

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

COMMENT 1

I wish to object to the proposed changes to evening car parking in Sevenoaks town council. This will make it much more expensive to park for people arriving before 7.30pm and will have an adverse effect on the town's economy. It will put people off going to restaurants until later in the evening and will make visiting the Stag more expensive for many people as they will have no choice about when they need to arrive and many events and films will mean they need to be parked before 7.30. Local arts groups which use the Stag are concerned that their members will face increased costs for rehearsals, as well as for performances.

As the council has said the evening parking charge changes will have little impact on the total money collected, I can't see why the council is pressing ahead with this. It makes eating out or visiting the Stag look expensive in comparison to visiting Bluewater or Tunbridge Wells.

COMMENT 2

I would welcome a comment on the effect that the withdrawal of the post-6.30pm £1 charge and the extension of the daily parking rates will have on those amateur groups who hire the Stag Theatre for performances.

I am a member of the Sevenoaks Symphony Orchestra, and note that we are not immediately affected by the change, as most of our concerts take place on Sundays so are exempt from parking charges. However, we hold an annual concert on a Wednesday evening in January at 8.30pm, with a rehearsal from 6.45pm, and after April 1st this would mean a noticeable increase both to the players' subscriptions and to the audience's ticket price. This might be enough to reduce our audience to the point where the concert would not be financially viable, and the Stag Theatre would lose a booking..

In the case of an amateur dramatic company hiring the Stag Theatre for several days, the added cost might cause the company to change the venue, with the Stag Theatre again losing income as a result.

Would it be possible to consider issuing parking charge exemptions to local amateur organisations hiring the Stag Theatre?

COMMENT 3

I just wanted to register my disagreement with the proposal of increased parking prices in Sevenoaks.

It feels like we are just starting to see a real revival in the high street with new shops and restaurants, there is such a positive vibe amongst other mums about what Sevenoaks has to offer now. The most frequent gripe is the cost of parking which for some people is prohibitive already.

Would it be too much to hold off parking increases until the high street is really booming again? So many of my friends, and me included, still opt to go to Bluewater or west malling instead. (Free parking). I think the range of shops in Sevenoaks has dramatically improved which is evidenced by the difficulty of parking before Christmas, I think there is a chance that increasing parking charges as per the proposal could kill that revival dead, or at least dampen the positivity about the town that there currently is...

COMMENT 4

I would like to register my opinion with you about the proposed car parking increases. I think the car parking charges are already too high and increasing them even more is counter productive. You will just put people off coming into the town centre. Bluewater is only a 15 or 20 minute drive away and car parking there is free. I for one will start to avoid Sevenoaks town centre and local businesses will suffer as will council run enterprises like the leisure centre. When you factor in car parking to the cost of attending the leisure centre it will make it almost as cost effective to go to somewhere private where the facilities will be much nicer as lets face it the Sevenoaks leisure centre, especially the pool and changing rooms are in dire need of refurbishment.

I want to support local businesses and have the convenience of having great shops in our town but not to be ripped off just to get to them and they won't survive if car parking charges put off their customers from coming into town.

COMMENT 5 (Sevenoaks)

I object most strongly to the proposals to increase the evening car park charges in Sevenoaks. I do not see the need to have a charge at all after 6.30pm as there has always seemed to me to be plenty of space in the central car parks in the evening but I can see even less justification for a 200% increase in this charge. This proposed move can only discourage evening visitors to Sevenoaks and do much harm to the Stag and the many restaurants in the town.

I ask the Council to abandon their proposal.

COMMENT 6

I object to the Order because it will be detrimental to the users of the High Street and will affect the "footfall".

Why not make the first 30 minutes free in all the car parks except the "Long Term" ones. You will find that the annual revenue will not be less than the existing.

The "Evening Charge" is already detrimental to the Stag Theatre (whose main competition comes from the complex at the North Farm Estate in Tunbridge Wells). This should not be increased from the current level.

COMMENT 7 (Sevenoaks)

I have just read the parking proposal and would like to strongly object to the increase in parking charges proposed.

Parking charges in Sevenoaks are already too high, people simply cannot afford to continue paying inflated prices and this will in turn drive people away from using the town. As for the changes to times, have you considered the families that want to use the car parks for a quick meal with their children, is it fair to expect them to pay more just to park for a couple of hours. You are not providing any additional parking facilities, there appears to be no justification for an increase in charges apart from greed.

I STRONGLY OBJECT TO ANY INCREASE IN PARKING CHARGES.

COMMENT 8 (Riverhead)

I vehemently object to another increase in parking charges made by the council in Sevenoaks.

The charges are already completely out of line with other areas and all that a further increase will do is lessen the business that is conducted in the town as the general public will vote with their feet and will chose to shop/eat in places such as Bluewater where parking is free.

Please refrain from being shortsighted and greedy and encourage businesses and consumers to the town; inordinate charges are already driving them away.

COMMENT 9 (Sevenoaks)

I write with particular reference to point (a) of the proposed amendment.

I object to the proposed increase in parking charges in and around Sevenoaks. I believe parking to be expensive enough as it currently stands and the proposed hike will impact upon business with less willing to pay the charges. One has to consider all members of society, those on low income such as the elderly and people with young families who will find it most difficult in terms of access to amenities if they cannot afford to park close by.

May I ask the reasoning behind the proposed increase?

COMMENT 10

I am writing with reference to the above proposal to increase car parking charges in sevenoaks and to formally object to the proposal. As a family we try to shop locally and support local businesses however the cost of parking in Sevenoaks is already high; increasing the cost still further will certainly make me find other places to shop or socialise where parking is not so expensive. There are many alternatives that are not too far away.

We are losing enough businesses in Sevenoaks and should be encouraging trade and a sense of local community but this will do the exact opposite as it forces people to shop or socialise elsewhere.

I urge the council to reconsider.

COMMENT 11

I have a Sevenoaks residence and I use the town a lot. I support the local shops, sports centre, cafes, doctor surgeries, restaurants and theatre. Therefore it make me very sad and angry to see that you are increasing the parking charges. Please think about the people who love this town before putting up the price of parking. I am against the rise.

COMMENT 12

I was very surprised and disappointed by the proposal to increase parking charges in Sevenoaks and write now to object in the strongest terms to their implementation.

The evening charges in particular are a disgrace. The businesses in Sevenoaks are already suffering without having to compete with parking charges now too. In addition, those working at the Stag Theatre will be unfairly hit and this in turn may cause show prices to rise. Unless we make going out in Sevenoaks attractive, people will stop using the local facilities, restaurants and evening venues.

Shops are currently closing in Sevenoaks and leaving the town (for example: Dorothy Perkins, Russell & Bromley) and we now have a high street filled with estate agents and charity shops. We are in danger of driving yet more business to other local towns such as Tunbridge Wells.

Higher parking charges will just make the town empty.

Don't do our community, which has the potential to be great, the disservice of incentivising them elsewhere.

COMMENT 13 (Hildenborough)

I am writing to object to the huge increase in proposed parking charges. Sevenoaks council appears to have put costs up on a regular basis recently.

As a Hildenborough resident I will be frequenting Tonbridge more than Sevenoaks if these increases are put in place.

COMMENT 14

I have read about your proposed car park price hikes for Sevenoaks with absolute horror. Are you trying to close the town down for once and for all? Finish off our local businesses? Send us all off to Bluewater, where the spacious parking is free (and the range of shops much better)?

3 hours in Blighs to cost £4.80?? Who on earth thought that one up? Adding a £3 parking charge to dinner out, or a trip to the Stag (which REALLY needs the support of us locals)??

We have a pretty town, with some nice shops, so why undermine it and put people off coming here? We don't want to see boarded-up empty premises and empty car parks (like the outrageously over-priced new M&S indoor car park - always spaces in there funnily enough, as we all avoid it like the plague!)

Oxted, another pretty town nearby, has free parking. Westerham is more than reasonable. These charges are beginning to feel like extortion, a sad nod to Rip-off Britain.

Please think again, and save our town.

COMMENT 15

I absolutely object to the raise in parking charges. This increase will force people to out of town shopping centres such as bluewater which will be detrimental to local trade. What a shame. The parking charges are already too high - my 92 year old grandfather walks miles to avoid the pay for car parks as he simply can't afford it.

COMMENT 16 (Sevenoaks)

I am writing to object to the increase in parking charges in Sevenoaks. In particular the evening charges. Parking in Sevenoaks is expense enough already! Friends from out of the area cannot believe there is an evening charge in the first place and to increase it will certainly damage the local businesses.

COMMENT 17 (Sevenoaks)

I am writing to object about the proposal to increase the parking charges in and around Sevenoaks. The high parking charges already discourage people from shopping locally and this increase will only encourage people to use more convenient towns. I personally have already changed dry cleaners and drive to a different post office to avoid the ridiculously high minimum charge to pop in a shop for 5 minutes. You are driving local businesses & shoppers out of our town.

COMMENT 18

Having just been alerted to this proposal that the parking charges in Sevenoaks are to be going up AGAIN, I am writing to strongly object to these proposals. In order to shop in Sevenoaks it seems we now have to pay extortionate prices to park the car. Not everybody that lives or shops in Sevenoaks has huge bank balances and can regularly spend huge amounts on simply parking their car. This will most definitely stop me from shopping in Sevenoaks and I find this a great

shame having grown up here, you are simply pushing people away from the town centre and they will find alternative places to go.

COMMENT 19 (Riverhead)

I wish to object to the proposed increase in parking services detailed in the above Order. My basis is that the charges in Sevenoaks are already high and the proposals make it more likely for people to travel out of town to e.g bluewater or Longfield Road, thereby not supporting local businesses.

COMMENT 20

I used to shop in Sevenoaks - I do not shop there any longer. I refuse to pay a parking charge of £3 to be able to potter around my High Street. And now you want to charge the same rate for evenings as well? Bye bye restaurants - as we said bye bye to Ginseng.

It's a shame as you are going to kill Sevenoaks and there will have to be a huge big plan to try and re-generate dead Sevenoaks in the future.

You are only increasing charging in Sevenoaks because apparently we are all 'rolling in money' and can easily afford it. I'm sure the cost of parking in other areas of Kent is nowhere near as high as Sevenoaks. You would be too frightened to do it as there would be uproar! In fact I'm sure Sevenoaks is the highest. Please let me know if I am right or wrong. It's another form of tax and I'm just not paying it. Enough is enough!

So another vote from me to go to Bluewater / Tesco / Sainsburys / Lidl / online to do my shopping. Alternatively I will walk / cycle to Sevenoaks - or are you going to charge me for that too?

When the tumble weed hits Sevenoaks - just remember I warned you!

Looking forward to your comments.

COMMENT 21

It is very shortsighted to increase charges in times of austerity when wages are not keeping up with inflation.

The High Street is dying in Sevenoaks and increased charges will force potential customers to seek shopping precincts that are either free of charge or lower charges than those proposed.

COMMENT 22

The proposed parking charges for Sevenoaks are too high I'm afraid. I wouldn't mind so much if you bothered to invest in local public transport, but let's face it the local buses are RUBBISH (I get the bus to and from the station every day, so please believe me). If you could demonstrate that additional money was going to be invested in buses and cycle lanes then that would at least offer some viable alternatives, but so far you seem to have shown little interest in either.

COMMENT 23

I am writing to object to the proposed price increases for parking in Sevenoaks town centre.

I do like to visit our town centre, despite too many estate agents, coffee shops and restaurants.

Increasing parking fees is another reason for the decline in the use of the "high street", it certainly puts me off shopping there. Attracting businesses to the high street is very important (other than more of those mentioned above), yet with increasing parking fees, there is less people visiting and if they do visit they do not stay for as long as they may like to.

COMMENT 24 (Sevenoaks)

I am writing to oppose to the proposed increase in car park charges in and around Sevenoaks. The current charges are quite high as they are and further increase would result in driving people away from the town which then would have decremental effect on the local business.

I would wish this proposal to be scrapped.

COMMENT 25 (Sevenoaks)

I am writing to express my objection to the proposed car park charging rises for the Sevenoaks car parks described in the order. In my view these proposed charges represent an unnecessary, ill-advised attempt to place a financial burden on the residents of Sevenoaks who already face high Council tax charges, an incompetent and irregular bus service, increased costs for children commuting from/to the town and increased commuting costs to London. I am also concerned at the financial burden they will impose on those who work in Sevenoaks and have limited parking facilities, who are integral to the success of the town. No doubt it will also mean that potential users of the retail, restaurants and other service outlets in Sevenoaks will also be put off by the disproportionate charges meaning a reduction in trade for the area.

With no rationale for the increased charges, I can only assume they are motivated by greed and wish to strongly register my objections.

COMMENT 26

I object to the increase in parking charges in sevenoaks, as the parking charges are already damaging local business. People are going to go to bluewater instead of local businesses

I'd like to understand what the proposed usages are for the revenue from this? Further, what study has been done to evaluate the impact of this proposal?

COMMENT 27

I think the proposed parking charge increase will adversely affect Sevenoaks. I think the cinema/theatre and restaurants will suffer from loss of customers. Why go into Sevenoaks when other places provide free parking?

Please, please think again, we all want to see a thriving town.

COMMENT 28

I am writing to object to the proposed increase in parking fees in Sevenoaks. I live in Riverhead so it is not feasible to walk into town, particularly with children, but I do drive in on a regular basis to use the shops in Sevenoaks. I particularly like to support the independent shops such as the Chinaman, Sevenoaks Bookshop, Devine and Lady Butterworths. However at a cost of around £3 just to spend a bit of time browsing I will have to seriously think about how often I can do this - just to pop into town three times a week will be costing me £9 a week, so £36 a month which is unfeasible. My mother lives in Oxted where there is free parking in the centre, and many independent shops are thriving in the high street, but unfortunately I can see the demise of many of the fabulous shops we have just because people will not pay to park in town.

There are many other options to using Sevenoaks town centre now - online shopping, Bluewater, the larger supermarkets on the outskirts of town, and unfortunately I believe that people will use these facilities in preference.

I really hope you will reconsider this proposal for the sake of a town that I lived in for many years and would love to see prosper.

COMMENT 29

I am extremely disappointed to read your proposal for the increase in parking charges.

Sevenoaks town is already suffering and the cost of parking is simply putting people off visiting. By only increasing the charge will add to the situation.

I often use to visit Sevenoaks to meet with friends for a coffee, but now Meet at alternative coffee shop due to the ridiculous charges. The same goes for evening meals, there are plenty of places for meeting friends outside the Sevenoaks high street area. Great for those businesses but I do feel very sorry for the businesses who will lose out due to your increases.

This is pure greed! I look forward to hearing from you

COMMENT 30

I would like to voice my objection to the parking charges in Sevenoaks being increased again. As it is, I rarely go up to the town to shop because of the high charges - or if I do, I rarely get time to pop into more than one shop. These charges are killing our town as I know of so many people that feel the same. I live on a pension so need to budget. I am amazed that the retailers in the town are not banging your doors down to object as you are surely killing their trade.

COMMENT 31

I wholly oppose the proposal to increase car parking charges in Sevenoaks. I am a local Mum and drive into Sevenoaks 3 times a week on average.

I already find the parking very expensive and I run around town trying to get all my shopping done so I can keep my parking to the minimum hour. I certainly don't browse or stay for that extra time. The shops and businesses don't get anything other than my briefest custom.

If the prices increase again I will cut back even more and will go elsewhere. As the road improvements on the a21 make penury more accessible and offer free parking - I will go there.

Sevenoaks town seems to have come through the last few years in better shape than other places and the new M&S and other new stores have come to town giving lots of reasons to go to town but people need time to also go to the other places - a coffee at Nonnas, a browse through one of the many independent boutiques, a snoop in one of the book shops. I won't be hanging around town to do any of this - I will buy 30 mins run to m&s, smiths and boots and run back to the car.....

Stop with your plans to increase the parking costs - invite people to the town to support the business and help the town prosper.

COMMENT 32

I wish to object to the proposed car parking charges in Sevenoaks. I will certainly think twice as to whether I continue to shop in Sevenoaks. As an Otford resident, it will make more sense for me to travel to Bromley by train or drive to Bluewater. Both of which have a greater shopping choice. What does Sevenoaks have to offer to afford these increases?

I have a love local life card but I won't remain loyal if these proposed charges come into force.

COMMENT 33 (Chipstead)

I am writing to object to the overall increases in parking fees around Sevenoaks town centre. It is a lovely place to shop, have a meal or see a film, but to have to pay almost £5 to see a film

and get a quick bite to eat, that is really pushing the limit and will deter people from using the town centre.

Also, I strongly object to the changes in evening rates. The hourly rates are too high already in town and only having of pay £1 after 630pm is sensible and should be retained.

For the record, I think it is cheeky that parking spaces were eliminated to make way for the M&S car park, which has even higher fees! No wonder that car park is normally empty when Blighs is full. It makes no sense that they do not have a scheme like Waitrose where the hourly rate is very reasonable AND you can get one or two hours free if you make purchases in the store.

Reference: Sevenoaks: to increase the 2 hour charge to £3 and the 3 hour charge to £4.80, to remove the evening charge for parking between 6.30pm and 9.30pm, and apply all parking charges from 8.30am to 8.30pm;

COMMENT 34 (Kemsing)

I work in Sevenoaks Town centre and every day, I have trouble parking. I am happy to pay but by the time I reach the long term car park, all the places are gone, so I then have to spend time driving around looking for a meter. More often than not, they are also full, which leaves me no choice to park down in Bayham Road and walk up. This all adds time to my day, but time I am not able to get paid for. I have had to adjust my hours and work 30 minutes less each day, just because I have to allow 15 minutes each way to walk to/from my car.

I feel that the long term parking in Sevenoaks really needs to be addressed, as the residents in Bayham and Serpentine are not happy with the parking situation and colleagues of mine, have had notes placed on their wind screens and rubbish stuffed up their exhaust pipes, despite them having every right to park there!

I am fortunate enough to have a job, which fits in with the school run, as I need to be able to make it back to school in Kemsing by 3.15 to collect my children, but the parking is making it very difficult for me. I have looked into getting a parking permit but I only work three or four days a week and the days change each week, so despite offering pro-rata permits this would not work for me.

The amendments to the Car Parking prices are not justified for the service you are providing to Sevenoaks employees, the lack of parking is what really needs to be addressed before prices are increased! Businesses will be forced out of our town, if their staff can't park easily.

COMMENT 35

I am writing to object to the above. It will simply drive away trade from already struggling businesses. Especially in the evening. Parking in Sevenoaks can no longer be seen as a never ending cash cow. The prices are already higher than surrounding towns or the many free shopping areas.

COMMENT 36 (Sevenoaks)

Are you people, absolutely mad? How can you increase parking fees yet again?

This is a travesty for local business and you will drive people out of your town into the big shopping centres turning sevenoaks into a ghost town.

It is nothing but greed and poor management. I suggest you think this through and seriously consider what you are doing to this town before you have a public backlash on your hands.

Unbelievable!

COMMENT 37

I write to you to strongly object to the proposed parking charge amendments as stated on your website. I have lived in Sevenoaks all of my life (35 years) and really do enjoy living here however you are making it very difficult for middle class residents like myself to continue to enjoy the town centre and its facilities. Having worked in London and now at home looking after my children I am frequenting the town centre a great deal more - but for me to use the facilities such as the swimming pool, cinema, Pup cafe, cafes and restaurants you are asking me to spend nearly £5 on parking before I've even walked through the door and paid for my activities. It makes it much more appealing to visit other areas where the parking is free or a fraction of the costs. This also applies to the shops. I am a big believer of supporting my high street but how can I when again it's cheaper for me to go to the supermarkets, Bluewater or shop online than pop into town to get what I need and browse. In particular I find the evening charges absolutely ridiculous. I really think you will see a damaging knock on affect to the support of the local bars and restaurants not to mention the cinema if people have to pay such extortionate rates. A few years ago you could pop to the pub to see some friends and have a diet coke for £2 ... Now you are looking at charging £3 before one has even got to the pub!!

I really hope you do listen to the people of this town as you are going to start squeezing more and more local people out and the independent pubs, restaurants, cafes and activities will not survive.

COMMENT 38

I write to object to the proposals to increase car park charges in Sevenoaks.

1. Central Sevenoaks suffers from a shortage of car parking spaces compared to the number of people who need to use the town for business and shopping. The shortage of spaces is the responsibility of Sevenoaks Council. Sevenoaks also suffers from appallingly unreliable (often never arriving) and infrequent buses which are of little use to most outlying properties. Charging more for the parking spaces is immoral in circumstances where the Council has failed in its obligations to provide sufficient parking and efficient public transport.

2. It is unlikely that increased charges will significantly reduce the number of users of the car parks as most users are there by necessity rather than choice. However should people decide to stay at home, this will have a serious negative impact on local business, particularly at the most useful, cheaper, end. For example I regularly attend the baby play centre behind the Stag theatre (Pup). Entrance costs £3.50. However the current parking charges effectively double the price of attending except for those rich enough to afford to live in central Sevenoaks. If charges are increased further I will not be able to afford for my child to attend Pup play as often, and this would be relevant to all of their customers and also for all other local businesses serving the less affluent parts of the surrounding villages. For example it would disincentivise families living in the poorer outlying areas from taking children swimming, and so on.

3. The proposed increases are considerably higher than inflation and do not appear to reflect any proposed improvement to the service, thus they are entirely unjustified.

COMMENT 39 (Riverhead)

Having lived in Sevenoaks all my life I have never before felt the need to object to something but this proposed parking charge hike is totally outrageous.

Once upon a time I used to do all my shopping in the town but sadly these days due to the cost of parking along with the decline in independent shops who have not been able to keep up with the business rates etc I now find it cheaper and easier to go to Bluewater and shop online. I do

try to support my local shops but the ever rising parking costs are simply making it financially unviable to continue to do so.

Please stop killing my home town and pricing both shoppers and shop owners out of the town. People who are lucky enough to have a job working in Sevenoaks are finding it increasingly difficult to afford to park there and are having to look at working elsewhere or not working at all thus adding to the burden on the welfare state. The true impact of these proposed price increases are both vast and complex but the outcome is certain so I beg you to rethink this money grabbing attitude and leave the parking charges alone long enough for the town to survive and even longer in the hope that it may even start to thrive again.

Just because Sevenoaks is considered an affluent area does not give you the right to milk it dry. Those that can afford to pay the parking aren't the ones who actually use it so you're barking up the wrong tree. Please consider all of those who ultimately pay your wages who would still like to enjoy the wonderful town in which they live, a town that was once a lovely market town until the council allowed that to be killed off leaving just a once pleasant mainly independent shopping town but now just a restaurant and estate agent filled town but with a beautiful parkland at its heart, a heart that people will no longer be able to afford to park near to visit.

COMMENT 40

On a recent visit to Westerham I was reminded of how expensive parking in Sevenoaks has become. Westerham has now made their largest carpark free for the first 2 hours (throughout the day) which is certainly enticing me to use its restaurants and shops more and I duly did this Christmas for example. It's a shame that Sevenoaks is going the other way on parking charges and is sure to drive people away from the town. I certainly won't pay £3 to park in the evening when it's free elsewhere.

COMMENT 41

I would be grateful if you would reconsider the evening charge times finishing at 8.30pm and to reduce that to 7pm so that those going to The Stag or local restaurants are not penalised. This will also help the businesses themselves - the busier they are, the more chance they are likely to be able to afford to stay in the town and therefore contribute through Business rates to the your coffers. This should apply to all car parks under your jurisdiction.

COMMENT 42

The parking charges will effect both business and entertainment facilities in our town. It is our town, you are merely its guardians. If the aim is to turn Sevenoaks into a ghost town you are well on the way. At least we have a pointer which way to go in the local elections.

COMMENT 43

I am writing to object to both of the above proposals with regard to the extension of the parking charging period to 8:30pm, having removed the £1 evening charge, in Sevenoaks car parks. I believe that such a move is detrimental to the local economy and further, once administration/enforcement costs are taken into account may not be cost effective.

In my view SDC should look to remove evening parking charges from 6:30pm, both on-street and off-street, in Sevenoaks and should also look hard at the difference in car parking charges endured by Sevenoaks compared to other locations within the SDC area. I am of the view that a disproportionate amount is obtained by SDC through parking charges in Sevenoaks, both in absolute and relative terms. This in turn has a detrimental effect on the town's vitality and sustainability.

COMMENT 44

Putting up the evening car parking charges will have a detrimental effect on the community life of Sevenoaks. People, who like us, do not live in the centre of Sevenoaks, have to drive in and park to attend any of the performances at the Stag. I thought your job was to keep Sevenoaks alive and to encourage people to attend the Stag and frequent the many restaurants the town has to offer.

The councillors seem to think that anybody who lives in Sevenoaks or its environs has plenty of disposable income and that is a very arrogant assumption. Many of us live on fixed incomes and extra car parking charges will inevitably mean that our evening visits to Sevenoaks will become less frequent. It seems so often that the consequences of your actions are not properly thought through. You may find in the end that your attempts to raise extra revenue through higher parking charges will be counter-productive; in the meantime, the Stag and others will have suffered a drop in attendance, and the people who you are in office to serve will be deprived of part of the enrichment of their lives.

COMMENT 45 (Hildenborough)

I'm gobsmacked that you can even consider raising your parking charges again. They are already way above what I pay to go to Tunbridge Wells or Tonbridge. I will be voting with my wheels, as it were, and shopping on those locations instead in future if your charges go up - they are a very strong disincentive to visit the local Sevenoaks shopping area no matter how charming it is.

As for your plan to increase the charge from 6.30pm onwards I think this is hideous. The reason it is lower is to prevent people from using the local parking as long term commuter parking. It allows people with families to pop out to the shops once their partner comes home to mind the kids, and has been a life-saver for us as a family. I will continue to take advantage of the FREE parking after 6pm in Tonbridge instead.

I understand that you're strapped for cash and have been feeling the pinch. But this is ludicrous. It's not like you have a decent public transport system we can use instead.

Having invested in new shops you think you would want to make them more attractive to the surrounding areas by charging competitively for parking instead of charging nearly double.

Bad idea. Lower them instead.

COMMENT 46 (Sevenoaks)

Good morning ! I object to another yearly augmentation of parking in Sevenoaks . Just WHY? Everything is getting more expensive! WHY, you are not looking after the carpark better, they are dirty and look terrible, my wages is not going up every year! So I OBJECT to yet another blood sucking idea, why don't you use our money and your energy to make Sevenoaks (our and your small bubble world) a better place? Have a good day anyway!

COMMENT 47

I am writing to object to the proposed increase in evening parking charges in Sevenoaks. It will certainly deter me and my teenage children from going out to local restaurants etc. in the evenings and to the Stag Theatre. The current £1 is a nominal cost, £3 represents a 200 percent increase and is not.

If the proposed charges are implemented it will be up to local businesses to consider whether they can afford to offer a refund of parking fees to their customers but I would like the council to

consider refunding parking fees to people attending an event at the Stag, especially as many productions are put on by local voluntary groups which have charitable status.

COMMENT 48 (Otford)

I am writing to object to the proposed increase in the car parking charges in Sevenoaks car parks during evenings (i.e from 1830 hrs onwards).

Are the Council hell bent on destroying the Sevenoaks community? The parking costs are already prohibitive during the day with huge profits made and hair-brain proposals for a multi storey car park which will be a white elephant because no one will come to Sevenoaks. The new proposals should finally destroy the pubs, cafes, restaurants and worst of all the Stag. So yet more empty premises.

As I live in Otford and wish to go into Sevenoaks of an evening, because there are no buses, I am forced to use the car, or get the train and walk up and down the hill. How about putting some of the excess car park profit into subsidising late evening public transport to the villages.

At least Waitrose have it right - so I might still use their store, spend £20 and get my £2 parking back and a free coffee!

Bluewater must be rubbing their hands with glee.

COMMENT49 (Sevenoaks)

This email is to lodge my objection to the proposed car parking amendments proposed under Car Park Amendment 4 Order 2010 – MY REASON IS AS FOLLOWS, I OBJECT TO THE INCREASE IN THESE CHARGES AND REMOVAL OR CHEAPER EVENING RATES– THE PRICES ARE EXPENSIVE ALREADY

COMMENT 50 (Underriver)

I would like to register my objection to the proposed increase in car parking charges.

As a season ticket holder of the Bradbourne car park I find the cost already to be disproportionate to the service provided. Spaces are too tight and my car has been damaged by another user. The decision to reduce street lighting also means that the car park is unsafe for lone women (or men for that matter) returning to vehicles in the evening, and potentially increases the risk of theft from the car park. I currently don't feel that I am getting value and therefore object to having to pay an increased cost for an already inadequate facility. Given however that I need to commute to London for work the council rather has me over the proverbial barrel.

In relation to car parking charges for town centre car parks, I wonder is it the explicit intention of the council to try and dissuade residents from using the amenities of our local town centre? It is surely a consequence of ever-increasing car parking charges; if parking costs are increased much further it will be more cost effective to drive to Bluewater. Provision of adequate, reasonably priced car parking is arguably a necessity if the council wishes to encourage a vibrant town centre.

Should anyone wish to respond to my concerns I can be contacted using the details below:

COMMENT 51

I am shocked that parking charges are going up yet again! Are you not worried about the effect it will have on local business? I support local shops but if parking increases I don't think I'd be able to afford to park or shop in Sevenoaks.... We use the local PUP cafe once twice a month and that cost nearly £8 for 4 hour (both visits!!) Please rethink!!

COMMENT 52 (Oxford)

I would like to object to the proposed increase in car parking charges throughout Sevenoaks.

It already costs a significant amount of money to park in Sevenoaks car parks, and to hike the charges considerably, whilst most people's wages are not increasing in line with inflation, seems crazy. The Council should be doing what it can to support local businesses, not making it more likely that customers will go elsewhere e.g. Bluewater so that they do not have to pay the higher charges. Given the lowering cost of fuel, it will soon be more expensive to shop in Sevenoaks than to drive to Bluewater where visitors don't have to pay. If you increase the prices, this is exactly what will happen.

Also, I strenuously object to changing the evening parking tariffs to the new scheme. All this will do is cause visitors to park on nearby roads, thus preventing people who live on these roads from being able to park anywhere near their houses when they return from work in the evenings.

I for one already park on nearby roads to avoid paying parking charges. It will be chaos if you force everybody to do that.

COMMENT 53

I have just read the document regarding the new parking fees in sevenoaks! I am shocked by how much they are due to go up. I already avoid sevenoak because of the excessive charges and many restrictions. Sevenoaks is my nearest large town and I'm sure I am not the only one going else where, which can only serve to effect local businesses. Please consider carefully before you confirm the new charges!

COMMENT 54 (Sevenoaks)

I write to object to the increase in evening charges for parking in Sevenoaks Town proposed in "Car Park Amendment 4 Order 2010". This will have an adverse impact particularly on audiences for films and events at the Stag Theatre but also on custom at restaurants. The present £1 evening charge (free on Sundays) seems reasonable but any more will, I feel, be detrimental to the economic life of the town centre and could even be counter-productive.

COMMENT 55

The increases are ridiculous and will negatively impact on shops etc... Everyone will go to Tunbridge Wells or Bluewater... The evening charge is particularly crazy....

COMMENT 56

Object.. To whom it might concern, Putting up the parking fees yet again is ridiculous. I used to come into sevenoaks quite a bit but since you have put the fees up I don't go in as much. If you put them up again it will be rare and not just me many others. We are losing businesses and shops all over the place, it will get worse putting the fees up, less people more shops suffering. I think sevenoaks is such a lovely town, please help keep it like it.

COMMENT 57

Hereby I object to the parking increases for the town centre parking and station parking. The town centre has suffered over the last few years and many of the small locally owned shops have closed down. Instead of trying to raise more money the council should encourage short visits to the town centre whilst discouraging all day parking. This can be done by charging less for any stay under 2 hrs and significantly increase the charges for stays over 2 hrs. I ask you to please reconsider.

The evening charge of 3 pounds for parking in the centre is excessive. The restaurants, pubs and the Stag will suffer because of this change. I don't see how this increase in tariff is going to do anything beneficial for the town centre. It will just mean less visitors and the increase in parking revenue will be limited. I ask you to please reconsider.

The parking charges near the station are very high as it stands. Sevenoaks became popular as a commuter town. However with the train fares as they stand plus parking costs it is becoming too expensive for people to work or visit London. More options should be offered for people to park or travel to London. Instead nothing is being done to add capacity. I would like to see the Council support its hard working residents instead of punishing them with an increase in fares.

It is easy to raise fares but the Council should explain what it is trying to achieve with this other than just trying to take in more money. The council is here to help residents and improve the quality of living in the Sevenoaks area. I fail to see how these parking tariff changes are beneficial to residents, shop owners, restaurateurs, the Stag and the leisure centre.

COMMENT 58

I cannot understand why you are increasing the evening parking charge in Sevenoaks. You say you will not make much money out of the increase so that prompts the question - why?

I used to visit Sevenoaks most days - I live in Riverhead - now I rarely go into Sevenoaks - mainly because of the cost of parking. We have just changed dentists - one of the reasons was the cost of parking in Sevenoaks - one never knows exactly how long one will be.

I generally shop on-line or in Bluewater these days - as no parking to pay.

I think Sevenoaks Council is crazy with their charges. You are just going to put all these small businesses out of business and we will have no independent shops anymore just coffee shops, Italian restaurants, opticians and charity shops!

The stag Cinema is also going to suffer - personally I would prefer to drive to Tunbridge Wells to the Odeon with free parking then pay your new evening charge.

I sincerely hope you do not put up the parking charges in Sevenoaks - I think you are spoiling a lovely town.

COMMENT 59

I am writing to object to the parking charge amendments proposed for later this year.

Local businesses, especially restaurants, in Sevenoaks are struggling to survive. These parking charges will not help. The £3 evening charge is especially concerning given that there is no demand/ supply problem to manage.

I urge you to reconsider.

COMMENT 60

I am writing to express my opposition to your proposed increases to parking charges throughout Sevenoaks. My reasons are the following:

1. You have made no effort to justify the increases, which come on top of charges which are already higher than nearby towns and shopping centres. What exactly will be the additional benefit we enjoy for the privilege of paying ever more to park?
2. You offer no evidence of the impact you expect the increased expense of parking in the town centre to have on the businesses, shops, restaurants and Stag Theatre. But common sense

suggests the impact will be detrimental, perhaps especially to the Stag given your proposal to triple the cost of parking in the evenings.

3. Government is supposed to simplify and streamline the provision of services to minimise the costs to hard-pressed taxpayers. Instead you propose to complicate the scheme. Your proposal to extend the evening hours for which we would pay is a good example. Instead of a simple flat rate after shopping hours, enabling security of mind for an evening out (NB spending money in the town), you now want half the evening to be hugely expensive and the rest free. People won't delay their arrival into Sevenoaks to avoid the charges; they'll just go elsewhere.

4. Before Christmas there was talk of you holding other charges down to "compensate" for the new evening increase. I don't see that now. But I wouldn't trust it if it were there, and I fully expect you to try to make swingeing increases year on year as soon as we've all got used to having to pay up to 8.30pm instead of 6.30pm. If you think this will raise more money think again; it'll just be fewer people each paying more and businesses dying in the town centre.

5. Have you not noticed that most people lucky enough to be in a job have seen their pay cut in real terms every year since 2008? Have you not noticed historically low levels of inflation for the last several years? How can you justify inflation-busting increases to parking charges year on year in these circumstances? Perhaps we should all go and work in parking enforcement, which has clearly been enjoying a positive golden age.

6. I object to your description of the proposals as "revisions" when not one single one is for anything other than an increase. You should show enough respect to the taxpayers who fund you to be honest and straightforward with us.

I look forward to you thinking again and withdrawing these proposals.

COMMENT 61

Parking in Sevenoaks is very expensive already. Without a decent public transport service to bring local people into Sevenoaks town centre we don't have a choice but drive. Increasing the cost will only encourage all to drive to bluewater or other large out of town shopping areas where parking is free.

COMMENT 62

I would like to strongly object to 'Car Park Amendment 4 Order 2010'.

I believe these changes are completely counterproductive and detrimental to the Sevenoaks community. As a mother with a young baby, being able to park in town is often a necessity. Increasing the charges will make parking unaffordable and affect young families. It will discourage mothers from shopping in town, affecting local shops, closing independent stores and make them more likely to travel to more convenient places like Bluewater. Local trade and commerce will be severely affected particularly to the restaurants if the evening charge is increased. There is also likely to be considerable congestion in the Waitrose car park.

Current parking charges are already excessive and exceed most other town car parks and I think these proposed changes are outrageous.

COMMENT 63 (Riverhead)

Please leave the Sevenoaks evening parking charges as they are.

I really don't see what is so complicated about paying £1 to park for the evening; I don't think that needs to be 'simplified' to paying £2 for a shorter period.

Surely only a politician could invent such a transparent subterfuge and think that the proles would not notice.

I notice that the SDC Economic Development Committee recommended retaining the £1 evening charge and on this occasion I agree with them.

COMMENT 64

I am writing to strongly object to the proposed revision of charges in particular with regard to the increase in evening charges.

One can almost smell a hidden agenda to make The Stag even more unviable: perhaps the Council have a cunning plan on the back burner (which did exist some years ago) for that site.

Hopefully citizens will either get out their bus passes (although the limited evening public transport makes this nigh on impossible), walking shoes or steer their car in a different direction. The unintended consequences of this wrong-headed policy may result in either reduced car parking income or reduced business rates or both.

Only next years accounts will tell, but it must be good news for our neighbouring towns and businesses.

COMMENT 65

I wish to voice my concern over the proposed changes to car park charges for evening use.

As a frequent user of the Stag car park whilst attending performances the increase from the current £1.00 charge would cause me considerable concern. Also at least twice a year I attend every evening for a whole week at a time to perform in various productions and as this means being there from approx 6pm to 10.30 pm this would cost me considerably more. Which as a pensioner is important.

Also I have regarded the current £1.00 charge as both fair and understandable.

Lastly I feel increased charges would affect users of restaurants and pubs and reduce further the opinion of locals regarding the Councils approach to residents and visitors over evening parking.

COMMENT 66

I have a Season Ticket in the Bradbourne Car Park, Bay 159, and I strongly object to an increase in the cost of this due to the increasing number of occasions on which I am unable to park because every space is already taken.

COMMENT 67

I have just read the proposed changes to parking charges in Sevenoaks town centre and am appalled. Sevenoaks has the potential to be a thriving shopping and leisure hub but not if parking charges keep going up like this. I am a mother of two small children who regularly uses the town centre car parks to shop or swim. Stop pricing people out of the town!!!

COMMENT 68 (Sevenoaks)

I oppose the proposed rise in the £1 evening charge, not because I shall be affected (I can walk or cycle to the town centre), but because it will have a serious effect on local businesses such as pubs and restaurants and discourage visitors to the Stag. This proposal shows that SDC has set the wrong objectives for its parking management policy. The primary goal of parking management should be to ration a scarce public resource when potential demand for spaces

exceeds supply, which is the situation that applies during the day. The second goal should be to encourage turnover of spaces and help local businesses. The third objective should be to ensure that off-street parking covers its costs and is not subsidised by council tax payers.

By setting a 3.5% annual growth in parking revenue as its main objective, SDC is distorting these outcomes. I do not object in principle to increases in short-stay daytime charges, though there is a point at which these will discourage visitors and shoppers. Morning charges could be raised and afternoon charges lowered to better manage demand through the day. Long stay charges could be increased to limit demand.

But there is no reason to charge even £1 for parking anywhere on-street or off-street in the town centre after 6.30 pm when spaces are plentiful and do not need to be rationed. The cabinet decision to triple the £1 charge, ignoring the recommendation of the SDC committee which examined this issue, shows that the council puts its revenue needs above the interests of local businesses. Cinema, restaurant and pub customers who use their cars in the evening can, and probably will, choose to drive elsewhere. Very few will arrive after 8.30 when parking will be free. The explanation that the change is 'easier to understand' is patronising and dishonest.

Sevenoaks has to compete with other destinations in West Kent. In Tonbridge off-street parking is free after 6 pm, as it is in Tunbridge Wells, though there is an overnight charge of £1. Maidstone charges £1.50 from 6.30 pm.

Local amateur groups in Sevenoaks who currently use the Stag theatre have a choice of alternative venues for evening events, and will choose to take their business elsewhere if this proposal goes ahead.

I am on the committee of the Sevenoaks Literary Celebration, which is planning its 2015 programme. We are considering using the Stag's Plaza Suite, but we now also have excellent facilities open to us in local schools where parking is free. We are concerned about how our audience will react if we ask them to pay £5-£8 for a ticket to a 7.30 pm event, and then tell them that leaving their cars in South Park will cost them an additional £2.50.

In past years the council has ignored public objections to parking charge increases. On this occasion a serious rethink is advisable.

COMMENT 69 (Stone Street)

I wish to register my opposition to the proposal to raise evening parking charges in Sevenoaks to £2.50. I oppose it chiefly on the grounds of the serious injury it will cause to the businesses and facilities which cater for evening customers in Sevenoaks. Such a disproportionate increase will seriously compromise, in particular, the Stag Cinema and Theatre as well as pubs and restaurants. Most out of town customers will choose to go elsewhere for their entertainment, to towns and venues where parking is either free or capped at a much lower level. By implementing such a steep rise the Council would be doing a serious disservice to the town.

COMMENT 70 (Sevenoaks)

I have received details of the proposed changes in town centre parking charges and wish to record my strong opposition. My reasons:-

A blatant attempt to disguise revenue raising despite council protests to the contrary. The limited consultation period presumably intended to stifle objection. Another demonstration of the total incompetence of the Council to address the dire parking problems in the town and the consequences for traders who already are voting with their feet – hence the number of business closures.

If the proposals are accepted I for one (and along with other civic minded members of my Residents' Association) will be pressing for publication of the names of those supporting the resolutions so that electors can reflect their exact their revenge via the ballot box.

COMMENT 71 (Riverhead)

I am very disappointed to hear a plan to increase parking charges. I have seen no improvements occur and paying for parking in advance is rather a pain already as you have to guess how long you will be.

There are already very few high street shops in Central Sevenoaks and I fear that increasing charges will cause more to close as shoppers choose to rather go to Bluewater where parking is free and they have a huge choice of clothing, food, electronic and department stores. Please do not increase parking charges and cause our town centre to become a ghost town.

COMMENT 72 (Larkfield)

I have today visited Sevenoaks to look around at the Centre, my first impression on entering the Car Park was the lack of Mother and Child spaces. Do Sevenoaks not welcome children or is it the powers that be clearly have never tried to get a baby out of the car from a normal space. My annoyance continued when I arrived at the pay station your charges are astronomical clearly confirming not only do you not make children welcome shoppers are also discouraged .£2.70 for a visit of 1 - 2 hours daylight robbery if you are unfortunate enough not to have the right money your change is also stolen from you! the fact that you mention this in your very small print does not excuse this practice. Your restaurants must also be fed up with you not only do they pay the taxes to you if you wish to go for lunch you then have to add on £4.50 for parking. Is it any wonder town centres are becoming ghost towns. Next time I will avoid trying to support the local shops

Go straight to Bluewater park easily for free and not have to clock watch or risk being mugged, get your act together or become a council with no shopping centre.

COMMENT 73 (Chipstead)

In recent years, Sevenoaks has successfully managed to attract a number well known dining establishments to the town.

Coupled with a reasonable parking charge, it has been an extremely popular venue for those wishing a relaxing night out and a pleasant meal.

We feel that tripling the parking charge will have a detrimental effect on the restaurant business and that many will now look to move outside of the town centre for their evenings out.

We would strongly encourage the proposal to effectively triple the cost of parking after 630pm to be rejected.

COMMENT 74 (Bessels Green)

As a resident of Sevenoaks I cannot agree with the ever increasing car parking charges. I particularly object to the charges being increased from £1 to £3 for evening parking in Sevenoaks. Such an increase will deter people from visiting the town for a night out, affecting both restaurants and pubs. Surely you want people to enjoy the town, however, these constant increases dissuade people.

COMMENT 75 (Bessels Green)

I am writing to object very strongly against the proposed increase for the evening car park charges which are proposed. I consider the £1 charge to be fair, and the proposed increase to be unreasonable. It will deter me from using the restaurants in Sevenoaks and also my support of the cinema at the Stag. It will be cheaper to go to Tunbridge Wells.

COMMENT 76

Sevenoaks is a delightful town in a beautiful part of Kent. There are numerous shops, businesses, restaurants and pubs, not to mention a theatre. Many of these are run by Sole Operators and people who have taken financial and personal risks in order to provide a service to the community, whether it be in the form of goods for sale, services, food and drink, or entertainment. In these difficult times it is a credit to those individuals who have got off their backsides, worked hard, made investments and offer something unique to the many people in the area who like to visit the town, as well as those visitors to the town and surrounding areas.

I appreciate that parking is precious in the town, but do not understand how, in a period of low inflation, low wage increases (if at all), reducing costs in fuel and other supplies, how you can justify the increase in parking charges, which are already high. Those people working in the town who need to travel by private car, are already forking out the value of almost an hourly wage to park, and that is if they are able to get in to the one long stay carpark in the town centre. Others have to move their cars at lunchtime in order to avoid penalties by the end of the day.

As for the evening charges, I cannot comprehend the lack of thought and consideration given to the many eating establishments, pubs, and theatre that are there for the pleasure of our local people and visitors alike. As I have said, we should be applauding the entrepreneurs who have opened up in the town, supporting their efforts and affording them the maximum opportunity to make a go of their business, not making life difficult for them by increasing the cost of evening parking. Indeed in my opinion, and that of many friends and colleagues, parking should be free after 6.30pm. Not only would this encourage more customers into the town, but would alleviate the cost of paying for traffic wardens from 6.30 onwards, which must be a factor in the proposed increase.

I urge you to reconsider the proposal and look forward to your rationale behind this proposed increase.

COMMENT 77 (Seal)

I am writing to register my opposition to the proposal to raise the after 6.30pm car parking charges in the town's car parks and would urge that this is kept at £1 (or even made free of charge) from 6.30 until midnight and on Sundays.

My observation is that the car parks are quite lightly used in the evenings and I can't imagine that the cost of additional attendant/enforcement staff required would be covered by the additional revenue collected.

I fully understand that the Council is in a difficult position and that revenue has to be generated and usage managed somehow. Of course, I fully expect to pay to abandon my ton of metal on council property but I do feel that there has to be a proper and balanced cost-benefit analysis.

From a personal perspective I am a Friend of the Stag and am particularly worried about the effect the proposals may have on attendances at this venue, which has been hard fought for and is a great asset to the town.

I'm sure that the imposition of additional evening charges would also have detrimental effect on other businesses such as restaurants and pubs and only serve to keep people away from town in the evenings.

Please help to encourage people into the town in the evenings to enjoy all it has to offer!

COMMENT 78 (Sevenoaks)

I wish to record my objections to the proposed car park charges in central Sevenoaks.

In particular I wish to object to the changed format of evening charges and the consequent increase arising from that change. The statement attributed to Cllr Hogarth that these changes to evening charges are to make fees "easier to understand" not to make money has been received by residents with derision. The existing system is very easy to understand and makes eating in the town restaurants in the evening a relaxed affair in that one does not have to keep an anxious eye on the clock to ensure that one does not overrun one's time. Using the town's facilities in the evening will become measurably more expensive and more complicated!

It is ironic that the general increase in charges is to be introduced at the same time that travelling to places like Bluewater - which offers serious competition for Sevenoaks traders - has become measurably cheaper with the current 25% drop in petrol prices. Surely this has not gone unnoticed?

Hitchen Hatch Lane Residents Association

COMMENT 79

I wish to object to any increase in parking charges as this would effect the shops and any evening entertainments and the increase is much too high. Parking charges are far too high and if they need to go up should have a pay on leaving system so that you pay for what time you have actually used.

COMMENT 80

I would strongly oppose the proposed new charges which are unlikely to lead to any significant, or indeed any, increased revenue for the council.

Moreover, the charges are likely to drive shoppers away from the town centre, at a time when town centres, Sevenoaks included, are struggling to compete and attract customers. How is the town centre supposed to compete with the out of town centres and supermarkets who almost all offer free parking. The nighttime charges will drive away custom for the restaurants in the town centre which are the only real lifeblood of the evening economy of the town.

For years the locals who are rightly proud of their town supported the town centre to try and keep it alive, paying more to park and often shop than in other locations. In an economic environment that has seen to rise of discount supermarkets the number of people prepared to pay that bit more for anything, including shopping locally, is a shrinking resource. The proposed increases are simply out of step with the current stage in the economic cycle.

I can not overstate how significant and potentially disastrous these proposals are. Put simply, more pensive parking means less people shopping and dining, which in turn means less income for local businesses, and therefore less businesses paying rates to the council.

Is the council not aware of the countless studies which have shown the major reason for town centre collapse has been parking costs and lack of parking, with legion reports suggestion free parking in town centres is the only way to maximise the number of people using local stores? I would strongly urge the council to reverse the proposals (whose timing and consultation period

are more than a little suspect) or to at least carry out a detailed impact analysis including market research with shoppers and how much they are prepared to pay. Failing that please post this email somewhere prominent in the council offices so that within a few years when we are looking at the sorry state of affairs of empty units and shuttered stores it won't be possible to say no-one warned the council the plans were simply not the right idea at the right time.

COMMENT 81 (Sevenoaks)

I am writing to object to the proposals to increase the parking charges in the Sevenoaks town centre car parks and in particular the plan to replace the £1 evening parking charge with the standard day time charges. (I note that the charges will apply until 8:30pm rather than 9:30pm but believe this is insufficient compensation).

The current day time parking charges in Sevenoaks town centre are already high enough to actively discourage many people from using them and from shopping in Sevenoaks. I fear that increasing the early evening charges will have a significant negative affect on restaurant trade in the town centre. The council should be doing everything it can to make it easier for residents to spend money locally and help local businesses. At a time when high streets are struggling to compete with the enormous rise in online shopping, in addition to the more established threat from out of town shopping centres such as Bluewater, these changes threaten to push some businesses over the edge and to make life harder for all of them. That will only lead to more empty shops and to Sevenoaks becoming a less pleasant place for all of us to live and/or work in.

My suggestion would be to remove all parking charges from 6:30pm. This would make Sevenoaks a more popular evening destination and increase the vitality and profitability of the town centre.

COMMENT 82

I am writing to object to the proposed increase in parking charges to the Sevenoaks off street parking. Not only do I think the parking charges extremely excessive, I especially **STRONGLY OBJECT** to increasing/extending the evening charges. The proposal states this is to make the charges clearer, however it seems to charge more for evening parking is purely to increase revenue.

I do not see ANY reason to charge for parking after 6.30pm. In fact the town would benefit from not charging as this will encourage people to go into town and use the theatre and restaurants more.

I also note that the initial announcement states that the public has until 21st Jan to raise their objections, however it appears the discussion is tonight, the 19th! I would like clarification on this too please!

COMMENT 83 (Sevenoaks)

I would like to raise an objection to items 1-4 of the proposed increase in parking tariffs under the Car Park Amendment 4 Order 2010.

My principal objection is that raising the parking charges will discourage users from parking, and therefore shopping / spending in our local shops and cafes.

The economic climate is difficult enough already, with shoppers watching their wallets; if we compounds this with higher parking charges, shoppers are more likely defer smaller local purchases until their larger weekly shopping trips to out of town super stores.

The change in the evening charges will likewise potentially put people off visiting the stag theater, our local bars and restaurants.

Thank you for your consideration,

COMMENT 84

The proposed increases in Sevenoaks parking charges are more bad news for local traders and residents, but clearly aimed at increasing revenue. However, the proposed changes to the evening parking arrangements make no sense, and are without credible justification.

You say that the change is not to increase revenue, but is just to make it simpler for people from outside the area. In order to help these poor souls, you propose making a change which is clearly going to be detrimental to the evening life of the residents of the Sevenoaks area, who make up the majority of those coming to the town in the evening.

There are many places to eat and drink in Sevenoaks, and there is the Stag; all of these rely heavily on evening business, and probably none of them would claim to be financially resilient. Most people using these places in the evening will park well before the proposed 8.30pm charging cut-off, and they will have to pay more. This is bound to be detrimental to the town's businesses. Going elsewhere is becoming increasingly attractive, and if you push the changes through you will be disadvantaging people who otherwise would like to use Sevenoaks in the evening – and all this apparently to appease a few visitors! Do you think that the proposed change to the evening parking regime is going to increase the number of visitors? Of course not, and certainly not enough to compensate the local residents and businesses – your own constituents – who you are increasingly alienating.

COMMENT 85 (Seal)

I am writing to strongly object to the proposed increased car parking charges in Sevenoaks. As a resident of Seal, my wife, children and I use the shops and amenities in Sevenoaks Town centre on a daily basis.

The distance to the town centre from Seal is too far to walk; there is no safe route to cycle, so taking the car is the only practical option.

My wife works part-time in the Chocolate Shop in London Road. I commute from Sevenoaks station and teach martial arts at the Leisure Centre.

The current car parking charges already affect our decisions on when to visit the town centre and, on occasions, decide not to visit the centre due to the car parking charges.

My wife is now weighing up her options on whether or not to continue her employment with the Chocolate Shop. The salary is basic and has to work an hour to pay for her parking!

Having grown up in Sevenoaks, the centre always had a vibrant evening atmosphere in the restaurants, pubs and theatre.

On our recent visits, this is no longer the case and the increased evening tariff would only worsen this situation.

Part of the appeal of the large out-of-town supermarkets and large shopping centre's such as Bluewater, is the free parking.

Sevenoaks town centre is a much nicer place to shop than the aforementioned and your suspension of the car parking charges before Christmas was a success I hope.

I certainly did more of my Christmas shopping in the town as a result of the free parking.

Please consider the affect raising the already significant car park charges will have on the town centre and the families such as ours who enjoy using the centre but may be forced to go elsewhere.

COMMENT 86

I wish to object to the above car parking amendment. To be frank, the changes that you are proposing to charge will end up resulting in the death of some local businesses. They are utterly unreasonable and I do wonder if anyone proposing them has any grip on reality whatsoever.

I am surprised to see that your chief executive "is passionate about delivering value for money" and that, according to him, "the customer is at the heart of everything the Council does to ensure that Sevenoaks District remains a great place to live, work and visit", yet is happy to propose the changes that are listed.

COMMENT 87

I deeply disagree with this increase in parking charges and changes that are being brought in

Talk about the fastest way to kill a town centre. I shall be spending my money driving to Blue water and shopping around there for free with a bigger shopping variety. The charges for parking are astronomical already in Sevenoaks !

I love Sevenoaks town centre to walk around and shop with my child, but the parking cost now just makes this impossible to consider (Busses at £2 each way are also not an option) CHEAPER IN LONDON

Kind regards and hoping that the money grabbing ideas will be rained in and more strategical long term ideas will be addressed to continue the growth and success of this beautiful town Sevenoaks not just increase parking fares.

COMMENT 88

I already use the town and its businesses far less than I would like. I used to potter around and spend money in town almost every day. As it is, I often go elsewhere, to the big supermarkets or retail parks because parking is so expensive - with the proposed increases, I cannot see myself shopping or eating in Sevenoaks at all.

COMMENT 89

I would like to object to two aspects of the plans:

1) The planned evening charges to apply from 6.30-8.30pm in Sevenoaks town centre car parks: these will deter people from coming into the town to visit the restaurants, cinema and theatre in the evening. Sevenoaks town centre has managed to avoid the decline experienced by so many other towns of this size because people do come in and use local facilities in the evenings - it has a good mix of restaurants as well as shops. People will go elsewhere if they are forced to pay the high charges proposed as most people in Sevenoaks go out before 8.30pm, more restaurants will close and become empty premises and the town will become a ghost town after dark.

2) The proposed charges relating to parking to use the leisure centre: it is already extremely expensive to park and take a family to use the leisure centre, the proposals will make it even more extortionate. It already stops us from making as much use of the leisure centre as we would like - you should be encouraging people to be healthy not putting barriers in the way. (And no, the bus isn't an option - that is even more expensive and too infrequent.)

I appreciate you need to generate extra money but deterring people from coming into Sevenoaks in the evening and from using the leisure centre is not in the town's interests.

COMMENT 90 (Bessels Green)

Please my note my objection to your proposal to amend the evening car parking charges.

Although I realise that SDC has to raise additional monies from somewhere to cover extra costs this year I do not think it prudent to increase the nightly charges (as well as the daytime ones) as this will harm the town, discourage residents from going in during the evening for meals and the theatre/cinema and will eventually lead to the town becoming a 'no go area' at night. The straightforward £1 per evening is a bearable and commonsense amount - any extra is not.

Sevenoaks is a wonderful town and has a very valuable community asset in the Stag Theatre, supported by both SDC and staffed to a large extent by volunteers who give not only their time but also (very often) the use of their cars when they drive in to do their volunteering hours outside the public transport times. I am one of those volunteers and am rarely able to find one of the very few free parking spaces available for use on the South Park Car Park. I invariably have to pay to park in order to carry out my volunteering duties and I do not bother to reclaim this money as I consider that I am supporting the Stag and £1 is not a bad price to pay.

If I have to start paying evening parking costs at the same rate as the daytime charges then I shall either stop the volunteering there or make sure that I claim back the charges so that I am not out of pocket. Likewise, I am sure that many others will, sadly, follow suit.

I hope that the proposed hike in evening charges, disguised as they are, will not be accepted.

COMMENT 91 (Sevenoaks)

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

Although I understand the need for local authorities to raise revenue due to the cuts they have been forced to implement, I don't think that increasing the amount that drivers pay in the evenings is the best way of doing so.

Sevenoaks isn't busy at night and increasing the charges for drivers well into the evening discourages people from coming to enjoy the restaurants & pubs, bringing money into the town.

I support shortening the time that charges are applied but would go further and stop charging by 7pm to encourage nighttime business. If you do continue to charge until 8:30pm, then the £1 fee should remain and not be increased.

COMMENT 92

The decision to increase the 6:30pm plus, parking charges from their current level is folly.

After 6:30pm there is a surplus of car parking spaces all around the town.

I happen to have studied Economics, but everyone understands that if there is an over-supply of a good or service, the price will naturally tend lower, not higher.

I'm lucky enough to be going to eat at the Spice Club this evening at 7:00pm. If in future I will have to pay a high price to park in an empty car park, for the privilege, I am likely to spend this wasted money on petrol and travel further afield for variety - Tunbridge Wells car parks will be free at this time.

That's how you encourage business in a town.

I would hazard a guess that a good source of evening revenue is currently generated from fines imposed on people who would not have guessed that Sevenoaks would charge anything at all in the evening.

Think again. I suggest free parking after 6:30pm, not an increase.

COMMENT – THE SEVENOAKS TOWN PARTNERSHIP

Sevenoaks Town Partnership would like to express its gratitude to Cllr Peter Fleming for attending its meeting on 21st January 2015 to provide information relating to Sevenoaks District Council's proposed new parking charges for the town and for the opportunity to reply to the consultation bearing in mind the closing date of the same date.

Representatives from the following organisations attended the Sevenoaks Town Partnership meeting

- Sevenoaks Town Council
- Stag Community Arts Centre
- Knole House, National Trust
- St John's Resident Association
- Senior Actions Forum
- Bligh's Meadow
- St Botolph's Road Residents Association
- Sevenoaks District Council
- Sevenoaks Chronicle
- Sevenoaks Chamber of Commerce
- Go Coaches
- Sevenoaks Society
- Local Retailers

Following a discussion it was unanimously agreed not to support Sevenoaks District Council's proposals for any increase to car parking charges in Sevenoaks town and that they should remain the same as at present.

Town Partnership Administrator
Sevenoaks Town Partnership

COMMENT – THE SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL

Please could it be noted that Sevenoaks Town Council's comments on consultations are as follows:

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (VARIOUS ROADS IN THE DISTRICT OF SEVENOAKS) (PROHIBITION AND RESTRICTION OF WAITING AND LOADING AND UNLOADING AND ON STREET PARKING PLACES) (AMENDMENT 11) ORDER 2013

Sevenoaks Town Council requests that the amendment be from '8:30am – 6:30pm' rather than '8:30am – 8:30pm'

THE SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL (OFF-STREET PARKING PLACES) (AMENDMENT 4) ORDER 2010

Sevenoaks Town Council objects to the proposed modification to the charging schedule and requests that:

- (a) There be no evening charges after 6:30pm on all days of the week
- (b) There be no charge on Sundays.

The Town Council objects strongly to the premise of any increase in car parking charges at the current time and request at least a 1yr freeze is implemented, noting that while the economy is

in the initial stages of recovery, this should not be seen as an opportunity for the District Council to raise further revenue from hard pressed tax payers.

Assistant Town Clerk
Sevenoaks Town Council

END