

CAR PARK CHARGES – REVIEW

Summary:

Car parking income represents a significant income source to the Council and as such has a substantial contribution to make to the Council's longer term financial sustainability and helping to set and maintain a balanced budget.

There are significant costs associated with a range of Council services which support the tourism economy, with provision of public conveniences, foreshore activities, parks, open spaces and woodlands representing a combined annual revenue spend in excess of £2.2m. It is appropriate for the costs of these services to be met in part by various fees and charges as they form an integral part of the visitor experience. These are all discretionary areas of spend but help to ensure that our district remains a beautiful place both to live and work in but also to visit, it is however becoming increasingly difficult to support all of these areas in the current financial climate.

The current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) projections for future years are still projecting budget deficits of around £2.5m by 2025/26 in the midst of continuing uncertainty regarding the Fair Funding and Business Rates reviews. The Council must therefore consider all available options to generate additional income and reduce costs wherever possible.

Car park charges have not been increased since July 2016. This report considers the current car park fees and charges and provides the Cabinet with an opportunity to consider changes to the fee structure as appropriate.

At their meeting on 12 January 2022 Overview and Scrutiny Committee were provided with an opportunity to pre-scrutinise the officer report to consider the range of potential options prior to any consideration by Cabinet and the recommendations from the Committee are therefore now included within this report for further consideration.

Options considered:

A number of options are considered within the report as follows;

1. Do nothing – the Council could opt to do nothing and not change the current fees and charges.
2. Alternatively the report considers a number of different proposals to fee structures for potential introduction from July 2022.

Conclusions:

As one of the Council's largest external income sources car parking charges have a significant contribution to make in terms of the Council's financial sustainability in the medium to long term. Financial Sustainability and Growth is one of six key themes within the Corporate Plan and links directly with objective 2.2 of the Delivery Plan.

The Council incurs significant levels of expenditure on discretionary service areas which help to ensure that our district remains a beautiful place both to live and work in but also to visit, it is however becoming increasingly difficult to support all of these areas in the

current financial climate. These costs cover a range of Council services which support the tourism economy, from provision of public conveniences, maintenance and operation of Cromer pier, foreshore activities, parks, open spaces and woodlands which represent a combined annual revenue spend in excess of £2.2m. It is appropriate therefore for the costs of these services to be met in part by various fees and charges as they form an integral part of the visitor experience.

There are clearly multiple variations on the possible range of pricing options and initiatives for car parks. Due to the nature of parking charges and for simplicity it is best to make any increases to the nearest 10p. Even a relatively modest annual increase of 3.5% from 2016 would have increased the hourly charge at our 'Coastal' car parks from £1.50 per to £1.84 (unrounded) by April 2022.

To ensure that this and other key income streams are given enough focus in terms of growth, improvement and efficiency to support the Council's medium and longer term budget position and to strengthen day to day car park management to minimise losses by more timely resolution of machine breakdowns etc, Cabinet are invited to consider and comment on the issue of resource for improved management of the service.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have pre-scrutinised the officer report and their recommendations are included as part of this updated report for further consideration by Cabinet.

Recommendations:

Cabinet consider the options and proposals contained within this report and make recommendations to Full Council on;

- **the preferred way forward in terms of pricing changes so that these changes can be considered as part of the budget setting process for 2022/23 and inform the future financial strategy;**
- **changes to car park designations as outlined within the report;**
- **implementing any new pricing changes from July 2022 and instigating the Car Park order (CPO) consultation process;**
- **budgetary provision of £25k to cover implementation costs resulting from any changes.**

Reasons for Recommendations:

Car parking income represents a significant income source to the Council and as such has a substantial contribution to make to the Council's longer term financial sustainability and helping to set and maintain a balanced budget.

Car parking income needs to be considered against the context of our discretionary service provision which people value but which is often difficult to charge for, such as we public conveniences, the seafront environment and Blue Flag beaches, beach lifeguards, additional street cleansing, litter bins etc. It is becoming increasingly more difficult for the Council to continue to provide these services at the level expected by local residents, businesses and tourist visitors from Council Tax payers alone. Further to this it is not fair or equitable across the District as a whole and doesn't operate under the 'user pays' principle.

Car park charges have not increased since July 2016, there are a number of options that Members need to consider in relation to any potential changes to the car park fees and charges so that any alterations can be implemented through a new Car Park Order (CPO). Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were given the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the officer report ahead of consideration and their recommendations are included now for further consideration.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

Cabinet Member(s); Cllr Eric Seward	Ward(s) affected; All
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The aim of this report is to present the findings of an options appraisal undertaken by officers for potential changes to car parking fees and charges and associated initiatives. It outlines the existing charging regime, presents some general information on car park usage and income comparisons and proceeds to discuss potential charging options.
- 1.2 Within the Corporate Plan and supporting Delivery Plan, Objective 2 under the 'Financial sustainability and growth' theme centres on 'taking, where appropriate, a more commercial approach to the delivery of discretionary services.' One of the Delivery Plan actions to help achieve this is set out under 2.2 and is to 'review the Car Parking Policy in order to maximise the revenue generated from car parking income.' This report considers ways in which the Council might best be able to achieve that objective.
- 1.3 Please note that due to the ongoing Covid pandemic and the impact this had on income figures for 2020/21, comparative information within this report focuses on the 2019/20 financial year.
- 1.4 The Council incurs significant levels of expenditure on discretionary service areas which help to ensure that our district remains a beautiful place both to live and work in but also to visit, it is however becoming increasingly difficult to support all of these areas in the current financial climate.
- 1.5 There are significant costs associated with a range of Council services which support the tourism economy, from provision of public conveniences, maintenance and operation of Cromer pier, foreshore activities, parks, open spaces and woodlands which represent a combined annual revenue spend in excess of £2.2m. It is appropriate therefore for the costs of these services to be met in part by various fees and charges as they form an integral part of the visitor experience.
- 1.6 Car parking income needs to be considered against the context of our discretionary service provision which people value but which is often difficult to charge for, such as we public conveniences, the seafront environment and Blue Flag beaches, beach lifeguards, additional street cleansing, litter bins etc. It is becoming increasingly more difficult for the Council to continue to provide these services at the level expected by local residents, businesses and tourist visitors from Council Tax payers alone. Further to this it is not fair or equitable across the District as a whole and doesn't operate under the 'user pays' principle.
- 1.7 Car park charges have not increased since July 2016. This report considers the current car park fees and charges and provides Cabinet with an opportunity to consider the range of potential options.
- 1.8 While officers appreciate the current financial pressures that our customers and residents are experiencing in terms of living costs, it needs to be recognised that the Council is also facing very similar cost pressures from increasing contract prices through to energy cost pressures.
- 1.9 There is a need for the Council to reach a sustainable medium to long term financial position and raising fees and charges for the range of services that the Council provides is one such way of helping to deliver this whilst protecting front line services.
- 1.10 Despite a favourable Provisional Settlement announcement for the 2022/23 financial year, the current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) projections for future years are still projecting budget deficits of around £2.5m by 2025/26 in the midst of continuing uncertainty regarding the Fair Funding and Business Rates reviews. The Council must therefore consider all available options to generate additional income and reduce costs wherever possible.
- 1.11 As well as statutory core services the Council provides a range of non-statutory services. There are however significant costs associated with a range of Council services which support the tourism economy. The revenue budget for provision of public conveniences for example for the 2021/22 financial year is £0.7m with capital investment of c£1.2m since 2018. Similarly budgets for the foreshore activities, parks, open spaces and woodlands total approximately £1.5m.

These areas represent a combined annual revenue budget in excess of £2.2m and it is appropriate for the costs of these services to be met in part by various fees and charges as they form an integral part of the visitor experience.

- 1.12 There are clearly multiple variations on the possible range of pricing options and initiatives for car parks, some of which are presented within this report. It is within this context that Cabinet are asked to consider options and proposals for future charging arrangements and to make recommendations to Full Council regarding any changes as required.

2. Consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 2.1 At their meeting on 12 January 2022 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were provided with an opportunity to pre-scrutinise the officer report to consider the range of potential options prior to any consideration by Cabinet and the recommendations from the Committee are therefore now included within this report for further consideration.

- 2.2 Following discussion around the options presented within the report the Overview and Scrutiny Committee made the following recommendations as outlined within the officer report, for further consideration by Cabinet;

- Option 1 (b) – consideration of increasing car park charges with the introduction of seasonal charging at coastal car parks
- Option 2 – consideration of season ticket increases
- In relation to the additional staffing recommended, the Committee stated that they would require further detail and understanding of what the posts would deliver and what the business case looked like before they were able to support the proposals

- 2.3 In relation to Options 1 (b) and Option 2, while the Committee were minded to increase charges, appreciating the current cost pressures the Council is facing and the need for tourists to help support the costs of the coastal infrastructure, this was on the basis of increases tied to the Consumer Price Index rises since the charges were last increased back in July 2016.

- 2.4 Sections 3 onward are presented as per the report that went to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for pre-scrutiny but the impact of the recommendations which were made in terms of potential income increases are summarised within the tables below.

- 2.5 In terms of CPI inflation over the last 6 years, the annual inflation figures have been taken as at July each year from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and are as follows;

July 2017	-	2.6%
July 2018	-	2.3%
July 2019	-	2.0%
July 2020	-	2.1%
July 2021	-	2.0%
July 2022	-	5.1% (estimate based on current rate in November 2021)

- 2.6 These inflationary rates have then been applied to the current car park charges across the three car park tariff types to arrive at the potential hourly rates within the table below. This would result in the following potential new rates for the various car park types;

Standard car parks - £1.20 for 2 hours then 80p per hour thereafter (£6.00 24-hour ticket)
Resort car parks - £1.50 for the first hour then £1.20 per hour thereafter (£8.70 24-hour ticket)
Coastal car parks - £1.80 per hour (£9.00 24-hour ticket)
Coach parking - £11.70
Holt Country Park - £2.30

- 2.7 The table below shows what the charges would be across the 3 car park types based on these charges although it would be sensible to put the round the coach ticket to £12 from £11.70 and the 7+ Resort ticket to £9 from £8.70. Seven day tickets will be based on the daily rates.

Option 1 (b) - seasonal charging linked to CPI rates for the last 6 years (uprated hourly car park charges)									
Standard Car Parks									
	30 mins	1 - 2 hrs	3	4	5	6	7	8+	Coach
£1.00 for 2 hrs then 70p per hr	£0.50	£1.00	£1.70	£2.40	£3.10	£3.80	£4.50	£5.00	£10.00
£1.20 for 2 hrs then 80p per hr (CPI)	£0.60	£1.20	£2.00	£2.80	£3.60	£4.40	£5.20	£6.00	£11.70
Ticket increase (cash)	£0.10	£0.20	£0.30	£0.40	£0.50	£0.60	£0.70	£1.00	£1.70
Resort Car Parks									
	30 mins	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+	Coach
£1.30 for 1st hr then £1.00 per hr (current)	£0.60	£1.30	£2.30	£3.30	£4.30	£5.30	£6.30	£7.00	£10.00
£1.50 for 1st hr then £1.20 per hr (CPI)	£0.70	£1.50	£2.70	£3.90	£5.10	£6.30	£7.50	£8.70	£11.70
Ticket increase (cash)	£0.10	£0.20	£0.40	£0.60	£0.80	£1.00	£1.20	£1.70	£1.70
Coastal Car Parks									
	30 mins	1	2	3	4	5+	Coach		
£1.50 per hr	£0.60	£1.50	£3.00	£4.50	£6.00	£7.00	£10.00		
£1.80 per hr	£0.70	£1.80	£3.60	£5.40	£7.20	£9.00	£11.70		
Ticket increase (cash)	£0.10	£0.30	£0.60	£0.90	£1.20	£2.00	£1.70		

- 2.8 The proposal in relation to the seasonal charging reflects freezing the prices at the coastal car parks during the months of November through to February inclusive (4 months). The first table below shows the projected income levels based on the forecast income levels **excluding the seasonal change** but based on the hourly charges outlined above. This shows the projected additional income, basing ticket prices on CPI increases, at c£321k pa.

Income growth projections vs current		
	Current	Projected
	£000	£000
Resort	921	118
Standard	269	30
Coastal	1,051	173
	<u>2,241</u>	<u>321</u>

- 2.9 The next table shows what the projected income levels would be based on the charging levels above but this time assuming that the charges at all Coastal car parks are frozen at current levels between the months of November – February inclusive.

Coastal income growth projections – Seasonal Variant		
	Current	Seasonal
	£000	£000
March - Oct	949	158
Nov - Feb	<u>102</u>	<u>3</u>
	<u>1,051</u>	<u>161</u>
Non-seasonal increase		<u>173</u>
Variance		<u>-13</u>

2.10 The table shows that the impact of introducing the seasonal reduction for four months over the winter reduces the anticipated income by c£13k based on current projections.

2.11 As with the hourly car park ticket tariffs the short and long term season ticket prices have been similarly increased by the CPI figures with the potential updated ticket rates shown within the table below.

Option 2 - seasonal tickets linked to CPI rates for the last 6 years							
	Short 3 m	Short 6 m	Short 12 m		Long 3m	Long 6m	Long 12m
Current price	£16	£31	£56		£66	£122	£204
CPI increase	£19	£36	£66		£77	£143	£239
Ticket increase (cash)	£3	£5	£10		£11	£21	£35

2.12 The CPI inflationary ticket price increases have been applied to the forecast ticket sales and these changes would result in a projected increase of £48k pa based on current forecasts when compared to the current budget as can be seen within the table below.

	Short 3 m	Short 6 m	Short 12 m	Subtotal	Long 3m	Long 6m	Long 12m	Subtotal	Total
CPI ticket increases	£19	£36	£66		£77	£143	£239		
	10	13	142	165	32	19	108	158	323
								Extra income	48

2.13 The CPI inflationary ticket price increases for Holt Country Park would increase the ticket price from £2.00 to £2.30 and would result in additional income of just over £4k based on current usage levels.

2.14 The table below brings all of the above together to summarise the position and shows the net projected increase in income based on the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of c£361k pa.

Income growth projections based on O&S recommendations		
	£000	£000
Pay & Display Ticket Income		
Resort	118	
Standard	30	
Coastal	173	
Coastal - seasonal	-13	
Holt Country Park	4	
		313
Season Ticket Income		
Season tickets - short stay	25	
Season tickets - long stay	23	
		48
	361	361

3. Background

- 3.1 North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) owns 32 car parks, 30 of which operate a pay and display (P&D) scheme. The remaining two facilities are; a car park on Midland Road, North Walsham (which is leased to and operated by North Walsham Town Council on a free basis) and a 'season ticket only' car park at Hall Staithe, Fakenham.
- 3.2 There are a number of components to the service which are managed partly by NNDC, and, since 2010, partly through a shared working arrangement with the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk who cover enforcement and cash collection on our behalf.
- 3.3 Car park income in North Norfolk has a seasonal bias with the majority of the income derived between May-September, particularly during peak holiday periods. This is particularly the case for the Resort and Coastal tariff car parks which provide key facilities for visitors during the summer season.
- 3.4 The car park fees and charges were last reviewed in June 2015 and subsequently changed in July 2016 and had not been increased since April 2012 prior to that. Parking charges currently apply from 8 am to 6 pm. Our [Car Park leaflet](#) provides further information on charges and season ticket prices.
- 3.5 Operating costs for the Council's car parks for the 4 years to 2019/20 are shown below, the net income position has consistently been around £1.6m over this period.

Subjective heading	2016/17 Actual £000	2017/18 Actual £000	2018/19 Actual £000	2019/20 Budget £000
Premises	403	388	472	467
Supplier & Services	305	327	349	378
Support Services	204	257	182	172
Capital Financing Costs	24	33	156	28
Income	(2,613)	(2,626)	(2,734)	(2,655)
Net Income	(1,677)	(1,621)	(1,576)	(1,609)
Enforcement Income (already taken into account but identified here for information)				
	(87)	(71)	(88)	(49)

Explanation of categories

Premises Relates to business rates, on-going and ad-hoc minor repairs and maintenance

Supplies and Services Relates mainly to the enforcement payments made to the Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk

Support Services A percentage of internal back office/support costs incurred to run this service

Capital charges General capital charges relate to depreciation which in the case of car parks will only be for the equipment (ticket machines)

Income Pay and display income (cash and credit cards), season ticket/permit sales, penalty charge income and market recovery

- 3.6 The gross budgeted income across all car park income streams and outturn figures (excluding VAT) for the last 5 years can be seen within the table below. As can be seen above the impact of the lockdown due to the Covid pandemic during the 2020/21 financial year had a significant effect on the car park income levels and resulted in a reduction of c£0.7m compared to the budget.
- 3.7 The gross income forecast from car parks across the district for 2021/22 is £2.7m (excluding VAT). The net budget after taking account of all running costs is £1.6m and as such this service area represents a significant income stream for the Council. This assumes full recovery to post Covid income levels and usage and does not take account of any further lockdown periods during the year.

Car park income figures for the last 5 years

	Actual (£m)	Budget (£m)	Variance (£m)	Notes
2017/18	2.6	2.7	0.1	
2018/19	2.7	2.7	0	
2019/20	2.7	2.7	0	
2020/21	2	2.7	0.7	*Covid
2021/22	-	2.7	-	

- 3.8 As mentioned above gross budgeted income for 2021/22 (excluding VAT and internal recharges) totals £2.7m and is split as follows:

(£000)

Cash/credit card payments in P&D machines	£2,361
Penalty Charges	£70
Season Tickets	£263
Other income/rentals	£ 40

- 3.9 As at period 6 (end of September 2021) the car parking income is £152k up against the year to date budget for 2021/22 with a full year effect of £80k currently being forecast once additional business rates costs have been taken into account.
- 3.10 The Council made a £250k investment in a scheme to deliver 40 electric vehicle charging points (EVCPs) across a range of Council car parks. This scheme is now complete with EVCPs installed in NNDC owned car parks in Sheringham, Cromer, Holt, Fakenham, Wells and North Walsham as well as some at the Council offices in Cromer.
- 3.11 Despite a favourable Provisional Settlement announcement for the 2022/23 financial year, the current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) projections for future years are still projecting budget deficits of around £2.5m by 2025/26 in the midst of continuing uncertainty regarding the Fair Funding and Business Rates reviews. The Council must therefore consider all available options to generate additional income and reduce costs wherever possible.
- 3.12 There is a significant cost associated with a range of Council services which support the tourism economy. The revenue budget for provision of public conveniences for example for the 2021/22 financial year is £0.7m with capital investment of c£1.2m since 2018. Similarly budgets for the foreshore activities, parks, open spaces and woodlands total approximately £1.5m. These areas represent a combined annual revenue budget in excess of £2.2m and it is appropriate for the costs of these services to be met in part by various fees and charges as they form an integral part of the visitor experience.
- 3.13 These are all discretionary areas of spend but help to ensure that our district remains a beautiful place both to live and work in but also to visit, it is however becoming increasingly difficult to support all of these areas in the current financial climate.
- 3.14 A significant element of the car parking income is generated from the seaside resorts during the peak holiday periods and the 6 weeks of the summer when the district sees a huge influx of holiday makers from outside the area. These visitors get to enjoy our Blue Flag beaches and our parks and open spaces without making any contribution to their upkeep and car park charges are a way to provide a contribution towards the continuance of these vital services which significantly support the visitor experience.

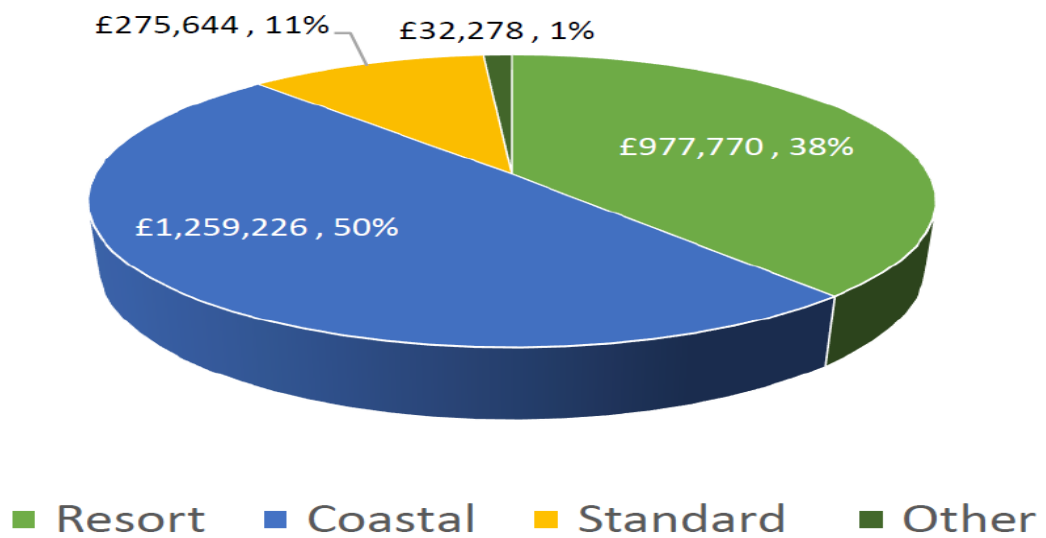
4. Current Charging Regime and Performance Data

- 4.1 Current car park charges in North Norfolk reflect different types of car parks, but in summary are as follows (where available coach parking is £5 for up to 4 hours and £10 for 24 hours);

Tariff Type	8am to 6pm	30 minutes	24 hour
Standard	£1.00 for two hours, then £0.70 for every additional hour thereafter.	£0.50	£5.00
Coastal	£1.50 per hour.	£0.60	£7.00
Resort	£1.30 for the first hour, then an extra £1 for every additional hour thereafter.	£0.60	£7.00
Holt Country Park	£2.00 per all-day ticket.		

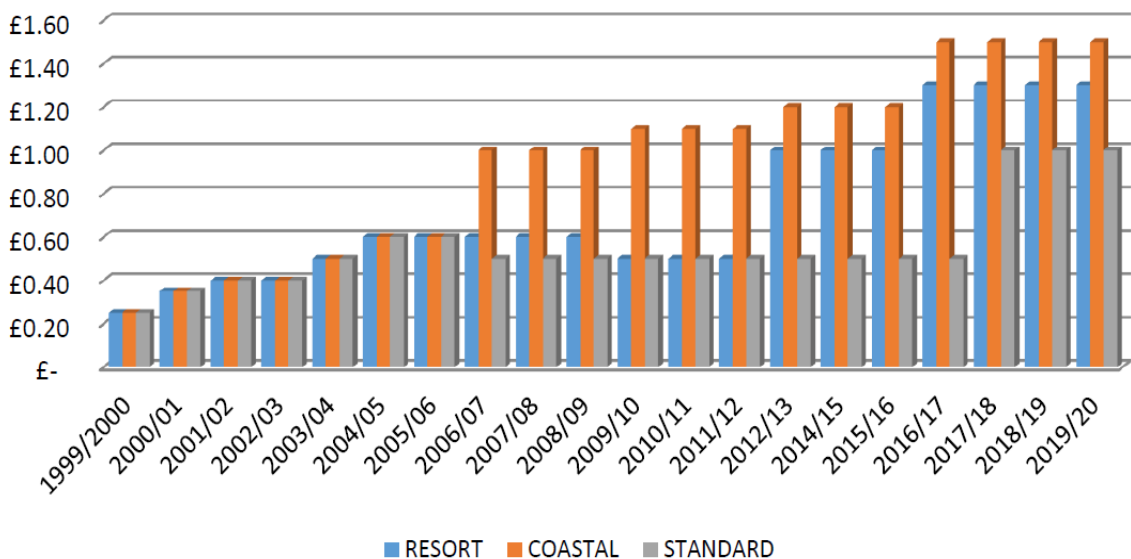
4.2 Of the 30 facilities operated on a P&D basis, 11 operate on a 'Standard' tariff, 11 on a 'Coastal' tariff, 8 on a 'Resort' tariff with Holt Country Park having its own pricing structure. Around 50% of the income is generated from the Council's 11 'Coastal' car parks as per the chart below. Previously the Council operated a £1 evening charge for parking after 6pm which generated c£90k pa, however this was removed from all car parks in November 2014.

Pay & Display Income 2019/20 by car park type (% of total)



4.3 This chart shows how the P&D charges have increased over the last 20 years.

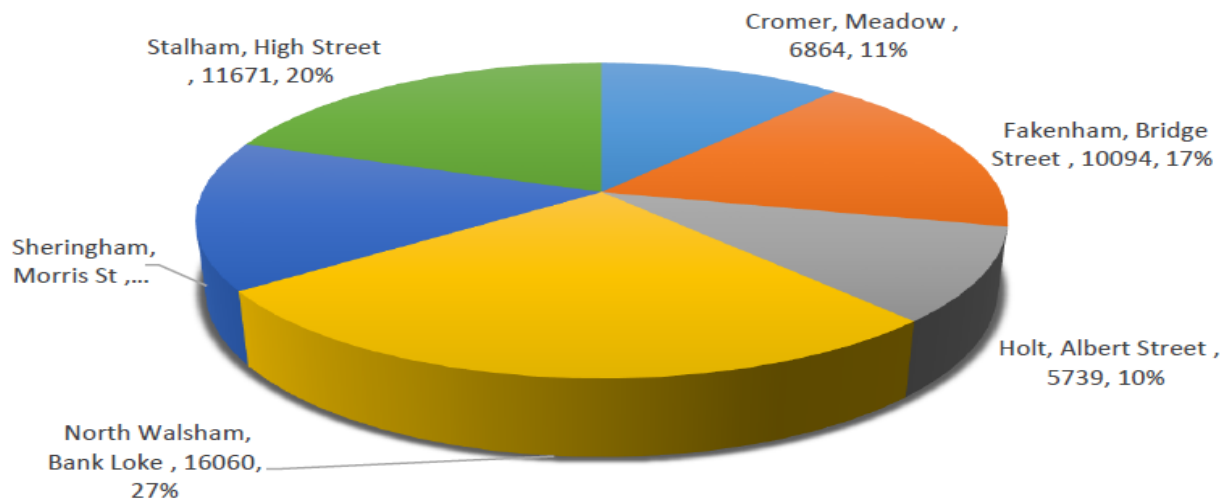
Price charged per hour* by sample car park type



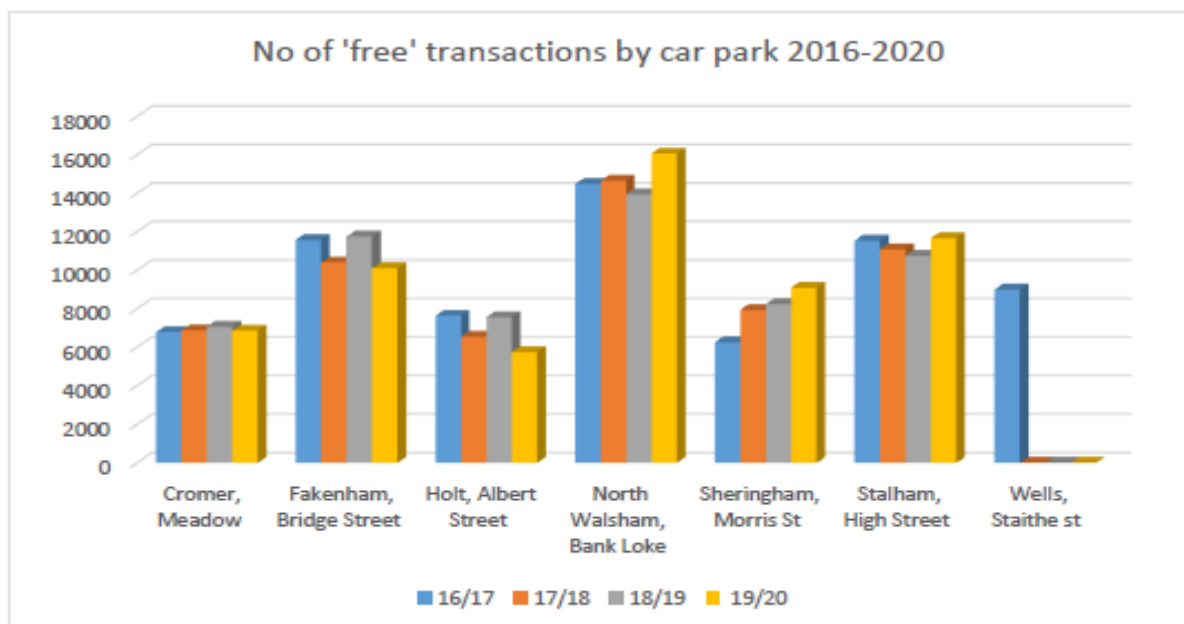
4.4 There are 3 free 30-minute parking bays available in each of the seven market towns. These are situated at the following car parks and the usage split can be seen within the chart below:

- Cromer – Meadow
- Fakenham – Bridge St
- Holt – Albert St
- North Walsham – Bank Loke
- Sheringham – Morris St
- Stalham – High St
- Wells – Staithe Street (non-operational for a number of years due to Maltings works)

Free transactions 2019/20 as no. and % of whole

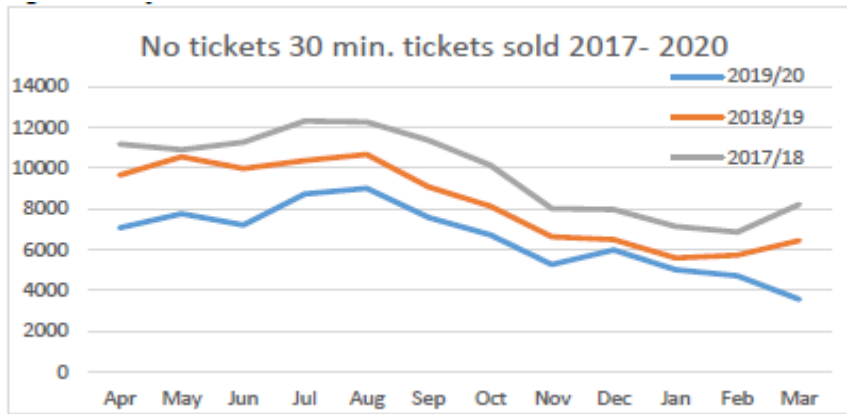


4.5 The chart below shows the pattern of usage across the 7 towns over the last 4 years.



30-minute short stay tickets

4.6 In 2012 a '50p for 30 minutes parking' tariff was introduced across all NNDC P&D car parks to accommodate those undertaking short stays and this charge has since been increased slightly to 60p for coastal and resort car parks. The trend in use of this ticket type is declining, reducing from a peak of nearly 160k in 2014/15 to 79k in 2019/20 representing almost 50%.



This indicates this tariff band is predominantly used by local people with only minor fluctuations during the peak holiday periods.

Since 2016, there has been a steady fall in the sale of 50p tickets.

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
2014/15	11,441	12,721	14,386	13,740	14,262	11,917	11,061	14,965	17,009	13,216	12,884	11,588	159,190
2015/16	10,626	11,231	13,914	12,458	14,744	13,313	10,951	10,376	8,515	7,604	10,355	10,063	194,150
2016/17	10,130	10,435	10,371	13,202	13,252	11,548	9,420	9,421	9,296	7,447	7,584	9,734	121,840
2017/18	11,169	10,907	11,263	12,312	12,255	11,351	10,143	8,011	7,974	7,131	6,863	8,223	117,602
2018/19	9,660	10,559	9,986	10,364	10,660	9,067	8,139	6,638	6,482	5,601	5,729	6,455	99,340
2019/20	7,066	7,764	7,212	8,735	9,010	7,583	6,711	5,259	5,982	5,017	4,718	3,567	78,624

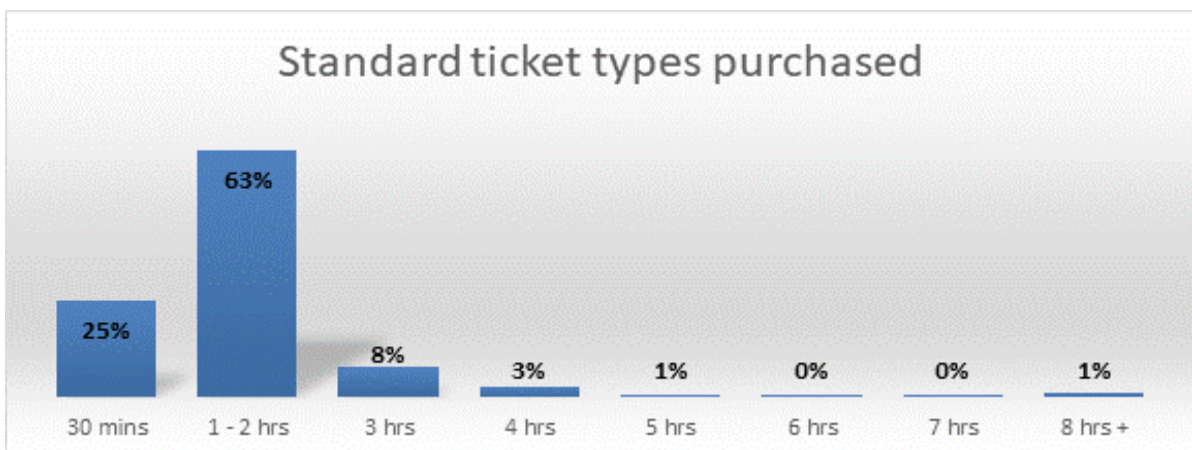
Whole day parking

- 4.7 In 2012 a £5 ticket for 24-hour parking was introduced across all car parks. In 2016/17 the 24-hour ticket price was increased to £7 for both Coastal and Resort car parks. Ticket numbers sold clearly reflect this option being predominantly used in July and August (41% 2019/20), suggesting it is popular with tourist/day trippers to the area and that sales remain fairly buoyant.

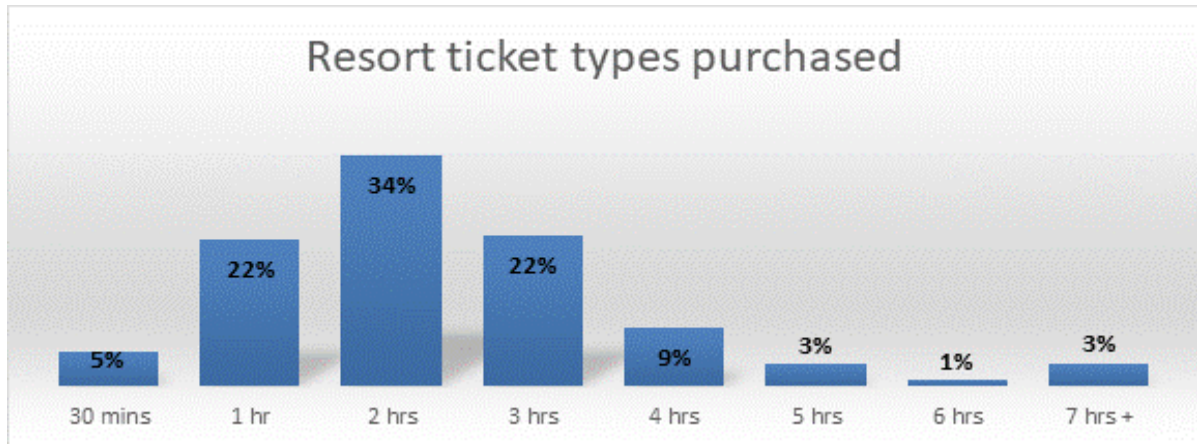
	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
2014/15	3,926	6,520	5,585	10,913	17,075	5,307	3,270	1,854	1,801	1,251	1,459	2,178	61,139
2015/16	4,416	6,513	6,142	11,172	21,375	5,493	3,868	1,889	2,031	1,687	2,252	3,498	70,336
2016/17	4,074	7,008	5,726	7,814	12,976	4,367	2,816	2,000	2,312	1,556	1,952	2,450	55,051
2017/18	3,586	4,416	4,504	6,159	14,350	4,978	3,538	1,196	1,869	1,776	2,094	2,117	90,583
2018/19	3,635	7,015	5,176	11,224	15,049	3,805	3,488	2,008	2,208	2,027	2,675	2,832	61,142
2019/20	5,352	5,296	5,675	8,736	15,788	5,466	3,399	2,057	2,409	2,234	2,131	1,785	60,328

Ticket types purchased

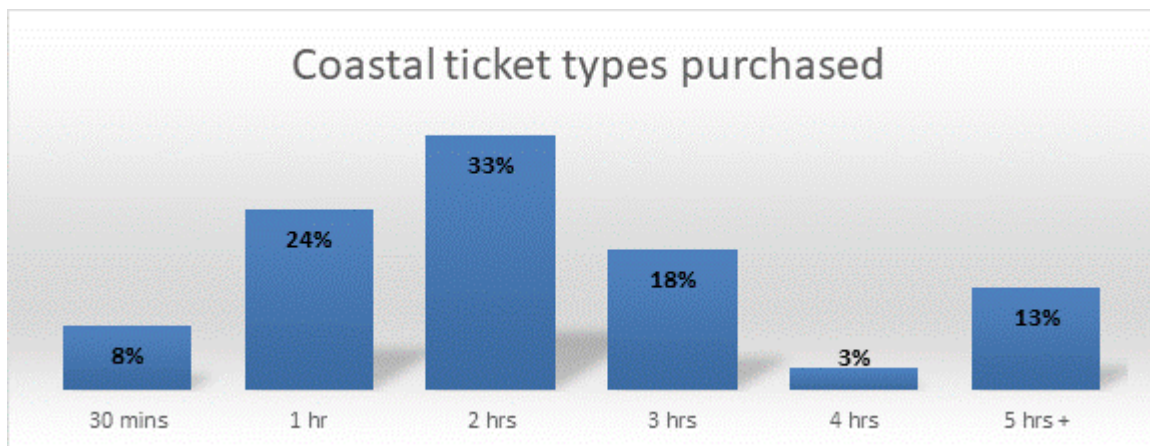
- 4.8 In total approximately 1.1m tickets are purchased annually, with roughly 0.3m of these relating to Standard car parks, 0.4m Resort and 0.4m Coastal. The split of ticket types purchased between the different classifications of car parks can be seen within the charts below.



4.9 Ticket purchases for Standard car parks are focussed predominantly at stays of 2 hours or less which represent 88% of sales. Sales for 4 hours or more only represent around 5% of total ticket sales. Members could consider a maximum charging regime for this type of car park of 3 hours, with the 3-hour ticket representing the maximum charge due to the ticket sales for 4 hours or more being comparatively low. This could encourage longer stays in these towns (North Walsham, Fakenham and Stalham) and would not significantly impact on income levels which would reduce by c£35k based on future projections, although this could be partly offset by any increased charges for the first 3 hours.



4.10 The pattern of Resort ticket purchasing differs from Standard car parks, reflecting slightly longer average stays with 84% of purchases being for 3 hours or less. Interestingly the 30-minute ticket is purchased far less often (5%) when compared to the Standard car parks (25%) which again suggests a far higher level of short stays at the Standard car parks.

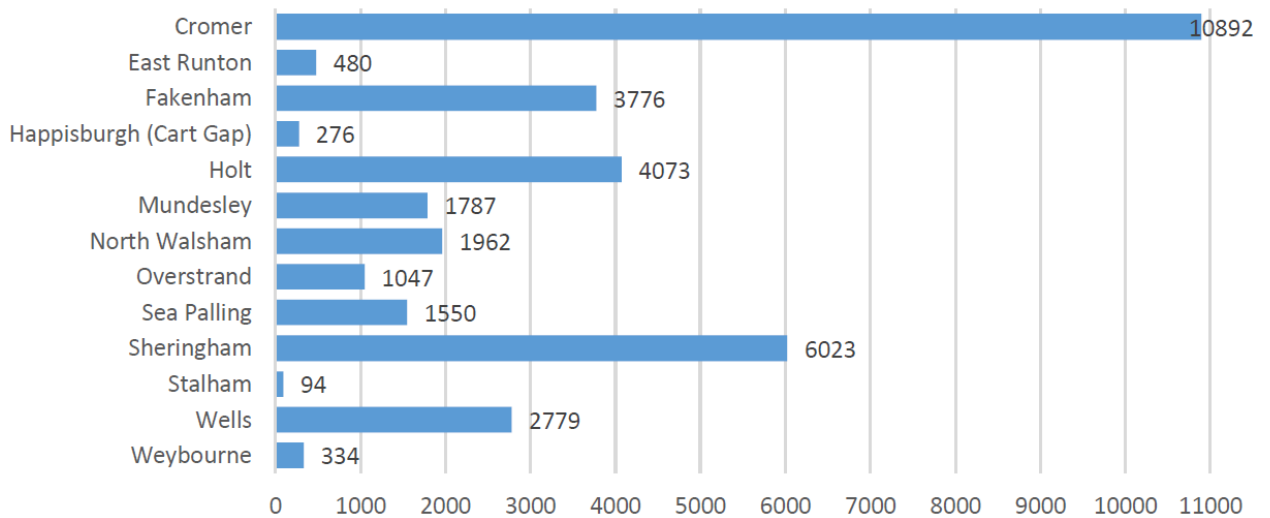


4.11 As with the Resort car parks, 84% of the ticket purchases for Coastal car parks are for stays of 3 hours or less. However, there is a significant level of tickets purchased for 5 hours or more (13%) which effectively represents the 24 hour stay, reflecting longer stays/day trips. The level of 4 hour tickets purchased (3%) is probably reflective of the fact that currently the 4-hour ticket costs £6 whereas for an additional £1 you can purchase a 24-hour ticket (£7).

Cashless Parking (MiPermit)

4.12 In 2018 a cashless parking system was introduced which allowed users to download an app (MiPermit) and pay for their parking via text using a credit or debit card. This system is connected to the enforcement team who can check validity of ticket purchases. This system has become increasingly popular (as can be seen from figure 8 below), particularly in the peak summer periods. We anticipate that with ongoing Covid concerns, cashless payments will become increasingly popular.

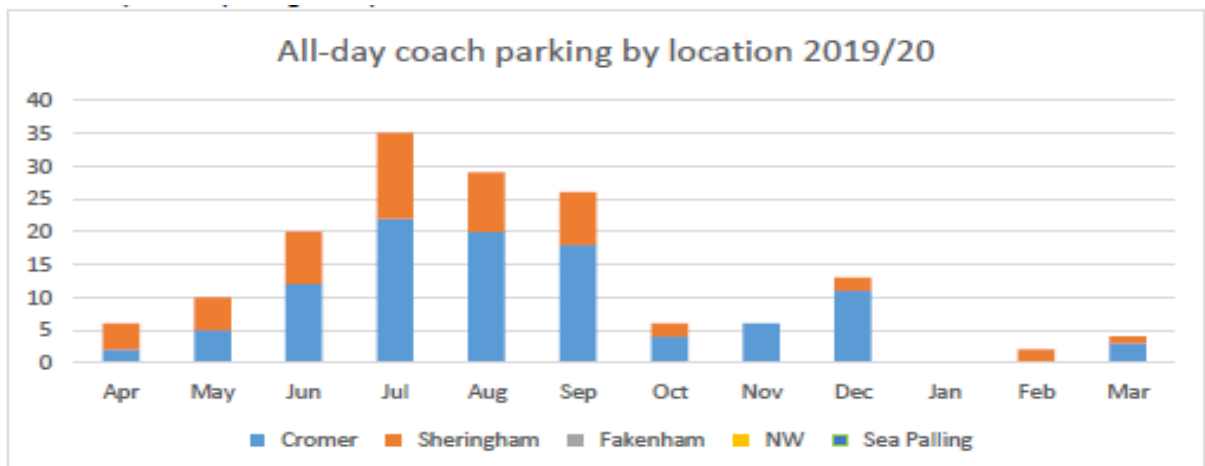
No of MiPermit transactions by place 2019/20



- 4.13 The Council's car park ticket machines are also fitted with cashless card sensors which enable customers to pay for parking with debit/credit cards which, like the MiPermit system, provides customers with added flexibility and convenience in terms of payment mechanisms.
- 4.14 Both these systems have the added benefit of reducing the costs of cash processing and the risk of vandalism so the Council will continue to promote these payment methods as being the most convenient for customers.

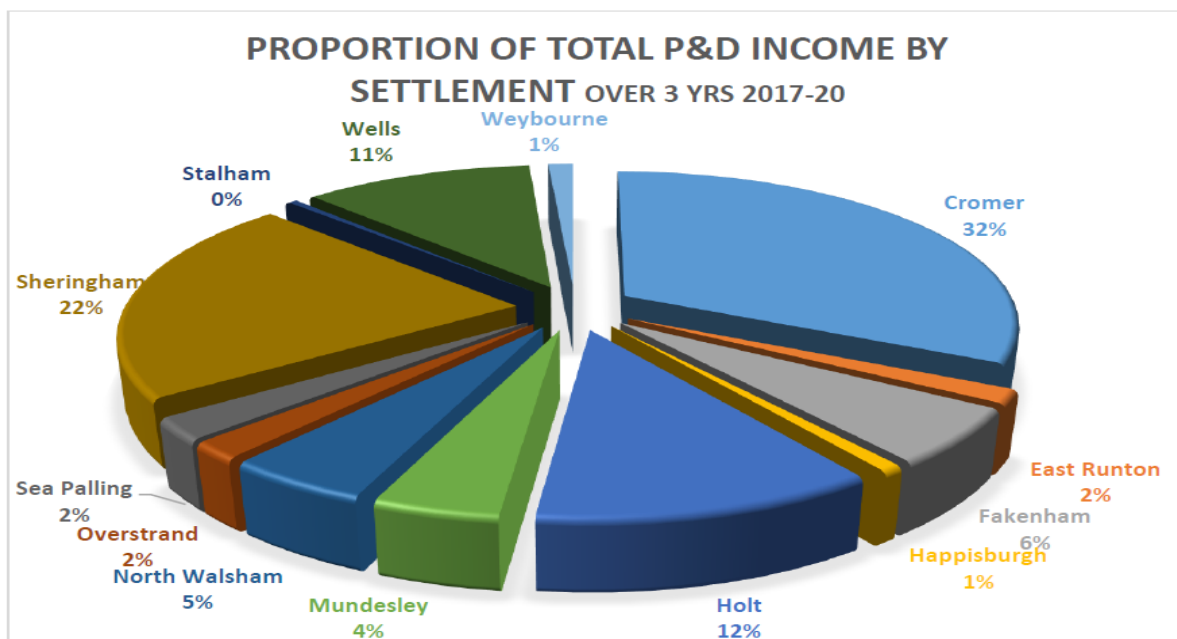
Coach parking

- 4.15 There are five car parks that offer coach parking (Station Approach Sheringham, Cadogan Road Cromer, Vicarage Street North Walsham, Clink Road Sea Palling and The Limes Fakenham). Coaches have the option of two tariffs: £5 for up to 4 hours and £10 for 24 hours. Figures for 2019/20 indicated no all-day coach parking tickets were purchased in Sea Palling or Fakenham although Fakenham coach bay was only opened in late 2019. In North Walsham 1 ticket was purchased through MiPermit. Purchases for 2019/20 are shown in the chart below.



Income by resort/town

- 4.16 The majority of car parking income comes from our seaside resorts/visitor destinations with 77% of the income in 2019/20 coming from these towns (Cromer, Sheringham and Wells) and Holt. The chart below illustrates the share of the average car park income over a three-year period.



Seasonal variations

- 4.17 Car park income is very seasonal with over 70% of the annual income being derived from the period April – September and 84% if you add March and October which are getting busier each year. Inevitably, it is very weather dependent, especially in the seaside resorts and coastal villages. The six weeks of the school summer holidays are crucial with for example, with 60% of income at Sea Palling coming from the months of July and August alone.
- 4.18 The highest earning car parks are those in resort towns which benefit from all year use as well as high summer use ie The Meadows (Cromer), Station Approach (Sheringham) and Albert Street (Holt). The seasonal prevalence is especially high as would be expected in coastal and then resort car parks with those designated as ‘standard’ having a fairly even usage across the year as shown within the table below.

2019/20	March - Oct	Nov - Feb	
Coastal	92%	8%	100%
Resort	79%	21%	100%
Standard	69%	31%	100%
Overall split	84%	16%	100%

Season tickets

- 4.19 Season tickets represent excellent value for money for people who park in our towns on a regular basis for work, shopping and leisure. Income from season tickets is currently at around £270k pa but has steadily increased over the past 5 years (c.37%), having seen only very small increases in price (2016 - just a £4 increase to the £200 charge), recognising the value these provide at £204 for a 12 month 24-hour ticket, this represents a cost of just £0.55 per day.

24-Hour Season Tickets

- 4.20 These tickets allow 24-hour, 7 days a week parking. Their use is restricted to car parks that are considered suitable for long-term parking and exclude Cromer (Meadow Road), Holt (Albert Street), Sheringham (Chequers), Sheringham (Morris Street) and Wells (Staithe Street). The current charges for 24-hour season tickets are as below.

7 Day Ticket	£28	Purchased from the car park ticket machines
3 Month Ticket	£66	Registration specific, purchased from NNDC
6 Month Ticket	£122	Registration specific, purchased from NNDC
12 Month Ticket	£204	Registration specific, purchased from NNDC

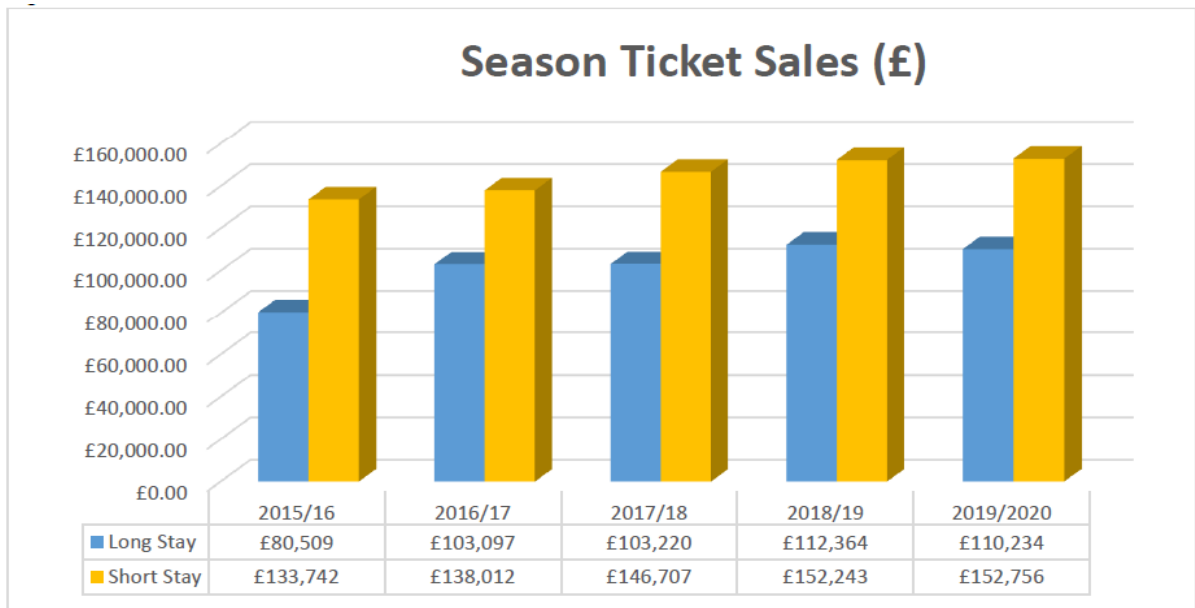
- 4.21 The 7-day ticket works out at £4 per day so there is potentially scope to consider increasing this to £5; £6 or £7.50 per day if the general daily charges are otherwise increased. These ticket types will predominantly be used by tourist visitors staying in self-catering and B&B accommodation or even camping and wanting to access the beach every day. At £5 per day this ticket type would cost £35 but that would still represent a £35 saving if daily charges at coastal car parks were increased to £10 for example.
- 4.22 Many Long Stay Season Tickets are purchased by local residents in town centres who live in terraced housing or flats and don't have private off-street parking and also by people who work in town centre retail and commercial businesses. Having bought a season ticket these can then be used at designated car parks at weekends at no additional cost.
- 4.23 Around 70% of 3 month tickets are purchased by people with a North Norfolk post code, and this increases to around 72% for the 6-month ticket and 84% for the 12-month ticket. Some of these purchases are however undoubtedly for second home owners and holiday lets as opposed to local residents.

3-Hour Season Tickets

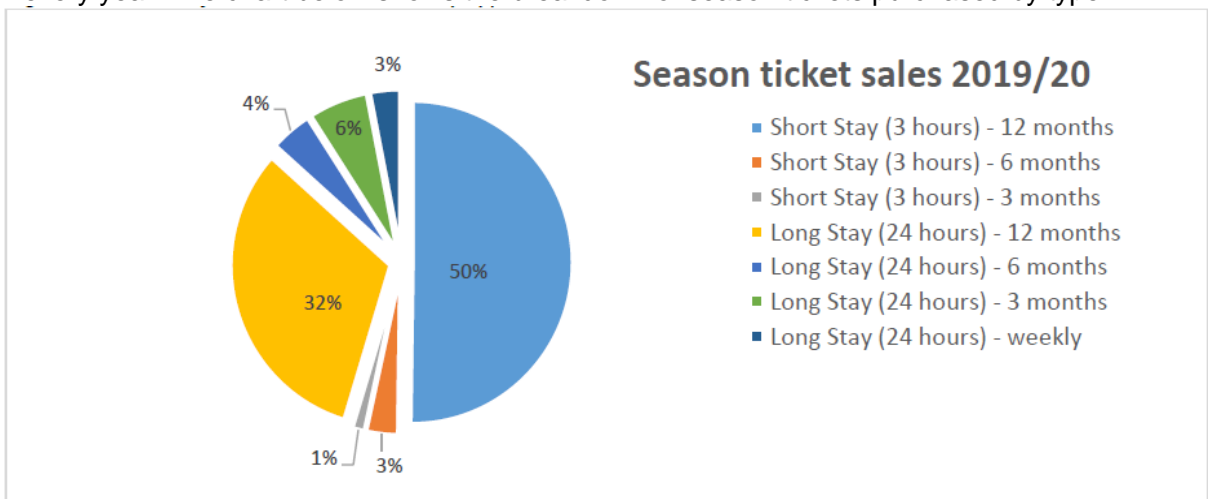
- 4.24 These season tickets allow up to 3 hours parking on any one car park on any one occasion, being designed for shoppers or those requiring regular short-term parking. The ticket consists of a manual dial that users set at the time they park the vehicle, enabling Kings Lynn's car parking enforcement personnel to enforce where necessary.
- 4.25 Any vehicle using this season ticket must be moved from the car park before the duration has expired. The same vehicle cannot return to the car park within two hours, but may park on an alternative NNDC car park for another three hours if required. The current charges for 3-hour season tickets are as below along with income levels for previous years.

3 Month Ticket	£16
6 Month Ticket	£31
12 Month Ticket	£56

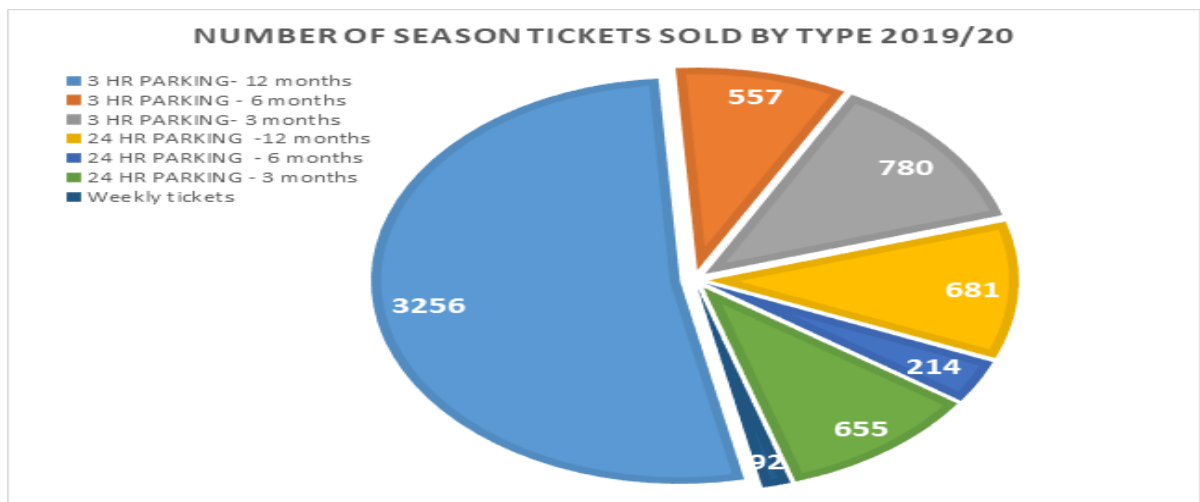
- 4.26 Around 55% of 3 month tickets are purchased by people with a North Norfolk post code, and this increases to around 50% for the 6-month ticket and 88% for the 12-month ticket. Some of these purchases are however undoubtedly for second home owners and holiday lets as opposed to local residents.



4.27 The most popular season tickets are short stay (3hr) tickets contributing to around 58% of total sales income, with 50% of those sales being for 12-month season tickets currently costing £56 each. There is a gradual shift to increased sales in 'long stay' ticket sales of about 1-2% more every year. The chart below shows the breakdown of season tickets purchased by type.



4.28 The chart below shows the breakdown of season tickets purchased by type as opposed to income generated.



Comparisons with other locations

4.29 Similar coastal resorts in Norfolk have the following charges:

Resort	Per hour	Winter Rates	Season tickets
Hunstanton car parks	Range from £1.80 - £4.00 and then £5.00 for 3 hours All day £7.00 Peak 1 July – 31 August	The same as summer except all day £6.00 Off-peak 1 September – 30 June	Details are here of various options at Hunstanton Car Parks. There are various options but the main annual permit costs £220 although there are exclusions.
Kings Lynn	Short term – range from £1.80 per hour up to £4.70 for 5 hours (8:00am until 4:59pm) with a £2.00 evening charge (5:00pm – 07:59am) Long term – Before 10:00 am – £2.80 After 10:00 am – £3.60 £2.00 evening charge (5:00pm – 07:59am)	All year round charge remains the same for all car parks	The details of the long-term season tickets can be found here , with an annual 24 hour ticket costing £400 or a monthly alternative at £40. Short term ticket information can be found here and the cost for an annual permit is £800 with no monthly option.
Great Yarmouth seafront	Summer £2.50 per hour, £5.00 for 2 hours then £3.30 per hour thereafter British Summer time – 31 October (ie last Sunday in March)	Winter £1.50 per hour Winter 1 November – start of British summer time (ie last Sunday in March)	Details are here of various options at Great Yarmouth Car Parks. Broadly speaking permits range from 3-day (£13.50, 8-day (£32.00) and monthly (£65.00). The monthly permit equates to £780 pa.
Great Yarmouth long stay	4 hours for £6.00, £9.30 for over 4 hours Summer 1 April – 31 October	Winter Closed 1 Nov – 31 March	As above.
Caister Beach Road	£1.00 per hour Summer 1 April – 30 September	Free Winter 1 October – 31 March	Residents quarterly pass £20.70
Wells, Beach Rd and Lady Anne Drive (Holkham Estates) Freeman Street	Up to 2 hours £3.50 Up to 4 hours £6.50 Over 4 hours & all day £9.00 Up to 2 hours £3.50 Up to 4 hours £5.00 Over 4 hours & all day £7.00	All year round charge remains the same for all car parks	Car passes run from 1st January to 31st December 2022. Holkham Beach £98.00 Wells Beach £98.00 Freeman Street, Wells £52.00

4.30 This suggests that in terms of seaside resorts, NNDC charges are generally lower than comparable areas, particularly in respect of season tickets for certain areas. There is a general expectation to pay for seaside car parking recognising the other infrastructure which is provided alongside these facilities.

Covid-19

4.31 During the 2020/21 financial year the car park income levels were significantly impacted as a result of the lockdown period experienced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This resulted in a negative budget variance of c£0.7m for the year although support for some of this lost income was ultimately received through the central government fees and charges scheme which was introduced.

4.32 This undoubtedly represents an ongoing risk to not only this but other Council income streams and is continuing to be witnessed over the winter period in the form of the Omicron variant. However, if the pattern of the virus and any subsequent variants follows a similar pattern of low

cases during the warmer summer months and increasing cases during the colder winter months the income levels would be impacted to a lesser extent as the majority of income (70%) is generated between April and September.

- 4.33 Further to this due to a combination of factors, including ongoing travel restrictions and a general nervousness continuing around foreign travel, the area is seeing increases in visitor numbers due the prevalence of 'staycations' which again could have a beneficial impact on this income stream.
- 4.34 This has been seen during the 2021/22 financial year and we are currently projecting a positive year end variance on car parking income of c£80k by the year end although we will have to see what the next few weeks hold in terms of any further restrictions which would negatively impact.

North Walsham Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)

- 4.35 A paper was taken to Cabinet on 1 November 2021 regarding North Walsham town centre 'place making' proposals ([here](#)). The report set out the proposed improvements to North Walsham town centre and sought authority to proceed with the activities to enable the proposals to be implemented as part of the High Street High Street Heritage Action Zone programme.
- 4.36 The final recommendations (slightly amended from the original) from this report related to car parking in the town and was as follows;
1. Agree to the potential use of a section of the New Road Car Park as a bus interchange and to meet the revenue costs of its future maintenance.
 2. Agree in principle to the permanent designation of eight spaces at the Bank Loke Car Park and eight spaces at Vicarage Street car park as free short stay (1-hour) spaces, to compensate for the sixteen (30-minute) short stay free parking spaces that would be lost on Market place (whilst retaining disabled parking spaces in the Market place) should the place making scheme go ahead.
- 4.37 As these recommendations were agreed these need to be reflected in any new Car Park Order. There should be no significant impact on the overall car parking income across the district as a result of these changes.

5. Options appraisal

- 5.1 The price modelling that has so far been undertaken has not taken account of behaviour change as a result of price change although this is considered as part of the scenario planning. In practice, increases in prices can deter some users.
- 5.2 Due to the nature of car parking charges and for simplicity it is best to make any increases to the nearest 10p. Taking the current hourly charge for the coastal car parks of £1.50 per hour, a relatively modest annual increase of 3.5% since the last price increases in 2016 would have had the following effect (unrounded);
- | | |
|------|-----------------------|
| 2016 | £1.50 |
| 2017 | £1.55 + 3.5% increase |
| 2018 | £1.61 + 3.5% increase |
| 2019 | £1.66 + 3.5% increase |
| 2020 | £1.72 + 3.5% increase |
| 2021 | £1.78 + 3.5% increase |
| 2022 | £1.84 + 3.5% increase |
- 5.3 On the basis of the above modelling the unrounded charge for 2022 would be £1.84 based on annual 3.5% increases for an hourly coastal car park ticket.
- 5.4 This section discusses a number of options in terms of principles and demonstrates the impact on income as a result of the potential proposals which include;

- Option 1 (a)** Increasing fees across coastal (mainly used by tourists), resort and standard car parks by between 10p and 40p per hour
- Option 1 (b)** Increasing fees at coastal car parks during March – October, but having lower fees during the shoulder months November – February inclusive
- Option 2** Increasing season ticket prices, including consideration of a discounted ‘residents’ permit

Option 1 (a) - Increasing fees across all car parks

5.5 The table contained within Appendix A shows the potential revised charging options compared to the current position, with charges increasing between 10p and 40p per hour across all car park types. The table below shows the projected additional income forecast over and above current levels from the various potential increases based on a full year of operation.

	Income growth projections vs current				
	Current £000	10p £000	20p £000	30p £000	40p £000
Resort	921	61	112	172	232
Standard	269	18	33	53	69
Coastal	1,051	75	109	175	239
	2,241	154	254	400	540
High Level Sensitivity Analysis					
+20%		31	51	80	108
+10%		15	25	40	54
+ 5%		8	13	20	27
- 5%		-8	-13	-20	-27
- 10%		-15	-25	-40	-54
-20%		-31	-51	-80	-108

- 5.6 The table highlights the projected impact of a range of charges across car park types. For example, a 10p increase per hour across the three car park designations would achieve additional projected income of c£154k whilst a 20p increase could generate around £254k.
- 5.7 A ‘mix and match’ approach across the various types could also however be adopted and the 3 figures highlighted in blue within the table above represent 30p per hour increases in Resort and Coastal car parks and a 10p per hour increase in Standard car parks which would generate additional income forecast in the region of £365k per annum.
- 5.8 It is important to note that, as with any financial forecasting, these figures are indicative and can be impacted by a range of factors. A bad summer weather wise can impact negatively both on visitor numbers and length of stay during a period which sees a significant element of the income generation, although conversely prolonged good weather would have a beneficial impact. The starkest demonstration of the influence of external factors which are beyond the control of the Council is however as a result of the Covid pandemic which saw the income decimated and reduced to almost zero during the periods of lockdown experienced during 2020.
- 5.9 The high level sensitivity analysis shows the potential impact in forecast cash terms of increases/decreases in additional income levels between +/- 20%. For example, if income were to see a 10% increase across all car park types following a 10p per hour increase the additional projected income would be £15k pa on top of the annual estimate of £154k, so a total projected figure of £169k. If the same projections (10p per hour) were to see a 20% reduction

this would represent a loss of income of £31k, which would take the projected increase down from £154k to £123k.

Option 1 (b) – Introducing a seasonal charge across Coastal car parks

- 5.10 As discussed elsewhere within the report the car park income can be very seasonal in nature and nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than with the Coastal car parks which achieve over 70% of their annual income levels between the months of April and September. This reflects their location and popularity with tourists and visitors during these peak periods.
- 5.11 This is a variant of Option 1 (a), Members could consider the introduction of seasonal charges across this car park type which look at increasing fees potentially during March – October, but then having lower fees during the shoulder months November – February inclusive. This would provide a benefit to residents who live within the district all year round whilst still generating additional income from the significant influx of tourists and visitors to the district during the peak season. This could also be introduced in combination with a combination of the proposals outlined above within Option 1 (a).
- 5.12 The table below shows the March – October seasonal split based on the increases between 10p and 40p per hour with the November – February period frozen at current pricing levels (as in operation as at January 2022). Again this projected additional income is based on a full year of operation and represents the forecast income over and above current levels.

Coastal income growth projections vs current (seasonal variant)					
	Current £000	10p £000	20p £000	30p £000	40p £000
March – Oct	949	67	97	157	216
Nov – Feb	102	3	3	3	3
	1,051	70	99	159	218
Projected income from full year increase		75	109	175	239
Variance		-5	-10	-15	-21

- 5.13 The table highlights the impact of freezing the charges at current levels for the period from November through to February when compared to just increasing the prices for the whole year. For example, if the 30p increase was introduced the expected additional income would be in the region of £159k if the full charging regime was in place for the full year. If, however the 4 months covering November – February were frozen at current pricing levels for that period, then the income would be reduced by approximately £15k per annum.
- 5.14 Whilst this proposal would see a reduction in charging over the winter months it would add a further tier of charging and complication which can lead to confusion for customers and complexity in terms of parking machine software configuration and updating.
- 5.15 Although not detailed within the table above to offset any potential reductions in income experienced within the shoulder months of the season (November to February) which would benefit from the lower charges, a standard charge of £2 per hour or £10 per day could be considered for high season coastal car park charges which would offset the lower charging levels during the winter.

Option 2 - Increasing season ticket prices

- 5.16 As outlined above season ticket prices have seen only very small increases in price (2016 - just a £4 increase to the £200 charge which had been in place since 2009), recognising the value these provide to residents and at £204 for a 12 month 24-hour ticket this represents a cost of just £0.55 per day to park.
- 5.17 However, as these charges have not increased in any meaningful way for over 10 years the charge is now not only considerably behind other local charges (please see comparison table above) but also out of step with charges on individual car parks. For example, a 12 month 3-hour season ticket currently works out at a cost of just over 15 pence per day (£56 / 365). If you parked on a coastal car park for 3 hours, such as Station Approach in Sheringham, the charge would be £4.50 for a normal ticket for 3 hours, so this represents a discount of £4.35 off the normal cost or over 96% although it is acknowledged that this is based on the purchase of an annual ticket.
- 5.18 The summary table below considers a range of options in relation to season ticket charging and considers both percentage increases but also cash increases based on the representative cost of parking per day. Appendix B contains more detail in respect of these projections.

Season Tickets	Short stay				Long stay				Total	Cash inc (70%)
	3m	6m	12m	Total	3m	6m	12m	Total		
Current price	£16	£31	£56		£66	£122	£204			
Income (excl VAT)	9	11	120	140	27	16	92	135	275	
Straight Percentage Increases to ticket prices										
10% (rounded)	10	12	132	154	30	18	101	149	303	19
20% (rounded)	10	13	144	168	33	19	111	162	331	39
30% (rounded)	11	15	156	182	35	21	120	176	358	58
40% (rounded)	12	16	168	196	38	22	129	189	386	77
50% (rounded)	13	17	180	210	41	24	138	203	413	96
Daily Charge Increases										
£5 - £15/month	10	12	129	151	22	13	81	117	267	-6
£7.5 - £22.5/month	16	18	193	227	33	20	122	175	402	89
£10 - £30/month	21	25	258	304	45	26	163	234	538	184
£0.25 - £1/day	17	20	196	232	46	27	165	237	470	136
£0.5 - £1/day	32	38	392	461	46	27	165	237	699	296

- 5.19 The straight percentage increases consider the current prices and then a percentage uplift from 10% - 50% rounded to the nearest £. The additional forecast income from these changes has then been reduced to 70% of the total to reflect potential changes to customer habits or resistance to the increases so that the income is not overly optimistic.
- 5.20 The projected additional income therefore ranges from £19k pa from a 10% increase through to £96k pa from a 50% increase.
- 5.21 The 'daily charge increases' are calculated on an entirely different basis and reflect the cost per day or per month. For example, the first 3 options represent charges of £5/£7.50/£10 per month for short stay tickets (which equate to annual ticket charges of £60/£90/£120 respectively) and £15/£22.50/£30 per month for long stay (equating to annual charges of £180/£270/£365).
- 5.22 Based on these pricing variants the projected changes to income (again assuming a 70% take up level) range from a small loss of £6k compared with the current pricing arrangements to additional income of £184k pa based on the annual £120 (short stay) and £365 (long stay) proposals.

- 5.23 The final 2 variants consider daily charges of either 25 pence (£91) or 50 pence (£183) for annual short stay tickets and £1 a day (£365) for annual long stay tickets and produce estimated increases in income levels of £136k and £296k respectively.
- 5.24 The latter, which would see an annual short stay season ticket priced at £91 and the equivalent long stay ticket at £365, generates a significant amount of additional income. However, this also reflects a significant increase against current prices of £56 and £204 respectively. In cash terms this is an additional £35 for a short stay ticket and £161 for the long term equivalent and represents percentage increases of 62% and 75% respectively. These charges do still however compare favourably to neighbouring authorities.
- 5.25 It is worth bearing in mind that, had these tickets seen a relatively modest 3% year on year increase since 2009, then the charges would now be £82 for short stay and £294 for long stay, which is only £9 less in cash terms for short stay and £71 for long stay.
- 5.26 As a significant amount of season tickets are purchased by local residents (around 80% of total purchases by ticket number for both short and long term tickets), Members could consider freezing the charges for residents at the current levels and only levying increased charges for customers based outside of the district. Eligibility could be based on the electoral role although the mechanics of this require further consideration and discussion.
- 5.27 At a very basic level this would reduce additional income forecasts by around 80% compared with the table above. On that basis the 10% to 50% percentage increases would then only generate between £4k to £19k and the daily/monthly scenario from between (£1k) and £59k.

Holt Country Park

- 5.28 Holt Country Park has always had its own separate charging regime and the park currently operates a charging policy of £2 to park all day. The park generates around £28k pa at present from the car parking charges levied and the proposal this year is to increase this charge to £2.50 which would generate in the region of an additional £7k pa.

Current anomalies

- 5.29 As discussed above the car parks are categorised between 'standard', 'resort' and 'coastal' which each have their own specific charging regimes in place. Following a review of these designations as part of this review there are two which potentially require consideration for re-designation, those being the Chequers car park in Sheringham and the parking provision on Cromer promenade.
- 5.30 Both of these car parks are currently designated as 'resort' car parks, however their proximity to the seafront would suggest that these should be re-designated as 'coastal' car parks and it is the officer recommendation that this is progressed as part of any new Car Park Order.

6. Strengthened Car Park Management Arrangements

- 6.1 The net budget after taking account of all running costs is £1.6m and as such this service area represents a significant income stream for the Council. To ensure that this and other key income streams are given enough focus in terms of growth, improvement and efficiency to support the Council's medium and longer term budget position it is suggested that a new car park management post is considered to ensure that the Council is able to maximise current income streams and also develop new ones to support the medium term financial position.
- 6.2 Whilst the job description has not yet been fully developed or assessed through the Job Evaluation process it is envisaged that the role would need to be at a fairly senior level to enable them to negotiate, liaise and co-ordinate activities across the Council. It should be noted that, whilst the core part of the role will focus around the delivery and improvement of the Council's car parking revenue streams in terms of operational day-to-day efficiency and also strategic direction and longer term improvement, the focus will be wider than purely car parks.

- 6.3 A focus particularly around car park income would enable consideration of improvements and expansion potentially at car parks which are already owned and operated and also potential acquisition of new assets.
- 6.4 Due to the level this officer will be expected to work at and for the purposes of this report it has been assumed the post will be at a grade 6, the mid-point (spinal point 36) for which (including oncosts) is c£51k.
- 6.5 Due to the focus of this role consideration should also be given to an assistant car park management role, introduced to focus on the more operational aspects of service delivery, particularly around car park operation and management which would see the responsibility for this area move away from the Environmental Services directorate.
- 6.6 The net cost of these posts is anticipated to reduce further due to the capacity and ability to more pro-actively manage machine breakdowns and potential issues. Work is ongoing to review potential lost income due to machine breakdowns and failures over previous years as this is additional income that could be gained regardless of any additional charges levied. These posts would provide the capacity to focus on this area and to help avoid some of these potential losses and to insure where issues are discovered that they are rectified as quickly as possible.
- 6.7 Again prior to any formal JE assessment and for the purposes of this report it has been assumed the post will be at a grade 8, the mid-point (spinal point 25) for which (including oncosts) is c£39k.
- 6.8 To ensure that this and other key income streams are given enough focus in terms of growth, improvement and efficiency to support the Council's medium and longer term budget position and to strengthen day to day car park management to minimise losses by more timely resolution of machine breakdowns etc, Cabinet are invited to consider and comment on the issue of resource for improved management of the service.

7. Corporate Plan Objectives

- 7.1 The proposals contained within this report directly contribute towards the 'Financial Sustainability and Growth' element of the Corporate Plan. Within the Corporate Plan and supporting Delivery Plan, Objective 2 under the 'Financial sustainability and growth' theme centres on 'taking, where appropriate, a more commercial approach to the delivery of discretionary services.' One of the Delivery Plan actions to help achieve this is set out under 2.2 and is to 'review the Car Parking Policy in order to maximise the revenue generated from car parking income.'
- 7.2 The Council has the opportunity to generate additional income whilst at the same time considering the expansion and/or acquisition of new car parks which would further increase this opportunity.
- 7.3 This area represents a fundamental external income stream for the Council and as such can contribute significantly to helping sustain the Council's medium term financial position.

8. Car Park Order

- 8.1 Ultimately Cabinet will need to make recommendations to Full Council for consideration if the car parking pricing policy is to be altered. Once approved in principle, any new charging regime would have to be formalised through the agreement of a new Car Park Order (CPO), the consultation process for which takes a number of months.
- 8.2 If no significant objections are received the Order could be agreed under delegation but if there is a requirement for further consideration of the results, then this could go back to Cabinet in June 2022. This would mean delivery of the new charges from July 2022 which is 6 years after the previous increases. A project timetable is provided within Appendix B.

9. Financial and resource implications

9.1 As outlined above the main proposals for consideration are as follows;

Proposal 1 (a) Increasing fees across coastal (mainly used by tourists), resort and standard car parks by between 10p and 40p per hour

Proposal 1 (b) Increasing fees at coastal car parks during March – October, but having lower fees during the shoulder months November – February inclusive

Proposal 2 (a/b) Increasing season ticket prices, including consideration of a discounted 'residents' permit

Proposal 1 (a) – Increasing fees across all car park types

9.2 The table highlights the impact of 10p/20p/30/40p increases to hourly charges and the **additional** income projected over and above current levels as a result of the potential changes.

	10p increase	20p increase	30p increase	40p increase
Proposal 1 (a)	£154k	£254k	£400k	£540k

Proposal 1 (b) – Seasonal charging variant for coastal car parks

9.3 This proposal is a variant of Proposal 1 (a), Members could consider the introduction of seasonal charges across this car park type which look at increasing fees potentially during March – October, but then having lower fees during the shoulder months November – February inclusive. This would provide a benefit to residents who live within the district all year round whilst still generating additional income from the significant influx of tourists and visitors to the district during the peak season. This could also be introduced in combination with a combination of the proposals outlined above within Option 1 (a).

9.4 The summary table below highlights the loss of income compared to the introduction of these increases for the whole 12 months, reflecting the lower charges (which are based on current prices) for the months November to February inclusive.

	10p increase	20p increase	30p increase	40p increase
Proposal 1 (b)	-£5k	-£10k	-£15k	-£21k

9.5 Whilst this proposal would see a reduction in charging over the winter months it would add a further tier of charging and complication which can lead to confusion for customers and complexity in terms of parking machine software configuration and updating.

Proposal 2 – Season tickets

9.6 Season ticket prices have seen only very small increases in price (2016 - just a £4 increase to the £200 charge which had been in place since 2009), recognising the value these provide to residents and at £204 for a 12 month 24-hour ticket this represents a cost of just £0.55 per day to park.

9.7 It is recommended that, if any price increases are agreed, that the season ticket prices are also increased as these have not seen any substantial increases since 2009. There are however options relating to potential residents permits but this needs to be confirmed in terms of principles with legal.

9.8 The first table below highlights the **additional** income projected over and above current levels as a result of the potential changes as a result of increasing both the 12 months' short stay and long stay season tickets by between 10% and 50% of current prices.

	10% increase	20% increase	30% increase	40% increase	50% increase
Proposal 2 (a)	£19k	£39k	£58k	£77k	£96k

9.9 The second table is based on 'daily charge increases' which have been calculated on an entirely different basis and reflect the cost per day or per month for parking. For example, the first 3 options focus on charges of £5/£7.50/£10 per month for short stay tickets (which equate to annual ticket charges of £60/£90/£120 respectively) and £15/£22.50/£30 per month for long stay (equating to annual charges of £180/£270/£365). The final 2 options consider daily charges of either 25 pence (£91) or 50 pence (£183) for annual short stay tickets and £1 a day (£365) for annual long stay tickets. Again the figures reflect the changes in income projected over and above current levels but please note this would be an 'either/or' and doesn't therefore represent additional income over and above that outlined within the table above.

	£5 - £15/month	£7.5 - £22.5/month	£10 - £30/month	£0.25 - £1/day	£0.5 - £1/day
Proposal 2 (b)	-£6k	£89k	£184k	£136k	£296k

9.10 As mentioned above consideration also needs to be given to the 7-day ticket which currently works out at £4 per day. There is potentially scope to consider increasing this to £5; £6 or £7.50 per day if the general daily charges are otherwise increased. These ticket types will predominantly be used by tourist visitors staying in self-catering and B&B accommodation or even camping and wanting to access the beach every day. At £5 per day this ticket type would cost £35 but that would still represent a £35 saving if daily charges at coastal car parks were increased to £10 for example.

Implementation costs

9.11 The cost of implementing the changes to the current charges would be in the region of £25k and this would cover signage overlays, car park leaflets and reprogramming of the car park machines. If agreed, the new charging structure could be in place from July 2022 following alterations to the Car Park order (CPO) and the relevant consultation process.

High level income forecast

9.12 While there are clearly a number of different options and permutations for consideration the following provides a snap shot of the potential income levels from selecting a range of the options outlined within the report just **for illustrative purposes**;

Increase Standard car parks by 10p	£18k
Increase Resort car parks by 30p	£173k
Increase Coastal car parks by 30p	£175k
Base season tickets on 25p/£1 day short/long	£136k
Car park management roles	(£90k)
Net increase in income forecast	£412k

10. Legal implications

10.1 The legal team have been engaged as part of the development of this report and will be supporting during the Car Park Order (CPO) process to ensure that the Council complies with the consultation requirements. Advice has also been sought in respect of the residents permit proposals.

11. Communications issues

11.1 A communications plan will need to be established to support the adoption and promotion of any new charging policy.

12. Risks

12.1 The risk matrix below considers the risks and considerations as to how these might best be managed and mitigated.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Potential outcome	Risk Management
Doing nothing	2	5	Further move away from market pricing, impact on financial sustainability.	Highlight consequences/reasoning in Cabinet Car Park Charges - Review report.
Customer resistance to proposal	4	3	The statutory process allows 21 days of public consultation.	Ensure the proposed changes are well argued in the 'Reasons for Change' document which forms part of the statutory CPO process.
Negative publicity	5	3	Raise awareness of procedure encouraging more negative representations.	Ensure the public are aware through media releases that car park revenue supports lots of free non-statutory services such as public toilets and parks/woodlands and will help the Council to maintain a sustainable budget.
Continued COVID impact	3	5	Lower use of car parks than projected due to lock downs.	Monitor use and report progress to Members as part of budget monitoring process.
Loss of key personnel	2	3	Potential delays to programme should key personnel become unavailable for any length of time.	Ensure others are up to date with project proposal and timeframes, although transfer of workload may still result in some delays.
Delays to statutory process	3	3	There are various points in the process where delays can creep in, for example. through statutory bodies raising concerns or missed media deadlines or supply issues.	Most timeframes allow some slippage time providing not all delays come into being at the same time. Use the project management Board to manage day to day risks and keep timeframe current to provide early identification of any issues likely to cause slippage.
Delays to implementation	2	3	The Order needs to come into being at the same time as changes are made on the ground to signage and ticket machines. Lack of resources or outside influences may delay the CPO being made in the timeframes identified.	Organise resources as far as possible (even if at risk) to ensure continuity.
Number of, or concerning representations	3	3	There may be a number of representations made during the consultations highlighting a particular issue or concern that Members feel is valid.	Members are bound to consider representations made and can chose to make amendments to the proposed Order if deemed appropriate. This will require any changes to be re-issued to statutory consultees which will result in a small delay to the timeframe.
Customer resistance to changes/ boycotting car parks	2	2	Income being reduced compared to financial forecasts.	Monitor use of car parks for initial three months to evaluate any changes in anticipated habit.
Customer resistance to changes/ boycotting permits	2	2	A significant increase in the price of permits may see some not renewing permits.	Carry out an advertising campaign highlighting their use and comparative costs to encourage new buyers. Increased income will offset some reduction in take-up.

13 Sustainability

13.1 There are no sustainability issues in relation to this report.

14 Equality and Diversity

14.1 There are no equality and diversity issues in relation to this report.

15 Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

15.1 There are no Section 17 implications as a result of this report.

16. Conclusions and Recommendations

16.1 As one of the Council's largest external income sources car parking charges have a significant contribution to make in terms of the Council's financial sustainability in the medium to long term. Financial Sustainability and Growth is one of six key themes within the Corporate Plan and links directly with objective 2.2 of the Delivery Plan.

16.2 The Council incurs significant levels of expenditure on discretionary service areas which help to ensure that our district remains a beautiful place both to live and work in but also to visit, it is however becoming increasingly difficult to support all of these areas in the current financial climate.

16.3 There are significant costs associated with a range of Council services which support the tourism economy, from provision of public conveniences, maintenance and operation of Cromer pier, foreshore activities, parks, open spaces and woodlands which represent a combined annual revenue spend in excess of £2.2m. It is appropriate therefore for the costs of these services to be met in part by various fees and charges as they form an integral part of the visitor experience.

16.4 Car parking income needs to be considered against the context of our discretionary service provision which people value but which is often difficult to charge for, such as we public conveniences, the seafront environment and Blue Flag beaches, beach lifeguards, additional street cleansing, litter bins etc. It is becoming increasingly more difficult for the Council to continue to provide these services at the level expected by local residents, businesses and tourist visitors from Council Tax payers alone. Further to this it is not fair or equitable across the District as a whole and doesn't operate under the 'user pays' principle.

16.5 There are clearly multiple variations on the possible range of pricing options and initiatives for car parks. Due to the nature of car parking charges and for simplicity it is best to make any increases to the nearest 10p. Even a relatively modest annual increase of 3.5% from 2016 would have increased the hourly charge at our 'Coastal' car parks from £1.50 per to £1.84 (unrounded) by April 2022. The officer recommendation is to look to introduce a range of complimentary changes from July 2022.

16.6 To ensure that this and other key income streams are given enough focus in terms of growth, improvement and efficiency to support the Council's medium and longer term budget position and to strengthen day to day car park management to minimise losses by more timely resolution of machine breakdowns etc, Cabinet are invited to consider and comment on the issue of resource for improved management of the service.

16.7 The current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) projections for future years are still projecting budget deficits of around £2.5m by 2025/26 in the midst of continuing uncertainty regarding the Fair Funding and Business Rates reviews. The Council must therefore consider all available options to generate additional income and reduce costs wherever possible.

16.8 Car parking policy has not been reviewed for a number of years so it is therefore recommended that the Cabinet consider the opportunities as outlined within this report and also consider the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Any changes can then be

recommended to Full Council and be consulted upon through a new Car Park order (CPO) to help generate additional income to support the Council's financial sustainability.

16.9 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have pre-scrutinised the officer report and their recommendations are included as part of this updated report for further consideration by Cabinet.

16.10 **Cabinet consider the options and proposals contained within this report and make recommendations to Full Council on;**

- **the preferred way forward in terms of pricing changes so that these changes can be considered as part of the budget setting process for 2022/23 and inform the future financial strategy;**
- **changes to car park designations as outlined within the report;**
- **implementing any new pricing changes from July 2022 and instigating the Car Park order (CPO) consultation process;**
- **budgetary provision of £25k to cover implementation costs resulting from any changes.**

Appendix A – potential tariff combinations across all car park types

Resort		30 mins	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+	Coach	
Current	£1.30 for 1st hr then £1.00 per hr	£0.00	£0.60	£1.30	£2.30	£3.30	£4.30	£5.30	£6.30	£7.00	£10.00
10p	£1.40 for 1st hr then £1.10 per hr	£0.00	£0.70	£1.40	£2.50	£3.60	£4.70	£5.80	£6.90	£8.00	£10.00
20p	£1.50 for 1st hr then £1.20 per hr	£0.00	£0.70	£1.50	£2.70	£3.90	£5.10	£6.30	£7.50	£8.00	£10.00
30p	£1.60 for 1st hr then £1.30 per hr	£0.00	£0.80	£1.60	£2.90	£4.20	£5.50	£6.80	£8.10	£9.00	£10.00
40p	£1.70 for 1st hr then £1.40 per hr	£0.00	£0.80	£1.70	£3.10	£4.50	£5.90	£7.30	£8.70	£10.00	£10.00
Standard		30 mins	1 - 2	3	4	5	6	7	8+	Coach	
Current	£1.00 for 2 hrs then 70p per hr	£0.00	£0.50	£1.00	£1.70	£2.40	£3.10	£3.80	£4.50	£5.00	£10.00
10p	£1.10 for 2 hrs then 80p per hr	£0.00	£0.60	£1.10	£1.90	£2.70	£3.50	£4.30	£5.10	£6.00	£10.00
20p	£1.20 for 2 hrs then 90p per hr	£0.00	£0.60	£1.20	£2.10	£3.00	£3.90	£4.80	£5.70	£6.00	£10.00
30p	£1.30 for 2 hrs then £1.00 per hr	£0.00	£0.70	£1.30	£2.30	£3.30	£4.30	£5.30	£6.30	£7.00	£10.00
40p	£1.40 for 2 hrs then £1.10 per hr	£0.00	£0.70	£1.40	£2.50	£3.60	£4.70	£5.80	£6.90	£8.00	£10.00
Coastal		30 mins	1	2	3	4	5+	Coach			
Current	£1.50 per hr	£0.60	£1.50	£3.00	£4.50	£6.00	£7.00	£10.00			
10p	£1.60 per hr	£0.70	£1.60	£3.20	£4.80	£6.40	£8.00	£10.00			
20p	£1.70 per hr	£0.70	£1.70	£3.40	£5.10	£6.80	£8.00	£10.00			
30p	£1.80 per hr	£0.80	£1.80	£3.60	£5.40	£7.20	£9.00	£10.00			
40p	£1.90 per hr	£0.80	£1.90	£3.80	£5.70	£7.60	£10.00	£10.00			

Appendix B – potential tariff considerations for season ticket prices

	Short			Total	Long			Total	Total
	3m	6m	12m		3m	6m	12m		
<i>Current price</i>		194%	181%			185%	167%		
	<i>£16</i>	<i>£31</i>	<i>£56</i>		<i>£66</i>	<i>£122</i>	<i>£204</i>		
Income (excl VAT)	9	11	120	140	27	16	92	135	275
Straight Percentage Increases									
10% (rounded)		194%	181%			185%	167%		
	<i>£18</i>	<i>£34</i>	<i>£62</i>		<i>£73</i>	<i>£134</i>	<i>£224</i>		
	10	12	132	154	30	18	101	149	303 110%
									Extra income @ 70% 19
20% (rounded)		194%	181%			185%	167%		
	<i>£19</i>	<i>£37</i>	<i>£67</i>		<i>£79</i>	<i>£146</i>	<i>£245</i>		
	10	13	144	168	33	19	111	162	331 120%
									Extra income @ 70% 39
30% (rounded)		194%	181%			185%	167%		
	<i>£21</i>	<i>£40</i>	<i>£73</i>		<i>£86</i>	<i>£159</i>	<i>£265</i>		
	11	15	156	182	35	21	120	176	358 130%
									Extra income @ 70% 58
40% (rounded)		194%	181%			185%	167%		
	<i>£22</i>	<i>£43</i>	<i>£78</i>		<i>£92</i>	<i>£171</i>	<i>£286</i>		
	12	16	168	196	38	22	129	189	386 140%
									Extra income @ 70% 77
50% (rounded)		194%	181%			185%	167%		
	<i>£24</i>	<i>£47</i>	<i>£84</i>		<i>£99</i>	<i>£183</i>	<i>£306</i>		
	13	17	180	210	41	24	138	203	413 150%
									Extra income @ 70% 96

Daily Charge Increases

		182%	182%			182%	182%				
£5 - £15/month	<i>£18</i>	<i>£33</i>	<i>£60</i>		<i>£54</i>	<i>£99</i>	<i>£180</i>				
Income (excl VAT)	10	12	129	151	22	13	81	117	<u><u>267</u></u>	97%	
											<i>Extra income @ 70%</i>
											<i>-6</i>
		164%	182%			186%	181%				
£7.5 - £22.5/month	<i>£30</i>	<i>£50</i>	<i>£90</i>		<i>£80</i>	<i>£150</i>	<i>£270</i>				
Income (excl VAT)	16	18	193	227	33	20	122	175	<u><u>402</u></u>	146%	
											<i>Extra income @ 70%</i>
											<i>89</i>
		177%	171%			182%	180%				
£10 - £30/month	<i>£40</i>	<i>£70</i>	<i>£120</i>		<i>£110</i>	<i>£200</i>	<i>£360</i>				
Income (excl VAT)	21	25	258	304	45	26	163	234	<u><u>538</u></u>	196%	
											<i>Extra income @ 70%</i>
											<i>184</i>
		176%	168%			182%	180%				
£0.25 - £1/day	<i>£31</i>	<i>£54</i>	<i>£91</i>		<i>£112</i>	<i>£203</i>	<i>£365</i>				
Income (excl VAT)	17	20	196	232	46	27	165	237	<u><u>470</u></u>	170%	
											<i>Extra income @ 70%</i>
											<i>136</i>
		193%	175%	163%		169%	166%	179%			
		179%	175%			182%	180%				
£0.5 - £1/day	<i>£58</i>	<i>£104</i>	<i>£183</i>		<i>£112</i>	<i>£203</i>	<i>£365</i>				
Income (excl VAT)	32	38	392	461	46	27	165	237	<u><u>699</u></u>	254%	
											<i>Extra income @ 70%</i>
											<i>296</i>
		365%	337%	326%		169%	166%	179%			

