

Subject: Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 – Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet Member: Councillor Dick Tonge – Highways and Transport

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to approve the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2011-2026 – Car Parking Strategy.

There are a number of reasons for reviewing the current LTP parking strategy at this time:

- There is a general lack of consistency in parking charges, standards and management in Wiltshire.
- A number of changes have occurred since 2001 when the current LTP parking strategy was published.
- Parking is an important part of the emerging third Wiltshire LTP.

The Council's term transport consultants, Mouchel, were commissioned to undertake the review in late January 2010. Their final reports were issued to the Council at the beginning of July 2010.

In total, 570 people and organisations responded to the consultation making 4,582 comments. A number of separate letters were also received from parish and town councils, and chambers of commerce. In addition, a petition was received from Amesbury Community Partnership and a survey from Mere and District Chamber of Trade. Feedback on the consultation findings were presented to all the Area Boards between September and November.

Commentary is provided on the responses received to the consultation, including on the following issues:

- spatial bands
- parking charges
- opportunities for parish and town councils
- reviewing parking charges
- season tickets
- residential parking standards in new developments
- residents' parking zones
- Sunday parking charges.

The findings of the LTP Strategic Environmental Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment have been included. Three headline risks have been identified.

Proposals

That Cabinet:

Approve the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026: Car Parking Strategy including the following:

- (i) Support the concept of spatial bands (as shown in Table 1) as a realistic way of balancing the different needs of towns with the achievement of a more consistent approach to parking throughout Wiltshire.
- (ii) Approve the parking charges (Monday – Saturday) as set-out in Table 2 for implementation in 2011/12.
- (iii) Agree to a free half an hour time period for the Market Place car park in Devizes.
- (iv) Agree that where there would be a reduction in a car park charge as a result of the introduction of the charges set-out in Table 2, then the current charge (subject to the proposal at (v)) would remain in place until equalisation is achieved. Thereafter, the car park charge would increase in line with the relevant band increases.
- (v) Approve a ten per cent increase in all on and off-street parking charges (i.e. over and above the increases set-out in Table 2) (see **Appendix 5**).
- (vi) Agree that any surplus parking revenue (i.e. that which is over and above the forecast income of £5,040,000) is hypothecated to support sustainable transport measures (e.g. local bus services).
- (vii) To note that the parking charges in Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge may need to be amended in light of the outcomes of area transport strategies to support planned growth.
- (viii) Approve the principle of the following opportunities:
 - Enable Band 3 towns to 'buy back' a small proportion of short-stay spaces from Wiltshire Council to offer as free parking spaces.
 - Enable Band 4 towns to take over the management of local public car parks and associated costs as an alternative to parking charges being set by Wiltshire Council.

Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood and Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, and with the advice of legal representation, to negotiate and agree the lease and legal agreement with relevant parish and town councils for implementation from 1 April 2011.

- (ix) Agree that significant reviews of parking charges are undertaken every five years based on 'Policy PS3 – Parking Charges' with interim reviews carried out annually based on an assessment of parking charges in key neighbouring towns and the annual Consumer Price Index (as at September each year with reviewed charges rounded to the nearest ten pence). Consideration will also need to be taken of the outcomes of area transport strategies developed to support planned growth.
- (x) Support the adoption of minimum residential parking standards.
- (xi) Agree the presumption that any planning application which includes provision for publicly available private non-residential parking will be required to provide an accompanying car park management plan and, subject to a case-by-case analysis, to implement parking restrictions and charges consistent with those of council run car parks in the local area.
- (xii) Approve the retention of the current Sunday parking charge of £1.50 in Salisbury (subject to the proposal at (v)) and the removal of Sunday parking charges in Bradford on Avon. Support the following addition to 'Policy PS3 – Parking Charges':

'Sunday parking charges will be considered where there is an identified traffic congestion or air quality issue, or where there is a strong and established parking demand from shoppers or visitors'.
- (xiii) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood and Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to undertake and approve the reviews on residents' parking zones, on-street waiting restriction reviews, season tickets and permits, and parking enforcement.
- (xiv) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood and Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to finalise the strategy document for publication as part of the third Wiltshire Local Transport Plan by 31 March 2011.

Reason for Proposal

To seek agreement to commence implementation of the revised LTP Car Parking Strategy following public consultation.

MARK BODEN

Corporate Director
Department for Neighbourhood and Planning

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet
14 December 2010

Subject: Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 – Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet Member: Councillor Dick Tonge – Highways and Transport

Key Decision: Yes

Purpose of Report

1. For Cabinet to approve the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2011-2026 – Car Parking Strategy.

Background

Introduction

2. The Council developed its current parking strategy during the preparation of the first Wiltshire LTP which was published in 2001. This set out, amongst other things, parking standards, strategies for public parking (including parking charges) and a policy on residents' parking zones.
3. More recently (June 2008), the Council completed the introduction of civil parking enforcement (CPE) throughout the whole of Wiltshire. Reviews of parking controls in a number of market towns have been undertaken to support the implementation of CPE.
4. As a consequence of the move to Wiltshire Council, a Parking Services Team has been set up to manage the Council's car parks and park-and-ride sites, and to enforce all parking controls, both on-street and off-street, for the whole of Wiltshire.

The need to review the Council's car parking strategy

5. There are a number of reasons for reviewing the current LTP parking strategy at this time.
6. Firstly, the current LTP parking strategy was not formally adopted by the former District Councils. As a result, this led to a general lack of consistency in parking charges, standards and management between the former district areas of Wiltshire. While some inconsistencies have been resolved as a result of the setting up of the Parking Services Team, a number remain.
7. Secondly, a number of changes in national policy, guidance and best practice relating to parking have occurred since 2001 when the current LTP parking strategy was published. Moreover, a number of neighbouring authorities have revised their parking strategies and parking charges over this time.

8. Thirdly, parking is an important part of the Council's long-term local transport strategy included in the emerging third Wiltshire LTP which is to be published in March 2011; appropriate parking policies and management can help support local priorities such as economic growth, tackling climate change and reducing disadvantage and inequalities. There is also the need to ensure that up-to-date and appropriate parking guidance is available to developers and the Council's planning and highway development control officers to help facilitate development growth.

The review process

9. A report on the proposed approach to reviewing the current LTP parking strategy was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Environment Select Committee on 12 January 2010. Included in the report was the proposal to generate four bands for parking charges within which Area Boards would be able to set the actual charges in their respective area. Following discussion, however, Members resolved that the Area Boards should simply have a chance to consider and be consulted on charges in their area and to make any recommendations through the Executive.
10. To more clearly establish the strategic context and setting for car parking in Wiltshire, officers drafted a number of overall policies which provided the high-level policy direction for the review (it should be noted that parking for cycles, powered two-wheelers and goods vehicles will be considered in other relevant LTP theme strategies).
11. The Council's term transport consultants, Mouchel, were commissioned to actually undertake the review in late January 2010. Following an inception meeting and a number of further meetings with council officers, Mouchel's final reports were issued to the council at the beginning of July 2010.

Consultation

12. Consultation on the draft car parking strategy was undertaken from 12 July to 3 September 2010.
13. A variety of means were used to inform people of the consultation:
 - web portal and documents/questionnaire in libraries
 - press release (which led to good media coverage), parish newsletter article and Area Board announcements
 - a letter and follow-up emails on 'opportunities' (see paragraph ?) to relevant town and parish councils
 - correspondence with chambers of commerce
 - meetings with several Town and Parish Councils
 - emails and letters sent to some 8,000 Area Board and LTP contacts.
14. In total, 570 people and organisations responded through the web portal or by completing questionnaires and submitting letters, making 4,582 comments. A number of letters were also received from Parish and Town Councils, and Chambers of Commerce.

15. While there was a reasonable response from Amesbury (including a 234 signature petition received from Amesbury Community Partnership requesting that parking charges are not introduced in Amesbury) and from Chippenham, Corsham, Devizes and Salisbury community areas, there was a more limited number of responses from most other areas.
16. The exception was the South West Wiltshire area where a concerted campaign was undertaken by Councillors and Parish Councils. In addition to a significant response to the questionnaire, 135 people signed up to a Mere and District Chamber of Trade survey asking how parking charges would affect their visit to Mere (this is in addition to a 200 signature survey submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Environment Select Committee in January 2010).
17. A number of respondents, including several Parish and Town Councils, complained about the nature (i.e. the focus on the Council's consultation web portal and the complex technical wording of some parts of the document) and the length of the consultation documents (i.e. the number of pages and volume of questions posed). In many respects, the subject matter and the breadth of the intended audience (i.e. statutory bodies, developers, transport consultants as well as the public and Parish and Town Councils) necessitated that the document covered the full gamut of parking matters in adequate detail. It should also be noted that the consultation was undertaken in conformity with the council's consultation strategy and based on the principles set out in the Wiltshire Local Development Framework Statement of Community Involvement.
18. Feedback on the consultation findings were presented to all the Area Boards between 22 September and 23 November 2010. The following resolutions (as at 1 December, 2010) were made by the respective Area Board:
 - (i) The Salisbury Area Board draws the attention of Cabinet to the importance to Salisbury of its continued economic vitality both as a popular tourist destination and an attractive shopping centre. We are keen to encourage the use of Park and Ride, so that our relatively compact city centre is not full of cars, but we also need to ensure that parking charges for Salisbury as a whole are lower than our competitors.
 - (ii) Confirmed figures from the car parking strategy consultation would be brought to the next [Devizes] Area Board meeting. (A subsequent letter from the Devizes Area Board dated 3 November 2010 requested that free parking be continued in the Market Place).
 - (iii) The Amesbury Area Board acknowledges Wiltshire Council's aspiration to harmonise car park charges across the county, but strongly recommends that:
 1. There be no charging in small communities, including and especially Amesbury; and
 2. Any final decision on this matter, in any community, take fully into account the specific local circumstances, and in this case, the unique characteristics of Amesbury.

19. The Environment Select Committee considered the car parking strategy again at its meeting on 2 November 2010 where Members resolved to note the strategy and congratulate the Cabinet Member and officers for their work.

Main Considerations for the Council

20. Commentary on the responses received to the consultation questions is provided in the following sections and includes consideration of other general responses (the number of respondents to each question is provided in brackets).
21. The revised parking strategy is presented at **Appendix 1**. It should be noted that in revising the strategy all the responses and comments received have been considered.

Question 1 – Objectives (193)

22. Of the ten objectives included in the draft strategy document, the following were selected as the most important by respondents:
- 1) Support the local economy and facilitate development growth (selected by 75.1% of respondents as their first preference).
 - 2) Meet residents' needs for car parking near their homes (selected by 29.5% of respondents as their second preference).
 - 3) Provide access to key services and facilities for special needs groups and the mobility impaired (selected by 18.7% of respondents as their third preference).

Question 2 – Overall Management (149)

23. The policy on overall management sought to set-out the general approach to parking in Wiltshire. As a result, the policy is rather nebulous in nature and this was a criticism of a number of respondents. Nevertheless, 52.3% of respondents supported the policy.

Questions 3 and 4 - Spatial Bands (143 and 123)

24. Banding seeks to establish a balance between acknowledging the range of economic, social and environmental differences between towns with the need to develop a more consistent approach to parking policy, management and operations throughout Wiltshire. It was therefore proposed to band Wiltshire's towns into one of four spatial bands (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Spatial Bands

Band	Spatial Area
1	Salisbury
2	Chippenham and Trowbridge
3	Amesbury, Bradford-on-Avon, Calne, Corsham, Devizes, Malmesbury, Marlborough, Melksham, Warminster, Westbury and Wootton Bassett
4	Small Towns and Villages (including rural areas)

25. These bands are based on (see also **Appendix 2**):
- (i) The hierarchy in the emerging Local Development Framework (which considers the role and function of towns, and their level of facilities and services)
 - (ii) Population levels
 - (iii) The availability of sustainable transport alternatives
 - (iv) Operational parking issues.
26. While the majority of respondents (58.7%) to the consultation supported the concept of spatial bands, those that disagreed stated that 'one size does not fit all' and that as a result, local distinctiveness and local needs would not be adequately considered. For these reasons, a number of respondents felt that decisions on parking should be taken at the lowest possible administrative level (i.e. the relevant Town or Parish Council).
27. As stated in paragraph 24, the banding of settlements seeks to establish a balance between acknowledging differences between towns and developing a more consistent approach to parking throughout Wiltshire. The categorisation of towns into four bands is clearly not a 'one size fits all' approach and the criteria outlined in paragraph 25 demonstrates that local differences have been taken into account. Furthermore, banding reduces the ability of towns to compete with each other over car parking charges (i.e. competing on the lowest parking charge rather than, for instance, on improvements to a town's retail offer).
28. Overall support for the concept of spatial bands contrasts with the majority of respondents (54.5%) who did not support the proposed spatial bands themselves. Suggestions for revision included that:
- (i) Salisbury should be grouped with Chippenham and Trowbridge
 - (ii) Chippenham and Trowbridge should be separated
 - (iii) Band 3 should be split into larger market towns and smaller market towns
 - (iv) Band 4 should be split into small towns and villages.
29. While having a similar strategic importance to Chippenham and Trowbridge, Salisbury has a larger population, is an important tourism destination and benefits from having five Park and Ride sites and a residents' parking zone. Given these circumstances, it is considered appropriate for Salisbury to be in a band on its own.
30. It is acknowledged that in a similar manner to Salisbury, parking management in Chippenham and Trowbridge may need to be amended (and separated) in the future in light of the respective area transport strategies to support planned growth. However, the outcome of this work is yet to emerge and until such time as it does, it is considered that Chippenham and Trowbridge should be categorised together in one band.
31. A split of Band 3 towns could be based on a number of factors including population levels, the retail mix or the number of existing public parking spaces. While this would go some way to appease those respondents who complained of a 'one size fits all' approach, it would be rather arbitrary in nature. It is considered that the opportunity offered to Band 3 town councils (see paragraph 64) adequately provides the means for local economic needs to be acknowledged.

32. It is not considered either practical or necessary to split Band 4 into small towns and villages.

Questions 5 and 25 – Land-Use Zones and Parking Management (125 and 126)

33. The zoning of areas within towns seeks to further reflect the economic, social and environmental differences between areas and the need to manage parking appropriately depending on local circumstances. While the proposed zones were supported by the majority of respondents (68.8%), only 41.3% of respondents agreed with the suggested approach to parking management in each zone. Having said this, a number of respondents' comments were concerned with the imposition of parking charges, particularly in Mere and Tisbury, rather than with the features of the different approaches to parking management in the six zones. Of the other comments received, a number suggested that modern communities were more complex and mixed than implied by the zones.
34. The proposed land-use zones and parking management in each zone was updated from the current LTP Parking Plan which was subject to stakeholder consultation and reviews of land-use at the time. So, while the zones and management strategy in each zone are considered to be appropriate, greater flexibility has been introduced to the way in which these are implemented.

Questions 6 and 27 – Managing the Council's Parking Stock (130 and 98)

35. The way in which the Council is proposing to manage its off-street and on-street parking stock was supported by the majority of respondents (55.4%). Those that had reservations or did not support the policy made a number of comments including:
- (i) Reducing off-street long-stay parking will lead to commuters parking on-street instead, and should therefore only be 'considered' where 'good' sustainable transport alternatives exist.
 - (ii) Short-stay and long-stay time periods should be defined, with on-street short-stay parking limited to one hour or less.
 - (iii) Blue badge parking provision should be made in accordance with recognised standards.
 - (iv) Increases in short-stay parking provision will encourage further traffic movements.
36. Points (i) to (iii) above have been incorporated into the revised policy. In terms of point (iv), while this may be an outcome, these traffic movements will generally be at non-peak times of the day. The adequate provision of short-stay parking spaces can also help support local businesses.
37. On the associated question of restricting short-stay parking to a maximum of three hours (question 27), 64.3% of respondents were in agreement.

38. Although some aspects of on-street parking are dealt with in the strategy as it stands, it is acknowledged that a more comprehensive review of the management of on-street parking will need to be undertaken in due course; a programme of on-street waiting restriction reviews is currently being developed.

Question 7 – Kerb Space Hierarchy (129)

39. The majority of respondents (54.3%) thought that the proposed kerb space hierarchy was reasonable. A number of people, however, suggested that the hierarchy should be more flexible and reflect the different needs of different areas (e.g. residents' parking to have a higher priority in residential areas). A number of suggestions for amending the hierarchy were also made although no one clear consensus emerged.
40. Reflecting respondents' comments and the approach outlined in paragraph 34, a degree of flexibility has been introduced to the way in which the kerb space hierarchy will be implemented.

Questions 8 and 26 – Parking Charges (Mon-Sat) (160 and 96)

41. Three options for parking charges (Monday - Saturday) were proposed as part of the consultation: 'conventional' (lowest charges), 'balanced' and 'radical' (highest charges). The development of these options followed a review by Mouchel of existing charges both within Wiltshire and in surrounding local authority areas.
42. Overall, Mouchel found that the parking charges in Wiltshire were significantly lower than in surrounding local authority areas and particularly compared to key competitor towns (an update of current parking charges in key competitor towns is included in **Appendix 3**). It was also found that, as a result of having four former District Councils, there were significant differences in parking charges across Wiltshire.
43. Other major considerations in the setting of parking charges were also reviewed as part of the process including the strength of the local economies, traffic conditions, availability of sustainable modes, environmental conditions and potential future demand.
44. The majority of respondents (59.4%) chose the 'conventional' option with 22.9% choosing the 'balanced' option and 17.7% the 'radical' option. A significant number of people, particularly from the South West Wiltshire community area (who did not generally answer the specific questions set out in the consultation and are therefore not included in the above figures), argued that parking charges should not be introduced and/or increased at all. Other comments included that:
- (i) The options do not reflect the rural nature of Wiltshire where most people need to use a car to access essential services and facilities.
 - (ii) Increased long-stay charges would have a disproportionate impact on lower paid workers.
 - (iii) The first hour of short-stay parking should be free to support the vitality and vibrancy of towns.

- (iv) More convenient means of paying (e.g. by mobile phone and 'pay on exit') should be introduced. (It should be noted that 'pay by mobile phone' will be implemented across the county in December 2010).
45. The following paragraphs (46 - 55) outline the characteristics, and advantages and disadvantages of each of the charging options as included in Mouchel's reports.

Conventional option

46. This option seeks to achieve a greater degree of consistency between and within the bands (i.e. charges steadily decrease from Band 1 to Band 4 and are level within each band). In order to achieve this position, while parking charges for most towns remain broadly as they are now, there have been some changes made in several towns.
47. It is also proposed that parking charges are introduced at all car parks to cover operational and maintenance costs, to ensure that council tax payers do not subsidise car parking and/or to provide revenue to support sustainable transport measures (e.g. local bus services). Lastly, short-stay parking has been priced at a premium over long-stay parking (where time periods overlap) to reflect the increased convenience of short-stay car parks.
48. The main advantages of this options are:
- Relatively low impact on the economies in Band 1 and 2 towns, and the majority of Band 3 towns.
 - No significant impact on the competitiveness of Band 1 and 2 towns, and the majority of Band 3 towns in comparison with key competitor towns in neighbouring areas.
 - Relatively low impact on the affordability of access by private car for Band 1 and 2 towns, and the majority of Band 3 towns.
49. The main disadvantages of this option are:
- Potential impacts on the local economies of Band 3 and 4 towns where there is currently free parking.
 - Limited impact on reducing congestion, carbon emissions, noise and air quality pollution.
 - No significant increase in parking revenues to enable the Council to fund sustainable transport measures (e.g. local bus services).

Balanced option

50. This option builds on the proposals put forward in the 'conventional' option by modestly increasing charges in the Band 1 and 2 towns of Salisbury, Chippenham and Trowbridge (where sustainable transport alternatives are more readily available), with smaller increases elsewhere.

51. The main advantages of this options are:

- Relatively low impact on the economies in Band 1 and 2 towns, and the majority of Band 3 towns.
- No significant widespread impact on the competitiveness of Band 1 and 2 towns, and the majority of Band 3 towns in comparison with key competitor towns in neighbouring areas.
- A small positive impact on reducing congestion, carbon emissions, noise and air pollution.
- An increase in revenue to support sustainable transport measures (e.g. local bus services).

52. The main disadvantages of this option are:

- Potential impacts on the local economies of Band 3 and 4 towns where there is currently free parking.
- A small negative impact on the affordability of access by private car.
- Some public opposition to increase in parking charges.

Radical option

53. This option builds on the proposals put forward in the 'conventional' option through modest to significant increases across the spatial bands. As with the 'balanced' option, the level of increases are higher in the Band 1 and 2 towns of Salisbury, Chippenham and Trowbridge where sustainable transport alternatives are more readily available.

54. The main advantages of this options are:

- No significant widespread impact on competitiveness in comparison with key competitor towns in neighbouring areas.
- A significant positive impact on reducing congestion, carbon emissions and noise and air pollution, particularly in Band 1 and 2 towns.
- A significant increase in parking revenues to enable the Council to fund sustainable transport measures (e.g. local bus services).
- Strong further encouragement for people to use the Park and Ride services in Salisbury.

55. The main disadvantages of this option are:

- Potential adverse impact on local economies if town footfall levels are reduced.
- Significant negative impact on the affordability of access by private car.
- Potentially strong public opposition to the widespread increase in car parking charges.

Preferred Option

56. In order to reflect the consultation responses (see paragraph 44), it is proposed that the 'preferred' option is largely based on the respective support for each of the above options. Therefore, each parking charge in Table 2 below (excluding the first two hours in Salisbury (Band 1) where a £2.00 charge applies and the first hour elsewhere where the 'conventional' charge applies) has been determined in accordance with the following weighting:

- 59% of the 'conventional' charge
- 23% of the 'balanced' charge
- 18% of the 'radical' charge.

Table 2: Preferred Parking Charges (Mon-Sat)

Band	Stay	<1hr	<2hr	<3hr	<4hr	<5hr	<8hr	All day
1	Short	-	£2.00	£3.80	-	-	-	-
1	Long	-	£2.00	£3.60	£4.20	£5.00	£6.70	£6.70
2	Short	£1.00	£1.40	£2.90	-	-	-	-
2	Long	£0.80	£1.20	£2.40	£2.80	£3.80	£4.90	£5.40
3	Short	£0.40	£1.10	£1.90	-	-	-	-
3	Long	£0.30	£1.00	£1.80	£2.20	£2.90	£4.70	£5.10
4	Short	£0.30	£1.00	£1.80	-	-	-	-
4	Long	£0.20	£0.90	£1.70	£2.10	£2.60	£4.40	£4.70

Note: Charges have been rounded up to the next 10 pence increment.

57. The 'conventional' charge has been applied to the first hour in all the bands (excluding Band 1) in acknowledgement that many people want to park for a short time period on a frequent basis; in doing so, the lower charge will help support the vitality and vibrancy of Wiltshire's market towns.
58. In Salisbury, representation was received for an alternative option of a £2.00 flat charge for the first two hours parking (the revenue effect of this option is neutral). This is supported by Salisbury City Centre Management. As Salisbury is alone in its band (Band 1) this proposal affects no other towns.
59. The other exception is the Market Place car park in Devizes. Both Marlborough and Devizes have charges higher than other Band 3 towns. However, Marlborough has some on-street parking free for half an hour. By applying the same criteria to the Market Place car park in Devizes, both communities are treated in an equal manner.
60. It should be noted that where there would be a reduction in a car park charge as a result of the introduction of the charges above, then the current charge (subject to the recommendation in paragraph 63) would remain in place until equalisation is achieved. Thereafter, the car park charge would increase in line with the relevant band increases.
61. Prioritised reviews will be undertaken where there is an identified displacement of parking into inappropriate areas caused as a result of the imposition of the revised parking charges (see also paragraphs 91 and 92 on residents' parking zones).

62. On a wider but nevertheless related issue, the combined effect of reductions in Council funding and the changes in concessionary fares reimbursement and Bus Service Operators Grant will be to severely reduce the ability of operators and the Council to provide reasonable levels of public bus service in Wiltshire (see **Appendix 4**). Operators will lose a significant proportion of their income, leading to higher prices for services they operate for the Council and a reduction in the services they are able to run commercially. At the same time, the Council will have less funding available for existing supported services, or to replace the services being withdrawn by the commercial operators.
63. Given the above, it is recommended that Cabinet supports an uplift in all on-street and off-street parking charges by ten per cent (rounded to the nearest ten pence which keeps Band 3 and 4 one hour charges at the level shown in Table 2) (see **Appendix 5**). Furthermore, it is recommended that Cabinet agrees to the hypothecation of surplus parking charges (i.e. that which is over and above the 2010/11 forecast income of £5,040,000) to provide funding for sustainable transport measures (e.g. local bus services). In doing so, this will establish a direct and transparent link between increases in parking charges and the Councils' support for sustainable transport services. Importantly, this will also help provide essential accessibility for non-car users and those people who prefer to choose sustainable transport modes.

Question 9 - Opportunities for Parish and Town Councils (140)

64. The following two opportunities, which were supported by a large majority of respondents to the consultation (73.6%), were offered to relevant Band 3 and 4 Parish and Town Councils:
- In Band 3 towns, to 'buy back' a small proportion of short-stay spaces from Wiltshire Council to offer as free parking spaces.
 - In Band 4 towns, to take over the management of local public car parks and associated costs as an alternative to parking charges being set by Wiltshire Council.
65. A number of respondents stated that the above opportunities should be made available to the city, town and parish councils in all the bands. Other comments included that the provision of free parking is effectively already paid through the council tax, and that if Band 4 towns did not take up the relevant opportunity, then charging revenues would not cover Wiltshire Council's management and enforcement costs.
66. A series of correspondence and meetings have been initiated with relevant Parish and Town Councils to understand their interest in taking up these opportunities and to discuss the Band 3 'buy back' cost of £500 plus VAT per space per year (to be managed through a legal agreement) and the Framework for a Lease with Band 4 towns which will be used as the basis for further negotiations with Parish and Town Councils on a case by case basis with the support of the Council's legal and property departments (see **Appendix 6**).
67. Comments received to date on the opportunities from Parish and Town Councils are included at **Appendix 7**. In particular, the following requests have been made:

- (i) Warminster Town Council would like the car parking assets currently under Wiltshire Council control to be transferred to Warminster Town Council as a community asset so that the Town Council can run them for the benefit of the town.
 - (ii) Box Parish Council feel that the period suggested of two years for the lease is too short if the Parish Council is expected to maintain the surface and walls. The Parish Council feels that this should preferably be for a ten year period with a five year break clause.
 - (iii) Tisbury Town Council's decision was resolved on the basis that the lease would be for a period of ten years, and not two years, as this was their understanding following a meeting with Wiltshire Council in August.
68. It should be noted that relevant Parish and Town Councils have been advised that they will need to agree to the lease by 31 March 2011.
69. It is recommended that Cabinet supports the principle of the opportunities expressed in paragraph 64 and delegates authority to the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood and Planning in association with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to agree the detailed terms of the lease with relevant Parish and Town Councils.

Question 10 – Reviewing Parking Charges (119)

70. The response to this question was relatively even with 52.1% of respondents agreeing that the proposed way of reviewing parking charges was reasonable. A number of people, however, stated that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) should be used instead of the Retail Price Index (RPI), and that five years between fundamental reviews was too long and that a three year time scale was more appropriate.
71. Given recent changes to the way in which annual increases to benefits and pensions are to be calculated, it is considered more appropriate that the annual review of parking charges should be based on the CPI rather than the RPI (using the CPI figure for September each year with reviewed charges rounded to the nearest ten pence). In terms of the timescale for the more fundamental reviews of parking charges, it is considered that a five year time interval is practical and reasonable.

Question 11 – Season Tickets (117)

72. The majority of respondents (77.8%) believed that the Council should continue to offer season tickets. A number of comments were made suggesting improvements, including the following:
- (i) Local businesses should be able to buy and share season tickets to their staff and customers as required.
 - (ii) Lower rates should be offered to town centre residents, key workers, essential car users, car sharers and low emission vehicles.
 - (iii) Payment levels should be affordable and flexible.
 - (iv) The use of season tickets should be restricted to under utilised and/or long-stay car parks.

73. While the option of season tickets has been retained in the strategy, the actual terms and conditions offered by the Council on season tickets and permits are subject to a current review; this review will include consideration of the comments made as part of this consultation.
74. The very short-term use of Council car parks by parents dropping off their children at school was raised during the consultation. A policy position on this matter was adopted by the former North Wiltshire District Council and this will be used as the basis for a countywide approach.

Questions 12, 16, 31 and 32 – Residential Parking Standards in New Development (136, 124, 106 and 102)

75. Controlling the amount of parking provided in new housing developments has historically been used as a way of seeking to influence both car use and ownership levels. It is, however, now considered generally unrealistic to seek to influence car ownership levels through residential parking standards as the majority of people will still want to own a car for the flexibility it provides.
76. It is therefore proposed that one of the aims of the Council's parking strategy should be on influencing car use through appropriate parking measures at destinations (e.g. retail, commercial and employment areas) and not seeking to influence car ownership levels through overly restrictive residential parking measures which can cause streetscene or safety issues as a result of parking overspill.
77. While the majority of respondents (77.2%) to the consultation supported this approach, a number did state that, in their view, minimum parking standards are contrary to current relevant national guidance and that land use take and design would suffer as a result.
78. It is considered that minimum residential parking standards are consistent with current government guidance such as PPS3 'Housing' (June 2010) in that account is being taken of the expected levels of car ownership in a predominately rural area like Wiltshire. Having stated this, the approach to residential parking in the revised strategy has been amended to ensure that it is flexible enough to deal with particular local circumstances, including housing design and density factors.
79. In terms of the question on whether garages should continue to be included in the allocated residential parking provision for housing developments, the response was more balanced with 54.9% of respondents stating that this should not be the case. Again, the approach to the use of garages in future housing developments has been clarified in the revised strategy to ensure that it is flexible enough to deal with particular local circumstances.

Questions 13, 30, 33 and 34 – Private Non-Residential Parking Standards for New Development (123, 92, 118 and 113)

80. The number of respondents supporting the policy and maximum standards for private non-residential parking was relatively even at 52.8% and 48.9% respectively. Some two-thirds of respondents disagreed with the other questions on the proposed initial and secondary discount levels for maximum parking standards.
81. While some respondents wanted more flexibility to reflect local circumstances (i.e. standards determined on a case-by-case basis), others wanted more certainty. Many respondents considered that maximum parking standards were not appropriate for a predominantly rural area like Wiltshire and that maximum standards would discourage commercial development and lead to on-street overspill parking.
82. The use of maximum standards for non-residential use classes reflects PPS4 'Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth' (2009). In undertaking their review, Mouchel have simply updated and harmonised the existing maximum parking standards used in Wiltshire. The accessibility framework is also a broad continuation of the approach adopted in the existing LTP Parking Plan and, along with the ability for discussions to be undertaken on the merits on individual sites with developers, provides the necessary flexibility to deal with local circumstances.

Question 14 – Managing Publicly Available Non-Residential Parking (120)

83. Managing Council owned parking is made more complicated where there is significant publicly available private non-residential parking (e.g. at retail outlets and supermarkets). Particular concerns include that:
- people may park in a supermarket or retail outlet car park free when visiting a town rather than using a nearby Council short-stay car park – this could both cause parking overspill onto residential roads if the supply of supermarket spaces is exceeded and a loss of revenue to the council; and
 - people may decide to shop at a supermarket or retail outlet because it has free car parking rather than in the local high street which relies on Council car parks – this could undermine the vitality and vibrancy of small retailers.
84. The proposed policy seeks to require that any planning application that includes publicly available private non-residential parking provides a car park management plan and implements parking restrictions and charges consistent with those of Council run car parks in the local area.
85. The majority of respondents (68.3%) did not support the above policy position. Of these, a significant number made the comment that the Council should not be interfering in the actions of private companies. Moreover, many also felt that the policy was unfair to new developers and that it could not be enforced by the Council.

86. In effect, the Council is already following the policy position on an informal basis (e.g. as demonstrated at Waitrose in Marlborough and Sainsburys in Trowbridge, etc.). Nevertheless, the policy has been amended to ensure that local circumstances and need are more fully considered.

Question 15 – Reductions in Private Non-Residential Parking Stock (134)

87. A significant majority of respondents (79.1%) did not support any reductions in the number and/or use of existing privately owned non-residential parking stock. Many respondents felt that such a policy would lead to overt Council interference in commercial decisions and may discourage future development in Wiltshire. Other comments included that the Council's public parking stock should also be considered and that the policy should focus on the better utilisation of spaces rather than reduction.
88. Given the consultation response and the fact that reductions in private non-residential parking stock can be considered through the development control process under existing national guidance, the policy has been deleted from the revised strategy.

Question 17 – Parking Enforcement (112)

89. While a significant majority of respondents (88.4%) supported the proposed approach to parking enforcement, a number of comments were made including the following:
- (i) The Council's approach to enforcement should be flexible.
 - (ii) Fines should be proportionate.
 - (iii) Parking enforcement should be visible in all of Wiltshire's towns.
 - (iv) Payment for parking charges should be 'pay on exit' rather than on arrival.
90. These and other relevant issues will be considered as part of the development of a Parking Enforcement Strategy in 2012/13.

Questions 18 and 29 – Residents' Parking Zones (118 and 105)

91. A significant majority of respondents supported both the policy (88.1%) and the process (68.6%) put forward in the draft strategy document. A few respondents suggested that residents' parking zones are only needed because of a failure to adequately deal with parking demand, particularly from commuters. There were also calls for the permit charges to be revenue neutral and for schemes to be sufficiently flexible so as to allow short-term parking for non-residents (e.g. tradesmen carrying out domestic repairs).
92. The policy and process will provide the context for any residents' parking zone reviews in market towns. Details of the timescale for these reviews are to be determined.

Question 19 – Visitor Attraction Parking (115)

93. A significant majority of respondents (89.6%) supported the proposed policy on visitor attraction parking.

Question 20 – Park and Ride (110)

94. While the majority of respondents (63.6%) supported the policy on Park and Ride, many of the comments made concerned operational issues which are outside the remit of the car parking strategy. Of those comments that were related to the policy approach, many argued that the park and ride service should be self-financing and not be subsidised from parking revenues.
95. Park and Ride sites effectively act as long-stay car parks at the edge of town centres. It is recognised that the park and ride charges needs to be set above normal bus services but below equivalent parking charges to work successfully. The mix, number and charging regime for long-stay spaces needs to reflect and support this approach. As stated previously, parking management in Salisbury may need to be reviewed in light of the area transport strategy which is to be developed to support planned growth.

Question 21 – Parking at Railway Stations (135)

96. The provision of adequate car parking at railway stations can help to reduce the length of car journeys by attracting people onto rail for at least part of their journey. Increased car parking provision can, however, also encourage people to use their car instead of more sustainable modes to travel to the station. Therefore, in looking at parking issues at railway stations, the strategy advocated that a number of factors would be considered including the provision of a station travel plan.
97. The response to the question on parking at railway stations was relatively even with 52.6% of respondents not supporting the policy. Of these, a number stated that the use of a car is the only realistic means of accessing railway stations and that therefore, particularly at the more rural stations, increased parking provision should be supported and that station travel plans are only relevant in the larger market towns.
98. It is often a difficult balance between encouraging use of sustainable transport modes to access railway stations and discouraging rails users because parking provision is too expensive and/or insufficient. In view of this, it is considered sensible for local circumstances to be assessed as part of a station travel plan before increased parking is supported.

Question 22 – Improving Access and Use (121)

99. An overwhelming majority of respondents (95%) supported the proposed policy on improving access and use. Officers held a separate meeting with the chair of the Swindon and Wiltshire Users' Network where the provision for disabled parking was discussed and as a result, a number of amendments have been made to the policy.

Question 23 – Workplace Parking Levy (117)

100. The majority of respondents (62.4%) did not support the policy on the workplace parking levy. However, it seems that many respondents misinterpreted the policy which simply states the Council's position to keep the introduction of the workplace parking levy under review. This reflects the council's current position as stated in the adopted Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016.

Question 24 – Residents' Overspill Parking (118)

101. The majority of respondents (63.6%) supported the proposed policy on residents' overspill parking. A number of respondents argued that parking demand should be managed (e.g. through personalised travel planning measures) before any loss of green space is considered.

Question 28 – Sunday Parking Charges (131)

102. In recognition that traffic volumes and sustainable transport services are reduced on Sundays, one hour and all-day charges were proposed at reduced rates compared with Monday - Saturday charges. Nevertheless, the vast majority (84.7%) of respondents disagreed with the proposed Sunday parking charges on a number of grounds including:

- (i) The Council's enforcement costs would exceed revenue streams.
- (ii) There would be an adverse impact on church attendance and visitor numbers.
- (iii) Charging is unnecessary except in a few locations (e.g. tourist hotspots) because congestion and parking demand on Sundays is not an issue.

103. As stated above, Sunday was implicitly identified in the draft strategy document as being different to the other days of the week. In view of the consultation response, it is proposed that the proposed Sunday parking charges are not introduced and that the current charges (subject to the recommendation in paragraph 61) are only retained in Salisbury given its particular local circumstances. It is further proposed that the following addition is made to 'Policy PS3 – Parking

'Sunday parking charges will be considered where there is an identified traffic congestion or air quality issue, or where there is a strong and established parking demand from shoppers or visitors'.

Environmental and climate change considerations

104. The draft car parking strategy has been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as part of the development of the third Wiltshire LTP. The SEA Environmental Report was subject to public consultation from 4 October to 26 November 2010.

105. Table 3 below identifies the significance of the effect of the draft car parking strategy on each SEA topic.

Table 3: SEA Effects

SEA Topic	Significance of the effect
Biodiversity	No significant effect
Land, soil and water resources	Minor negative effect
Air quality and environmental pollution	Minor positive effect
Climatic factors	Minor positive effect
Historic environment	Partial positive/partial negative effect
Landscapes (and townscapes)	Partial positive/partial negative effect
Population	Minor positive effect
Healthy communities	Minor positive effect
Inclusive communities	Minor positive effect
Transport	Minor positive effect
Economy and enterprise	Minor positive effect

106. For those topics where negative effects have been identified, Table 4 provides further details of the impact and suggested mitigation measures.

Table 4: SEA Negative Effects

SEA Topic	Impact	Suggested mitigation and enhancement measures
Land, soil and water resources	<p>No significant effects [on soil quality and water resources].</p> <p>While new council car parks (including Park & Ride sites) are not being proposed as part of the strategy, the move to minimum residential parking standards will lead to a greater land take requirement for parking in new housing developments.</p>	<p>Mitigation - Further emphasis on the use of unallocated communal parking should be considered as part of the approach to residential parking. More generally, a comment on environmental mitigation measures (e.g. use of permeable surfaces) should be included in the strategy.</p>
Historic environment	<p>The introduction of charging at most council car parks will help to reduce car trips by a small degree and provide some limited further encouragement for people to use sustainable modes. Beneficial impacts will be most felt in the market towns and particularly in Salisbury where the highest charges are being proposed.</p> <p>The enforcement of parking restrictions will also be positive in enhancing streetscapes. However, there is the danger that there may be an adverse impact on streetscenes if</p>	<p>Mitigation - The adoption of the radical parking charges option would provide the most beneficial impact on the historic environment. Controlled parking schemes need to be considered where commuter/shopper parking is redistributed onto inappropriate streets.</p>

SEA Topic	Impact	Suggested mitigation and enhancement measures
	<p>people choose to park in nearby streets rather than pay the charge. Policy PS3 states that local environmental conditions will be considered in settling parking charges.</p>	
Landscapes (and townscapes)	<p>No significant impact on Wiltshire's landscape.</p> <p>The introduction of charging at most council car parks will help to reduce car trips by a small degree and provide some limited further encouragement for people to use sustainable modes. Beneficial impacts will be most felt in the market towns and particularly in Salisbury where the highest charges are being proposed. The effective enforcement of parking restrictions will be positive in enhancing streetscenes. However, there is the danger that there may be an adverse impact on streetscenes if people choose to park in nearby streets rather than pay the charge. Policy PS3 states that local environmental conditions will be considered in settling parking charges.</p>	<p>Mitigation - The adoption of the radical parking charges option would provide the most beneficial impact on townscapes. Controlled parking schemes need to be considered where commuter/shopper parking is redistributed onto inappropriate streets.</p>

107. The SEA outputs and consultation comments will be considered as part of the development of the final car parking strategy for publication with the third Wiltshire LTP in March 2011.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

108. The draft car parking strategy has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) as part of the development of the third Wiltshire LTP. The EqIA was subject to public consultation from 4 October to 26 November 2010.

109. The summary findings of the EqIA states that:

“The strategy sets minimum standards for disabled people and ensures that equality groups have access to adequate parking provisions. The parking charges allocated to areas reflect the economic vitality, and alternative transport systems available. Revenue for increased charges may also be used to provide alternative transport to community centres.

The impact of the policy options on the equality goals has been considered and consultation has been carried out with different equality groups and stakeholders.

Adverse issues relating to parking will continue to be able to be reported through the Area Boards after the LTP3 consultation is completed”.

110. The EqlA recommendations and consultation comments will be considered as part of the development of the final car parking strategy for publication with the third Wiltshire LTP in March 2011.

Risk Assessment

111. Table 5 highlights the headline risks and proposed management of those risks associated with the proposals in this report. A risk register has also been developed to enable each risk associated with the implementation of the project to be considered in detail.

Table 5: Headline Risks

Risks of not carrying out proposals	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued inconsistency in parking charges, standards and management between the former district areas of Wiltshire. • Inability to reflect changes in national policy, guidance and best practice. • Parking charges increasingly out of step with charges in neighbouring authority areas. • Lower levels of parking revenue to support other council services, including subsidised buses. 	
Risks of proposals	Mitigation of risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to implement proposals on time. • Reduced parking demand/revenues due to increased charges. • Parking is dispersed onto neighbouring streets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed project plan produced. Early and ongoing engagement with Band 3 and 4 parish and town councils. • Forecast revenues have been adjusted by the use of a recognised demand elasticity value. • Town reviews are to be undertaken following implementation as per a prioritised programme.

Financial Implications

112. The income forecasts of the various charging options (see paragraphs 46 to 63) are shown in Table 6 below.

Charging Option	Forecast Income (£)	Demand Adjustment (£)	Adjusted Forecast (£)	Increase on 2010/11 (£)	Increase (%)
Conventional	5,573,172	-69,312	5,503,860	463,860	9.2
Balanced	5,979,150	-122,089	5,857,060	817,060	16.2
Radical	7,203,389	-281,241	6,922,139	1,882,149	37.3
Preferred	6,203,459	-151,250	6,052,209	1,012,209	20.1
Preferred plus 10%	6,762,500	-223,925	6,538,575	1,498,575	29.7

113. In reading the above table, the following should be noted:

- (i) The forecast income for 2010/11 is £5,040,000. This forecast is approximately £1m below the originally budgeted level. It is anticipated that the 'preferred' option plus ten per cent will more than recoup this shortfall.
- (ii) The figures cover all off-street parking (Monday - Saturday) except for Park and Ride.
- (iii) The forecast income is based on a combination of actual and predicted car park occupancy figures.
- (iv) Many actual occupancy figures relate to time periods of one hour or more (e.g. at car parks where only tickets for up to four hours are available) and therefore cannot be accurately broken down into separate hourly time periods for forecasting purposes.
- (v) As a result of existing overpayments, an increase to some car park charges will not necessarily increase the forecast income (e.g. a ten pence overpayment is often taken against a 90 pence charge).
- (vi) The demand adjustment is based on a recognised elasticity of -0.13 as identified by Mouchel in their technical report. However, a variety of local factors (e.g. purpose and length of trip, availability of alternative transport modes, etc.) can affect the way in which people react to increases in parking charges, all of which can affect the elasticity of demand.
- (vii) The Value Added Tax increase of 2.5 per cent to 20 per cent from January 2011 has been allowed for in the income forecasts.

Legal Implications

114. Any significant change to either car parking charges or the terms and conditions applicable to car parks will require a public consultation process over 21 days to permit objections to be made and considered. Any objections received would then need to be identified in a report and considered by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.
115. For these purposes, a significant change would include:
- (i) Imposing a charge where one did not previously exist.
 - (ii) Introducing free parking areas into a charging car park.
 - (iii) Changing the class of vehicle permitted to use a car park
116. Failure to adhere to the statutory processes set out in the Procedure Regulation 1996 could result in:
- (i) The new charges being successfully challenged in the High Court resulting in loss of income and/or loss of reputation for Wiltshire Council.
 - (ii) Not being able to increase the charges on the anticipated implementation date of 4 April 2011.

Options Considered

117. As stated in paragraph 9, the option to allow Area Boards to set parking charges within specified levels was considered and rejected by the Overview and Scrutiny Environment Select Committee at its meeting on 12 January 2010.
118. As part of their review, Mouchel considered the following options (see Table 7 below).

Table 7: Options

Theme	Conventional	Balanced	Radical
Managing on-street and off-street parking	Retain existing provision and management.	Further promote short stay on-street parking through increasing charges where appropriate. Look to manage other areas where required to balance demand.	Removal of on-street parking in central areas, except for disabled, to promote non-car uses and restrict traffic in busy towns. Limit long stay parking provision to encourage use of alternative modes. Introduction of more park and ride sites to restrain vehicles

Theme	Conventional	Balanced	Radical
			from entering town centres.
Parking charges	Existing parking charges retained but broader unification of regime across the council area.	Increased parking charges with unified regime across the council, focussing charges on long stay users.	Substantially increased parking charges within a unified regime, focussing charges on long stay and larger settlements.
Parking standards	Retain existing maximum parking standards.	Retain existing maximum parking standards but introduce minimum standards for residential parking.	Retain existing maximum parking standards, introduce minimum standards for residential parking and apply discounts to maximum standards based on site accessibility.

Conclusions

119. The review of the current LTP parking strategy is required to deal with the general lack of consistency in parking charges, standards and management between the former district areas of Wiltshire. The review also enables the Council to consider changes in national parking policy and neighbouring authorities' parking charges.
120. The banding of settlements seeks to establish a balance between acknowledging differences between towns and developing a more consistent approach to parking throughout Wiltshire. The concept of spatial bands was supported by the majority of respondents.
121. The 'preferred' parking charge option has been largely based on the respective support for each of the three consultation options. The proposals to increase all parking charges by a further ten per cent and to hypothecate surplus parking charges revenue will enable the Council to support local bus services.
122. It is considered that the opportunities offered to Band 3 and Band 4 towns provide the necessary flexibility for relevant Parish and Town Councils to reflect local economic needs.
123. The move to minimum residential parking standards is a pragmatic response to the current unsatisfactory use of maximum residential parking standards in a predominately rural area like Wiltshire.
124. The policy and process on residents' parking zones clearly sets out the context for reviews in the market towns and was strongly supported by respondents.

125. The Sunday parking charges proposal has been amended in light of the overwhelming consultation response.
126. The main risks identified are a failure to implement the proposals on time, a reduction in parking demand and therefore revenues due to increased charges, and that parking is dispersed onto neighbouring streets in market towns.

MARK BODEN

Corporate Director
Department for Neighbourhood and Planning

Report Author:

Robert Murphy

Principal Transport Planner – Transport Policy
01225 713458

November 2010

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 – Car Parking Strategy
- Appendix 2 - Justification for Spatial Bands
- Appendix 3 - Average Car Parking Charges (Monday - Saturday) in Key Competitor Towns
- Appendix 4 - Impact on local Bus Services of Changes in Central Government Funding to the Bus Industry
- Appendix 5 – Preferred Parking Charges plus 10% Uplift
- Appendix 6 - Framework for a Lease
- Appendix 7 - Responses from Parish and Town Councils to the Band 3 and Band 4 Opportunities