

East Herts District Council

Proposed Off-Street Parking Charges Statutory Consultation Results Analysis



Originator	Checker	Approver
Baasill Ahmedi	Matthew Ring	Richard Hearle
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INTRODUCTION

This summary note provides analysis of consultation returns and objections received as part of East Herts District Council (EHDC) Statutory Consultation to amend the off-street parking charges in the towns of Ware, Bishops Stortford and Hertford.

This summary note should be read in conjunction with document ref. 326124-TPN-ITQ-004-01_A Statutory Consultation Results (with confidential data).

SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

EHDC are proposing to introduce a new flat rate charge to park in the councils' off-street car parks between 4pm and 10pm. Parking is currently free at this time.

The council are also proposing to introduce 30 minutes free parking for all users any time of the day. To accommodate this change the existing charging structure is proposed to change to provide users with more parking time under the existing charging structure.

The council is proposing these charges in the towns of Hertford, Bishop's Stortford and Ware.

The purpose of the survey is to see if the residents or users of the area are in support of these proposals.

STATUTORY CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY

On Thursday May 1st 2014 an online questionnaire was made available via EHDC website and paper copies of the same questionnaire was made available at different locations. In addition to this letter responses could be sent directly to Mott MacDonald and emails could be sent directly to EHDC.

The Statutory Consultation closed on Friday 30th May 2014, no responses were received after this date.

Where a respondent was objecting to the scheme it was compulsory that they justified their objection with an explanation. Where this was not the case the objection was not considered valid. All objections received were acceptable with comments to support their objection.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

All Areas

A total of 159 responses were received and one petition was received objecting to the proposals. The petition was signed by 2,011 signatories objecting to the proposals.

Of the 159 responses, 15 (9%) support the councils proposals, 140 (88%) do not support the councils proposals, 4 (3%) replied with 'No opinion'.

All comments made supporting the respondents views above have been reviewed and analysed in detail. For the purpose of this report staff familiar with this type of exercise have summarised the comments, with the most frequent comments summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Most Frequent comments made by respondents - All Areas

Comment	Frequency	Percentage
Proposals will be detrimental to the town centre	104	56%
Happy with the idea of limited free parking	23	12%
Extend the duration of free parking	20	11%
against the new proposals	16	9%
Implement pay on exit parking	8	4%
Doesn't make economic sense to introduce this proposal	7	4%
Money making scheme	5	2%
Free limited parking is useless	3	1%

From Table 1 it can be seen that, overall, respondents believe the proposed evening charge will have a negative or detrimental effect on the town centre.

However, respondents are supportive of the proposals to implement limited free parking, especially for the use of shops, which would be welcomed. They do however feel the proposed time of 30 minutes is not long enough.

Hertford Results Only

Having looked at the overall responses, undertaking a detailed analysis of the responses for each town will give us a better picture to see how the results reflect the different areas.

A total of 75 responses were received stating Hertford. 6 (8%) of the responses are in favour of the proposals, whilst 67 (89%) are against the proposals. 2 (3%) do not have an opinion towards proposal.

Table 2 summarises the comments made by respondents supporting their answer above.

Table 2: Top 3 comments made by respondents – Hertford Only

Comments	Frequency
Proposals will be detrimental to the town centre	49
Against the new proposals – do not make any changes	13
Happy with the idea of limited free parking	8

49 who responded in Hertford are against the evening restriction proposal due to the perceived detrimental effect it would have on the town centre and local businesses.

13 responses were against the proposals and believe the council should not make any changes to the current charging structure, whilst 8 responded welcoming the proposal to introduce limited free parking.

Bishop's Stortford Results Only

A total of 34 responses were received stating Bishop's Stortford. 6 (18%) support the proposals, 26 (76%) indicated they do not support the proposals and 2 (6%) have no opinion on the proposals.

Table 3 summarises the top three comments made by respondents supporting their answer above.

Table 3: Top 3 comments made by respondents – Bishop’s Stortford Only

Comments	Frequency
Proposals will be detrimental to the town centre	23
Doesn’t make economic sense to introduce charges	5
Happy with the idea of limited free parking	6

Once again it seems the proposal to include charges in the evening is not popular due to the perceived detrimental effect it would have on the town centre.

Once again the proposal for limited free parking is supported but some respondents expressed concern that the proposal does not make economic sense as the implementation will likely cost more than the total income received if the proposals are implemented.

Ware Results Only

A total of 23 responses were received stating Ware. Not a single respondent from this area was in favour of the proposal, 23 (100%) are against the proposals.

Table 4: Top 3 comments made by respondents – Ware Only

Comments	Frequency
Proposals will be detrimental to the town centre	14
Extend the duration of free parking	5
Happy with the idea of limited free parking	2

As we can see once again the proposal for evening restrictions is not welcomed by the residents because of the negative effects they believe it will have on the town centre and local businesses. A number of respondents believe the proposals are just a money making exercise.

Proposals to introduce free limited waiting are supported but 30 minutes free parking is not considered long enough.

Responses Stating Two or More Towns

Some 27 respondents stated more than one area in their response. 3 (11%) were in favour of the proposal, and 24 (89%) were against the proposal.

Table 5: Top 3 comments made by respondents stating two or more towns

Comments	Frequency
Proposals will be detrimental to the town centre	18
Extend the duration of free parking	6
Happy with the idea of limited free parking	6

From the comments received we can see that the respondents are against the proposals for the introduction of evening restrictions because of the negative effect they believe they would have on the town centre and local businesses.

The proposal for free limited parking was again welcomed but the duration of 30 minutes is again, not considered long enough.