

Parking Tariff Benchmarking: Frequency and Scale of Increases

Comparison table for Shropshire and neighbouring / comparable UK local authorities

Authority	Recent tariff increases identified	Frequency of review / increase	Typical fee or % increase	Relevant rationale / contextual points
Shropshire Council	Parking charges remained unchanged for several years before major review / increases identified for 2024/25 and further proposed rates noted in Shropshire parking review material.	Historically around 3-5 years between substantive reviews; recommendation is to move to a more regular review mechanism.	Examples: Shrewsbury on-street Band 1 from £2.80 to £3.60 per hour (+28.6%); Band 2 from £2.00 to £2.80 per hour (+40%). Later proposed schedule shows Band 1 £3.60, Band 2 £2.80, Band 3 £1.40, Band 4 £1.20 and lower bands £0.70 / £0.40.	Rationale includes asset maintenance, parking infrastructure investment, Park & Ride support, demand management, Local Transport Plan objectives, congestion reduction and air quality benefits.
Worcester City Council	First significant increase approved in 2023/24 following no tariff changes since 2009. Further annual review undertaken for 2026/27 including a proposed 5% uplift across Council-owned car parks and introduction of charges at Diglis Playing Fields and Waterworks Road car parks (subject to consultation).	Historically no increase for approximately 14 years before 2023. Since then, parking tariffs have been reviewed through the annual budget and fees and charges process.	2023/24 examples: Red Zone 2-hour stay increased from £2.40 to £3.00 (+25%); Amber Zone 2-hour stay increased from £1.80 to £2.00 (+11%). 2026/27 proposal: 5% increase in off-street parking charges	Rationale includes addressing inflationary pressures, maintaining parking assets, supporting core council services, ensuring financial sustainability, and aligning tariffs more closely with comparable authorities after a 14-year tariff freeze. The Council noted parking income is a significant funding source for waste, recycling, street cleansing and housing services.
Cheshire West and Chester Council	Tariff changes implemented for Council run car parks from January 2024 following many years without inflation-linked increases. A second phase increase was implemented from 30 January 2025 affecting car parks in Ellesmere Port, Frodsham and Northwich.	Phased annual review approach. The Council implemented Phase 1 in 2024 and Phase 2 in 2025 after a prolonged period of 10years during which charges had not kept pace with inflation.	2024 examples: Northwich 2-hour tariff increased from £0.20 to £0.50 (+150%); longer-stay tariffs increased from £3 to £3.30 2025 examples: Most tariffs across Ellesmere Port, Frodsham and Northwich increased by £0.20.	The Council cited significant investment in parking facilities, new payment machines and payment options, the need to address inflation after charges had not increased for many years (in some cases over 10 years), and support for the borough's 15-year Parking Strategy. The Council also highlighted the need to ensure parking remains financially sustainable while supporting local economic activity.
Westmorland & Furness Council (Cumbria)	Comprehensive Parking Services Review commenced in September 2024 forming the evidence base for the Council's Parking Strategy 2025.	Strategic review-led approach following local government reorganisation following local government reorganisation in 2023.	The published strategy and review documents do not currently specify tariff increases.	Reviews include improving consistency across former councils, reviewing parking fees and charges, improving permit arrangements, supporting town centres, supporting sustainable transport objectives and aligning parking operations with wider transport policy.
Wiltshire Council	Comprehensive parking charges review was approved alongside the Parking Plan 2026-2030 in January 2026. Following consultation, revised parking charges were implemented in September 2026.	Biennial review cycle. Parking charges remained unchanged from 2022 until the 2026 review. The Council's Parking Plan 2026–2030 introduced regular two-yearly tariff reviews, with increases implemented in 2026 and a further review planned for 2028	Parking charges increased by an average of 20% from September 2026. The Council noted that inflation had increased by approximately 28% since the previous tariff increase in 2022. Consultation documents also referenced a further 5% increase planned for 2028.	The review was driven by inflationary pressures, the need for a financially sustainable and self-financing parking service, support for transport infrastructure and rural bus services, and alignment with the Local Transport Plan

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Devon County Council	On-street parking charges were reviewed and increased in 2025, following the previous review in September 2022.	The Council reviews on-street parking tariffs periodically rather than annually, typically every 2-3 years,	Location-specific tariff changes rather than a standard county-wide increase. Recent examples include increases of up to 50%, with Ilfracombe tariffs increasing from £2.00 to £3.00 for a 2-hour stay (+50%) and some Exeter tariffs increasing by up to 49%.	Tariffs are reviewed to manage parking demand, reduce congestion by encouraging drivers to use car parks over on-street parking bays
Somerset Council	Undertook a county-wide parking harmonisation review in 2025, followed by the Somerset Parking Review and Charging Principles Framework in 2026.	Strategic county-wide review approach following local government reorganisation, with major parking reviews undertaken in 2025 and 2026	No single authority-wide percentage uplift identified. Somerset uses a five-tier pricing framework with tariffs varying by location, demand and car park role	The review focuses on fairness and consistency across Somerset, supporting local economies, managing parking demand, encouraging sustainable travel, improving customer clarity, supporting transport strategies and ensuring long-term financial sustainability.

Why Local Authorities should regularly review parking charges

Maintaining Financial Sustainability

Parking infrastructure requires ongoing investment in resurfacing, lighting, signage, payment systems, enforcement technology and general maintenance. If charges are not reviewed regularly, revenue fails to keep pace with rising costs.

Avoiding Large Future Increases

Small annual or biennial increases are generally easier for residents, businesses and visitors to understand and absorb than large step changes after many years of tariff freezes.

Supporting Effective Traffic Management

Parking charges are not simply a revenue mechanism. They are a recognised traffic management tool that can:

- Encourage turnover of prime parking spaces.
- Manage demand in busy centres.
- Reduce congestion.
- Support sustainable travel choices.
- Funding Wider Transport Improvements

Surplus parking income can be reinvested into transport initiatives including parking improvements, public realm, Park & Ride services and wider transport infrastructure.

Supporting Town Centre Vitality

Appropriately structured tariffs can improve parking availability and turnover, making it easier for shoppers and visitors to access town centres.

Risks of Not Reviewing Parking Charges

Authorities that delay reviews typically face a number of challenges:

- Growing Maintenance Backlogs
- Without sufficient revenue, councils may struggle to maintain car parks, equipment, lighting, surfacing and signage to the desired standard.
- Reduced Ability to Invest
- Investment in new payment technology, EV infrastructure, security improvements and Park & Ride enhancements becomes increasingly difficult.
- Tariffs Fall Behind the Market
- When neighboring authorities undertake regular reviews whilst one authority does not, tariff structures become increasingly misaligned and can undermine demand management objectives.
- Requirement for Large Catch-Up Increases
- Long periods without review often lead to politically difficult increases of 20-40% or more when action finally becomes unavoidable.
- Pressure on General Council Budgets
- Where parking income no longer covers operating and maintenance costs, increasing pressure can be placed on wider council finances.

Conclusion

Benchmarking indicates that regular annual or biennial tariff reviews are increasingly common. Authorities that have frozen tariffs for several years often need larger catch-up increases, commonly exceeding standard inflationary uplifts. Shropshire's movement towards updated tariffs is therefore consistent with regional and comparable authority practice, provided future reviews are made regular, transparent and linked to asset condition, demand management and wider transport objectives.