

EVENING CAR PARKING CHARGES

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Mark Bullivant
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Guy Revans
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This report sets out the current parking provision for Bromsgrove town centre car parks and outlines the details of a twelve month trial offering free evening parking from 7pm each evening on the following Pay and Display car parks only: Recreation Road North, Stourbridge Road, Parkside, School Drive, Windsor Street, New Road and Hanover Street.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members resolve that:

- 2.1 A twelve month trial be undertaken on Pay and Display car parks within Bromsgrove offering free parking from 7pm each evening. This trial will start in February 2015 and be reviewed in February 2016.

That Members recommend that:

- 2.2 the shortfall in projected income of £60k for the 12 months trial be released from balances.

3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 Financial Implications

- 3.1.1 The table below shows the parking tariffs for 2014/15. There are no increases in the tariffs for 2015/16.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

7th January 2015

Car Park	Up to 30 minutes	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	5 hours	All day
Recreation Road South	40p	80p	£1.60	£2.40	£3.20	£4.00	n/a
Churchfields Multi-storey	40p	80p	£1.60	£2.40	-	-	£3.00
Recreation Road North	40p	80p	£1.60	£2.40	-	-	£5.00
Parkside	40p	80p	£1.60	£2.40	£3.20	£4.00	n/a
Stourbridge Road	40p	80p	£1.60	£2.40	-		£5.00
School Drive	40p	80p	£1.60	£2.40	-	-	£5.00
Hanover Street	40p	80p	£1.60	£2.40	-	-	£5.00
New Road	40p	80p	£1.60	£2.40	£3.20	£4.00	-
Windsor Street	50p	£1.00	£2.00	-	-	-	-
Bromsgrove Railway Station	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£3.00
Dolphin Centre (Permits only)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

3.1.2 The income generated at the pay and display machines between 7pm and 10pm for a twelve month period is detailed below

Evening Machine Income for Pay and Display Car Parks (Exc VAT)

	19:00 - 19:59	20:00 - 20:59	21:00 - 21:59	Total
Dec-13	£1,761.33	£779.29	£189.54	£2,730.17
Jan-14	£2,219.83	£908.83	£196.04	£3,324.71
Feb-14	£2,313.67	£871.71	£154.00	£3,339.38
Mar-14	£2,570.50	£1,012.88	£173.13	£3,756.50
Apr-14	£2,255.63	£934.08	£180.25	£3,369.96
May-14	£2,213.96	£925.33	£233.25	£3,372.54
Jun-14	£2,138.21	£949.38	£267.58	£3,355.17
Jul-14	£2,205.13	£1,031.50	£213.08	£3,449.71
Aug-14	£2,048.42	£918.88	£186.75	£3,154.04
Sep-14	£2,352.63	£956.79	£184.38	£3,493.79
Oct-14	£2,282.58	£901.13	£155.58	£3,339.29
Nov-14	£1,970.92	£760.04	£151.33	£2,882.29
Total	£26,332.79	£10,949.83	£2,284.92	£39,567.54

3.1.3 The total amount of money taken at the machines between 7pm and 10 pm during this twelve month period was £39,567 (Exc. VAT). If free parking was offered during this period the loss in

parking income would be higher than this figure as the reporting system does not account for monies paid prior to 7pm therefore a driver paying for three hours parking at 5:50pm or two hours parking at 6:50pm would not be recorded. Based on information within the system, the annual income generated between 6pm and 7pm is £23,860. It is reasonable to assume that a proportion of this and revenue from 5pm would be lost.

- 3.1.4 The authority may also see a displacement of customers from the pay on foot Recreation Road South car park to the free Pay and Display car parks during the evenings which would further reduce income generated.
- 3.1.6 Therefore officers anticipate the potential loss of income to be between £38k and £60k per year.
- 3.1.7 If the Council decides to offer free parking the information boards in the car parks will need amending which will cost around £500.
- 3.1.8 Members should be aware that reducing the charging times from 10pm to 7pm will not provide any savings from reduced staffing levels as it will still be necessary to provide On Street Enforcement and monitor the Pay on Foot car parks.
- 3.1.9 Monitoring the positive impact of offering free evening parking will be difficult to achieve using car parking data. When the requirement to pay for a ticket is removed, the only way to record how many people use a car park would require someone to count the number of cars parked in a car park.
- 3.1.10 As an indicator is required to provide data on the result of the trial it is suggested that perhaps either the town centre regeneration team or economic development with their business contacts undertake a survey of the evening traders to see if they have noticed an increase in trade. However it should be noted that during a visit by officers a year ago to Altrincham it was reported that although businesses were very happy with the reduced parking rates they were not able to evidence any increase in trade as a result. Officers are continuing to assess how best data to monitor the effectiveness of the trial can be captured and members will be updated on this at the Cabinet meeting on 7th January.

3.2 Legal Implications

- 3.2.1 Bromsgrove District Council operates a system of providing off street parking for residents under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. This legislation allows the Council to designate off

street car parks (section 32) and regulate their operation, including the levying of charges, through a local car parking order (section 35). The current parking order in force is the District Council of Bromsgrove (Off-Street Car Parks) Order 2013.

3.2.2 To make substantive changes to the existing car parking order involves a consultation period and may take up to three months to bring into effect. There is a shorter process that can be used (see more detailed explanation below) where the only proposed change is to the schedule setting out the parking fees. For a very short trial period continuing under the existing order may be appropriate. However, for a period of 12 months officers would suggest that making changes to the car parking order should be considered so that the precise charging regime is clearly set out. The disadvantage of this approach is that changes may then have to be made again to the Order at the end of the trial period. However, generally speaking most councils keep their charges under review and there are other circumstances in the town centre that may lead to changes to the car parking order having to be made..

3.2.3 The process for updating off street car parking orders is prescribed by the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 2012. Regulation 26 sets out the process for making a change to charges at off street parking places by way of a " Notice of Variation". Briefly, this requires the Council to give notice of the proposed changes in the car parks affected by issuing a notice. The changes can then be brought into effect after 21 days. . Different rules apply in the event that substantive changes to the parking order are proposed and under this process there is a formal consultation period with the chance for objections to be made. Provided there are no objections the normal length of time needed to amend the car parking order is approximately 2 to 3 months.

3.3 Service/Operational Implications

3.3.1 Bromsgrove District Council has an ambitious town centre regeneration programme which is attracting a number of national retailers to both the town centre and edge of town. This proposal provides an opportunity for the Council to support local businesses and encourage the night time economy of the town.

3.3.2 Good quality safe car parking should help to support the Council's strategic purposes 'Help me to run a successful business', 'Keep my place safe and looking good' and 'Provide good things for me to do see and visit'

- 3.3.3 Bromsgrove District Council operates 11 charged car parks and 3 free car parks and also manages the enforcement of Alvechurch Sports and Social Club car park. The Council has also taken responsibility for the enforcement of On-Street parking regulations since Civil Parking Enforcement was introduced in May 2013.
- 3.3.4 The Council operate two payment methods in different car parks. 'Pay on Foot' allows the customer to pay for parking at the end of their stay, and 'Pay and Display' requires the customer to predict the length of their stay and pay up front.
- 3.3.5 Bromsgrove has a low pricing structure when compared to other close authorities and operates a flexible payment tariff which grants additional time when the set rates are overpaid, this is a good concession to motorists who might otherwise expect to lose money if they had incorrect coinage. Our neighbouring authorities do not offer this concession.
- 3.3.6 The Pay on Foot facility enables users to pay for the length of stay without the need to worry about overstaying a Pay & Display ticket. Users like this facility and it is considered to be a way of supporting the town's economy as it encourages users to have extended stays in the town.
- 3.3.7 Bromsgrove also operates a permit system for many of its car parks avoiding the need to use the Pay & Display machines for convenience. Charges for permit holders work out considerably cheaper when compared to the cost of buying daily tickets.
- 3.3.8 Bromsgrove District Council currently provides 1390 charged car park spaces in 11 car parks within Bromsgrove
- 3.3.9 The charged spaces account for the majority of charged parking within Bromsgrove town and there is little private sector parking competition. Free parking is however available at a number of supermarket sites on the edge of the town and on-street close to the town centre.
- 3.3.10 Car park charges are set using a traditional approach of charging more in prime car parks and less in the underused ones. However due to the geographical distribution of the car parks there is not a significant convenience factor and prices have tended to be set at the same level across most car parks. Maximum length of stay is used in preference to price to manage user behaviour. Prices in Bromsgrove are amongst the lowest in Worcestershire and are considered on a yearly basis but have not increased since 2010.

3.4 Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.4.1 Meetings have not taken place with customers/residents at this stage. This is a one year trial and as this proposal is reducing the parking charge we would not anticipate negative feedback and no particular group would be disadvantaged.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 There is a risk of a negative financial implications should parking charges be removed between 7pm and 10pm each evening on Pay and Display car parks
- 4.2 There a risk that the Council could also loose income from the Pay on Foot car parks if people opt to use Pay and Display free parking.
- 4.3 As referred to at 3.1.10 there is a risk that collecting evidence to monitor the effectiveness of the trial period will be difficult. Officers are mitigating this risk by exploring alternative ways to collect data.

5. APPENDICES

None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Short Review Nov 2014
Bromsgrove District Council parking Review Dec 2013
The Bromsgrove District Council (Off-Street Car Parks) Order 2013
Car Parks review 2010
Town Health Check December 2012
Disabled Parking Report 2012

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