

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**DRAFT REPORT TO CABINET**

**JULY 2009**

**PARKING IN BROMSGROVE**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor James Duddy
Responsible Head of Service	Mike Bell
Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report summarises the development of the car parking operation through investment, increases to staffing levels, the introduction of pay on foot, and the possibility of introducing Civil Parking Enforcement in the District.
- 1.2 The report also looks at making the parking service as customer friendly as possible by publishing full and complete details of the guidelines and policies used, and increasing the provision of customer friendly measures such as spaces for parents with children, and a better choice of tariff.
- 1.3 The report is as brief as possible with the substance provided by the appendices. Some of these items are dependant on earlier decisions. For example, it would not be economically viable for the Council to carry out Civil Parking Enforcement before adopting pay on foot. Therefore the following sequence should be followed;
- Adopt a new computer system to manage the parking service.
  - Employ an additional Civil Enforcement Officer.
  - Open Shopmobility on Saturdays and commence locking and unlocking of car parks using own staff rather than a contractor.

As a result:

- The business case for pay on foot will become more viable as only two extra staff are now required.
- The business case for Civil Parking Enforcement then also becomes more viable as potentially only one more officer is required.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the purchase of the Chipside software for parking management at a cost of £5k from existing budgets.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approve the deletion of the Shopmobility Assistant post and additional funding of £6.5k is allocated for a Civil Enforcement Officer.
- 2.3 That Cabinet request Council approve the release of capital receipts of £165k to fund the introduction of pay on foot on Recreation Road South and Churchfields car parks. In addition £6k to be included as part of the medium term financial plan for 2010/11 to fund increased maintenance costs.
- 2.4 That Cabinet approve an additional two additional Civil Enforcement Officers at a cost of £43k to facilitate the introduction of pay on foot.
- 2.5 That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Street Scene and Community to negotiate an agency agreement for CPE with Worcestershire County Council, such agreement to be on the same or similar terms and conditions as set out in the draft agreement attached at Appendix E. In the event that it is not possible for agreement to be reached on terms that are acceptable the matter to be referred back to Cabinet for further consideration.
- 2.6 That 10 additional parent and child spaces are provided at suitable locations on various car parks subject to Head of Service approval, and that these spaces are included in the car parking order in line with paragraph 3.21 at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.7 That the limited waiting spaces, with the exception of the four spaces for disabled drivers, on School Drive car park are converted back to standard spaces as soon as possible.
- 2.8 That the Dolphin Centre car park is converted to a permit only car park as soon as possible for the use of Dolphin Centre staff, Customer Service Centre staff, and contractors visiting the site.
- 2.9 That Cabinet approve and adopt Appendix C Customer Charter and Procedures, and Appendix D Parking Appeal Policy, and that delegated authority be granted to the Head of Street Scene and Community to review the Customer Charter and Procedures and the Parking Appeal Policy and make any revisions or amendments in the future.
- 2.10 That the hourly rate on Hanover Street car park is reduced from 80p per hour to 70p per hour, and that the all day fee on the same car park of £4 is reduced to £3 with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009.
- 2.11 That the 30 minute tariff is made available on long stay car parks at the rate of 40p with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009.

2.12 That the Churchfields Multi Storey and Stourbridge Road car parks have a three hour tariff set at £2.10 made available with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009.

### **3. BACKGROUND - STAFFING**

3.1 The parking section currently consists of three Civil Enforcement Officers. Officers have been concerned for some time that the section has taken on more and more work without any increase in the number of officers. For example the Council now charges for 50% more days and hours than in 2003. The appointment of an additional Civil Enforcement Officer is seen as extremely important by the team managing the car parks.

3.2 These Officers are involved in a wide range of activities other than enforcement. For example, all Officers have attended medical emergencies and provided assistance. Officers are regularly required to give directions and advice to people visiting the town and are often the first point of contact. In addition, these officers regularly give assistance to motorists in changing tyres or assisting broken down vehicles.

3.3 Should the Council adopt other parking control methods such as pay on foot, the ambassadorial role of these officers will increase.

3.4 The problem the section has is in justifying the appointment of a further officer is the cost involved. The section cannot rely on the income generated by excess charges as the aim of the section is to force 100% compliance through effective and reasonable enforcement. Therefore the appointment must be funded by savings. The cost of the post is estimated at £21.5k.

3.5 Two Officers are currently involved in the administration of the parking office. In order to improve the efficiency of the service and to realise savings to fund the additional resource officers have reviewed alternative ways of managing the car parking section through the use of technology.

3.6 The purchase of the Chipside system for managing parking enforcement would reduce the need for two staff to operate within the Parking office and would allow the Council to employ just one full time member of staff instead of one full time and one part time (or 1.76 Full Time Equivalent staff). The Chipside system has been identified as the best value during a procurement exercise. It is also the market leader. The cost of the system is £5k with an ongoing £1.25k annual licence fee. The saving generated by reducing the Parking office staff is £15,000 per year including overheads.

3.7 An additional Civil Enforcement Officer would negate the need for a private security company to be employed to lock Churchfields Multi Storey car park – this would save the Council an additional £3.5k per year. This is currently funded from car park budgets.

3.8 Employing an officer to open the Shopmobility service on a Saturday would cost around £4k per year. The employment of an additional Civil

Enforcement Officer would allow the Council to open this service on a Saturday without this additional costs because the extra service would be included within the remit of the team of Civil Enforcement Officers. Therefore most of the cost of appointment of a Civil Enforcement Officer could be made through the savings generated (£18.5k) and an additional spend of £4k per annum could be avoided whilst increasing the availability of the Shopmobility service to the public. Licence fees for the Chipside system and ongoing costs such as an electronic DVLA link are already budgeted for.

### **BACKGROUND – PAY ON FOOT**

- 3.9 The adoption of pay on foot is covered in detail in appendix A.
- 3.10 The advantages of pay on foot over pay and display are;
- It increases compliance from 85% to 99.9%
  - It is a far more customer focused system
  - It reduces friction between offenders and Council staff
  - It generates more revenue
- 3.11 The disadvantages of the system are that;
- It requires higher staffing levels
  - There is a capital cost
- 3.12 The cost of installing pay on foot on Recreation Road South and Churchfields Multi Storey would be around £165k. This is described in detail in appendix A.
- 3.13 The pay back for this system is estimated to be around £40k per year. This is conditional on recommendations 2.1 – 2.3 inclusive being accepted. This is a pay back period of less than five years. A full sensitivity analysis of the likely consequences of the adoption of pay on foot is included in appendix A.
- 3.14 The introduction of pay on foot parking is supported by the Town Centre Regeneration Programme Manager. This is because pay on foot parking has been shown to have a beneficial effect on retail performance and visitor numbers and as such has been used as a key part of regeneration programmes. It has been one of the first actions of the well publicised Regeneration of Coventry, where it is currently being implemented. Some other examples of this out-turn are given below:
- The Centre Manager of Lanes Shopping Centre, Carlisle, stated that trade increased due to the introduction of pay-on-foot car parking at his centre.
  - The Parking Services Manager for Chesterfield Borough Council, stated that 3,000 more cars parked at the multi-storey car park in 2008/09 compared to 2007/08 following the introduction of pay-on-foot
  - When pay-on-foot was introduced at Westmorland Shopping Centre, Kendal by South Lakeland District Council, trade increased, visitors

enjoyed a more relaxed visit (not having to rush back to their cars), and vandalism virtually ceased. The Project Director for Kendal Riverside Ltd., who funded the changes, said: "Kendal Riverside Ltd's support of this project is another tranche of our investment and commitment to the town and its ongoing regeneration

### **BACKGROUND – CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT**

- 3.15 Civil Parking Enforcement is the adoption by the Council of the enforcement of on-street parking restrictions which are currently enforced by the police.
- 3.16 The costs of implementing CPE can be large. However, if pay on foot is adopted prior to the implementation of CPE the business case improves by £50k per annum. The start up costs of £120k would then be met within around three years even taking the worst case scenario. The costs associated with the implementation of CPE are outlined in detail in appendix B.
- 3.17 There are a number of issues regarding the involvement of the County Council in introducing CPE. The current agency agreement allows the District to take most of the risk without the County being liable. For example, Worcestershire County Council appears to be the only one which makes Districts pay for consolidating the Traffic Regulation Orders. These are clearly a County responsibility.
- 3.18 Members will have to take a view on whether they accept that the District pays for the adoption of CPE (as four other Districts already have). The alternative is to refuse the current agency agreement (as Malvern Hills have) and put pressure on the County to come up with a more reasonable agreement.
- 3.19 Officers would recommend that Civil Parking Enforcement is only adopted on acceptance by the County Council of the proposed agency agreement.

### **BACKGROUND – PARENT AND CHILD SPACES**

- 3.20 The number of parent and child spaces on the car parks numbers is low with 9 spaces on Recreation Road South car park, and 5 on Churchfields Multi Storey. These spaces are not enforced as they are not adequately signposted with clear regulations over their use.
- 3.21 Officers regularly receive complaints from customers who wish enforcement action to be taken against drivers abusing these bays. These types of bay are not included in the Order, and there is no definition of what denotes a child in this instance. Therefore Officers would advise that parents who arrive and leave with children aged 5 or under are permitted to use these bays, and those drivers who are observed contravening their use in any other way, have enforcement action taken against them.

- 3.22 Officers also receive complaints regarding the lack of provision of these spaces. Unlike spaces for drivers with a disability, there is no statutory requirement for spaces for parents with children.
- 3.23 As these spaces occupy two standard spaces, they can adversely affect revenue particularly in well used car parks. In other car parks, the effect will be less keenly felt except at peak times.
- 3.24 Therefore officers would recommend that 10 additional parent and child spaces are provided at suitable locations on various car parks, subject to the approval of the relevant Head of Service. Each space will be designated by markings on the bay floor, and a further sign at eye level.
- 3.25 Additionally Officers would recommend that the parent and child spaces are included in the Car Parking Order at the earliest opportunity.

#### **BACKGROUND - FREE PARKING BAYS SCHOOL DRIVE AND DOLPHIN CENTRE**

- 3.26 The 11 spaces provided in the School Drive car park for drivers wishing to park for up to 30 minutes are not all used throughout the day. These spaces allow free parking for up to 30 minutes for those users visiting the Customer Service Centre, or allow drivers visiting the Dolphin Centre to drop people off.
- 3.27 These spaces require more officer time than standard spaces to enforce, and a number of drivers who have stayed beyond the 30 minutes, or have used the space for a purpose other than indicated, have been issued with excess charge notices.
- 3.28 The use of these spaces is so low that officers would recommend their withdrawal. They suppress revenue at peak times, cause confusion for the customer by mixing free and paid for parking, and also cause extra work for Service Centre staff who currently check that drivers are not overstaying their 30 minutes at peak times.
- 3.29 In addition, the parking section has a responsibility to be fair reasonable, and consistent. The provision of these spaces is unfair unreasonable and inconsistent because the Council is treating drivers using its own facilities differently than those drivers using retailers and businesses in the town.
- 3.30 The original business case for the adoption of the Dolphin Centre car park was based on the increase in revenue from the Dolphin Centre car park exceeding the withdrawal of a number of spaces on the School Drive car park. The cost of refurbishment was £45k, and the revenue from ticket sales (excluding VAT) in the three years since adoption has been £59k for the Dolphin Centre car park and £309k from the School Drive car park.

3.31 In addition, the Council has refunded customers of the Dolphin Centre £157k for the same period. Although this has worked well for the Dolphin Centre, the granting of refunds in this manner has caused some problems.

- It is uncontrolled - there is no mechanism in place to prohibit unexpected increased use, and therefore a further decrease in income.
- The cost of the refunds directly reduces expected income from the parking section.
- The Council is providing free parking for its own customers while not providing the same mechanism for other services and businesses in the town.

3.32 If current trends continue the cost of issuing refunds for the forthcoming financial year is likely to be around £70k.

3.33 The business case also included the provision of the 11 spaces for those drivers wishing to make use of the Customer Service Centre for up to 30 minutes or those wishing to drop off people for the Dolphin Centre. These spaces are difficult and time consuming to enforce, are the subject of daily abuse, and cause problems for staff in the Customer Service Centre (particularly at peak times). The manager of the Customer Service Centre and the Transport and Engineering Officer have both come to the conclusion that it would far simpler for all concerned if these spaces were removed.

3.34 In order to address the problems outlined above, officers would recommend the following;

- That the limited waiting spaces, with the exception of the four spaces for disabled drivers (which are converted to standard spaces the disabled), on School Drive car park are converted back to standard spaces.
- That the Dolphin Centre car park is converted to a permit only car park for the use of Dolphin Centre staff, Customer Service Centre staff, and contractors visiting the site.

### **BACKGROUND – ENFORCEMENT AND APPEALS POLICIES**

3.35 Appendices C and D detail the current enforcement and appeals policies.

3.36 In order to provide a transparent and clear presentation of these policies officers would recommend their adoption and publication as soon as possible.

3.37 It is intended that further minor operational changes may be made with Head of Service approval. Major changes will require Council approval.

### **BACKGROUND – TARIFF CHANGES**

3.38 The previous tariff changes in 2007 increased the fee on certain car parks to the current level.

- 3.39 The increase in charge to 80p per hour and £4 for all day parking on Hanover Street car park has decreased sales by 7% or 9349 tickets on the previous year. The price was increased to provide an incentive for drivers to park elsewhere as this car park was heavily used particularly when the market was in operation. The withdrawal of the market has removed some of the need for drivers to park here, and occupancy has fallen as a result.
- 3.40 Reducing the tariff to 70p per hour and £3 per day would encourage increased use of the car park. In addition, the proposed knocking down of the Market Hall would increase the size of the car park and also make it more visible. Officers therefore believe that any decrease in revenue should be covered by increased use arising from increased spaces and attractiveness.
- 3.41 Officers would therefore recommend that the tariff on Hanover Street car park is reduced to 70p per hour, and £3.00 for all day parking with effect from October 1<sup>st</sup> 2009.
- 3.42 In addition, officers believe that there is a strong case for the introduction of a 30 minute ticket for 40p on all the town centre long stay car parks. This may reduce income as a number of drivers who would normally purchase a 70p ticket will now have the option to save 30p.
- 3.43 The 30 minute ticket also aids enforcement as it is more difficult to argue with an officer when all they are requesting the driver to do is to spend 40p. This is particularly important when drivers are collecting prescriptions or takeaways.
- 3.44 Officers would therefore recommend that the 30 minute ticket is available on School Drive, Dolphin Centre (depending on recommendation 2.13), Stourbridge Road, Recreation Road North, Hanover Street, and Churchfields Multi Storey car parks with effect from October 1<sup>st</sup> 2009.
- 3.45 There is a discrepancy between some long stay car parks. The Stourbridge Road and Churchfields Multi Storey car parks do not have a three hour tariff band. Officers would recommend that these car parks now have the three hour tariff introduced.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 A summary of the estimated financial impact of the recommendations is listed below.

<i>Rec. No.</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>£k</i>
2.1	<b><u>Increased Staffing</u></b>	
	One off Expenditure	
	Cost of redundancy:	£Xk
	Revenue Expenditure	
	Civil Enforcement Officer	£21.5k



	Revenue Savings	£3.5k
2.2	<b><u>Pay On Foot</u></b>	
2.3	Capital Expenditure	
	Conversion of car parks	165k
	Revenue Expenditure	
	Civil Enforcement Officers	-£43k
	Additional Collections	-£6k
	Additional Maintenance	-£6k
	Revenue Savings	
	Increased income due to POF	£95k
	Increased annual income	£41
2.4	<b><u>CPE Agency Agreement</u></b>	
	No financial impact	£n/a
2.5	<b><u>Provision of Parent and Child Spaces</u></b>	£n/a
	Met from existing budgets	
2.6	<b><u>Removal of Limited Waiting Spaces</u></b>	
	Revenue Savings	£13k
2.7	<b><u>Dolphin Centre Car Park to Staff Only Parking</u></b>	
	Met from existing budgets	£n/a
2.8	<b><u>Parking Policies</u></b>	
	No financial impact	£n/a
2.9	<b><u>Hanover Street Reduction</u></b>	
	Revenue cost	-£33k
2.10	<b><u>Increased Provision of 30 Minute Ticket</u></b>	
	Revenue cost	-£10k
2.11	<b><u>Additional 3 Hour Tariff</u></b>	
	Negligible financial impact	£n/a

## 5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The making and amendment of car parks orders is regulated the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 and the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

## **6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- 6.1 The regeneration of the Town Centre is an objective for the Council. The proposals in this report will lead to a more customer focused system and more choice for customers of the parking service. This will attract visitors back to the town.

## **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 Car parking is covered by Key Objective Reference Number 7 in the Street Scene and Community risk register. There are no new considerations.

## **8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The proposals in this report will lead to a more customer focused system and more choice for customers of the parking service. This will attract visitors back to the town.

## **9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The current requirement for this car park is to have 18 spaces for disabled drivers. In order to keep this number of spaces at the minimum level it may be necessary to remove or reallocate other spaces, and specifically convert parent and child spaces to spaces for disabled drivers. Any downward adjustment of these spaces will be matched by an identical increase in provision in the Churchfields car park.
- 9.2 In addition, two of the existing spaces for disabled will be allocated solely for the new Changing Places facility in the town centre.
- 9.3 Officers are not currently putting forward the absolute proposed changes to the spaces as work is still underway to assess the optimum layout and any changes are an operational matter.

## **10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The use of a system such as pay on foot will deliver financial benefits to the Council. However, to look at the system in financial terms is unhelpful as there are a number of other benefits which need to be considered.
- 10.2 A pay on exit system such as pay on foot is favoured by a number of drivers as a fairer system. Town traders have also been keen to see this type of system introduced as it removes the need for the driver to return by a fixed time. The Economic Development Officer at the Council is also in favour of such a system as it will undoubtedly bring more drivers into the town and

also increase the average length of stay. This will have the further benefit of increasing the average spend for each visitor.

10.3 The introduction of pay on foot will also enhance the reputation of the Council. There are groups who have campaigned for an easier system in preference to pay and display as this is thought of as too difficult to use. This system is simple to use.

10.4 The other options for delivery are to work in partnership with an adjacent or nearby authority, or to subcontract the service to a private contractor. Both courses of action would be more expensive than operating this system in house and would still require a large amount of management. The cheapest and most efficient way of delivering the service is for the Council to operate it.

## 11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues <i>None</i>
Personnel Implications <i>None</i>
Governance/Performance Management <i>None</i>
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 <i>None</i>
Policy <i>None</i>
Environmental <i>None</i>

## 12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	<b>Yes</b>
Chief Executive	<b>No</b>
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	<b>No</b>
Executive Director - Services	<b>No</b>
Assistant Chief Executive	<b>No</b>

Head of Service	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Financial Services	<b>No</b>
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	<b>No</b>
Head of Organisational Development & HR	<b>No</b>
Corporate Procurement Team	<b>No</b>

**13. WARDS AFFECTED**

All Wards

**14. APPENDICES**

Appendix A Pay On Foot Proposal  
Appendix B CPE Briefing Note  
Appendix C Parking Enforcement Policy  
Appendix D Parking Appeals Policy  
Appendix E Proposed Agency Agreement

**15. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

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