

# **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **CABINET**

**2ND SEPTEMBER 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, and the introduction of pay on foot and considers the option of introducing Civil Parking Enforcement.
- 1.2 The report also considers changes to improve customer perception of the parking service by developing guidelines and policies used, increasing the number of spaces for parents with children, suggesting modifications to the parking tariff and increasing the opening hours of Shopmobility.
- 1.3 The report is brief and sequential with the substance provided by the appendices but it is important to follow this sequence to maximise the benefit of the changes and to generate maximum support from car park users. Therefore the following sequence is recommended;

- 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 will be required if this option is considered.

## **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 utilise the savings together with additional funding of £6.5k to fund an additional Civil Enforcement Officer.
- 2.3 That Cabinet approve the opening of Shopmobility on Saturday mornings funded from savings elsewhere within the Parking service.
- 2.4 That Cabinet request Council approve the increase to the Capital Programme in 2009/10 of £165k to fund the introduction of pay on foot on Recreation Road South and Churchfields car parks. This is to be funded from balances.
- 2.5 That Cabinet request Council approve to additional funding of £6k to be included as part of the medium term financial plan for 2010/11 to fund increased maintenance costs of the Pay on Foot system
- 2.6 That Cabinet request Council to approve an additional two Civil Enforcement Officers at a cost of £43k to facilitate the operation of the Pay on Foot parking system.
- 2.7 That delegated authority is granted to the Head of Street Scene and Community to negotiate an agency agreement for Civil Parking Enforcement with Worcestershire County Council, similar in terms and conditions to those set out in the draft agreement attached at Appendix E. If an agreement cannot be agreed then a further report will be brought to Cabinet for further consideration.
- 2.8 That an additional 10 parent and child spaces are provided at various locations within Council car parks.
- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 That the Dolphin Centre car park is converted to a permit only car park with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010.
- 2.11 That Cabinet approve and adopt Appendix C Customer Charter and Procedures, and Appendix D Parking Appeal Policy, and that delegated authority is 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.
- 2.12 That there is a reduction in parking charges on Hanover Street car park 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> January 2010.

- 2.13 That a new 30 minute charge of 40p is introduced on long stay car parks with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010.
- 2.14 That the Churchfields Multi Storey and Stourbridge Road car parks have a new three hour tariff set at £2.10 made available with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010.

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

- 3.1 The parking section currently consists of three Civil Enforcement Officers undertaking all of the duties associated with managing of the Council car parks. Officers have been concerned for some time that this is insufficient to properly cover the operating hours of the sites across each 7 day period. The appointment of an additional Civil Enforcement Officer is therefore seen as critical to maintain this high profile operation.
- 3.2 Officers are involved in a wide range of activities other than enforcement including attending medical emergencies, providing assistance to users, giving directions and giving of advice to people visiting the town. They are often the first point of contact and act in an ambassadorial role for the Council. In addition, these officers regularly give assistance to motorists in changing tyres or assisting broken down vehicles.
- 3.3 It is likely that changes to the parking operation will increase this ambassadorial role of officers.
- 3.4 The cost of each post is £21.5k but employment of an additional Civil Enforcement Officer would negate the need for a private security company to be employed to lock Churchfields Multi Storey car park which would save the Council an additional £3.5k per year and part fund the new post.
- 3.5 Two Officers are currently involved in the administration of the parking office. This is labour intensive due to the inadequate nature of the current car park computer system. Officers have identified and trialed dedicated computer software which can considerably reduce the manual aspect of this operation.
- 3.6 The purchase of the Chipside system for managing parking enforcement would reduce the staff need within the Parking office and would allow the Council to employ just one full time member of staff to manage both Shopmobility and the administrative functions of the service. Thus saving a further £15,000 per annum
- 3.7 The employment of an additional Civil Parking Officer funded primarily from savings elsewhere within the team will also allow the Shopmobility service to operate on a Saturday. This is a service that has been requested many times by the disabled community.

### **BACKGROUND – PAY ON FOOT**

- 3.8 The adoption of pay on foot is covered in detail in appendix A.
- 3.9 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
- 3.10 The disadvantages of the system are that;
- It requires higher staffing levels
  - There is a capital cost
- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 The pay back for this system is estimated to be around £40k per year. This is conditional on recommendations 2.1 – 2.2 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.
- 3.13 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**

- 3.14 Civil Parking Enforcement is the adoption by the Council of the enforcement of on-street parking restrictions which are currently enforced by the police.

- 3.15 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.
- 3.16 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.
- 3.17 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.
- 3.18 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**

- 3.19 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.
- 3.20 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 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.
- 3.21 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.
- 3.22 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.
- 3.23 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.

3.24 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**

3.25 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.

3.26 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.

3.27 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.

3.28 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.

3.29 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.

3.30 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**

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

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

3.33 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**

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

3.35 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.

3.36 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.

3.37 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 January 1<sup>st</sup> 2010.

3.38 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.

3.39 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.

3.40 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 January 1<sup>st</sup> 2010.

3.41 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 at the earliest opportunity.

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

Rec. No.		£'000	£'000
2.2	<b><u>Increased Staffing</u></b> One off Expenditure Cost of redundancy:		
	Revenue Expenditure		
	Civil Enforcement Officer	21.5	
	Deletion shopmobility assistant	-15	
	Savings from security of car park changes	-3.5	
	<b>Net Cost p.a</b>		<b>3</b>
2.2	<b><u>Pay On Foot</u></b>		
2.3	<b><u>Capital Expenditure</u></b>		
	Conversion of car parks	165	
	Loss of investment income	2	
	<b><u>Revenue Expenditure</u></b>		
	Civil Enforcement Officers	43	
	Additional Collections	6	
	Additional Maintenance	6	
	<b>Revenue Savings</b>		
	Increased income due to POF	-95	
	<b>Net Savings p.a</b>		<b>-38</b>
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> Met from existing budgets	N/A	
2.6	<b><u>Removal of Limited Waiting Spaces</u></b> Additional Income generated		-13
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> Reduction in income generated		33
2.1	<b><u>Increased Provision of 30 Minute Ticket</u></b> Reduction in income generated		10
2.11	<b><u>Additional 3 Hour Tariff</u></b> Negligible financial impact	N/A	
<b>NET SAVING ARISING FROM CHANGES</b>			<b>-5</b>

## **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 the Recreation Road South 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 have been 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>Yes</b>
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	<b>Yes</b>
Executive Director - Services	<b>Yes</b>
Assistant Chief Executive	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Service	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Financial Services	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Organisational Development & HR	<b>Yes</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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