

Subject:	REVIEW OF ON AND OFF-STREET PARKING CHARGES
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 1 February 2021
Report of:	Roger Wragg, Head of Commercial Services
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Nigel Collor, Portfolio Holder for Transport, Licensing and Community
Decision Type:	Key Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted
Purpose of the report:	To consider the outcome of the annual review of parking charges and to seek approval to implement items that have been proposed as set out in Appendix 1.
Recommendation:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the outcome of the annual review of parking charges. 2. Agree to the proposed parking charge options as set out in Appendix 1. 3. That the Transport and Parking Services Manager or Head of Commercial Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Licensing and Community, be authorised to take all necessary legal and procedural processes to give effect to agreed recommendations as set out in Appendix 1, including the giving of notices and the making or amendment of any orders under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
1. Summary	
1.1	This report seeks Cabinet agreement for the parking charges for both on and off-street parking as set out in the proposal section of this report and Appendix 1 . In January 2011 it was agreed that parking charges would be reviewed annually and in line with that decision it is considered appropriate to review charges once again.
1.2	In making these recommendations, consideration has been given to equality issues. It is not anticipated that these proposals will adversely affect any of the groups having protected characteristics contrary to the Equalities Act 2010. It should be noted that the proposals detailed in this report will not impact on Blue badge holders, an Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out as set out in Appendix 2 .
2. Introduction and Background	
2.1	Parking provision throughout the District is regularly under review and the needs of the local economy and residents alike are always taken into consideration.
2.2	In considering the appropriate level for parking charges the Council must have regard to guidance on parking policy and charges given in the Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance to the Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions, expanded upon in Operational Guidance to Local Authorities: Parking Policy and Enforcement. This states that charges should be proportionate, so authorities should not set them at unreasonable levels.
3. Proposals for 2020/21	

- 3.1 In undertaking this annual review of the Council's parking charges, it has been recognised from the outset that the pandemic has clearly had a significant impact across all sectors of the community and especially the hospitality and retail sector. Businesses are facing significant challenges and we need to ensure that our parking policies and charging structure recognise these challenges.
- 3.2 The availability and effective management of parking is an important factor in both maintaining and increasing the vitality of our town centres, with a difficult balance needing to be struck between the use of charges and parking restrictions as a mechanism to ensure that parking spaces are rotated and available to meet demand rather than being full all day, against the risk that the cost of parking dissuades residents and visitors alike from using town centre businesses.

Charging Structure

- 3.3 Pay & Display charges were increased, for the first time in four years, in June 2020 by 20p per hour and it should be no surprise given the current economic situation to note that this review has concluded that **there is clearly no case whatsoever for a general increase in the hourly charge.**
- 3.4 The review has highlighted some disparities in the charging structure across the District and proposes some adjustments in charges for consideration by Cabinet as summarised below together with reasons for the proposal.
- Increase in minimum charge from 40p to 50p; Inflationary increase. (50p is equivalent to 23 minutes within the main car parks).
 - Introduce Sunday charging at Stanhope, West Street and Union Road car parks; To balance demand and availability of spaces.
 - Reduce the maximum length of stay at Middle Street, Deal car park to 3hrs; To balance demand and availability of spaces.
 - Introduce of a charge at Tides car park in excess of 4 hours; To ensure availability of spaces for users of Tides.
 - Reintroduction of charges at Albany Place Car Park, Dover; To provide a revenue stream to support the maintenance of the car park.
 - Increasing charges at Gazen Salts & The Quay, Sandwich by 10p/hr; To provide a better balance of charges within Sandwich relative to other town centres.
 - Introduction of seasonal charges at Borrow Pit Car Park, Walmer; To provide a revenue stream to support the maintenance of the car park.
 - Introduction of parking controls to limit length of stay at Kearsney Abbey, Temple Ewell; To balance demand and availability of spaces.
 - Introduction of Pay & Display controls to The Strand, Walmer and extension of the limited waiting area along the beach side adjacent with the green. To balance demand and availability of spaces.
 - Extending the areas covered by Pay & Display controls in Victoria Road, Deal (the entire length of Victoria Road) and New Street, Sandwich (extend to all resident permit bays for non-permit holders).

Resident Zones

- 3.5 Resident parking schemes are continually reviewed by the parking team as these are key to our residents and their ability to park close to their home. Requests received for the introduction of additional resident permit schemes are considered by the team with all new schemes presented to the Joint Transportation Advisory Board for guidance and advice.
- 3.6 The aim of a resident parking zone is of course to enable residents to park close to their home by restricting the availability of spaces to other road users at either certain times of the day or by permitting parking by non-permit holders for a limited period.
- 3.7 It has become clear that in some areas, this is not working effectively and so it is proposed to extend the time period during which a resident permit is required to Mon to Sat 07.00 to 20.00, and to include Sundays for those resident zones close to car parks which include Sunday charging.
- 3.8 This will reduce the problems faced by some permit holders of being unable to park in the early evening on returning from work as spaces have been taken up by non-permit holders.
- 3.9 In addition, it is proposed to reduce the limited waiting period for non-permit holders within resident zones from 2 hours to 1 hour and to introduce pay and display controls to selected areas close to town centres rather than limited waiting. This should increase the turnover of spaces and make more space available for those making short visits to our town centres. There also remains the option for daily visitor permits to be purchased and utilised for any visitors who wish to stay for longer than 1 hour.
- 3.10 The proposed changes to resident zones are summarised below, which are all intended to improve the availability of spaces for residents.
- Adjustments to the current resident zones in Sondes Road, Ranelagh Road, Stanley Road, Clanwilliam Road, Deal, and at Coombe Valley Road, Dover by the introduction of a cashless charge system instead of limited waiting for non-permit holders;
 - Reduction in limited waiting period in town centre on-street parking areas from 2 hours to 1 hour;
 - Increase the enforcement period for resident permit zones generally from; Mon to Sat, 08.30 to 17.30 to Mon to Sat 07.00 to 20.00 and extend to include Sunday's for those resident zones close to car parks which include Sunday charging.
- 3.11 The proposed use of a charging structure to regulate the length of stay within certain resident zones, would conventionally involve the installation of a significant number of pay & display machines. Recognising the cost involved and the impact on street scene it is proposed to move instead to a cashless charging system, relying instead on the 'pay by phone' arrangements. Use of pay by phone has of course increased significantly during the past few months in response to lockdown measures and concerns that residents and visitors have regarding the use of cash. There will also be the option to pay for parking charges at any Pay Point station from 25th January 2021 which will assist any person who may not have access to a mobile phone.

Climate Change Agenda

Following the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration in January 2020 a Strategy and underlying Action Plan have now been developed setting out the steps needed for

the Council to reach net zero by 2030 and to support the wider district to become net zero by 2050.

- 3.12 In support of this agenda, Parking Services regularly review all tasks and activities to find opportunities to support this. Three years ago, the Council transitioned from a paper permit system to a fully virtual system and now the service is utilising fully biodegradable Penalty Charge Notice envelopes.
- 3.13 More recently, Parking Services have been successful in a bid for OZEV funding for the introduction of 49 Electric Vehicle charging bays, which is the subject of a separate report on this agenda. We are currently in the process of introducing these at various On & Off-Street locations throughout Dover, Deal and Sandwich.
- 3.14 The introduction of EV charging bays across the District is a first and significant step in encouraging the use of electric or low emission vehicles, such as plug-in hybrids.
- 3.15 In undertaking this review, it has been noted that a number of local authorities are now making adjustments to their charging structures to provide financial incentives to switch to lower emission vehicles.
- 3.16 There are various ways in which this can be achieved, with some Councils relating their charges to engine size, whilst others levy a surcharge on diesel vehicles. However, there is growing recognition that with the increased efficiency of engines, as well as the greater availability of low and zero emission vehicles, there is less of a close relationship between engine size and emissions.
- 3.17 Based on the approach taken by other Councils it is therefore proposed that the Council's resident permit tariffs should in future be linked to vehicle emissions, in which those with the least polluting vehicles pay lower tariffs.
- 3.18 The proposed charging structure for resident permits seeks to incentivise the use of low emission vehicles by introducing a stepped charging structure as follows:

Band	CO2 Emission g/km	Charge £/Annum	
		Current	Proposed
A	0	£65 or £100 depending on zone	£35 or £60 depending on zone
B	1 to 50		£70 or £105 depending on zone
C	51 to 130		£90 or £125 depending on zone
D	131 and above		£110 or £150 depending on zone

Other Measures

- 3.19 Concerns have been regularly raised with the parking team regarding parking outside schools and the abuse of zigzag markings. This is one of the few matters for which enforcement using CCTV cameras is permitted. Cabinet are asked to note that

officers have reviewed enforcement options and are proposing to trial the use of mobile CCTV static cameras.

- 3.20 The changes proposed to the parking charges structure as outlined above are set out in detail in **Appendix 1**, with the changes to the current charging structure highlighted in yellow:

4. **Identification of Options**

4.1 Option 1. **This is the preferred option.**

- To agree the proposed options for both On & Off-Street parking for 2020/2021 as set out in the recommendations and **Appendix 1**.
- To agree to delegate the decision-making process for the Transport & Parking Services Manager or Head of Commercial Services in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Licensing and Community to be authorised to take all necessary legal and procedural processes to give effect to agreed recommendations as set out in the recommendations and **Appendix 1**.

4.2 Option 2. To retain the current management and charging arrangements.

5. **Evaluation of Options**

5.1 Option 1 is recommended for the following key reasons:

- To support a continued and reasonable “turn over” of available parking spaces which aids the tourism agenda and local businesses;
- To support those living in residential zones by enabling them to park near their homes;
- To maintain low cost parking options for visitors;
- To support the budget and mitigate the financial impact of Covid 19;
- To enable a more efficient and consistent parking operation.

5.2 Option 2 is not recommended for the following reasons:

- Will inhibit continued and reasonable “turn over” of available parking spaces;
- Will not adequately support those living within the resident zones;
- Will not support the budget and mitigate the financial impact of Covid 19.

6. **Resource Implications**

- 6.1 The income and expenditure for on-street parking is required by Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA) to be ring-fenced for limited purposes, which in summary are:

- to repay any funds for parking measures that have been borrowed from the General Fund;
- to contribute towards the provision or maintenance of parking facilities;
- to contribute towards improvements to passenger transport services or infrastructure; and,
- to contribute towards other highway improvements.

- 6.2 As regards income and expenditure from off-street parking, the revenue received is an important income stream to the Council derived from its' property assets, whilst charges

are set at a level to balance the needs of the town centres and ensure effective traffic management.

- 6.3 The overall impact of the changes to the charging structure as listed in the proposals set out in **Appendix 1** are forecasted to generate an estimated additional net income of £291k after the initial one off costs of £59k have been deducted for a recommended cashless payment model. The year 2 additional net income is estimated to be £318k after ongoing costs of £33k have been deducted. It is forecasted that the, as mentioned, upfront implementation costs will be covered by the speculated £351k income gain from the parking fee proposals. On comparison the estimated income for a Pay & Display machine model would generate a considerably lower net income of £90k after one off costs of £261k has been deducted for new Pay and Display parking machines, installation and signage.

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 7.1 The proposals which seek to encourage the use of more efficient and lower emission vehicles will make a significant contribution towards the Council's Climate Change objectives.

8. Corporate Implications

- 8.1 Comment from the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources): Members are reminded that the Council's revenue and capital resources are under pressure and so they will wish to assure themselves that all proposals progress the Council's priorities, are the best option available and will deliver value for money.(JS)
- 8.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.
- 8.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out to identify and mitigate any negative impact upon the protected characteristic groups. The Equality Officer has been consulted during the development of the report and has no further comments to make, other than to remind Members that in discharging their responsibilities they are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>'

9. Appendices

Appendix 1: Schedule of Proposed Charges

Appendix 2: Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix 3: Permit Charges Comparisons with Neighbouring Authorities

10. Background Papers

None.

11. Consultation Statement

The Portfolio Holder for Transport, Licensing and Community has been consulted on the proposals outlined in this report.

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