

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET		
SUBJECT:	EVENING PARKING CHARGES		
DATE OF DECISION:	16 JULY 2013		
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY			
Not applicable			

BRIEF SUMMARY

To consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport seeking to establish a policy to allow evening parking charges to be introduced and to advertise the appropriate Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to deliver the scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) To amend the Strategic Level Parking Policy (previously approved by Cabinet on the 17 March 2008) to allow the establishment of the principle of charging for evening parking charges.
- (ii) To delegate to the Head of Transport, Highways and Parking, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, to determine detailed proposals, including costs, permit schemes and advertise Traffic Regulation Orders for evening charges, in accordance with the new policy.
- (iii) To note that the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for evening charges will propose the following:
 - A flat rate charge of £2 to apply in the on street city centre pay & display zone from 6pm until 8pm after which time it will be free;
 - Multi storey car parks already charging in the evenings will see no change;
 - Evening car park charges to be introduced in city centre surface car parks at a flat rate of £2 from 6pm to midnight;
 - That the overnight annual car park season ticket charges are reduced from £250 to £150 and that this offer apply to all car parks in the city centre boundary as defined by the map in appendix 4;
 - That the maximum period of stay in the Red Zone during chargeable hours is increased to 2 hours.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommendation (i) seeks to confirm a new policy that allows evening parking charges to be implemented. This is in order to achieve the following outcomes:
 - Ensure that the parking service covers its costs of operation;
 - To at least maintain and improve the quality of service offered to our customers albeit at a cost;
 - Encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport in accordance with the Local Transport Plan;
 - Reduce the level of carbon emissions from transport.
2. Recommendation (ii) is required to allow a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to be advertised and determined. This is a legal process which requires the details of the evening parking charges scheme to be advertised for a period of time. It also serves as public consultation on the proposals and gives the public a further opportunity to object to the scheme or suggest minor amendments.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3. The option of not implementing evening parking charges was considered and rejected on the basis that it does not meet the objectives above. The provision of parking facilities in the evening incurs significant maintenance and operation costs. Under current financial pressures, if the Council were unable to implement this proposal alternative efficiency and savings proposals would be required. This would include reducing the quality of the parking offer in Southampton.
4. Existing free parking provision is a disincentive to use other more sustainable modes of transport. It also distorts the relative affordability of the evening public transport offer compared to car use.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

5. Evening parking charges are required to allow the Council to cover its costs in operating an evening parking service and to promote sustainable modes of transport. This report seeks to implement evening parking charges in Southampton city centre. It also summarises the results of a consultation undertaken to help design a scheme that has minimal negative impacts on residents and businesses but still achieves the desired objectives.
6. The evening economy places specific demands on managing car parking. The Council provides a number of parking related services to support the evening economy and local residents. They include:
 - CCTV monitoring;
 - Enforcement;
 - Cleansing and maintenance of car parks;
 - Lighting;
 - Maintaining the roads, parking restrictions and signs;The Council choose to do this to a good quality and in most of our car parks we have achieved a Park Mark accreditation for safety.

- 7 Affordability of parking is a key issue. Too high and the wider economy could suffer. Too low and the service fails to achieve the quality standards expected of a modern city. In designing a scheme which implements evening parking charges finding the right balance is critical. This was also a key theme coming out from the consultation. Therefore, in proposing appropriate charges we have considered what other similar size cities have done and the experiences they have had. Many cities now charge in the evenings for car parking. This includes our nearest neighbours of Bournemouth and Portsmouth. Both have implemented evening charges of £2 or greater.

CONSULTATION

8. In order to understand key issues evening charges might raise with businesses, residents and visitors we have undertaken a consultation on this proposal including a number of options. A detailed summary of collective/association responders can be found in Appendix 3. This report pulls out the key issues.
9. The consultation was publicised through street notices and in the Daily Echo. Responses were collated through the consultation page on the city web in the form of questionnaire (see Appendix 1). It was divided into three parts. There were 487 responses to the questionnaire on the city web, including paper questionnaires received and input on behalf of the respondents.

Part A City Centre Pay & Display Zone – evening parking charges

10. The aim of Part A of the questionnaire was to establish preferences over the period and tariff type that could apply to on-street and off-street evening charges in the pay & display zone in the city centre. Of the 337 preferences 92% were in favour of Option 3 which was to extend parking charges till 8pm only. From consideration of the comments these preferences were subject to qualification:
- 73% of respondents to the overall questionnaire were opposed to evening parking charges in principle;
 - The primary concern was over the cost of parking and affordability;
 - 7% of respondents highlighted concerns over the impact for residents and their visitors;
 - 6% of respondents highlighted concerns over the impact of community services (e.g. charities, faith centres and societies);
 - 28% of respondents highlighted concerns over the impact on the economy of the city centre (e.g. business and leisure facilities).

Part B Evening and Overnight Charges for Parking Permits

11. The aim of Part B of the questionnaire was to see whether there would be public support for reducing the charge for permits to park overnight in the car parks from £250 to £150. Of the 445 preferences made 65% were in favour of reducing the charge. From considering the associated comments:
- A minority of these (85 respondents) highlighted opposition to any reduction on the basis of the revenue loss and/or adding to the need for the introduction of evening charges.

Part C Red Zone Time Limits (the heart of the City Centre - see Appendix 4)

12. The aim of Part C of the questionnaire was to see whether there would be public support for extending the maximum parking period to two hours. Of the 451 preferences, 85% were in favour of this extension. From considering the associated comments:
- 25 respondents highlighted opposition to the increase on the basis of the shortage of parking or a 1 hour stay being sufficient

General information about respondents

- 13.
- Of the 427 respondents providing postcode information (68% were in Southampton and 38% were outside Southampton)
 - From the comment boxes, the percentage of people opposed to evening charges in principle or as presented, was 69% of respondents entering Southampton postcodes and 78% for other postcodes.
14. There has also been support from public transport operators. Bluestar Uni-Link buses have responded to the consultation by saying they “*would be happy to support this proposal with special discounted fares in conjunction with any planned introduction of these parking charges on a commercial basis to help show people there is a good and frequent and long standing commercial evening bus service already*”
15. The results of the consultation and the TRO to follow will inform the design of the evening parking charges scheme. Whilst the report recommendation delegates the details of the scheme to be determined by the Head of Transport, Highways and Parking, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport it is expected that the scheme to be advertised in a TRO will include the following:
- That charges will apply to 8pm only on street and until midnight in car parks;
 - The charge will only be £2 to reflect concerns about the affordability of parking and to the introduction of a flat fee of £2 will make the system easier to understand and enable people to not clock-watch whilst enjoying the evening economy;
 - The charge will be a flat rate. This is to reflect the different demands of the night time economy when compared to the daytime e.g. the need to dwell longer to enjoy the city centres leisure offer rather than feel pressured to return back to a vehicle at a certain time.
16. In addition, a number of associated measures are proposed to address some of the concerns raised about the evening economy and affordability. These include:
- For residents and visitors the cost of an overnight parking season ticket for all city centre car parks will be reduced from £250 to £150.;
 - A NEW all day and weekend residents season ticket offer for designated city centre car parks will be developed;
 - A limited number of parking permits/vouchers will be made available to charities and voluntary organisation for them to distribute amongst their members. A system will be set up to administer the process;

- We will work with public transport operators to provide a new and enhanced evening bus ticket offer;
- Concern about extending the red zone permitted length of stay to 2 hours will be addressed as part of a review of existing parking zone boundaries to be conducted next year.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

17. The one-off implementation costs are expected to be £30,000. There are unlikely to be other significant operating costs, as the cost of enforcement is already included within existing approved revenue budgets.
18. The General Fund revenue budget, approved by Council in February 2013, included income from evening parking charges of £300,000 in 2013/14 and then £500,000 per annum in a full year. As this is a new parking policy it is difficult to gauge the public response. However, it is currently estimated that the additional income from the proposal set out in this report will be £200,000 in a full year. The implementation date is expected to be the start of October 2013, giving a net income projection, after one-off costs, of £70,000 in 2013/14.
19. Compared to the approved Environment & Transport Portfolio revenue budget there will be an estimated shortfall of £230,000 in 2013/14 and £300,000 in future years. This will be monitored and reported to Cabinet during the course of the current financial year and will be considered as part of the overall financial position for 2013/14. Any ongoing revenue pressure will be addressed as part of the development of the 2014/15 budget.
20. At present, it is not anticipated that any additional costs will be incurred as a result of the associated measures set out in paragraph 16. For example, no additional funding has been identified to encourage public transport operators to provide a new and enhanced evening bus ticket offer. The financial effect of the extension of the red zone from one hour to two hours has yet to be determined but will need to be considered as part of the wider boundary review to be conducted next year. As part of these proposals, the Polygon resident parking scheme may need to be extended from an end time of 1800 to 2000 to be consistent with these proposals.

Property/Other

None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

21. The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 permits the introduction of the parking charges as set out in this report in accordance with a statutory consultation procedure set down in the Act and associated secondary legislation

Other Legal Implications:

- 22. In preparing and determining the proposals set out in this report the Council is required to have regard to the provisions of Equalities legislation, the Human Rights Act 1988 and s.17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (the duty to have regard to the need to remove or reduce crime and disorder in the area). Parking is not in and of itself a property right. Any change to on street parking arrangements does not therefore constitute an undue interference with the property rights protected by the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 23. However it is recognised that the availability of parking can have an indirect impact on property rights. The proposals in this report, and any interference with any individuals expectations in relation to parking or how that may affect their properties, are considered necessary in order to meet the wider needs of the community in relation to managing parking and vehicle congestion and environmental impacts of such, promoting sustainable transport methods, balancing the needs of visitors to the area with that of residents and to improve road safety. It is considered that the proposals set out in this report are proportionate having regard to the wider needs of the city centre

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

- 24. None

KEY DECISION? Yes/No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	Bargate / Bevois
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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1.	Content of Evening Charges consultation questionnaire
2.	Analysis of Responses to the Evening Charges consultation questionnaire
3.	Summary of collective responses received
4.	Plan of City Centre Parking Area

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None
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Equality Impact Assessment

Does the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out.	Yes
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Other Background Documents

Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at the Council offices or by requesting a copy from the author of this report

Title of Background Paper(s) Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

1.	None	
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