

BRIEFING PAPER

SUBJECT: CHANGE IN CITY CENTRE PARKING CHARGING HOURS
DATE: 12 OCTOBER 2023
RECIPIENT: OVERVIEW AND MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

SUMMARY:

1. The Council has proposed introducing a single continuous parking charging period of 8am to 8pm for City Centre On Street Locations and 8am to Midnight for City Centre Off Street Car Parks. The policy goal of the proposal is to further encourage the alternative travel modes by ensuring that City Centre car trips are managed at all times when there is parking demand for the benefits of an improved air quality and reduced congestion. A public consultation on the proposals has been carried out from 1st September 2023 to 22nd September 2023. The proposal is recommended for approval. However, a further consultation has been recommended for the Zone 18 Permit Parking restrictions on Rockstone Place which operate in parallel to the Pay and Display restrictions on that road.

BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

2. The Council has proposed amending the parking tariffs for City Centre locations by adopting a single continuous charging tariff structure that will apply 8am to 8pm (On Street) and 8am to Midnight (Off Street) for all days of the week. The existing charging structure for City Centre on street locations is Monday to Saturday 8am to 8pm with a separate evening tariff that applies 6pm to 8pm, and Sundays/Bank Holidays 1pm to 6pm. The existing tariff structure for City Centre Off Street car parks is Monday to Saturday 8am to Midnight, with a separate evening tariff that applied 6pm to Midnight, and Sundays / Bank Holidays 12pm to 6pm. The existing and proposed changes are set out in Annex 1 and 2.
3. The aim of the proposals is to have a consistent charging structure for the purpose of managing car trips at times when there is parking demand. Regardless of the time or purpose of a visit there is still a need to manage car trips and by extension, parking demand. This further encourages the use of alternative travel modes for the benefits of improved air quality and reduced congestion. The City Centre can experience congestion outside of typical peak periods particularly during stadium events, busy cruise periods and other city centre based events such as the marathon. Vehicle trips also have other impacts regardless of when they are made such as wear on highway infrastructure, including road surfaces and structures. Surplus on street parking revenue can assist in better covering these costs, while off street revenue is utilised for maintaining car parks and investing in new infrastructure such as updated barrier control systems. In this regard, tariffs should be in place to manage all trips.
4. The Council's parking infrastructure collects data on date/time of transactions at Pay and Display Machines and time of entry into the 4 barrier controlled car parks. While the former does not account for any vehicles arriving at a parking location where the tariff is not paid by

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the driver (e.g. because the charging hours are not in effect), some drivers still make a transaction to account for a stay that does include the charging period. Combining the two sets of data provides a figure for the minimum parking demand for City Centre locations outside of the current Sunday charging periods;

27/08/2023 (Before 12pm) - 961	27/08/2023 (After 6pm) - 211
03/09/2023 (Before 12pm) - 1,072	03/09/2023 (After 6pm) - 155
10/09/2023 (Before 12pm) - 963	10/09/2023 (After 6pm) - 148
17/09/2023 (Before 12pm) - 972	23/09/2023 (After 6pm) - 208

It is evident that even without accounting for vehicles who arrive and depart at Pay and Display locations without needing to pay, there are a high number of vehicles arriving in the City Centre during these times.

5. As part of the development of these proposals, the Council has carried out a benchmarking exercise with other authorities (see Annex 3). It has found that similar urban centres within the region, i.e. those with a comparative retail/leisure offer, are already operating tariff structures that constitute a single continuous charging period. This includes Portsmouth where City Council car parks operate a 24 hour single continuous tariff Monday to Sunday and Bournemouth, where many of their City Centre sites operate in a similar way. Winchester has recently changed their tariff structure, so that high demand car parks now have standard tariffs for Monday to Sunday 8am to 7pm.

The Council has carried out a consultation on the proposals between 1st September 2023 and 22nd September 2023. 347 responses were received in total.

- 287 responses were logged as objections to the proposals
- 35 responses were logged as supporting the proposals
- 25 responses were logged as comments

A summary of the objections and officer responses is included as Annex 4.

A table of all the representations submitted is included as Annex 5. It is the officer's view that no objections have been raised that constitute any material overriding consideration to the proposals. The exception to this is Rockstone Place for which further consideration is outlined below.

6. Provision for making amendments to parking tariffs is held under Officer scheme of delegation within the Council constitution under Section 23.16. Therefore, amendments to parking tariffs would usually be done under delegated authority with Administration oversight. As evening tariffs were effectively set by Cabinet decision in October 2022, any subsequent change to tariffs during this period would subject to a Cabinet decision. It is therefore recommended that Cabinet delegates all future amendments of parking tariffs and tariffs structures to the Executive Director - Place. This will provide a more flexible process for the amendment of parking tariffs going forward.
7. The parking bays in Rockstone Place are both permit parking bays for Zone 18 and Pay and Display Bays. While the Council has effectively consulted on changing the days and hours of operation of these bays, it did not specifically do so for permit parking restrictions. It is

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therefore recommended that the proposals for the pay and display aspect of the restriction is approved in principle subject to a further consultation on the Zone 18 permit parking restrictions. It is noted that permit holders would be largely unaffected by any change as the permits would continue to be valid during the extended charging periods.

RESOURCE/POLICY/FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

8. Parking tariff changes are not done for the purpose of raising revenue, but to address policy goals as outlined in the proposal. It is projected that there will nonetheless be an impact on parking revenue which is set out below;

The impact on income has been based on applying proposed tariffs to average usage data on affected car parks to assess the likely changes to income, with a general assumption that usage may reduce slightly as a result of the implementation from November 2023. This has then been compared to current budget in 2023 and income assumptions from 2024/25 in the MTFS.

On Street

The overall increase in income in 2023/24 (Nov '23 to March '24) is expected to be £0.1M, rising to £0.2M from 2024/25. The On-street parking account is ring fenced and the additional revenue from this proposal will be reinvested to support transport provision elsewhere in the Council's revenue budget.

Off Street

The overall increase in budgeted income in 2023/24 (Nov '23 to March '24) is expected to be £0.28M, increasing to £0.68M from 2024/25. This will be reflected in the MTFS following approval.

9. Local Authorities have powers to set parking tariffs and charging structures under Part IV the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Other relevant legislation is the Equalities Act 2010, Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and Human Rights Act 1998
10. The proposal is supportive of Policies I3 – Smart Parking (a single continuous tariff supports the broad policy goal), R1 – Well Managed Highway (on street parking revenue contributes to Highway maintenance budgets), A1 – Liveable City Centre, A3 – Environment and Policy Z1 – Zero Emission City (through deterring car use), Policy HA3 – Walking (by encouraging people to walk through the City Centre and not specific destinations), HA4 – Smarter Travel Choices (by encouraging the use of alternative travel modes) in Connected Southampton, the Council's Local Transport Plan.

The proposal can be considered a clear policy response to challenges noted in 2.4.2 of the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan

OPTIONS and TIMESCALES:

11. If approved by Cabinet on 17 October, implementation of the proposals will commence in November 2023.

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RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There is some potential for drivers to migrate to other parking providers within the City Centre which, if occurring in significant volumes, put the policy goals of the proposals at risk. It is noted however that West Quay car parks (the largest private sector provider) currently operates both a Sunday morning charge and Sunday evening charge as does West Quay Retail Park (evening charging period until 8pm) and the NCP (charging structure operates 24 hours). Both West Quay Shopping Centre and West Quay Retail Park currently offer a cheaper parking rate in the evening period. It is believed that users would typically use parking locations close to their destination in the evening or use alternative means of travel as per the policy goal.

Appendices/Supporting Information:

- Annex 1 – Existing Tariff Structure
- Annex 2 – Proposed Tariff Structure
- Annex 3 – Sunday Charging Benchmarking Document
- Annex 4 – Summary of Objections and Officer Response
- Annex 5 – Consultation Responses
- Annex 6 – Public Notice On Street Proposals
- Annex 7 – Public Notice Off Street Proposals
- Annex 8 – ESIA

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