

Appendix 4 – Summary of Consultation and Officer Response

Issue	Response
<p>Economic Impact</p> <p>The proposals will have a negative impact on local businesses with visitors choosing to drive to alternative locations where parking is cheaper or free (e.g. Hedge End Retail Park or Whitely Shopping Centre)</p> <p>Example comments:</p> <p><i>“You will kill the local economy, people will resort to online shopping and less social interaction leading to isolation. I want to go shopping, but not have to pay through the nose for parking.”</i></p> <p><i>“It will suffocate the already difficult small shops in those area and adversely affect the economy of these area. This is a shortsighted proposal.”</i></p> <p><i>“People will more likely opt to go to retail parks such as Whitely or Hedge End where they have an extensive free parking area.”</i></p> <p><i>“Woolston high street struggles enough without introducing parking fees. A lot of shops depend on trade passing through and cars stopping whilst driving through the main street. Introducing fees will stop that happening and deter people from visiting.”</i></p> <p><i>“With the increased headwinds of costs facing businesses (NI, minimum wage and rates) in the areas, were these charges are to be imposed, the council should be doing absolutely everything to support these businesses by ensuring growth to footfall in the areas. Adding these charges will cause these businesses a loss in revenue and are adding stress and worry in what is already an impossible economic climate to operate within.”</i></p>	<p>There is no conclusive link between the health of a local retail economy and car parking charges. The cost of parking is just one of numerous variables which influence the economic success of a district centre.</p> <p>Officers have carried out a benchmarking exercise (Appendix 3) and have found that many district centres within urban authorities as well as local towns operate parking charges within their car parks.</p> <p>The charges proposed are lower than many of these locations and while there are some retail parks such as Hedge End and Whitely that offer free parking, travel costs as well as journey time would mean that the district centres would remain a viable alternative to these destinations.</p> <p>The report recommends that officers monitor and review footfall in the district centres and use of the car parks for a six month period following implementation and provide a follow up discussion paper to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport on these findings with any further recommendations as appropriate.</p>

<p>Cost of Living</p> <p>Significant increases in the cost of living have reduced the ability of many to pay additional parking charges.</p> <p>Example comments:</p> <p><i>“Life is already challenging and expensive and this will just stretch people's budgets even further.”</i></p> <p><i>“With the cost of living rising no one can afford these parking charges.”</i></p> <p><i>“Parking and travel in Southampton is becoming more and more difficult and areas like Bitterne, where the residents are not so affluent, means you're going to make it impossible for residents to afford just getting their food shop etc with the current cost of living crisis.”</i></p>	<p>The proposed tariffs maintain a competitive offer in comparison to other local and regional destinations as shown in Appendix 3.</p> <p>The majority of parking sessions are likely to only cost £1.00 or less.</p>
<p>Impact on workers who use the car parks all day</p> <p>Retail employees and other workers will have to pay for all day parking</p> <p>Example comments:</p> <p><i>“Parking around here is hard enough, especially when you're office based all day, having to pay for parking every day is a massive chunk out of our pay!”</i></p> <p><i>“It will hit shop workers who rely on parking at a time when people are struggling financially, disproportionately hurting those on low incomes.”</i></p>	<p>Drivers parking within the Suburban Car Parks for longer than 2 hours are already required to pay a parking tariff. The current all day charge is £5.60, with the proposals increasing this to £6.00. The corresponding charge within the inner City Centre area is £7.00 or £9.00</p>

<p>Impact on those visiting local Health Centres and Clinics</p> <p>Example comments:</p> <p><i>“It is hard to find reasonably priced parking in Southampton areas and to put prices up or start charges will force people to stop visiting GP surgeries, health centres for appointments or even local libraries or groups which will have a worse effect of local health as well, as the economy.”</i></p> <p><i>“I work with very deprived patients and deliver health care at Bitterne Health Centre. the Patients often turn down appointments and don’t access health care when they have to pay for parking as they cannot afford it.”</i></p>	<p>The majority of parking sessions for a health appointment are likely to only cost £0.50 for 1 hour, with a 2 hour stay costing only £1.00.</p> <p>The corresponding charges at Southampton General Hospital are £2.70 for 1 hour and £4.90 for 2 hours.</p> <p>The corresponding charges at Royal South Hants Hospital are £1.50 for 1 hour and £2.00 for 2 hours.</p> <p>Blue Badge Holders will continue to be able park without charge under these proposals.</p>
<p>Lack and unsuitability of public transport</p> <p>Public transport options to the district centres are not suitable or available for many people, particularly for weekly food shopping.</p> <p>Example comments:</p> <p><i>“If I was able to carry a full weeks shopping on public transport that went anywhere near where I live at a time I needed - or I could carry it on a pushbike - I would consider it.”</i></p> <p><i>“It doesn’t incentivise people to use public transport because public transport is extortionate and inconsistent.”</i></p> <p><i>“As for encouraging people to use public transport, suggest whoever thought of this refers to the bus route map because for many people, it's not possible to get to either area by public transport and this will adversely affect older people, disabled people and parents of young children.”</i></p>	<p>There are a range of Bus routes that provide frequent services to all four district centres from Southampton’s suburban areas.</p> <p>It is recognised that drivers may not seek to use alternative travel modes in place of every car journey, but public transport can be a viable choice for many trips.</p> <p>The Council will continue to work with bus operators on fare offers.</p>

<p>Charges have been introduced to raise revenue</p> <p>The parking charges are only being introduced to raise money for the Council.</p> <p>Example comments:</p> <p><i>“The majority of citizens recognise this as being to do with raising revenue. It’s an insult to people’s intelligence to try and pretend otherwise.”</i></p> <p><i>“This to me is just pure greed from Southampton City Council trying to squeeze every little Penny they can out of people.”</i></p> <p><i>“There is no mention of raising revenue which, I believe, is a significant factor behind these proposals.”</i></p>	<p>Parking Charges are not implemented to raise revenue, but to address policy goals as outlined in the proposal.</p> <p>The Council does need to cover the cost of operating the car parks, while any surplus revenue is used for the public good.</p>
<p>Parking will be displaced to residential roads</p> <p>Drivers will choose to park on nearby residential roads rather than pay the parking charge.</p> <p>Example comments:</p> <p><i>“People will be parking in local residential areas, which coming from a person who lives nearby will be very annoying.”</i></p> <p><i>“This will encourage drivers to park in residential areas or illegally to avoid fee.”</i></p> <p><i>“This will also push people to then park on surrounding residential streets, this will cause issues for residents. Then I suppose your “solution” to that would be permits for the roads.”</i></p>	<p>The proposed parking charges have been kept at a nominal level to deter people from residential roads and it is generally found that drivers will try to park as close to their destinations as possible.</p> <p>Resident Permit Parking Zones have been introduced in some residential areas to deter parking by non-residents, with some of these schemes already operating in close proximity to the Portswood, Shirley and Bitterne District Centres.</p> <p>It is current Council policy that it will investigate implementing or amending Permit Parking restrictions if a request is made by a representative group of residents who would be affected by the proposal.</p>

The proposals will impact on parents dropping off / collecting children at / from local schools

Some schools have been encouraged to use Suburban Car Parks as Park and Stride facilities which reduces the impact on neighbouring residential roads from this activity and improves road safety around the schools.

Example comments:

“Also you will only encourage parents to block roads as they try to park in surrounding roads to collect children from the school.”

“It will cause problems for parents who use these car parks for dropping off /collecting their children for school causing them to park dangerously on roads around the schools causing danger to ALL people on the roads around schools.”

“This will hinder park and stride for the local primary school.”

“In my area of Bitterne, these car parks are used as safe drop-of zones for school children. Introducing these charges will mean that parents will resort to trying to park on residential streets near to the schools further increasing the chaos at school drop-off and pick-up time that the recent "School Streets Experimental Order" has created.”

“For many years now parents have been encouraged to use these car parks as part of Park and Stride. Should parents be forced to pay for parking to do the right thing and reduce traffic around our schools. Even using the shortest pay period twice a day this would amount to £5 per week.”

The report recommends that officers develop proposals to enable the use of Suburban Car Parks as Park and Stride facilities

<p>Impact on residents</p> <p>Residents will have to pay to park in the car parks during the evenings and on Sundays. Residents will have to pay when charging their Electric Vehicle</p> <p>Example comments:</p> <p><i>“Residents use the car park for evening parking, as well as for visiting friends and family outside of chargeable hours, when the road parking is at maximum.”</i></p> <p><i>“Also, how does this affect people using electric charging- will they have to pay for parking as well as electricity?”</i></p>	<p>The Suburban car parks are not maintained for the purpose of residential parking, but to provide parking amenity for those visiting the District Centres. Residents can of course use the facilities, but as with any parking facility, tariffs assist with covering the operating cost of the facilities.</p> <p>It is standard practice in Southampton City Council’s car parks for Electric Vehicles to be subject to the parking restrictions while charging and this was already the case for the Suburban Car Parks.</p>
<p>Impact on community groups and volunteers</p> <p>The proposals will have a negative impact on participation within societies and other community groups which operate in and around the district centres.</p> <p>Example comments:</p> <p><i>“I belong to a Shirley-based amateur theatre group Maskers Theatre Company. I use my car to come to rehearsals in the evenings and weekends, from outside of the city. I am often at rehearsal for several hours, 3-4 times per week, and 7 days a week during show runs. This would cost me £28 per week to park under the new proposal, which is more than my annual membership fee for the theatre group being unemployed I cannot afford the additional weekly expense so would likely have to abandon my hobby.”</i></p> <p><i>“The Oakbank car park is crucial to several community based running clubs. Removing the free evening charges will decimate attendance for these clubs, and likely see them fold.”</i></p>	<p>Regardless of the purpose of a visit there is still a need to manage car trips and parking demand.</p> <p>The report recommends amending the proposed charging hours from Monday to Sunday 8am to Midnight, to Monday to Sunday 8am to 8pm, which would reduce the cost of parking for evening based community activities.</p>

<p>Impact on groups attending Places of Worship</p> <p>There are currently no district centre parking charges on Sundays during which period, some community groups attend Places of Worship. Parking charges may be payable by groups who have previously parked during these times without charge.</p> <p>Some respondents have also stated that introducing parking charges on Sunday mornings and Sunday evenings could be discriminatory against some community groups.</p> <p>Example comments:</p> <p><i>“My primary concern is for the parishioners of my church who have found a home in our church, that they may be put off attending and withdrawing from our community.”</i></p> <p><i>“We use this car park to support our religious beliefs as this is where I park to attend church on Sundays and church activities through the week. This could deter people from attending due to this. I shouldn’t have to worry about finding the money to pay for parking when I am attending for religious reasons.”</i></p>	<p>Regardless of the purpose of a visit there is still a need to manage car trips and parking demand. Many similar urban centres and local towns have charges that apply on Sundays.</p> <p>The Council currently applies parking charges Monday to Saturday, 8am – 6pm. These existing charging periods encompass times of worship and meetings for other community groups. Therefore, the revised charging structure constitutes an equal parking structure for all daytime/evening activities within these areas.</p> <p>The Council could not amend the parking tariff to favour a specific section of community.</p>
<p>The proposals are an attack on motorists.</p> <p>The proposal penalises drivers.</p> <p>Example comments:</p> <p><i>“No reason to continually penalise the motorist, seems like vengeful attack on drivers and local shops.”</i></p> <p><i>“All you appear to be doing is waging war on motorists and causing gridlock.”</i></p>	<p>The aim of the proposals is to manage car trips at times when there is parking demand.</p> <p>The Council’s key transport policies are focused on encouraging the use of alternative transport modes, particular for local trips. This would provide an overall benefit for those who have to drive by reducing traffic and congestion.</p> <p>The Council provides a range of parking facilities and tariff options for those who need to drive and also offers season tickets for regular users.</p>

Implementing parking tariffs may cause health issues

People would be deterred from visiting gyms which may lead to obesity and other health issues.

Example comments:

“The car park on Angel Crescent is used by many people for shopping but also for the use of the gym. With the cost of living rising, the extra cost per day people cannot afford. That could then stop them going to the gym! That can then lead to obesity! Instead of bringing in an injection to help with obesity you should be promoting places like Bitterne and its gyms so that it is accessible to people for health reasons not making it more difficult!”

“I currently use the car park at Angel Crescent when I visit the Gym in the evening or on weekends. Whilst I appreciate there is cost involved in maintaining these car parks perhaps that can be collected from the business rates of businesses that benefit from the parking rather than the general public. Particularly where the gym is involved paying further to attend is going to put people off going which contributes to a lazier unhealthier society.”

There are many gyms within the City Centre where parking charges apply.

The majority of parking sessions are likely to only cost £1.00 or less.