

Update from Car Parking Working Group

Cabinet Member Cllr Neal Davey
Responsible Officer Head of Finance

Reason for the report: To update the PDG with regard to the proposals being recommended by the Car Parking Working Group.

RECOMMENDATION: To agree the proposals from the working group be included in the draft budget considerations to be discussed at this meeting of the Managing the Environment PDG with all the other service proposals in order to set a balanced Council budget for 2016/17.

Relationship to the Corporate Plan: To deliver our Corporate Plan's priorities within existing financial resources.

Financial implications: The proposals that have been recommended by the car parking working group could potentially increase revenue from our Pay & Display car parks by circa £90k in 2016/17 (based on current vend levels).

Legal implications: It is a statutory requirement for the Local Authority to set a balanced budget. Any changes/revisions to car park charging tariffs will be included in a new Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).

Risk assessment: After any new fees/charges are introduced officers will monitor future usage levels and income being received and report back to Members on a regular basis.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 At a meeting of the Managing the Environment PDG on the 13 January 2015 it was recommended to set up a small officer/Member working group to look at all areas of future car parking strategy. This would consider: fees/charges, review of current usage levels/patterns, cost of running the service, existing dispensations/concessions, etc.

2.0 Update from these meetings

2.1 The initial scope for the working group was identified at the first meeting and considered: number/location of car parks and the amount of spaces in them, condition survey and maintenance plan, income generated per car park, budget position, overnight parking, current charges, local benchmarking of charges, vacancy levels per car park, audit report and officer issues.

2.2 So far there have been 4 meetings (minutes are attached as Appendix 1) where both officers and Members have all engaged in lively debate about a significant number of service related issues.

3.0 Proposals/recommendations

3.1 The most recent working group meeting held on the 17 September 2015 reached an overall majority decision on the following proposals/recommendations:

- That Pay & Display car parking charges across the District are amended based on the information included in Appendix 2. This will generate additional car parking fee revenue of circa £87k in 2016/17 – based on current vend levels.
- All District permits will be increased per the proposals contained in Appendix 3. This would generate additional income of slightly over £1k in 2016/17 – however, there are some new permits (with no historic sales information).

Note 1 – all car park charges have not been increased for the past 2 financial years.

Note 2 - With regard to all District permits it was agreed that we need to do more to advertise/promote the up-take of these items.

3.2 In addition to the above proposals the working group also identified a number of existing dispensations that it felt was appropriate to receive formal approval from the PDG. These are detailed below:

- Castle Primary School next to Will St – drop off at 8.50 – 9.10am and pick up 3.25 – 3.45pm
- Dance class Mkt Place - Saturdays
- 4 free Saturdays in run up to Xmas
- Monthly food markets (*)
- Some town/parish councils (*)
- Officers/members in various cparks
- Road closures (*)
- Market traders – currently provided with one space included in the trader's stall/pitch hire of £14 per day.
- Permit discounts for bulk buying (*)

(*) Note – it is proposed that the following items above are delegated to the HoF and Cab Member for Environment to agree appropriate discount rates or terms.

3.3 Also need to consider coach parking bays – and their inclusion on the TRO. Will St and St Rd, Cullompton

4.0 Other work still ongoing

- 4.1 As part of the review of the working group we also considered the Council's provision of amenity car parks. Currently the Council has 9 General Fund amenity car parks in various locations within the District boundaries. These car parks are provided at no cost to users but obviously have an ongoing maintenance, utility and enforcement cost. It should be noted that some are very well used, some less so and the total maintenance cost estimated for the next 5 years is circa £80-100k.
- 4.2 The working group has agreed that the Head of Finance arranges discussions with the relevant Town/Parish Clerks and/or Chairmen to discuss the future provision of amenity car parks to consider some of the following possibilities; introduction of P&D, permits, asset sale or transfer – after more extensive work on establishing usage levels, patterns, categories of users – i.e. residents or commuters, etc.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the Head of Finance can give the PDG a verbal update at the meeting on how these discussions are progressing.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 Any change in pricing strategy will always be subject to fluctuations in user demand, market conditions, alternative provision, the economic position, what is commercially on offer in close proximity to a car park, etc. Therefore, after any price change officers will monitor income and usage levels and report back to the PDG to keep all Members informed of any material changes against what has initially been predicted.

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Background Papers: Minutes of Working Group

Circulation of the Report: Management Team, Members & Relevant Service Managers