

SCRUTINY
13 MARCH 2017

CAR PARKING UPDATE FOR THE TEN MONTHS TO 31 JANUARY 2017

Cabinet Member Cllrs Karl Busch & Richard Chesterton
Responsible Officer Andrew Jarrett – Director of Finance, Assets & Resources

Reason for Report: To present a car parking update after the first 10 months of the new charging strategy.

RECOMMENDATION(S): The Committee note the current position on car parking vends and income for the first 10 months of 2016/17 and consider the attached footfall data and associated commentary.

Relationship to the Corporate Plan: The Council must ensure that it maximises the opportunity available from all of its property assets, however, it must also be mindful of the associated economic consequences that can be directly or indirectly related to major changes in any charging policy.

Financial Implications: The new car parking strategy targeted better utilisation of the Councils car parks, introduced a more streamlined tariff system and looked to increase overall income from its 10 Pay & Display car parks by £141k.

Legal Implications: None.

Risk Assessment: Regular financial monitoring information will indicate to Members whether this strategy is achieving its objectives.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 During 2015/16 the Managing the Environment Policy Development Group set up an officer and member working group to review our current car park charging policy and then make recommendations on a new one to be implemented on the 1/4/16. This review looked at: usage levels, benchmarked charges against neighbouring Councils, considered more free periods, reviewed concessions, considered economic consequence, etc.

2.0 The new charging strategy for 2016/17

2.1 After an extensive consultation process, reported at all of our 34 car parks and advertised in the local press and at the Council offices, the main changes made to our new charging policy were:

- The removal of the £1 tariff for 5hrs parking in the 3 long stays
- But freezing the £2 tariff for all day parking
- Introducing a 30min free period during the evening and freezing the overnight charge at a £1
- Extending the free period at Westexe and PHouse to 30 mins

- Introducing a 30 mins free period at William St and Wellbrook St
 - Reducing Sunday and BH charges to £1
- 2.2 It was then estimated that if current (15/16) vends remained at the same level for 2016/17 this new charging policy would generate circa £141k more income from the Council's 10 P&D car parks.
- 2.3 When evaluating the impact of a new charging policy for any product, it is often made harder, as other variables may well have direct/indirect effects/consequences. This is particularly relevant to car parking. Variables such as weather, the economy, fuel prices, provision of alternative parking, availability and range of shops, level of ad hoc concessions granted, road closures, etc. will also affect usage levels and hence income generated.
- 2.4 The Scrutiny Committee was provided information with regard to the first 6 months of 2016/17 relating to both income received and vends purchased. Subsequent to this meeting we have been asked to provide a further update on income and vends and in addition information/data held on footfall and any relevant observations from officers in the Economic Development team. This information is attached as appendices 3 and 4

3.0 Car parking vends and income for 1/4/16 – 30/9/16

- 3.1 Members of the Scrutiny Committee received an initial update on car parking income and vends after the first 3 months of 2016/17. This was then further updated to include the overall position upto the 30/9/16 (i.e. the first 6 months). We are now in a position to report the overall income and vends for the first 10 months of 2016/17. This information is shown in the table below.

Month	Income 16/17	Income 15/16	Variance
April	£58,948	£47,349	£11,599
May	£52,273	£48,910	£3,363
June	£56,200	£49,833	£6,367
July	£59,452	£54,616	£4,836
August	£58,514	£51,190	£7,324
September	£56,939	£52,610	£4,329
October	£58,724	£54,509	£4,215
November	£57,595	£50,436	£7,159
December	£60,105	£52,895	£7,210
January	£51,195	£48,508	£2,687
Total	£569,945	£510,856	£59,089

NB1 - The above table shows an overall income position vs the actual figures achieved in April to January against the same months in 2015/16 for all of the Council's P&D car parks.

- 3.2 In addition to the above table, Appendix 1 shows the total vends and income per car park for the first 10 months of 2016/17 and Appendix 2 shows the performance against budget of each car park.
- 3.3 If we assume that the first 10 months are representative of the rest of 2016/17 the Council would potentially generate circa £684k against a budget of £712k – which was set £141k higher than in 2015/16.
- 3.4 When evaluating our new charging strategy, we must also look at the vend analysis to establish how it has affected; parking numbers, length of stays, success of increased free parking concessions, etc. This information is also contained in Appendix 1.
- 3.5 At a previous meeting Members were informed that due to contractor software problems not all vend analysis had been recorded during May and June.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The first 10 months of income data shows that if fee/charges are maintained at broadly the same level during the remainder of 2016/17 that the Council should achieve some where close to the increased budget of £712k (note the P&D car park income budget was £571.5k in 2015/16).
- 4.2 Officers will continue to provide regular updates on car parking income and vend analysis to members.
- 4.3 Officers and members will review correspondence/feedback on the new charging strategy and consider whether any changes are required to our current strategy.
- 4.4 With regard to any correlation between parking tariffs and footfall it is virtually impossible to prove any direct cause and effect due to all of the other interrelated variables that can affect footfall numbers and the relatively inaccurate way we currently collect this data.
- 4.5 As seen in appendix 3 officers have investigated the potential cost of procuring more accurate headcount measures/systems, but at a cost of circa £10k, it is felt that this would not demonstrate value for money.

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Circulation of the Report:

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