

CABINET (TRAFFIC AND PARKING) COMMITTEE

19 JANUARY 2006

DISCOUNTED PARKING FOR LOW EMISSION VEHICLES

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

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RECENT REFERENCES:

EA 20 – Review of Parking Issues – Environment and Access PIC, 15 March 2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In March 2004, Cabinet agreed that season tickets in the pay and display car parks should be discounted for low emission vehicles as part of the County's MIRACLES project. The project is now ending, and this report proposes continuing the discounts for season tickets in the pay and display car parks. It also proposes using the same level of discounts for residents parking permits, and investigating further whether the same level of discounts could be offered for the pre-paid Park and Ride tickets.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That the discounts for pay and display season ticket holders using low emission vehicles should continue to be 50% for vehicles in Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) band B, and 75% for vehicles in VED band A.
- 2 That the same level of discounts should apply to residents parking permit holders with low emission vehicles.
- 3 That detailed investigations should be progressed on the same level of discounts being offered on pre-paid Park and Ride tickets.

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The County Council as part of the MIRACLES project proposed that low emission vehicles could be offered a reduction on parking charges compared to the standard parking charges. There were two main issues to be resolved, firstly which parking charges should be discounted and secondly which vehicles should be entitled to a discount.
- 1.2 There were significant difficulties in identifying how a reduction for low emissions could be introduced without allowing fraudulent use of a discounted scheme. The only option that could be easily introduced was to restrict availability to season tickets in the pay and display car parks where the season ticket can show the registration number of the vehicle which is eligible for the discount. It had been hoped to extend the discount option to the season tickets for pay on foot car parks, but it has not been possible to adapt the parking equipment with the required Automatic Number Plate Recognition System to prevent fraudulent use of discounted cards.
- 1.3 The vehicles to be discounted could most easily be identified by using the level of CO2 emissions, since this measurement has been adopted nationally for both vehicle excise duty (VED) and company car tax purposes. It was agreed that vehicles with CO2 emissions of 101 to 120 g/km (VED band B) should be entitled to a 50% discount, and those with CO2 emissions of 100g/km or less (VED band A) should be entitled to a 75% discount. In addition the County Council proposed that hybrid or electric powered vehicles should be entitled to free parking, and that the Miracles budget would fund the loss of income in excess of the discount that the vehicles would otherwise be eligible for.
- 1.4 The changes were approved by Cabinet on 31 March 2004, and 29 vehicles have so far claimed a discount. Of these, 19 vehicles are hybrids and have therefore received free season tickets, while 10 vehicles are in VED band B and have received a 50% discount on their season tickets. There has been one vehicle in VED band A but that was also a hybrid vehicle and eligible for a free season ticket.

2 Proposed Discounts

- 2.1 The Miracles project ends on 31 January 2006, and it is therefore necessary to review the existing scheme and consider the discounts that should apply in future. There will no longer be any funding from the Miracles project towards the free season tickets for hybrid and electric vehicles.
- 2.2 There have been changes in car models since the discount scheme commenced two years ago. There has been slow growth in the number of hybrid vehicles, although

there have been new versions produced of the two most popular hybrids, the Toyota Prius and the Honda Civic IMA, and both these new models are in VED band B. The most recent hybrid announced has been the Lexus RX400h, a large high-performance 4-wheel drive vehicle. This is a relatively high emissions vehicle compared to a medium size car, with CO2 emissions of 192 g/km putting it in the highest VED band F, although the emissions are lower than for other large 4-wheel drive vehicles.

- 2.3 There are environmental and public awareness benefits in continuing to offer discounts for low emission vehicles. It is proposed that in future the discounts should be based solely on CO2 emissions to avoid relatively high emission hybrid vehicles such as the Lexus RX400h being eligible for discounts, and that two categories should be used. Those vehicles in VED band B (CO2 emissions of 101 to 120 g/km) would be eligible for a 50% discount, and this would include the Toyota Prius and Honda Civic IMA hybrids. Those vehicles in VED band A (CO2 emissions of 100 g/km or less) would be eligible for a 75% discount, and this would include all electric cars and some future hybrids that are likely to achieve lower emissions than existing hybrid models.
- 2.4 The low emission vehicle discounts would continue to be available for season tickets in the pay and display car parks, and it has also been proposed by the Residents' Parking Informal Working Group that these discounts should in future be available for residents permit holders. This would apply only to residents' permits, which are issued for a specified vehicle, and not to visitors' permits where the vehicle is not specified. It is unlikely that any progress can be made to enable the discounts to be offered for the pay on foot car parks due to the technical difficulties in achieving the required equipment modifications. It may however be possible to offer the discounts for pre-paid Park and Ride tickets with relatively low cost modifications to the pay and display machines, and it is proposed that this should be investigated further.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

3 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 3.1 These proposals will continue to encourage more sustainable transport and in particular the improvement of air quality in Winchester.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 The application of these discounts for season tickets is already included within existing budgets. The introduction of discounts for residents' permits will result in minimal loss of income compared to the additional income which will be achieved at the same time by increasing the first permit charge.
- 4.2 The introduction of discounts for pre-paid Park and Ride tickets will require expenditure on modifying the pay and display machines, and will also result in a small loss of income. If the Committee approves further investigation of this option, financial details will be available in a future Committee report before there is any commitment to proceed.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None.

APPENDICES: None.