

CABINET

16 MARCH 2011

CAR PARKING CHARGES

REPORT OF HEAD OF ACCESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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RECENT REFERENCES:

[CAB 2110\(TP\)](#) Rural Car Park Charges – Results of Advertisement of Order – 18th January 2011

[CAB 2090](#) Car Park Charges – Results of Advertisement of Order – 1 December 2010

[CAB 2061](#) Car Park Charges & Operation Review – 13 October 2010

[CAB 1915 \(TP\)](#) Car Park Charges Review – 5 November 2009

[CAB 1796](#) Review of car par charges 2009/10 – 4 February 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report considers the implications of the amendment to the 2011/12 Budget agreed by Council on 24 February 2011 and suggests to Cabinet how it may wish to progress the proposed changes to car parking charges.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Head of Legal Services be authorised to give public notice of the necessary orders under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended) required to give effect to the budget changes approved by Council on 24 February 2011.

2. That responses to the proposals received within the statutory consultation period are reported to Cabinet in May 2011 and that the changes agreed are implemented as soon as practicable thereafter.
3. That the budget implications of the changes are considered by Cabinet in the light of the responses received.

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At Council meeting on 24 February 2011, an amendment in relation to car parking charges was agreed as set out below:

“That to help both the Community and Business sector, the increase in car park charges, recently introduced, be reversed as soon as practically possible, following the process of statutory notices.

Therefore:-

- a. Sunday Charging is discontinued both in short stay car parks and on metered street parking bays.*
- b. The free half hour be reinstated in Winchester*
- c. The increase in charges for short stay rural car parks be cancelled.*

And:

- d. and a free hour be allowed in Rural District Car Parks*
- e. That the estimated cost in 2011/12 of £95,000 be met by a release from the LABGI Fund.”*

- 1.2 This amendment has the effect of requiring Cabinet to set in motion the process by which some of the previously agreed changes to car park charges on which the originally proposed 2011/12 budget was predicated can be amended and introducing a new proposal, that of a free first hour for stays in rural car parks

2 Implementation of Council Resolution

- 2.1 As the Council resolution recognises, there are certain statutory processes that have to be completed before the changes contained within it can be brought about. The Council could use a notification process to reduce the charges in line with the Council resolution. Whilst this is the appropriate mechanism for a straightforward modification to prices, it is not considered appropriate to use it where there are more fundamental changes proposed

which have an effect on transport strategy and in which there may be significant public interest. It should also be noted that the cost of making changes to prices as required by Council will be of the order of £5,000. It would be sensible to ensure that the process used to make changes is robust and not likely to be challenged or itself reversed.

- 2.2 It is therefore recommended that these proposals are implemented by way of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which will be subject to advertising and a formal consultation process. Allowing for the process itself and time to consider and prepare a report on responses it should be possible to report to the first 'normal business' Cabinet in May.
- 2.3 This process will also allow for Hampshire County Council to be consulted, which is particularly important with regard to the reinstatement of the free half hour on-street provision in Winchester, about which the County Council has previously expressed reservations. Members are reminded that the City Council operates on-street parking under an agency agreement with the County Council rather than as a function of the City Council itself.
- 2.4 The use of a TRO will also allow for consultation with the rural communities in the District. The proposed free hour in rural car parks is a completely new proposal. Currently Basingwell Car Park in Bishops Waltham and Wickham Square car park have a free half hour provision and the car parking in New Alresford has no free period. Parish Councils in these towns should be consulted on the proposal, as it will have implications for enforcement and for parking management, about which they may have comments to make.

3 Consequential Implications

- 3.1 Lifts in the car parks had not operated on Sundays (except for Farmer's Market days), due to the fact that there would not have been staff available to switch them on and off, nor to deal with any emergencies that might have arisen. It was planned to operate the lifts on Sundays when the new charges were introduced, as staff would be employed to enforce the charges and could therefore deal with these matters. If free Sunday parking is re-introduced, then it will be necessary to revert to the previous pattern of operation, with lifts not operating on Sundays.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

4 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN (RELEVANCE TO):

- 4.1 The suggested amendments to car parking charges need to be considered carefully in terms of their environmental impacts. The Council has developed a parking strategy which depends on a managed approach to car parking charges. The proposed changes would require a modification of the Council's approach as set out in the draft Winchester Town Access Plan.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The financial information in CAB 2061 on the parking review agreed by Cabinet in October 2010 indicated that the agreed changes would raise revenue (for a full year 2011/12) as shown below:

Sunday parking charges:	£46,000
Removal of free 1/2 hr on street in Winchester:	£32,000
Increases in charges in rural car parks:	£40,000
 Total assumed additional income	 £122,000

It is not possible to draw any conclusions about the accuracy of these figures from the short period that Sunday charging or the increases in rural car parks have been operating. Whatever the accuracy, if the Council does not make these charges then it will receive less income than it would otherwise have done. .

- 5.2 The amendment to the budget made at Council indicated an estimated cost of £95,000, on the assumption that lower income would be received from June/July 2011 after the statutory decision making, and that this should be met in the current year only by a release from the LABGI funds. It is now believed that the estimate did not include sufficient allowance for the change to allow 1hr free in all rural car parks which it is estimated will cost an additional £33,000, giving an overall total of £155,000 reduction in income in a full year.
- 5.3 By the time that TRO has been advertised and a report returned to Cabinet it may be clearer what the financial implications of the change will actually be since there will be more evidence on which to base estimates. Cabinet will therefore be provided with an update on the financial implications within that report and will be in a position to make decisions on how they should be dealt with within the scope of the 2011/12 budget as it now stands.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 6.1 Car parking income has shown significant decline against target since December 2010 and this is expected to have an adverse effect on the Council's budget outturn in 2010/11. There are a number of factors which may be the cause of this decline, most notably the general slow down in the economy and the rapid increase in fuel prices affecting driver behaviour. The increase in the availability of park and ride services also provides a cheaper long term option for motorists which is good for the environment but does reduce the Council's income from car parking charges. If they cannot be compensated from by further efficiency savings in the Council's operation then measures which reduce income from car parking may have an adverse effect on service delivery.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None.

APPENDICES:

None.