

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 11 th December 2018
Report Subject	6 Month Review of the Revised Car Parking Charges
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside
Report Author	Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2018, Cabinet approved the revised car parking charges which are contained within the County wide car parking strategy and the commencement of car parking charges in Flint, following the town centre regeneration works. The new charges now apply in all of the Councils car parks included within the strategy and were introduced during May 2018.

Cabinet requested that a review of the new parking charges should be undertaken, 6 months after their introduction.

This review has now been completed and the outcomes of the work and a number of recommended changes to the charging arrangements, which can be accommodated within the current strategy, are detailed in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Scrutiny notes the content of the 6 month review of the new car park charging regime introduced in May 2018.
2.	That Scrutiny recommends Cabinet approve the associated changes to the charging arrangements, as highlighted in this report, which are considered to be within the boundaries and limitations of the overall strategy.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW OF STAGE 2 CAR PARKING STRATEGY
1.01	<p>Following the revision of the Council's car parking strategy in March 2018, new car parking charges were introduced at the following locations within the County:</p> <p>Mold – Revised charging tariffs introduced in May 2018 Buckley – Revised charging tariffs introduced in May 2018 Talacre – Introduced charging arrangements (partial) in July 2015 Holywell – Revised charging tariffs introduced in May 2018 Connah's Quay – Revised charging tariffs introduced in May 2018 Shotton – Revised charging tariffs introduced in May 2018 Queensferry – Revised charging tariffs introduced in May 2018 Mold, County Hall - Revised charging tariffs introduced in May 2018 Flint - Introduced charging arrangements in May 2018</p>
1.02	<p>Prior to the implementation of the revised charges, projected income levels were assessed, based on the existing car park utilisation levels prior to the change in tariff (except Flint where the original utilisation models were used to calculate the expected usage).</p> <p>The expected income levels at each of the car parks, based on actual uptake, can now be compared against these projections.</p> <p>A summary of income levels against projections, for each town, for the financial year 2018/19 are shown in Appendix 1.</p>
1.03	<p>Appendix 2 highlights the percentage income per hour in time bands against total income across all pay and display car parks in Flintshire.</p>
1.04	<p>It is projected that there will be an in-year financial pressure from car parking 'pay and display' charges of £240k.</p> <p>There are four main reasons for this under recovery, which are detailed in sections 1.05 to 1.08 below.</p>
1.05	<p>Delays in the implementation the new car parking tariffs in 2018/19 has resulted in a pressure of £80k. The budget was based on a full year assumption with the new charges being introduced in April 2018, with the delay being as a result of the extended political approval process.</p>
1.06	<p>Due to the ongoing town centre regeneration works, the Flint car parking strategy implementation was delayed until May 2018. The original business model projections for income had not therefore been tested, as in other towns in the car parking strategy and the percentage increase in additional income was applied to Flint pay and display charges, in line with the expected increases from other towns.</p> <p>The significantly lower income levels in Flint can partly be attributed to the high availability of off street parking particularly in the retail park area within the town and the late introduction of charges. The Feather Street car park which was built into the business model is also still currently being used as</p>

	<p>a compound by contractors for development works further contributing to the pressure on income levels.</p> <p>Income on the car parks will increase when the development works commence on Flint Retail Park.</p> <p>Excluding the delay in implementing the charge, the projected pressure against the income target is expected to be £62k.</p>
1.07	<p>When reviewing monthly ticket sales year on year across the County, a small reduction since the beginning of the calendar year can be identified. However there has been no further significant decrease in tickets purchased since the new charges were induced in May 2018.</p> <p>This decrease in tickets sold against projection is resulting in a pressure projected to be £52k.</p>
1.08	<p>Projections were based on assumptions that the former '4 hour' tariff being removed would result in more all day tickets being purchased however, actual results are showing sales are falling into the 1 and 2 hour tariff bands.</p> <p>Following a request from scrutiny, a 30p for an hour tariff was implemented. This is showing a higher purchase rate than anticipated compared to the 2 hour tariff.</p> <p>Together these trends result in an expected pressure of £46k.</p>
1.09	<p>Since the introduction of the revised charging scheme, a number of suggested amendments to the charging arrangements have been received from various individuals, companies and public bodies. All of these suggestions have been assessed and considered against the existing strategy and are now put forward as viable or not viable within the constraints of the approved strategy.</p> <p>The full list of suggested changes are detailed on Appendix 3, together with an assessment of their acceptability within the strategy. The list also shows suggestions that could not be considered, because they fall outside of the overarching parking strategy and the principles set down in the March 2018 Cabinet report, which introduced the new charges.</p> <p>The March 2018 report confirmed that any proposals to amend or support car parking charges from Town Councils would be considered within the following limitations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the overall net income of individual car parks and individual town centre car parks as a whole is not reduced; and 2. That any proposal will meet the principles of the Council's Car Parking Strategy and will promote management of the car parking network to provide available spaces and therefore access to the town centres. <p>In order to assist Town Councils who wish to support car parking charges in their town, guidelines (on what may or may not be considered within the policy and the above limitations) were produced. These guidelines are</p>

	shown on Appendix 4.
1.10	<p>The proposed changes to the car parking charging arrangements are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To introduce pay and display charges on the third tier of the car park at County Hall on the spaces nearest to Llwynegrin Hall, with remaining spaces on the tiers retained for permit holders only. – This will increase income levels and provide space for additional visitors to Llwynegrin Hall, 2. To introduce an additional 4 hour tariff band at Llwynegrin Hall. Increasing the time banding which will be more convenient for people visiting and attending weddings at Llwynegrin Hall. This will also increase income levels 3. To increase the charge at Alexander Street, Shotton car park to £2 all day. This will align with the charge for users of the Railway Station at Flint. – This will increase income levels and bring all station car park charges into alignment. 4. A trial of a chip and contactless payment function will take place at three selected locations for a quick and convenient way to pay the appropriate tariff. If the trial proves to be successful, the arrangement will be extended to other car parks across the County and for all new machines installed in future. 5. It is proposed to trial ‘pay by phone’ facility on one of the pay and display machines in the County. A viable option would be the machine at Flint Railway Station, due the nature of the customers using the car park. If successful this payment option would be introduced at other suitable locations across the County. 6. A review of maximising on street parking in town centres in order to provide some free short stay parking for quick visits to the town centre if possible, is permissible within the strategy. The Council are currently trialling de-pedestrianisation in Holywell Town Centre, to provide free on-street car parking and encourage shoppers to the town. 7. The £1 tariff in Mold has been increased to 3 hours from 2 hours in long and short stay car parks. The proposal was within the strategy and limitations and had no impact on income levels and could be supported. On this basis, the revised arrangements were introduced in September 8. A review of parking configuration to increase the car parking spaces available at New Street car park, Mold to support the increase in visitors to the town centre. This will also increase income levels 9. Review the percentage of income above the ‘core charging level’ paid to Town Councils. The existing level (10%) provides the T&CC with a sustainable income which can be invested in local related projects and it is considered to be at an appropriate level and should therefore

	<p>remain constant.</p> <p>10. A suggestion can be supported to support free car parking charges during the period of town centre festivals in a single car park, for up to 2 days per year, in each town in the County, based on a formal request and Business Case being submitted by the Town Council. This is on the basis that the additional visitors will utilise the other chargeable car parks in the town which will balance the overall income levels.</p> <p>11. The offer of free car parking for the month of December in towns would be considered to within the strategy and would be classed as a single event for the Town (if approved) however, due to the extended period, the cost to provide this arrangement would be passed by the Town Council.</p>
1.11	<p>The following suggestions which have been put forward could not be accommodated within the current car parking strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The removal car parking charges completely – This is not possible due to the impact on car parking availability in the town centres and the impact on income levels to the Authority. The funding raised is used to meet management and maintenance costs. 2. Introducing charges in some towns and not others. This would create inconsistencies and unfair advantages in those towns without charges, and impact on income level to the Authority. 3. A suggestion to extend charges to Sunday and Bank Holidays at all car parks across the County (Currently, only Flint Railway Station, Alexander Street and Talacre are chargeable on Sundays and Bank Holidays). This proposal could not be accepted as the current policy does not allow for Sunday and Bank Holidays charges, outside of those mentioned and there is limited demand for the car parks on these days. 4. A suggestion that disabled spaces become chargeable and are no longer provided longer free of charge (There is a statutory duty to provide disabled parking spaces, however there is no obligation to provide them free of charge). The proposal could not be accepted as current policy states that disable parking will be provided free of charge. 5. The increase of chargeable hours at the multi storey car park in County Hall and the Jade Jones Pavilion, Flint. This could not be accepted as they should remain in line with chargeable hours across the County. Aura could consider a business case to review chargeable hours at the Jade Jones Pavilion. 6. It is also recommended that the operational times remain unchanged at other car parks across the County. Chargeable hours are currently 08:00 to 17:00.

	<p>7. Proposal to introduce new tariff bands at the multi storey car park, County Hall and Halkyn Road, Holywell. Recommended to remain in line with tariff bands across the County as this would impact on income levels.</p> <p>8. Introduction of on-street parking charges are not to be considered as they are contrary to the Council strategy which is to maximise free short stay on -street parking within town centres.</p> <p>9. The proposal from Buckley Town Council to support up to six month's pay and display charges cannot be supported as it fails to meet the principles of the car parking strategy in that the provision of unrestricted and long term free parking would not support the management of car parking in the town.</p> <p>10. The extension of pay and display charges to other car parks across the County is not to be reviewed at this point in time. Options to extend the strategy could be reviewed in the future, but each location would need to be considered on a case by case business case basis.</p> <p>11. The provision of free parking after 3pm would have a detrimental impact on income levels to the Authority and shopping habits within the towns.</p> <p>12. Providing free, 30 minute parking in some car parks would be difficult to enforce and would heavily impact on shopping habits and income levels.</p>
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Total in year (2018 – 19) projected shortfall - £240,000</p> <p>Figure includes £80k from the delay in introducing the new charges in the current financial year.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Suggested changes have been received from various sources during the period of revised charges.
3.02	Consultation took place with the Cabinet Member on all of the proposed changes to parking policy contained within the report.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
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4.01	Further loss of car parking income will result in financial pressures within the service. Utilisation levels and income levels are monitored as part of the regular budget monitoring process
4.02	The introduction of car parking charges was intended to ensure the availability of parking within the town centres, whilst providing a contribution to the overall cost of maintaining the car parking facilities.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Expected income vs budget Appendix 2 – Percentage income per hour Appendix 3 – Options for consideration Appendix 4 - Guidelines for Town Councils

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Stephen O Jones Telephone: 01352 704700 E-mail: stephen.o.jones@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None.