

Joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board 12 July 2011

Supplementary Information and Options on Parking Policy and Charging

The following represents summary information on a range of options to change current car parking charges. They have been grouped according to the subjects which reflect the main customer feedback and complaint. Each subject shows the 2011/12 budget adjustment that was made for the measure being introduced.

For each option, an attempt has been made to estimate both the cost to implement and the potential loss of income. Income loss is based on a projection of the actual experience from the first 10 weeks of implementation. Scrutiny should take into account the financial effects of any recommendations for change to the Executive. In all areas there is also the option not to change.

The key risks are around: revenue consequences; information and publicity about any changes agreed; reliance on third party contractors where pay and display and pay by phone software has to be reprogrammed; and formal Order changes that require legal process taking approximately 3 months.

1. The introduction of Evening Charges

The new charges from 4 April involved the introduction of evening charges from 6.00pm to 12.00 midnight @ 80p per stay in Banbury and 70p per stay in Bicester. Whilst it appears from usage and income levels that this change has now become accepted, town centre traders in particular feel that this is one of the factors which have influenced their recent downturn in evening trade.

Potential options for change include:

	Description	Difficulty to Implement 1 Difficult – 4 Easy	Cost to Implement (Estimate)	Income Effect (Estimate)
1a	Return to free evening parking	3	£10,000	£144,000 income loss from pay and display
1b	Free 10 minute period drop off/collection	3	Likely to be negligible	No data to calculate but likely to be low
1c	Charging to 1900hrs only on current hourly tariffs and free thereafter	2	£10,000	Difficult to calculate but likely to be near cost neutral
1d	Charging to 2000hrs only on current hourly tariffs and free thereafter	2	£10,000	Difficult to calculate but likely to be near cost neutral

2. The introduction of charging to Blue Badge Holders

Prior to 4 April, all Blue Badge holders were given free parking. Since 4 April, all have been charged at the standard tariffs appropriate for each location, but with concession of one additional hour free of charge after the paid for period. Concern has been expressed by some blue badge holders not being able to afford these charges plus confusion over free on street parking (responsibility of County Council) close to chargeable off street parking, particularly in Banbury.

Potential options for change include;

	Description	Difficulty to Implement 1 Difficult – 4 Easy	Cost to Implement (Estimate)	Income Effect (Estimate)
2a	Return to free blue badge charging	2	£6,000	Likely to be up to £100,000 loss of income
2b	Reduce charges for blue badge holders – flat rate of 70/80p	2/3	£6,000	Loss of £40,000 income
2c	Free parking in designated disabled spaces, chargeable in general spaces	2	£10,000	Difficult to calculate but could be £50,000 loss of income
2d	Refine policy in line with vehicle tax exemption to offer free parking for the most disabled *	2/3	£10,000	Not possible to estimate but likely to be low

* Note: To claim exemption from vehicle tax you must be receiving at least one of either the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance or War Pensioners Mobility Supplement.

3. Parking charges in Bicester given the forthcoming redevelopment works and impact these will have on residents and businesses.

All 4 April changes have been introduced in both Banbury and Bicester. However, it is recognised that the town centre redevelopment work are likely to have an adverse effect on the town's trading position and as such, some consideration could be given to support the town centre during the period up to Summer 2013

Potential options for change include;

	Description	Difficulty to Implement 1 Difficult – 4 Easy	Cost to Implement (Estimate)	Income Effect (Estimate)
3a	Return to Free evening parking in Bicester	3	£5,500	Likely to be an estimated £44,000 income loss
3b	Reduce cost of evening parking to £0.50/stay in	2	£5,500	Likely to be a minimum of £4,500

	Bicester			income loss
3c	Reduce charges during redevelopment by £0.10/hr	3	£5,500	Depends on ongoing patterns of use but could be up to £80,000 loss of income
3d	Designate the Market Square as free parking for up to 1 hour *	3	£1,500	Likely to be loss of income in excess of £100,000
3e	Return to free Sundays and Bank Holidays	3	£10,000	Loss of £7,000 income

* Note: It is proposed that Market Square is the main car park for use by Shopmobility during the redevelopment works.

4. Excess Charge Notice Levels and Early Payment Incentives

Concern has been expressed about the level of penalty at £60 or £80 in relation to the nature of the offence and the cost of a parking ticket. Also, that there is little incentive (£10) to pay early. This latter issue has resulted in a higher number of appeals of late to correctly issued excess charge notices (ECNs).

Potential options for change include;

	Description	Difficulty to Implement 1 Difficult – 4 Easy	Cost to Implement (Estimate)	Income Effect (Estimate)
4a	Increase early payment discounts to 50% on all contraventions	2	£10,000	Likely loss of £43,000 income
4b	Increase discount to 25%	2	£10,000	Likely loss of £25,000 income
4c	Reduce the level of ECN fines to CPE levels of £70/£50	2	£10,000	Potential of up to £80,000 loss of income
4d	Cease the current £16 Admin Charge (already implemented)	3	Nil	None anticipated

5. Transferable Tickets

Consideration can be given to transferable tickets generally but this needs to be controlled to preserve the benefits of short and ultra short stay car parks ie it will have to be from short to short and long to long stay car parks only and no transfer to ultra short stay car parks, only from ultra short stay car parks. Whilst this option is estimated to incur negligible loss of income and will benefit an anticipated small number of users, it is highly likely to cause confusion with some car park users as it will rely heavily on those car park users knowing which car parks are short or long stay.