

Portfolio Holder decision record sheet

PH-023-24

Name of decision maker: Councillor Adrian England

Portfolio: Corporate & Commercial Services and Leader of the Council

Date of Portfolio Holder decision: 02/10/2024

Title of decision: Parking Service Tariff & Business Case Proposals

Background to report:

During 2023/24 several reports were presented to the Finance & Resources OSC and Cabinet in relation to proposals for parking tariff increases and changes to existing charging policies. With the last increase in parking tariffs being agreed in 2019, the objective was to obtain agreement on a set of proposals that could be included in a statutory consultation process.

This culminated in a report being presented to Cabinet in December 2023 which clearly set out a full breakdown of the proposed changes and agreement was reached with a decision made to progress to statutory consultation.

Following the publication of the Cabinet paper in December 2023, the Administration received representations from opposition parties and also from residents and local businesses who expressed concern at the proposed changes. Consequently, the Administration reviewed the proposals again and have proposed a final updated set of changes that were presented back to the Finance & Resources OSC and Cabinet in February 2024.

A summary of the updated proposals are set out below.

- Increases to both on-street and off-street parking tariff.
- Consolidating on-street parking sessions to introduce a new minimum stay of 2 hours.
- Keep Limited Wait Bays (LWBs) on the peripheries of the high streets in Berkhamsted and Kings Langley as being free to use.
- Keep all LWBs free in Apsley and Hemel Hempstead Old Town
- Introduce charges for LWBs in the centre of Tring and Kings Langley
- All chargeable LWBs (on-street parking) in the centre of Berkhamsted, Kings Langley, Tring plus Waterhouse Street and Marlowes to have maximum 1 hour stay with 2 tariffs: 30 mins for £0.80 or 1 hour for £1.50.
- Hemel Hempstead on-street parking to reduce from the proposed 4 hours to 2 hours in:
 - Alexandra Road;
 - Cemetery Hill;
 - St John's Road;
 - Cotterells
 - London Road
- Addition of an 'Up to 10 hours' parking option in off-street parking
- Tariffs in on-street and off-street locations to apply from 8am – 6pm Monday to Sunday
- All evening charging (post 6pm) to be removed.
- Kings Langley off-street car parks to remain free but stay limited to a maximum of 4 hours between 8am – 6pm (no time restriction after 6pm)
- Canal Fields, Berkhamsted, to remain free but stay limited to a maximum of 4 hours between 8am – 6pm (no time restriction after 6pm)
- The introduction of a change in the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to enable customers to extend a parking session by using the Pay By Phone app or the pay machines, but only where this allowed under the parking restrictions (e.g. you cannot extend a parking session past the maximum stay)

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These proposals have been developed through extensive consultation by the Administration with the key aims of

- Starting to introduce consistency with parking across the borough
- Recognising the value of Council assets and maximising income, whilst also recognising the desire to:
 - Support Town/Village centre shops,
 - Support the nighttime economy across the borough,
 - Provide freedom and flexibilities to shoppers.

At the Cabinet meeting in February it was agreed to progress to statutory consultation with these proposals, and to delegate authority to the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder Corporate & Commercial to make any final decision on the implementation of the parking tariff increases and changes to charging policy.

Work commenced on drafting the statutory consultation documentation and the proposals were submitted to the Highways Department at Hertfordshire County Council, the emergency services, and the Road Haulage Association for agreement on the proposals before the statutory consultation with residents and businesses could commence.

Responses were received from all of the above organisations in the early summer with no objections being raised, however, before the statutory consultation could commence, the Government called a Parliamentary election and due to the pre-election period (purdah), the statutory consultation was delayed until after the election.

The statutory consultation commenced on 10 July 2024 and concluded on 31 July 2024 and was available on the Council's corporate consultation platform with hard copies of the consultation and survey also being available at The Forum, Victoria Hall in Tring, and Berkhamsted Civic Centre. The statutory consultation included 3 separate Traffic Regulation Orders:

- Off-street
- On-street
- Controlled Parking Zones

Consultees were asked to provide any objections to the proposals with clear reasons for these objections.

The Council's consultation platform showed that over 3,000 people visited the consultation during the period and the following 538 objections were received:

- Off-street (146 responses)
- On-street (372 responses)
- Controlled Parking Zones (20 responses)

Whilst this cannot be considered as part of the statutory consultation process, it is worth noting that a petition with 3,840 signatures has been delivered to the Council relating to objections to the parking proposals in Kings Langley. The Petition was considered in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme, but was not reported to full Council because this matter was already subject to an open public consultation. It was therefore agreed that the petition would be referred to the final decision makers so that it could be considered as part of the overall consultation responses.

Statutory Consultation Objections

The number and type of objections received as part of the statutory consultation is summarised in Appendix 1.

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Decision made and reasons:

Following discussions with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial a decision has been made to progress the proposed changes to parking tariffs and changes to charging policies for full implementation.

The reasons for this decision are set out below:

- There was nothing highlighted in the objections to the statutory consultation that had not previously been considered by the Council.
- The Council has a duty to its residents and taxpayers to ensure best value for money, by ensuring it recovers costs for services provided.
- The proposals provide a more equitable charging basis for users across the Borough, with consistency as to charging policies.
- The additional income that the proposals will deliver will contribute to parking income pressures, and contribute to the Council's wider financial sustainability and delivery of services.
- The income will also contribute to longer term objectives relating to sustainability and climate change, as part of a holistic approach to encouraging behaviour change in relation to travel and sustainable transport options.

Reports considered:

- 13 February 2023 Cabinet - Parking Service Tariff & Business Case Proposals
- 12 December 2023 Cabinet - Parking Service Tariff & Business Case Proposals
- 12 September 2023 Cabinet - Parking Tariff & Business Case Proposals
- 7 February 2023 Finance & Resources OSC - Parking Service Tariff & Business Case proposals

Officers/Councillors/Ward Councillors/Stakeholders consulted:

Ben Hosier
Catherine Silva Donayre
Nigel Howcutt
Finance & Resources OSC
Cabinet
Hertfordshire Highways
Emergency Services
Road Haulage Association
Local Businesses & Residents

Monitoring Officer comments:

On 13th February 2024 Cabinet agreed to progress to the statutory consultation and delegated authority to the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial Services to make the final decision on implementation of the parking tariff increases and changes to charging policy following the statutory consultation.

The statutory consultation has now closed and the responses received are summarised in Appendix 1. Having considered the consultation responses, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial Services and the Leader of the Council, exercising their delegated authority, agree to implement the changes as set out in the statutory consultation without further change.

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The changes will now proceed to implementation via traffic regulation order.

Chief Financial Officer comments:

The recommendation is in line with the assumptions made in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the 2024/25 budget setting proposals.

Financial Implications:

- The proposed changes to parking tariffs and charging policy is expected to generate a net position of £600k per annum.

Risk:

- Higher parking tariffs may lead to reduced usage, which may result in a loss of parking income and reduced footfall in the town centre locations.
- There is a risk of complaints concerning changes to current tariffs and charging policies, but the increases and proposals are reasonable, no increases will have taken place in five years by 2024, and prices still compare favourably with neighbouring Authorities and local privately managed car parks.
- Higher number of vehicles being displaced into residential roads leading to an increase in complaints and requests for introduction of CPZs.

Value for money:

- These proposals will have a positive financial impact on the Council's ability to raise its own income and contribute to the Council's wider service delivery and financial sustainability; and support continued investment and improvements to local communities, including Hemel Hempstead town centre and other neighbourhood and urban centres.

Options considered and reasons for rejection:

The Council also has the option of not making any changes to parking tariffs or charging policy. However, this would mean that the Council does not properly fulfil its duty to its residents and taxpayers to ensure best value for money, by ensuring it recovers costs for services provided.

Portfolio Holder's signature:

Date: 25/09/24

Details of any interests declared and any dispensations given by the Standards Committee:

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Date decision record sheet received from portfolio holder: 25/09/24

Date decision published: 02/10/24

Decision no: PH-023-24

Date of expiry of call-in period: ~~09/10/24~~ – Decision called in

Date ~~any call-in received~~ or decision implemented: 05/11/2024 - Decision approved by the Finance & Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee by a majority vote