

Parking Charges Review

Decriminalisation Task Group item 4

Committee:	Decriminalisation Task Group	Agenda Item
Date:	7 August 2006	4
Title:	Parking Charges Review	
Author:	Les Scott, Parking Enforcement Manager	Item for decision

Summary

This report provides Members with details of parking charges and associated income to enable it to decide whether to amend parking tariffs with effect from 1 April 2007.

Recommendations

Members recommend to the Environment Committee that Options 3, 5 and 6 in the table in paragraph 16 of this report be implemented.

Background Papers

Policy Priorities and Budgets 2004/05 - Report to Environment & Transport
6 November 2003

Parking Review report to and minutes of the meeting of the Environment & Transport Committee – September 2005

Parking Review report to and minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee – March 2006

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Consultation has taken place throughout the review process with relevant parties and will be undertaken, as appropriate, as policies are implemented
Community Safety	Community Safety implications will be considered when policies are implemented
Equalities	Equality implications will be considered when policies are implemented
Finance	Financial implications will be provided to Members as appropriate as policies are implemented
Human Rights	Human Right implications will be considered when policies are implemented
Legal implications	Legal implications will be considered when policies are implemented
Ward-specific impacts	Ward-specific/Area Panel implications will be considered when policies are implemented

Parking Charges Review

Decriminalisation Task Group item 4

Workforce/Workplace	Workforce/place implications will be considered when policies are implemented
---------------------	---

Situation

- 1 It is Council policy to review the parking charges on a bi-annual basis. The last review was carried out in November 2003 and resulted in increased charges for parking on Council car parks, for Season Tickets and for Resident Parking Scheme (RPS) permits from April 2004. Appendix 1 provides details of all of the current charges and also includes the charges applied by our neighbouring districts.
- 2 The increase applied from April 2004 was as follows –
 - Council car parks – 10p increase across all tariffs
 - Season Tickets - Saffron Walden £250 to £275
Dunmow £200 to £220
Stansted £150 to £165 for business employees
£350 for remainder (New) compared to £488 at the Railway Station
 - Resident Parking Scheme permits – 1 April 2003 £54 to £70
 - On-street Pay & Display parking – no increase.

Consultation

- 3 In accordance with Council policy, consultation has been carried out with key stakeholders with regard to parking charges. Responses were received from Great Dunmow Town Council, Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council, Saffron Walden Town Council, Saffron Walden Town Centre Working Group, Saffron Walden Business Forum, Dunmow and District Chamber of Trade and Commerce and Waitrose.
- 4 All consultees advised that they would not wish to see parking charges increased.
- 5 With regard to Saffron Walden, the following comments were made -
 - Charge at Swan Meadow to be £1 for all day except the furthest bay which should be free.
 - For The Common, Fairycroft and Waitrose car parks introduce a 30p ½ hr Tariff.
 - That as Swan Meadow has spare capacity, charges could be reduced to encourage people to park there.
 - Parking charges in Saffron Walden are considerably more expensive than other market towns in East Anglia.

Parking Charges Review

Decriminalisation Task Group item 4

- Allow parking for residents on Swan Meadow car park at an economical rate.
 - Revoke parking charges at the London Road car park on Saturdays as this is a major annoyance for wedding parties and residents of London Road.
 - Parking charges should not be increased by a 5p denomination as this is impractical
 - Introduce ticket machines with “smart” facilities
 - Replace signs for Swan Meadow to read “medium and long term parking”
- 6 With regard to Great Dunmow, the following comments were made –
- It was felt that it was difficult to comment until it is clear what changes are to be made
 - Parking charges should not be increased by a 5p denomination as this is impractical
 - If charges are increased by 10p they would then be in line with car parks in Braintree which may mean a reduction in patronage in Dunmow
- 7 With regard to Stansted Mountfitchet the following comments were made –
- Introduce a ½ hour tariff on both Crafton Green and Lower Street car park to enable people to “pop” into the shops in the village e.g. the new post office, the Crafton Green facilities.
 - ½ hour tariff to be set at 10p or 20p

Comparison of Current Charges with other Neighbouring Authorities

- 8 Appendix 1 provides Members with detailed comparisons of parking charges in neighbouring authority car parks, season ticket charges and RPS charges with our own charges.
- 9 Analysing the detail for car park charges, the highest charge for long stay parking is £3.50 for all day parking in Braintree and the lowest charge for long stay parking is £1.20 for over 4 hours parking in Haverhill. These compared to our charges for up to 10 hours of £2.70 for Swan Meadow and £2.20 White Street, Dunmow. The lowest charge for short stay parking is in Newmarket where up to 30minutes parking is Free and then parking for up to 2 hours is 30p. This compares to our charge of 40p for one hour parking on-street in Saffron Walden and in Stansted.
- 10 With regard to Season Ticket charges, although compared to other authorities the charge is higher, when it is compared to the all day charge for Swan Meadow of £2.70 it is over £1.55 cheaper, i.e. £275 / 240 working days per annum = £1.15 per day.

Parking Charges Review

Decriminalisation Task Group item 4

- 11 The cost of RPS permits is based on the principle of the scheme paying for its self. Members will be aware that ECC will not consider introducing any new RPS scheme unless it can pay for its self. It will also be appreciated that the cost of the scheme is relative to the number of space available, demand for permits, enforcement and administrative costs.
- 12 Members will appreciate that the charges set in other towns by neighbouring authorities are relative to their needs and circumstances. Equally, this approach applies to the towns within Uttlesford which are unique and need to be treated individually.

Charging Options

- 13 The Charges review on a bi-annual basis gives Members the opportunity to consider the views of business and Town/Parish Councils etc., appraise neighbouring authority tariffs, consider future implications and opportunities and, as a result, decide whether charges should be changed.
- 14 Any changes to parking charges invokes a cost to the Council in terms of the advertising and making of the revised Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), changes to charge board notices and signage, reconfiguration of ticket machines. The cost of making changes to the TRO alone is usually in the region of £1,000.
- 15 The options for changes to the parking tariffs include the following –
 1. Maintain the Status Quo
 2. Decrease charges
 3. Increase all On and Off Street tariffs by 10p (50p for Coaches)
 4. Increase all On and Off Street tariffs by 20p (£1.00 for Coaches)
 5. Increase Season Ticket and Resident Parking Permit charge by inflation @ 2.5%
 6. Introduce a ½ hour tariff to Stansted Mountfitchet car parks only
- 16 Based on the latest available information, the table below sets out the implications and potential additional income. However, the car park information that has been used is not completely up to date due to unavoidable data loss from older ticket machines.

	Options	Potential Additional Income	Implications
1	Maintain Status Quo	None	Satisfied consultees
2	Decrease charges	None – there would be a decrease in income proportionate to the decrease in tariff	Satisfied consultees, businesses and customers Service costs will increase by at least inflation ECC agreement required. Waitrose would need to be consulted

Parking Charges Review

Decriminalisation Task Group item 4

	Options	Potential Additional Income	Implications
3	Increase all On and Off Street tariffs by 10p (50p for Coaches)	Approximately £80,000 p.a.	ECC agreement required for changes Waitrose to be consulted
4	Increase all On and Off Street tariffs by 20p (£1.00 for Coaches)	Approximately £160,000 p.a.	ECC agreement required for changes. Waitrose to be consulted
5	Increase Season Ticket and Resident Parking Permit charges by inflation @ 2.5%	Based on current take up – Season Tickets – £940 RPS permits - £290	Dissatisfaction of season ticket holders and residents
6	Introduce a ½ hour 30p tariff to Stansted Mountfitchet car parks only	It is difficult to predict the income for this arrangement However, based on latest available data on tickets issued at Stansted's car parks, if it is predicted that 25% of the hourly take-up opt for a ½ hour ticket (at a tariff of 30p) there is a reduction in income of approximately £500	Overall, income is likely to reduce because the number of cars parking for an hour is likely to reduce, thereby causing a reduction in income. Options for the ½ hour tariff could range from 10p to 30p (the current hourly charge being 40p)

Comments on Consultation and Implications

- 17 The Decriminalisation Agency Agreement with ECC means that in the event that the District Council wishes to make any changes in the management of it's Off-Street car park including any adjustment to the level of parking charges in any Off-Street car park the District Council will advise the County Council of its proposal in writing and consider any response received in writing from the County Council within 14 days. A letter with a copy of this report has been sent to ECC.
- 18 The suggested changes to parking ticket machines and the introduction of alternative ways to pay for parking (see separate report on this agenda), together with the implications of introducing the Traffic Management Act 2004, which are not yet fully researched and understood, mean that it is not necessarily the appropriate time to carry out a more fundamental review of the structure of our parking tariffs. However, it is felt by officers that this piece of work should be undertaken in time to inform the next parking charges review in September 2008.
- 19 A separate report is on this agenda with regard to parking ticket machines. A report will be presented to the North Area Panel which considers the removal

Parking Charges Review

Decriminalisation Task Group item 4

of charges for parking at the Council Offices, Saffron Walden in association with RPS issues at Little Larchmount and London Road. The final decision on whether to remove charges at the Council offices will be made by the Environment Committee.

- 20 The recommendation to increase charges as per Options 3 and 5 is based on the principle that charges should be increased at least bi-annually to keep up with inflation and help to off-set year-on-year service costs.
- 21 Officers consider that the introduction of a ½ hr tariff in Saffron Walden would create additional traffic movement to and on the car parks in question. There is already On-street Pay and Display parking on 5 streets (40p for 1 hr only) and free parking for 30 mins on the Market Square and around The Common. If this option were to be introduced in Stansted and Saffron Walden then it would also need to be considered for Dunmow.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The predicted income is not realised	Low	Medium	Monitor and consider options to encourage parking on car parks together with appropriate enforcement
More attempts by road users to park for free on-street in residential areas	Medium	High on residents Low on income	Monitor and consider options to encourage parking on car parks together with appropriate enforcement
Businesses are affected by decreased patronage	Medium in the short term/ low in the medium term	High in the short term / low in the medium term	Monitor and consider options, in conjunction with businesses, to encourage parking on car parks together with appropriate enforcement