

# Cabinet

24 February 2016



<b>Title</b>	Review of Parking Orders		
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a Key Decision		
<b>Report Author</b>	Sandy Muirhead		
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Maureen Attewell	<b>Confidential</b>	No
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Value for money Council		
<b>Cabinet Values</b>	Community and Accountability		
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>The Cabinet is asked to:</b></p> <p>(1) authorise the Head of Sustainability and Leisure to proceed with proposals made in this report</p> <p>(2) authorise the Head of Corporate Governance to publish a notice of proposal to advertise the proposed changes</p> <p>(3) delegate authority to the Head of Corporate Governance, in consultation with the Head of Sustainability and Leisure and the Cabinet Member for parking services to deal with any responses to the proposed changes</p> <p>(4) delegate authority to the Head of Sustainability and Leisure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for parking services to amend the proposals following consultation</p> <p>(5) to authorise the Head of Corporate Governance to publish a notice of making once the final decision is made.</p> <p>(6) To agree the changes to the operational policy.</p>		

## 1. Key issues

- 1.1 Income from our car parks is a significant part of the Council's budget. In 2014/15 the outturn income received from parking services, excluding on-street enforcement, was £2,109,960 compared to the budget estimate of £2,020,000. There are potentially significant annual fluctuations mainly due to season ticket sales, which can vary depending on company uptake and when companies leave the Borough or redesign their requirements.
- 1.2 Bearing in mind the current economic climate, we should only consider increasing parking charges where we have attractions, the demand is high, need to cover costs and, or, we are offering good value for money. We have supported residents and businesses in the current economic climate, and although there are continued signs of improvement, resident and/or visitor confidence still seems to be limited. The Council has a good

relationship with the local Business community in terms of the inflow of traffic to the town centres and wishes to maintain that.

- 1.3 However, as a Council we also have to recognise operational costs still rise and Council budgetary constraints. There is a cost to maintaining and operating car parks and striking the balance between covering costs and the provision of a good service is important.
- 1.4 To operate our car parks we have off street traffic orders as required by law, which need updating to meet current requirements and this report therefore aims to resolve a number of changes needed.
- 1.5 To keep the parking operational policy in line with changes to uniform we need to submit it for sign off so we are in line with the Traffic Management Act 2004.
- 1.6 To improve the customer experience and maintain income a new replacement pay on foot system has been installed in Elmsleigh surface and multi-storey. The system chosen is robust but flexible to allow future digital options such as vouchers to be used by shops to pay for parking to be introduced. The system will also allow the use of credit/debit cards and for permit holders to pay at the machines. Credit and debit cards though do have a cost associated with their use and it is suggested the Council look to recover this.
- 1.7 Additionally over the next 5 months there will be a programme of replacing the old pay and display machines with modern versions allowing use of technology and number plate inclusion to prevent re-use of tickets and credit/debit card payments.
- 1.8 Both these measures will reduce operational costs and increased equipment reliability resulting in less downtime which will help maintain and increase income.
- 1.9 Parking charges have not been increased in all areas since 2011 and the shopping offer in Staines is between Feltham and Woking where charges are slightly lower and higher respectively. Parking charge increases are generally not easily accepted but users do get used to them and footfall may dip for a very short time but then rebalance.

## **2. Options analysis and proposal**

- 2.1 In consideration of parking charges the options are to:-
  - To keep parking charges as they are currently, including the £2.00 Sunday charge and prices compared to other neighbouring Boroughs are competitive.
  - To increase by 10p all daily tariffs except Sunday £2 all day tariff, which would generate an extra income of approximately £58k. (detail in Appendix 1)
  - To increase by 20p all daily tariffs except Sunday £2 all day tariff, which would generate an extra income of £127k. (detail in Appendix 1) This is the recommended option.
  - Other pricing mechanisms could be considered and other scenarios developed.

- 2.2 Other scenarios have been examined but a number may be considered by the public and businesses as unacceptable and may potentially affect footfall in the town centre.
- 2.3 Encouraging the use of credit and debit cards the Council is open to increased costs as card use is charged to the Council at about 6/7p per transaction. Therefore, with the new programmable technology in parking machines it is proposed that an extra 10p charge is made where cards are used to ensure costs are covered. Quite often charges are applied in other circumstances for credit cards and the PaybyPhone system has an extra 10p transaction fee.
- 2.4 It is proposed to remove the currently marked spaces allocated as resident bays in the Walled Garden car park to bring equitability across the Borough in relation to residents permit parking in car parks. Details of this proposal are provided in Appendix 2. This is likely to cause some local controversy but if marked spaces are available thus guaranteeing residents a space we would need to value the spaces and charge considerably more.
- 2.5 The recommendation is to amend the Off-Street Parking Order in accordance with the proposals outlined in Appendix 1, to ensure the Parking Order is in line with legislative and operational requirements. Not to do any of the proposals in Appendix 1 will leave the traffic orders with areas that cannot be enforced or prices changed.
- 2.6 The Operational Policy for parking as required under the Traffic Management Act 2004 also requires updating as outlined in Appendix 3. It is recommended this is undertaken to ensure we are in line with legislation and the policy reflects fully current operations.

### **3. Financial implications**

- 3.1 The income from parking assists the Council in maintaining and providing these facilities for residents and businesses but they do have to be maintained and administered. Therefore the income generated assists with service provision.
- 3.2 Although the service should see significant maintenance cost reductions over the next year with the installation of new equipment, other costs, including business rates are not static. Therefore, costs of the service are increasing. The proposals to increase all daily charges by 20p in Staines-upon-Thames town centre should increase income by £127k per annum.

### **4. Other considerations**

- 4.1 The increasing of charges is not a popular option with residents but if we are to maintain the service there is a need to ensure costs are fully covered.

### **5. Timetable for implementation**

- 5.1 February Cabinet – followed by consultation of 4 weeks. Depending on quantity of objections implementation of a new Off Street Parking Order will take place in May or July, depending on whether an objections report needs to be submitted to Cabinet.

**Background papers:**

**Appendices:**

**Appendix 1 Proposed amendments to the Spelthorne (off-street parking places) Order 2014**

**Appendix 2 Walled Garden Car Park**

**Appendix 3 Proposed Amendments to Operational Policy**