

On-Street Charging Proposals in Newbury

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council undertook an informal public consultation on its proposal to introduce charging for parking in certain streets in Newbury between 21 January and 1 March 2013. If introduced the charges would apply every day between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm including bank holidays. Parking would be free at all other times and to help mitigate the impact on local traders it is proposed to allow free parking for the first 30 minutes in the streets in the central area of Newbury where there is reliance on passing trade. On Sundays there would be a single daily charge of £1.00 at all of the locations where on-street charging was introduced. The 30 minutes free would be retained in all locations where it applies from Monday to Saturday as would the 50p charge for up to 2 hours parking in the two locations where this applies. The proposal includes 'Pay by Phone' only at some locations. Information on the nearest alternative location for parking using pay machines would be provided at these 'Pay by Phone' only sites. The purpose of the consultation was to seek to understand the likely impact that this would have on stakeholders and how the impact of this could be mitigated.
- 1.2 The Council considers that charging for on-street parking and limiting the periods of parking in the central area of Newbury would encourage a turn-over of the available parking spaces. Making best use of available road space in all areas where charging is proposed would not only have some road safety and traffic management benefits in the streets concerned but the income generated would provide much needed revenue income to help maintain important front line road safety services over wider areas and to offer some support for specific promotions to support business in the town. In addition, discouraging all day commuter parking prevents road space being sterilised and gives visitors more choice.
- 1.3 The streets considered for pay for parking under this proposal are listed below:
 - a. Bartholomew Street (outside of the Pedestrian Zone)
 - b. Broadway
 - c. Catherine Road
 - d. Cheap Street
 - e. Faraday Road industrial area
 - f. Kings Road West
 - g. Link Road
 - h. Newtown Road
 - i. Northbrook Street (outside of the Pedestrian Zone)
 - j. Old Bath Road
 - k. Pelican Lane
 - l. West Mills.

- 1.4 On-street charging is not new to West Berkshire as there are already long established schemes with parking meters in High Street Hungerford and in Station Road Newbury. Many towns throughout the country now have similar schemes.

2. Responses to consultation

- 2.1 At the end of the informal consultation period there had been 171 responses, including a petition presented at the Council meeting on 5 March containing 1,719 signatures, a petition from 68 Royal Mail employees, a joint letter signed by 16 residents of the Goldwell Drive area, and comments from Newbury Town Council, the Federation of Small Businesses and Newbury BID all of which represent the views of a large number of interested parties.
- 2.2 The petition of 1,719 signatures stated:

'We the undersigned object to the introduction of On Street Parking Charges on the following grounds:

- 1. They are an unnecessary imposition of cost to shoppers, residents and shop workers.*
- 2. They will act as a deterrent to local trade.*
- 3. Charging is unnecessary for the regulation of parking – that can and is being done by parking regulations.*
- 4. It will displace parking into other already congested areas.*
- 5. The charges are purely to generate money for the Council.'*

- 2.3 The petition from Post Office workers of 68 signatures stated:

'We the undersigned wish to draw to the Newbury Council's attention that their proposals in respect of the above will lead to considerable financial hardship for residents in the area who work in Newbury Town Centre, such as my members who work for Royal Mail. If these proposals are to be implemented, we request that concessions on the parking fees should be introduced for those who work in Newbury and provide a service to the local community.'

- 2.4 A detailed summary of all the comments received during the statutory consultation, together with officer comments, is provided in Appendix A to this report.

3. Amendments

- 3.1 Officers have taken due note of the responses, and are proposing some amendments to the original proposals to take account of the points raised. The aim is to continue to provide short term parking, and hence turnover of customers, in parts of Newbury; as well as achieving revenue from commuters and those parking all day on the streets. This enables the Council to provide appropriate traffic management and road safety measures and offer some support for specific promotions to support business in the town.

- 3.2 The following adjustments are proposed that would address the comments received:
- a. That the only areas to now be subject to the proposed new on-street charging in Catherine Road and Link Road be those lengths which are currently unrestricted and generally used throughout the day by rail commuters for long term parking. This would provide 10 pay for parking spaces in Catherine Road and 13 in Link Road. The remaining areas currently subject to formal parking restrictions in both of these roads should be retained in their current format. This would continue to provide up to two hours of Limited Waiting with exemption for permit holders, for visitors to the medical or dental surgeries, and for dropping off and picking up at St Nicholas Junior School.
 - b. That the only areas to now be subject to proposed new on-street charging in Kings Road West be those bays which are currently unrestricted and generally used throughout the day by local workers for long term parking. These unrestricted parking spaces in a central part of Newbury are an anomaly in traffic management terms but have historically provided long term free parking for Post Office workers in the main who arrive early for shift work. This revised proposal would provide 18 pay for parking spaces. The remaining 8 spaces, currently subject to formal parking restrictions, should be retained in their current format. This would continue to provide up to four hours of Limited Waiting with exemption for Zone C1 permit holders and therefore assist some local workers, particularly the early shift postal workers. The revised proposal therefore provides a positive response to the concerns raised in the petition from the Post Office workers.
 - c. That the area in Carnegie Road that currently provides one hour Limited Waiting and was originally proposed to be converted to allow an exemption for resident permit holders be revised to provide up to four hours of Limited Waiting with exemption for Zone C1 permit holders. This would provide a further 6 spaces to assist local workers, including postal workers, and take some pressure off the Zone C1 residents parking scheme.
 - d. That the number of pay for parking spaces in Newtown Road (south of St John's Road) be maximised to approximately 40 spaces.
 - e. That the number of pay for parking spaces in Old Bath Road (south side) be maximised to approximately 53 spaces.
 - f. That the number of pay for parking bays in the Faraday Road area be maximised to approximately 60 spaces.
 - g. That the remaining elements of the on-street parking scheme that formed the basis of the informal consultation should remain unchanged.

3.3 The charges proposed to be levied for the various periods of parking duration vary from street to street. These charges have not been revised following the informal consultation. However the adjustments proposed in this section have been incorporated into the revised table that is provided in Appendix B to this report.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Having carried out a thorough review of all of the responses received to the informal consultation into the proposal to introduce on-street charging in certain streets in Newbury the Council has taken note of the comments received and proposed a number of amendments to the scheme originally proposed. These amendments are set out in section 3 above.

4.2 The revised scheme with the proposed amendments will now be taken forward to the next stage of the process, which will be to undertake the formal statutory consultation by advertising the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders. At this stage any representations received will be taken into account in the decision making process.

Appendices

Appendix A – Summary of Comments to Consultation

Appendix B – On-Street Charging Proposals for Newbury – Table of Details.