

Title of Report:	Revised Parking Charges
Report to be considered by:	Council
Date of Meeting:	22 September 2011
Forward Plan Ref:	C2360

Purpose of Report: To consider alternative options for revised or new parking charges in order to generate additional revenue income to support Council savings targets.

Recommended Action: That Council resolves to approve the recommendations set out below:

1. To introduce a Sunday charge of £1.00 in the Council's Newbury car parks during the day for any period of stay up until 6.00pm and £1.00 after 6.00 pm during the evening.
2. To retain the current free parking concession for blue badge holders in Council car parks.

Reason for decision to be taken: The Highways and Transport Service is tasked with generating additional revenue income in support of savings targets that need to be met by the Environment Directorate.

Other options considered: None at this time. Other savings targets in the Highways and Transport Service, including the Parking budgets, have already been introduced to meet previous savings targets.

Key background documentation: None.

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Theme:

CPT13 - Value for Money

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:

helping the Council meet its savings targets whilst maintaining good value for its stakeholders.

Portfolio Member Details	
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Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	21 June 2011

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Implications

- Policy:** The recommendations in this report will assist in meeting corporate savings targets.
- Financial:** The details of the financial implications of the various options for increasing revenue parking income are contained in the main body of the report.
- Personnel:** There are no personnel issues arising from this report.
- Legal/Procurement:** Legal Services will process the necessary Parking Orders. There are no procurement implications.
- Property:** There are no property issues arising from this report.
- Risk Management:** There are no risk management issues arising from this report.
- Equalities Impact Assessment:** EIA Stage 1 attached as Appendix A.

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position		<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report seeks the resolution of options for revising or introducing new parking charges in the Council's off street public car parks in Newbury.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 Two options have been put forward for consideration. These are:
- (a) introduction of Sunday charges in the Council's Newbury car parks; and
 - (b) removal of the free parking concession for blue badge holders in the Council's car parks.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The report recommends that the Council should proceed with option (a) but that option (b) should not be pursued at this point in time.

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In order for the Council to meet demanding financial savings targets in 2011/12 and beyond the Parking budgets managed by the Highways and Transport Service has needed to contribute to these savings.
- 1.2 A number of savings have already been included in the current 2011/12 financial year Parking budget as follows:
- £15,320 by a reduction in training and by removal of the consultancy budget;
 - £43,000 by reducing the frequency of cleaning in the Council's car parks;
 - £4,850 by removing a van from the Parking Service fleet;
 - £5,000 income generation target for advertising in the Council's car parks.

2. Need for further savings

- 2.1 Further savings are required in the current financial year and the following three options have been identified as potential means of achieving these:
- introduction of Sunday charges in the Council's Newbury car parks – estimated income in full year £15,000;
 - removal of the free parking concession for blue badge holders in the Council's car parks – estimated income in full year £10,000.
- 2.2 Both of these options have fees and charges implications and therefore in order to introduce any of them approval is required from Council. The proposals were discussed at the Management Board meeting on 18 August and it was agreed that the recommendations should be brought to this meeting of Council for decision. The revisions to Parking Orders could not be progressed until late October. Consequently it will be the beginning of November before the new charges could come into force if approved. This means that for the current financial year the above options would generate less income on a pro-rata basis.

3. Commentary on each of the further savings options

Sunday Charges

- 3.1 The estimated income for charging on Sundays is based on a tariff of £1.00 in the Council's Newbury car parks during the day for any period of stay up until 6.00pm (the main charging hours would be from 8.00 am until 6.00 pm) and £1.00 after 6.00 pm during the evening. These are the same charging periods that apply from Monday to Saturday. The Sunday survey data used to calculate the estimated income was from the original Transport Assessment for the Newbury Cinema in late 2004 updated in March 2009, and Sunday parking surveys undertaken in July and August 2009. It has been assumed that there will be a 20% reduction from the Sunday survey data to allow for customer resistance to these new charges.

- 3.2 Many neighbouring towns such as Wantage, Abingdon, Basingstoke and Reading already charge for parking on a Sunday. The charges there are similar, or in some cases more expensive, than those proposed for Newbury. These plans will bring Newbury in line with many of its near neighbours who already have similar arrangements.
- 3.3 Although it may not be a popular decision it is considered that free parking on Sundays is no longer an appropriate position for Newbury, especially with the imminent opening of the new Parkway development when it can be reasonably expected that there will be a considerable increase in Sunday trading. The proposed charges are modest, still offer very good value and are very competitive with our neighbours.

Removal of the free parking concession for blue badge holders

- 3.4 It is considered that there would be considerable customer resistance and negative PR if this proposal is pursued. For this reason a reduction of 50% has been assumed for the estimated income to allow for this customer resistance. Even with this reduction there is concern that the modest income may not be achieved because blue badge holders may opt to park on the highway, potentially on double yellow lines, which they are permitted to do for up to 3 hours. This would potentially cause traffic congestion.
- 3.5 There are moves in some parts of the country to charge blue badge holders to park in car parks on the basis that having the right to a blue badge is not directly related to a person's wealth and therefore their ability to pay to park. However there are still many areas that do not charge because the move is so unpopular and because of risk of traffic congestion as mentioned above.
- 3.6 It is understood that the owners of the car park for the new Parkway development that will open in October this year are intending to charge blue badge holders to park and members may feel that the Council should follow this lead and go down the same route. It is considered however that in view of the concerns regarding traffic congestion, the modest income that this would generate and the likely negative public reaction, that we should not pursue this particular option at this point in time.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 If both of the further savings options were to be introduced this could generate a total income of £25,000 in a full financial year. The corresponding part year income for the current financial year from November to March inclusive would be about £10,000. However it is necessary to sound a cautionary note regarding expectations concerning this potential income. The reason for this is because the Parking budget is already experiencing pressures due to reduced ticket and season ticket sales, and reduced penalty charge notices issued in the first quarter of the financial year. Based on these first quarter figures the current projection is that there will be a year end shortfall in income of £150,000. This is despite the fact that the income target was reduced by £220,000 at the start of the year because of poor ticket and penalty charge notice figures in 2010/11. It had been hoped that this income target reduction would address the problems encountered last year and that the situation would be improved this year as we move out of recession. Based on the first quarter returns this does not seem to be the case however and the recession is still biting

hard as far as parking income is concerned. It should be pointed out however that this is by no means solely a West Berkshire problem. Local authorities across the country are suffering similar problems with reduced ticket sales and reduced penalty charge notice numbers.

- 4.2 For the reasons identified in 3.4 to 3.6 above it is recommended that we should not remove the free parking concession for blue badge holders. This means that the potential full financial year income generation would reduce to £15,000. The caveats concerning caution about income in the current economic climate still apply though.
- 4.3 Despite the concerns expressed regarding the poor income in the first quarter of the financial year and hence the currently predicted year end pressure, it is still considered appropriate to introduce Sunday charges in the Council's Newbury car parks. The reasons for this are threefold. Firstly, the new Parkway development will open in October and it is anticipated that this will give Newbury an economic boost by attracting more visitors, some of whom will park in the Council's car parks as well as the new Parkway car park. Secondly the new retail development will result in increased employment levels and the need for some new workers to find somewhere to park in Newbury. These workers are likely to use the less expensive out of town centre Council car parks rather than the Parkway car park. Thirdly it is thought that season tickets sales may also increase as a result of the increased level of employment.
- 4.4 Council is requested to consider the various factors discussed in this report. The detailed recommendations that have been endorsed by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT and Customer Services, David Betts, are set out in the Recommended Action section at the beginning of the report and Council is invited to resolve accordingly.

Appendices

Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment – Stage One

Consultees

- Local Stakeholders:** The changes would be advertised as part of the statutory process required to change the Parking Orders.
- Officers Consulted:** John Ashworth, Mark Edwards, Melanie Ellis, Martyn Baker.
- Trade Union:** Not applicable.