

REPORT TO: Place Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee
Date of Meeting: 8 and 13 September 2016
Report of: Assistant Director Public Realm
Title: Delivering the Parking Strategy: Tariffs, Designations and Permits

Is this a Key Decision? *

Yes

**One that affects finances over £1m or significantly affects two or more wards. If this is a key decision then the item must be on the appropriate forward plan of key decisions.*

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive.

1. What is the report about?

Car park tariff, designation and permit changes to be introduced in January 2017.

2. Recommendations:

That Place Scrutiny Committee recommend approval by Executive of the following:-

- 2.1 the adoption of a linear approach to parking tariffs in order to simplify the pricing structure and encourage increased visitor dwell time, as set out in table below:-

Premier Car Parks (Guildhall, Mary Arches, John Lewis)		
Stay	Current Tariff	Proposed Tariff
1 hour	£1.80	£2.00
2 hours	£2.60	£3.00
3 hours	£3.50	£4.00
4 hours	£6.50	£5.00
5 hours	£8.80	£6.00
6 hours	£11.80	£7.00
7 hours	£11.80	£8.00
All day	£11.80	£12.00
Short Stay Car Parks (Bampfylde Street, Bartholomew Terrace, Harlequins, King William Street, Magdalen Road, Magdalen Street, Matthews Hall, Princesshay 2, Princesshay 3, Smythen Street)		
Stay	Current Tariff	Proposed Tariff
1 hour	£1.20	£1.00
2 hours	£2.20	£2.00

3 hours	£3.30	£3.00
4 hours	£5.70	£4.00
5 hours	£7.70	£5.00
6 hours	£10.80	£6.00
7 hours	£10.80	£7.00
All day	£10.80	£10.00
Long Stay Car Parks (Belmont Road, Bystock Terrace, Cathedral & Quay, Haven Road 1, Howell Road, Richmond Road, Parr Street, Topsham Quay)		
Stay	Current Tariff	Proposed Tariff
1 hour	£0.80	£1.00
2 hours	£1.20	£2.00
3 hours	£1.80	£3.00
4 hours	£3.20	£4.00
5 hours	£5.00	£5.00
All day	£6.20	£6.00
Local Car Parks (Gordons Place, Haven Road 2 & 3, Holman Way, Okehampton Street, Tappers Close)		
Stay	Current Tariff	Proposed Tariff
1 hour	£0.60	£0.50
2 hours	£0.80	£1.00
3 hours	£1.00	£1.50
4 hours	£1.20	£2.00
All day	£1.80	£2.50
Coach Parking at Haven Road 3 (per day)	£5.00	£5.00
Quarterly Commuter Season Ticket	£260.00	£300.00
Residents Annual Season Ticket	£125.00	£125.00
Bartholomew Terrace Business Permit	£205.00	£205.00
Cathedral & Quay Business Bays	£565.00	£565.00

- 2.2 the excetension of the new linear tariff to midnight at Mary Arches, Guildhall and John Lewis car parks, replacing the current £2.00 evening parking charge at Mary Arches Street after 6pm, subject to approval of the business case to extend staffed evening parking facilities at these sites;
- 2.3 the operation of Mary Arches Street and Guildhall car parks until midnight and John Lewis until 9pm, monitoring demand at John Lewis to ensure closing time remains proportionate to demand;
- 2.4 the re-designation of Topsham Quay as a long stay car park;

- 2.5 the re-designation of Haven Road car park to offer both long stay and local rate parking options;
- 2.6 to facilitate, and better advertise, long stay parking (up to 3 days) at Tappers Close car park to encourage rail use at adjacent station;
- 2.7 to maintain, but not extend, existing resident and business annual season ticket schemes to support city centre living and smaller businesses;
- 2.8 to increase the cost of an annual season ticket from £260.00 to £300.00 per quarter to help encourage commuter use of public transport;
- 2.9 to continue to offer free parking support to Blue Badge holders in all Pay & Display car parks and to consult with appropriate groups to better understand why certain disabled parking areas are underused; and
- 2.10 with the exception of Mary Arches Street, Guildhall and John Lewis, the current charging hours of 8am to 6pm in all Exeter car parks and 9am to 5pm in all Topsham car parks be maintained.

3. Reasons for the recommendations:

To help deliver the four key objectives outlined in the document 'A New Strategy for Parking 2016 -2026':-

Economic Growth: Car parking is an important element of Exeter's growth story and it is essential to ensure that the City Council's car parks support economic growth by encouraging visitors to the city and to stay longer when they visit;

Maximising Capacity: projections show that actual capacity in Exeter's city centre car parks will be reached on a Saturday by 2018 without strategic intervention;

Reducing Congestion: Traffic congestion is seen as a key deterrent to accessing the City Centre;

Maintaining Income: The City Council depends on the £6M income it receives from its car parks service every year to deliver a balanced budget and provide essential services.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources.

Based on historical ticket data, and assumptions on changes to parking patterns resulting from the new charging structure, the projected impact of the recommended linear tariff is an estimated additional income of £73,200

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

The report raises no concerns for the section 151 officer. As the figures can only be estimates, Finance will work with Parking Services to produce a budget that is realistic and achievable rather than simply adding this estimate to the existing budget.

6. What are the legal aspects?

Any changes to tariffs or charging hours need to be reflected in the Council's Parking Places Order and advertised accordingly.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

This report raises no issues for the Monitoring officer.

8. Report Details:

Delivering the Parking Strategy – Tariffs, Designations and Permits

- 8.1. A new strategic approach to off-street parking was adopted in March 2016 following a detailed parking review by consultants, and a number of Member Spotlight Reviews, during 2014/15.
- 8.2. The final Strategy seeks to deliver the four Strategic Objectives outlined in 3.1 by way of a five themed action plan (Regulatory, Physical Improvements, Service Improvements, Partnership Improvements and Longer Term Projects).
- 8.3. Clearly, these Strategic Objectives will conflict from time to time and it will not always be possible to make interventions that meet all four Objectives. Decisions on the specific interventions set out in the Action Plan will need to take into account the impact on each and balance them in the best way possible.
- 8.4. This report seeks to address the Regulatory theme by including all elements which would require amendments to the Council's Parking Places Order.

Revised Parking Tariffs

- 8.5. Exeter City Council has not made wholesale changes to parking tariffs since January 2012.
- 8.6. The Parking Strategy highlighted that the current tariff structure encourages high turnover in Premium and short stay car parks. In particular stays beyond 3 hours are discouraged by a sharp increase in price. The proposed tariff structure aims to provide a more gradual and even rise in price with a clearer 'per hour' rationale.
- 8.7. Exeter city centre offers retail, dining, leisure and culture options for residents and visitors so parking tariffs should encourage longer stays to enhance the 'destination experience'.
- 8.8. At the same time tariffs should be at a level so as not to encourage car use over other forms of more sustainable transport and a linear approach aims to achieve this. In addition, the existing anomaly of short stay parking being cheaper in long stay car parks is addressed in the proposed tariffs.

- 8.9. Impact on income is anticipated to be minimal but positive. Based on historical ticket data, and assumptions on changes to parking patterns resulting from the new charging structure, the projected impact of the recommended linear tariff is an additional income of approx. £73,200 (see appendix 1).
- 8.10. The figures in appendix 1 show the annual number of parking tickets purchased at each tariff during 2015/16 and the resulting income. This has then been recalculated using the proposed tariffs with some additional assumptions on how the tariff change might potentially alter parking patterns. For example the 4 hour tariff in a Premier car park is currently £6.50 and the 5 hour tariff £8.80. The proposed tariffs are £5.00 and £6.00 respectively so an assumption has been included that 10% of customers currently paying £6.50 will elect to pay £6.00 and stay an hour longer and 90% will chose to stay the same amount of time and only pay £5.00.

Evening Parking

- 8.11. Charging hours are currently 8am to 6pm in most sites, 9am to 5pm in all Topsham car parks and 8am to midnight at Mary Arches Street. Extending charging hours at Guildhall and John Lewis car parks is explored below. Maintaining the existing charging hours at the other sites also supports the evening economy and encourages longer stays by providing a diverse offer.
- 8.12. Mary Arches Street provides a popular staffed evening parking facility at an additional set charge of £2.00 between 6pm and midnight. However, this charge is often viewed as unfair by customers who have parked during the day and leave shortly after 6pm. Extending the daytime linear tariff into the evening and up until midnight, in place of the £2.00 fee, would be clearer and fairer.
- 8.13. Guildhall (midnight) and John Lewis (9pm) are open during the evening to support, in the main, new restaurant investment at the Guildhall shopping centre and evening trading at the John Lewis store. Charging at these premium sites in the same way as at Mary Arches should be considered. This is aimed at supporting the evening economy by giving customers the choice and reassurance of staffed evening parking at a reasonable tariff or free parking after 6pm in unattended sites such as Harlequins or Princesshay 3. A separate business case will be considered by Executive Committee to address additional staffing implications.
- 8.14. In addition this extra staffing resource will allow for random disruptive security patrols at Cathedral & Quay car park to help deter anti-social behaviour, particularly vandalism.

Car Park Designation and Zonal Strategy

- 8.15. The pricing structure should be clear and easy to understand. Coloured banding and an improved visual representation of car park locations in relation to gateway routes and key attractions should be improved as part of a zonal approach (see appendix 2).

- 8.16. This zonal approach puts the three Premier pay on foot car parks (Guildhall, Mary Arches and John Lewis) at the centre of the city and the parking offer. All three sites allow customers to pay when they leave, thereby negating any fear of enforcement action for overstaying.
- 8.17. Short stay car parks form a peripheral ring around the centre, with long stay sites providing an outer cordon. Local car parks serve outer business areas such as St Thomas and Heavitree. A maximum stay restriction of 3 hours should be maintained at Gordon's Place to deter long stay parking by hospital staff and visitors which would detrimentally impact businesses in Heavitree.
- 8.18. Topsham Quay is currently short-stay to support high turn-over of bays for shoppers. However, Matthews Hall car park already provides this option and it is the strong view of Topsham Members that Topsham Quay should be re-designated as a long stay site to help facilitate recreational visits for walking, birdwatching and boating activities.
- 8.19. Haven Road car park consists of three separate parking areas. Although the site is designated for long stay parking a pilot scheme was introduced in May 2016 to charge cheaper local parking tariffs in one area of the site in response to underuse of this area. This resulted in a 10% increase in use of the whole car park during the months of May, June and July 2016 when compared with the same period in 2015.
- 8.20. Tapper's Close car park is a small underused car park adjacent to Topsham railway station and current restrictions prevent parking beyond a 24 hour period. Allowing 72 hour parking would help encourage use by rail passengers

Season Tickets and Permits

- 8.21. Residents Annual Season Tickets are available in a number of city car parks (Bartholomew Terrace, Richmond Road, Bystock Terrace, Belmont Road, Parr Street, Gordon's Place, Okehampton Street and Cathedral & Quay) for £125.00 per year. For the most part these were introduced in areas where residents' previous parking had been taken over by the council for development. Many of these arrangements date back more than twenty years and in the passage of time the logic of the arrangement has been lost.
- 8.22. In some areas there was recognition that there was generally a lack of parking for residents and a number of tickets were offered under the scheme on a first come first served basis.
- 8.23. The number of Residents Annual Season Tickets and their distribution was arbitrary. Again with the passage of time this distribution became irrational. The number of infill and converted properties, together with the significant increase in the number of cars seeking parking simply resulted in a number of seemingly ad-hoc catchment areas.
- 8.24. Because the 'scheme' has been operating for so many years without clear direction, tickets have been issued to the new occupants of properties that

were arbitrarily gifted under the original scheme. The gifting of, in effect, free parking to select properties is not only unfair but may be financially advantageous to the owners of properties for sale.

- 8.25. There are at present around 200 tickets in circulation, including some issued to businesses (at £205.00 per annum). Withdrawing them would be a very contentious move. The status quo lacks any transparency but is stable.
- 8.26. The options are to:-
- a) cease the issue of these permits to any new applicants and to allow the scheme to wind down as existing beneficiaries move from the properties that currently have tickets allocated
 - b) continue with the scheme as it is but charge considerably more for the permits to reduce the current large concession
 - c) continue with the scheme as it is, without extending to additional properties and only consider increasing permit charges by inflationary amount as part of any annual tariff review
- 8.27. The anticipated outcome of increasing the cost of permits would be that residents continue to park within their nearest car park but simply pay more to do so. It is unlikely that the result would be for those cars to be removed to create increased parking capacity, particularly at weekends when it is required most.
- 8.28. Topsham does not have a Residents Annual Season Ticket Scheme. Introducing one would put pressure on the off-street parking capacity (152 bays outside of the summer season). Topsham currently has two cheaper local tariff sites and charging hours have previously been reduced by 2 hours in all of the town's car parks (9am to 5pm) to provide 16 hours per day free parking for all users.
- 8.29. Designated parking bays are provided on the lower decks of Cathedral & Quay for businesses in the surrounding area who require a vehicle for the operation of their business (e.g. Estate Agents). Bays are limited to two per business and cost £565.00 per year. Future consideration should be given, in conjunction with Exeter Futures, as to how to utilise this scheme to further support carbon reduction (reduced prices for electric vehicles for example).
- 8.30. Quarterly commuter season tickets are available for use in long stay car parks at £260.00 per quarter. This appears relatively cheap when compared to quarterly season tickets for bus travel (Stagecoach Exeter Mega-rider Plus £230.00) and rail journeys (First Great Western Exeter to Exmouth £295.00 and Exeter to Newton Abbot £397.00) and does little to discourage regular commuter car use.
- 8.31. Blue Badge holders currently enjoy unlimited free parking in all Council Pay & Display car parks. This is rather unusual but has been sustained for many years. A number of disabled bays at King William Street appear to be

underused and further monitoring, along with consultation with disability group representatives should be undertaken in order to either better locate the bays, improve access to them or convert to standard parking spaces if there is no demand for them by disabled drivers.

8.32. It should be noted that adjustments would need to be made to 54 parking machines to make them fully accessible to disabled customers before we were able to begin charging Blue Badge holders. Costs for such work would be in the region of £50K.

9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

One of the five Key Strands of the Corporate Plan is to grow the economy and deliver a thriving city centre by getting more income from our car parks. Adopting a new Parking Strategy and developing the Parking Action Plan is a Key Priority of the Economy and Culture Theme.

10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

The risk of loss of parking income from the new parking strategy has been identified as a medium risk on the Corporate Risk Register. The recommended tariffs are based upon a great deal of data and well-informed assumptions set out in the appendices to the Parking Strategy, as detailed in 8.5 above. These show that very slightly more income will be derived as a result of the tariff changes.

In addition, regular monitoring of income and parking patterns will be undertaken to ensure early identification of possible under-recovery of parking income. Overall parking income is one of the published measures of the Parking Strategy.

11. What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?

Maintaining free parking for Blue Badge Holders supports equality of access to the city. An EQIA was completed to accompany the previous Parking Strategy report.

12. Are there any other options?

The Parking Strategy rehearses many alternative options available in Exeter for parking tariffs and designations. The recommendations in the report seek to deliver the optimum impact on each of the four key objectives of the Strategy.

Sarah Ward
Assistant Director Public Realm

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

Parking Strategy 2016-2016 <https://exeter.gov.uk/media/2442/ecc-parking-strategy.pdf>

Contact for enquires:

Democratic Services (Committees), Room 2.3, 01392 265275