

CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2 December 2021

Present:

Councillors Mitchell, M, Allcock, Atkinson, Begley, Denning, Mrs Henson, Pearce, Sparkes, Sparling, Wardle and Warwick

Apologies:

Councillors Vizard, Martin, Quance and Ghusain

Also present:

Director Net Zero Exeter & City Management, Engineering, Waterways, and Parking Services Manager and Democratic Services Officer (HB)

In attendance:

Councillor Harvey

Portfolio Holder City Management

26 **Chair**

In the absence of the Chair, the meeting was chaired by the Deputy Chair, Councillor M. Mitchell.

27 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 7 October 2021 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

28 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

29 **Questions from the public under Standing Order No. 19**

In accordance with Standing Order 19, a member of the public, Mr Peter Hill, had submitted the following question, which in Mr Hill's absence had been tabled together with the answer.

Question

Since the Clear Streets Charter launch in 2018, pavement obstacles to the visually impaired have, undeniably, persisted. A Freedom of Information reply states there is no Charter implementation plan and no performance measures - i.e. no effective management of Charter aims. Why have the Charter commitments not been given dedicated resources?

Answer

The Clear Streets Charter was a collation of all of the duties and responsibilities that both the City Council and the County Council already had, in relation to keeping the streets safe for people of all abilities. This included pavement obstructions but also continued into other areas such as planning, licencing and designing new public spaces. Bringing all these duties and responsibilities together into one charter

underlined the importance of these existing duties to both authorities and to the businesses and residents in the City.

To both the City and County Councils this is business as usual and so there is no need for a charter implementation or performance measures which overcomplicate the message. The message is simply that in all of our decisions and actions we need to consider the safety of all of our residents and visitors. The Charter does not need additional resources it just required embedding into all of our decision making. There will always be challenges and occasions where we need to take action over pavement obstacles but the Charter has proven to be a success. One such example of this is the involvement of the RNIB in the design of the new bus station from its inception to completion.

The Chair reported that he had submitted a request for a review of the Implementation of the Council's Street Charter for Exeter for consideration by the Strategic Management Board and the Scrutiny Programme Board.

30 **To receive questions from Members of the Council under Standing Order No. 20**

No questions had been received from Members under Standing Order No 20.

31 **Car Parks and Environmental Considerations**

The Chair reported that at the meeting of the recent Combined Strategic and Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee when a number of work streams were discussed as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan, Councillors were asked to consider how they could be involved in the future development of the Council's car parking service.

The Council's Engineering, Waterways and Parking Service Manager, attended the meeting and took Members through an overview of the service setting out the number, location and condition of the Council's car parks. The presentation provided detailed figures for each of the 49 car parks showing their type, the income for the last two years including income per bay and options for re-purposing. An annual surplus of £5,858,381 had been returned in 2019/20 compared with £1,093,970 for 2020/21.

The Council's Engineering, Waterways and Parking Service Manager explained that the previous Council approach to car parking had been to aim the city centre car parks at short-stay shoppers with a pricing structure designed to encourage high turnover in sites with the more peripheral sites such as Triangle and Howell Road providing cheaper, long-stay parking for commuters, the emphasis being to facilitate as many cars as possible to boost the city centre economy. Regular, incremental tariff increases had followed as the Council sought to maximise income generation.

The intention of the current strategy was to reduce the number of cars travelling into the city centre, prevent congestion within the central area by encouraging drivers, where possible, to walk a longer last leg of their journey and to encourage a longer dwell time in central car parks so that the shopping public also saw the High Street as a place to visit at leisure to eat and drink. Increasing, or at least maintaining, car park income was also a goal.

The current parking stock was being reviewed to ascertain where it might be prudent to either re-purpose or re-develop current car parks

The presentation set out the current tariffs with the following suggested as potential options for the way forward:-

- extend the charging period;
- introduce flat-rate overnight charging;
- introduce 'Dynamic' charging which could seek to levy an additional fee on top of the usual parking tariff for those arriving or leaving a car park during designated 'rush hour' periods. The aim being to smooth out peak travel times;
- reduce Blue Badge concession;
- re-classify some 'Local' car parks;
- introduce charging in current 'free' car parks;
- all the above estimated to deliver an additional £300,000;
- any tariff changes would require a lead in period of eight weeks, once Council approval confirmed;
- enforcement and compliance; and
- competitors meet market demand.

(A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes)

The Director and the Council's Engineering, Waterways and Parking Service Manager responded to Members' queries:-

- £8.8 million would have been a predicted income generation without the Covid Pandemic at an occupancy level of 86%. Confidence was returning and a 75% level was anticipated for 2022/23. However, maintaining current tariff levels would result in a £2 million shortfall in 2022/23, whereas implementing the agreed tariffs would reduce the shortfall to £1 million if in place before April 2002, for which there was a eight week lead in period;
- key players in the commercial sector considered that tariffs were less of a barrier for trade and that congested arterial roads and slow journey times were more off-putting for visitors. Individual businesses however had regularly campaigned against tariff rises when advertised. Free car parking however would fly against the city's environmental ambitions so it requires a balanced approach;
- it was not considered that consolidating the parking estate and reducing overall car park numbers would see competitors seeking to capture the market as there was little land opportunities for such speculation;
- re-purposing of car parks could be explored where they were in close proximity to each other and duplicated provision. Of the Guildhall, Harlequins and Mary Arches Street car parks, the latter was in a poorer condition and, on this basis, could be a choice for an alternative use. Re-purposing could involve replacing car park income with alternative revenue streams;
- research was required on the night time use of car parks with view to charging. At present, it was estimated that there were 200 vehicles parked across the city in the car parks. Apart from the Guildhall, John Lewis and Mary Arches car parks, which offered premium night time parking, other car parks were free between 6pm and 8am;
- the recently created Net Zero team would be developing a strategy in respect of electric charging points in our car parks and looking at the business case for their installation and operation to meet anticipated future demand. A small number of charging points were already available within a handful of car parks;
- additional enforcement would protect income. The current nationally set penalty charge was £25 (with prompt payment discount), whereas one city was known to charge £26 per day;
- costs for future maintenance of car parks has been factored in to the capital programme and did not impact on the car parking budget; and

- an income of £101,297 had been generated in 2019/20 from miscellaneous rentals to commercial businesses etc.

The following questions had been put to the Committee in advance of the meeting by Councillor Sparling, with the answers provided by officers for each set out in italics below:-

- what would a tariff look like that did not lead to a shortfall, taking into account that electric vehicles, whilst better in regards to air pollution, are not a solution to congestion and also seeking to protect the ability of Blue Badge holders to access the City without an increase in cost;
there are 1.9 million users of car parks annually; a 50p across the board increase on top of the agreed tariff for 2022/23 would eliminate the £1million shortfall;
- what would be the effect of removing free parking periods from all car parks and potential revenue from introducing car parking fees in open spaces and leisure centres and how much would this generate over a three year period?;
- *there are 194 bays that fall into this category. Assuming every bay brought in £1 per day, that would equate to £70,000 per annum;*
- what research has been undertaken into a Workplace Parking Levy for the City and what were the outcomes?; Could secure cycle parking provision be made available at all car parks, especially in light of the car parks rarely being at 100% capacity?
a comprehensive work place levy can only be implemented by a unitary transport authority and a good example is Nottingham City which used the levy to fund its tram network. A number of parking bays at Princesshay 3 car park have been given over to provide cycle locker facilities for businesses within the Broadwalk House offices above and other commercial opportunities are being explored such as secure cycle parking.

Members made the following observations and suggestions with the responses of officers, where given, set out in italics below:-

- future policy should not discourage coach visits to the city;
- *the increase from £5 to £18 for coaches in the Haven Banks car park was viewed as being easier to absorb by a commercial operator rather than steep percentage increases impacting directly on individual motorists;*
- consider introducing a different, cheaper tariff structure for the weekends. Increasing charges could lead to the public using other shopping centres;
- *car parks are busiest at weekends. When free parking on Sundays was offered, shop workers had predominantly taken advantage. Congestion was considered by the local Chamber of Commerce as being more off putting to shoppers than parking charges. Our charging strategy is designed to reduce congestion;*
- support a tariff increase to reduce the income shortfall of £1 million and suggest that Exeter City Living would not be able at present to incorporate a car park such as Parr Street into its portfolio. Also suggest using the Triangle Car Park for coach use and maximising the use of the Bromhams Farm Car Park and a previously approved charging scheme to limit all day parking will be implemented;
- *the Triangle Car Park would have insufficient space for coaches. The Environment Agency will shortly hand back Bromhams Farm Car Park;*
- a broader approach is necessary to examine opportunities on the fringes of the city as slow access to the city centre, as for example along Alphington Road, can result in visitors avoiding the city. Retail outlets offer free car parking along this artery. Develop a strong, clear message for the city in line with environmental ambitions;

- support a holistic approach and working with the County Council as part of the Net Zero goal. As vehicle ownership is expensive in any event, increased charges should not prove an obstacle. Improve cycle parking provision at car parks. Technical solutions should be examined for better enforcement;
- *the City has a good relationship with the County Council and terms of reference will be brought forward for the new Transport Working Group which will be an advisory body. Use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition for enforcement purposes in car parks by local authorities is restricted but is under review by the Government;*
- important to achieve balance to continue ensuring Exeter is a prime visitor and shopping destination. Increased charges would discourage hotel use;
- potential longer term solutions could include:-
 - charging to reflect emission levels of vehicles via vehicle registration;
 - city to bring forward its own Park and Ride sites; and
 - free hopper buses from outlying car parks, possibly for coach users only;
- hire of cargo bikes from retail outlets, possibly in conjunction with Co-Cars;
- introduce Clean Air Zones;
- future policy will need to achieve a balance and be mindful of diverging goals including:-
 - maximising income;
 - bringing people into Exeter;
 - reducing congestion; and
 - reducing pollution;
- focus should be on encouraging improved, affordable access to the city centre for residents as, in the current economic climate, shopping visits to this and other centres may be economically prohibitive;
- *Exeter still offers a premium shopping experience and the High Street is recovering well; and*
- utilise capital funding to enhance our parks and open spaces to attract more visitors into the city and make it a place for families.

The Chair thanked Members for the useful and informed suggestions which would help the preparation of an officer report to feed into the new 2022/23 tariffs included within the proposed budget as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan. In order for Members to input further into car parking policy and tariff setting, future reviews by the Committee should ideally be timetabled earlier in the year.

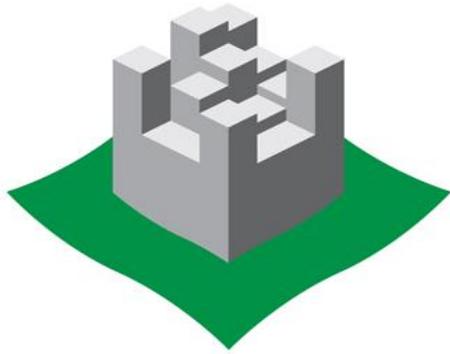
32 **Forward Plan of Business**

Members noted the Forward Plan.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.52 pm

Chair

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Exeter
City Council

Car Parking Overview

December 2021

Background

For many years the Council's approach to car parking was a simple one. The city centre car parks were aimed at short-stay shoppers with a pricing structure designed to encourage high turnover in sites such as Guildhall and Mary Arches Street.

Meanwhile, those more peripheral sites such as Triangle and Howell Road provided cheaper long-stay parking for commuters.

The emphasis was on facilitating as many cars as possible as this was deemed to be beneficial to the city centre economy. Being 'full' was considered to be a success and an indicator of a thriving city.

As the global financial landscape began to change in 2007/08 the income derived from car parking became ever more important in order to allow the Council to deliver both the level and range of services it desired for the citizens of Exeter.

Regular tariff increases followed as the Council sought to maximise income generation while still ensuring car parking was supporting city centre business need.

Current Position

Much work was done around 2016 to help inform a revised parking strategy. Part of that work involved workshops with representatives from city centre business, the general public and partner organisations.

It emerged that key players in the commercial sector didn't consider tariffs alone to be a barrier for trade but instead cited the congested arterial routes and slow journey times as a major factor in deterring people visiting the city.

The strategy adopted as a result of this work can be summarised as follows:-

1. Reduce the number of cars travelling into the city centre
2. Increase the dwell time of those cars that do
3. Do so without detrimentally affecting city centre footfall
4. Increase, or at least maintain, car park income

This was broadly being achieved during the two years immediately before the Covid pandemic by means of a revised tariff structure.

The new structure made it more expensive to park the closer to the city centre someone drove. So travelling along the Alphington Road corridor, for example, a motorist would have the option of parking at Haven Road or Okehampton Street for £3.50 a day. Continuing further in as far as Cathedral & Quay would cost £11.00 a day, closer still to Magdalen Street would be £13.00 and centrally in Guildhall, Mary Arches Street or John Lewis would be £15.00

The intention being to prevent congestion within the central area by encouraging drivers, where possible, to walk a longer last leg of their journey.

The new structure also did away with the previous large rise in tariff for anyone staying beyond 3 hours in a short stay car park. This was changed in order to encourage a longer dwell time in central car parks as the emphasis changed from the High Street being somewhere to 'nip in' and shop to being somewhere to visit at leisure to shop, eat and drink.

Planning for the Future

1. What have we got?

2. Where are they?

3. What's their condition?

4. How do we re-purpose?

5. What options for tariffs?

1. What have we got?

Parking Site	Type	No. of Bays	Income 2019/20	Income 2020/21	Annual Income per Bay
Bampfylde Street	Pay & Display	88	241,458	172,215	£ 2,744
Bartholomew Terrace	Pay & Display	46	18,218	7,200	£ 396
Belmont Road	Pay & Display	27	45,554	22,087	£ 1,687
Bystock Terrace	Pay & Display	50	121,531	73,999	£ 2,431
Cathedral & Quay	Pay & Display	395	327,016	130,220	£ 828
Civic Centre	Free Visitors	16	-	-	-
Clifton Hill	Pay & Display	10	954	136	£ 95
Flowerpot Lane	Pay & Display	70	25,926	12,133	£ 370
Gordons' Place	Pay & Display	38	24,860	12,063	£ 654
Guildhall	Pay on Foot	440	1,470,758	633,393	£ 3,343
Harlequins	Pay & Display	91	221,828	117,496	£ 2,438
Haven Road	Pay & Display	176	198,853	111,511	£ 1,130
Holman Way	Pay & Display	68	80,357	53,145	£ 1,182
Howell Road	Pay & Display	337	543,438	232,164	£ 1,613
John Lewis	Pay on Foot	425	751,488	222,965	£ 1,768
King William Street	Pay & Display	244	300,839	91,792	£ 1,233
Magdalen Road	Pay & Display	213	358,221	124,395	£ 1,682

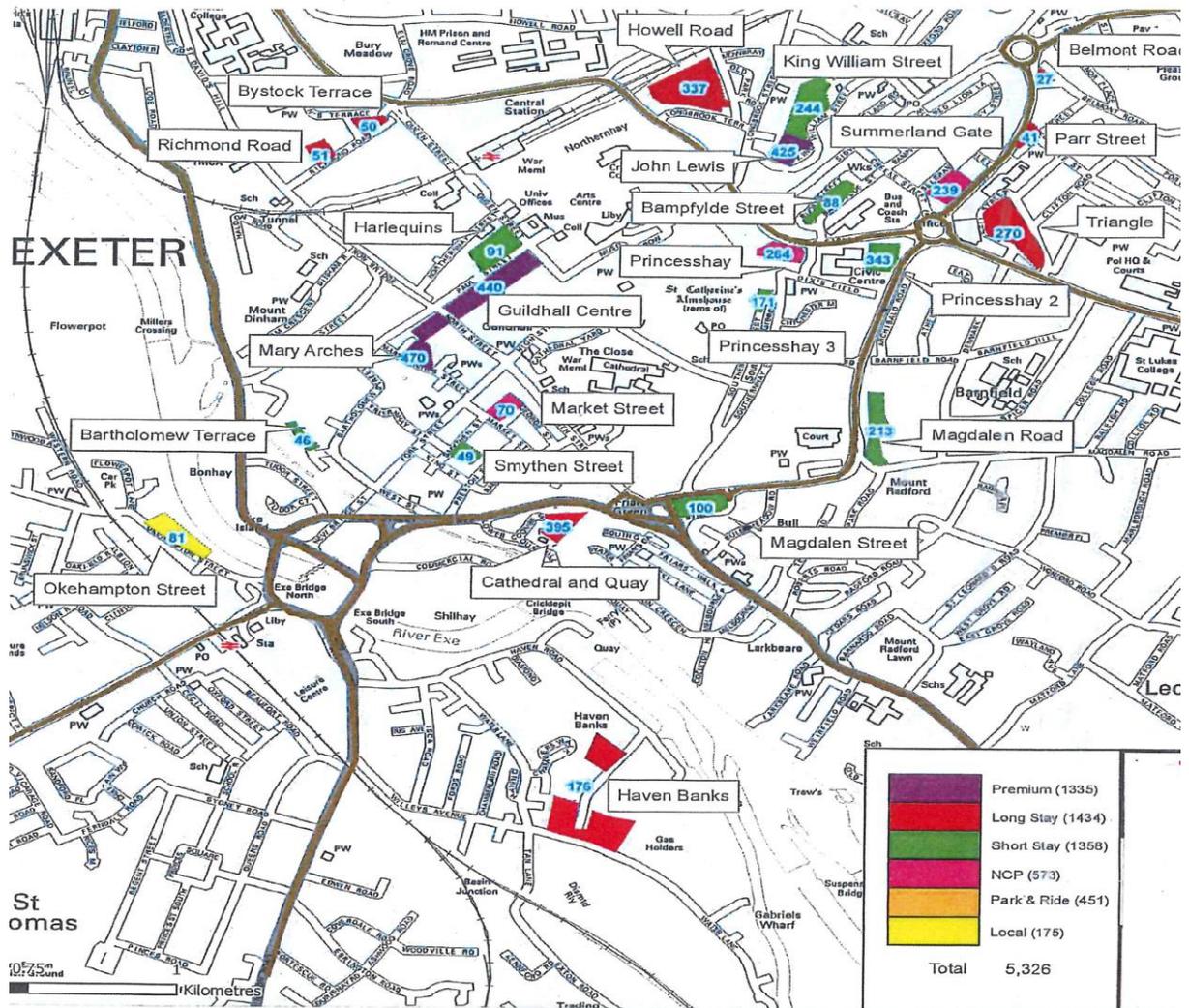
Magdalen Street	Pay & Display	100	334,779	179,455	£ 3,348
Mary Arches Street	Pay on Foot	470	1,112,454	195,868	£ 2,326
Mathews Hall	Pay & Display	32	78,548	42,837	£ 2,455
Okehampton Street	Pay & Display	81	64,932	32,049	£ 802
Parr Street	Pay & Display	41	44,238	11,598	£ 1,079
Princesshay 2	Pay & Display	343	304,270	137,620	£ 887
Princesshay 3	Pay & Display	171	428,871	182,341	£ 2,508
Richmond Road	Pay & Display	51	22,984	7,757	£ 451
Smythen Street	Pay & Display	49	147,610	90,206	£ 3,012
Station Road, Exwick	Pay & Display	18	6,905	8,349	£ 384
Tapper's Close	Pay & Display	26	16,484	5,898	£ 634
Topsham Quay	Pay & Display	26 (+64 seasonal)	100,523	56,736	£ 1,733
Triangle	Pay & Display	270	562,569	173,625	£ 2,084
Albert Street	Free Off-Street Residents	17	-	-	
Clifton Street 1	Free Off-Street Residents	9	-	-	
Clifton Street 2	Free Off-Street Residents	4	-	-	
Clifton Street 3	Free Off-Street Residents	7	-	-	
East John Walk	Free Off-Street Residents	8	-	-	
Leighton Terrace	Free Off-Street Residents	3	-	-	

Lower Albert Street	Free Off-Street Residents	6	-	-	
Oxford Road	Free Off-Street Residents	11	-	-	
Parr Street	Free Off-Street Residents	10	-	-	
Sandford Walk 1	Free Off-Street Residents	4	-	-	
Sandford Walk 2	Free Off-Street Residents	8	-	-	
St Matthews Close	Free Off-Street Residents	25	-	-	
Duryard	Free Off-Street Recreational	16	-	-	
Bromhams Farm	Free Off-Street Recreational	26	-	-	
Cowick Barton	Free Off-Street Recreational	28	-	-	
Bettys Mead	Free Off-Street Recreational	12	-	-	
Hamlin Lane	Free Off-Street Recreational	22	-	-	
King George V	Free Off-Street Recreational	74	-	-	
Station Road, Pinhoe	Free Off-Street Recreational	16	-	-	
Permits/Season Tickets	Various	n/a	361,968	159,140	
Penalty Charge Notices	Various	n/a	47,648	66,497	
Solar Panel Income	Mary Arches Street & John Lewis MSCPs	n/a	31,262	35,565	
Other Miscellaneous	Rents, Recharges etc.	n/a	101,297	56,524	
Total Net Income			8,498,641	3,458,979	

Expenditure					
Pay	Car Parks & Cash Collection		588,863	393,264	
Premises	Car Parks & Cash Collection		1,300,750	1,286,836	
Supplies & Services	Car Parks & Cash Collection		291,362	218,168	
Transport	Car Parks & Cash Collection		1,484	1,870	
Support Services	Car Parks & Cash Collection		149,980	120,000	
Capital Charges	Car Parks & Cash Collection		307,821	344,871	
Total Net Expenditure	Car Parks & Cash Collection		2,640,260	2,365,009	
Annual Surplus			5,858,381	1,093,970	



2. Where are they?



3. What's their condition?

a) All Surface car parks are currently in reasonable condition

b) Multi-storey and Basement car parks require attention as indicated in the table below

Green = Good Amber = Fair Red = Poor

Site	Structure	Lighting	Decor	Lifts
Guildhall	Amber	Green	Green	Green
Mary Arches	Red	Amber	Red	Red
Harlequins	Green	Amber	Amber	N/A
Cath & Quay	Red	Red	Red	Red
John Lewis	Amber	Green	Green	Amber
King William	Red	Amber	Amber	N/A
Princesshay 2	Amber	Amber	Amber	N/A
Princesshay 3	Green	Green	Amber	Green

4. How do we re-purpose?

- a) Rare to be at 100% capacity.
- b) Our ambition to reduce the number of journeys made into the city by car.
- c) A number of sites within close proximity of each other. (e.g Belmont Road/Parr Street and Guildhall/Harlequins/Mary Arches Street).
- d) Reduce overheads without impacting on income.
- e) Emphasis on replacing car park income with an alternative revenue streams.



Car Park and Existing Issues	Nearby Alternatives	Re-Purposed Use Options
Mary Arches (poor condition of overall site, including pedestrian bridge, requiring significant capital investment, upper decks currently house a large solar panel array)	Guildhall and Harlequins	<p>Sell for redevelopment</p> <p>Demolish and operate surface car park from same site with reduced overheads</p> <p>Repair/refurbish and continue to run as car park</p> <p>Repair/refurbish and run as joint car park/visitor attraction ('urban chic' theme for go-karting, skateboarding, crazy golf, silent discos, film set/video shoot location, street art exhibitions etc)</p>
Belmont Road (small site in area with alternative car parks)	Parr Street and Triangle	Sell for redevelopment
Cathedral & Quay (known structural problems, ASB, poor lighting)	Magdalen Street	<p>Development for upper decks already planned</p> <p>Ensure appropriate security to deter ASB and gentrify site with secure parking options, wider bays, EV provision etc</p>
King William Street (recent structural concerns, ASB, spare capacity across this site and John Lewis MSCP)	John Lewis	<p>Maintain John Lewis MSCP as a car park but repurpose King William Street for 'urban chic' themes mentioned above but also scope for netted-in 5-a-side football/netball/tennis use at Leighton Terrace deck</p> <p>King William underground section could potentially be used as base for boxing/martial arts type clubs</p> <p>Alternatively this section could be utilised to support active travel (co-share bikes, cycle racks, lockers, showers etc)</p>

5. What options for tariffs?

a) Do Nothing - £2M shortfall in 2022/23

b) Implement Agreed Tariffs - £1M shortfall if in place before April 2022 (8 week lead in period)

Premium Car Parks (Guildhall, Mary Arches, John Lewis)		
Stay	Current Tariff	Proposed Tariff
1 hour	£3.30	n/a
2 hours	£4.40	£4.50
3 hours	£5.50	£5.60
4 hours	£6.60	£6.70
5 hours	£7.70	£7.80
6 hours	£8.80	£8.90
7 hours	£9.90	£10.00
All day	£15.00	£18.00
Zone 1 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	£2.20	n/a
2 hours	£3.30	£3.40
3 hours	£4.40	£4.50
4 hours	£5.50	£5.60
5 hours	£6.60	£6.70
6 hours	£7.70	£7.80
7 hours	£8.80	£8.90
All day	£13.00	£13.00
Zone 2 Car Parks (Belmont Road, Bystock Terrace, Cathedral & Quay, Haven Road 1, Howell Road, Richmond Road, Parr Street, Topsham Quay, Triangle)		
Stay	Current Tariff	Proposed Tariff
1 hour	£2.20	n/a
2 hours	£3.30	£3.40
3 hours	£4.40	£4.50
4 hours	£5.50	£5.60
5 hours	£6.60	£6.70
All day	£11.00	£11.00

Zone 3 Car Parks (Flowerpot, Haven Road 2 & 3, Holman Way, Okehampton Street, Tappers Close, Turf Approach)		
Stay	Current Tariff	Proposed Tariff
1 hour	£1.00	n/a
2 hours	£1.50	£2.00
3 hours	£2.00	£3.00
4 hours	£2.50	£4.00
All day	£3.50	£5.00
Zone 3 Car Parks with Maximum Stay (Bromhams Farm, Clifton Hill, Gordons Place, Station Road (Exwick))		
1 hour	£1.00	n/a
2 hours	£1.50	£2.00
3 hours maximum stay (6 hours maximum stay at Bromhams Farm)	£2.00	£3.00
Other charges		
Coach Parking at Haven Road 2 (per day)	£5.00	£18.00
Season Ticket (per annum)	£1,500.00	£1,800.00
Residents Annual Car Park Permit (within catchment zone)	£150.00	£200.00
Residents Annual Car Park Permit (if electric vehicle and within catchment zone)	£150.00	Free
Business Annual Car Park Permit (within catchment zone)	£250.00	£250.00
Cathedral & Quay Dedicated Business Bay (within catchment zone and subject to availability)	£750.00	£800.00



c) Other tariff considerations:-

Extend charging period

Introduce flat-rate overnight charging

Introduce 'Dynamic' charging

Reduce Blue Badge concession

Re-classify some 'Local' car parks

Charging in current 'free' car parks

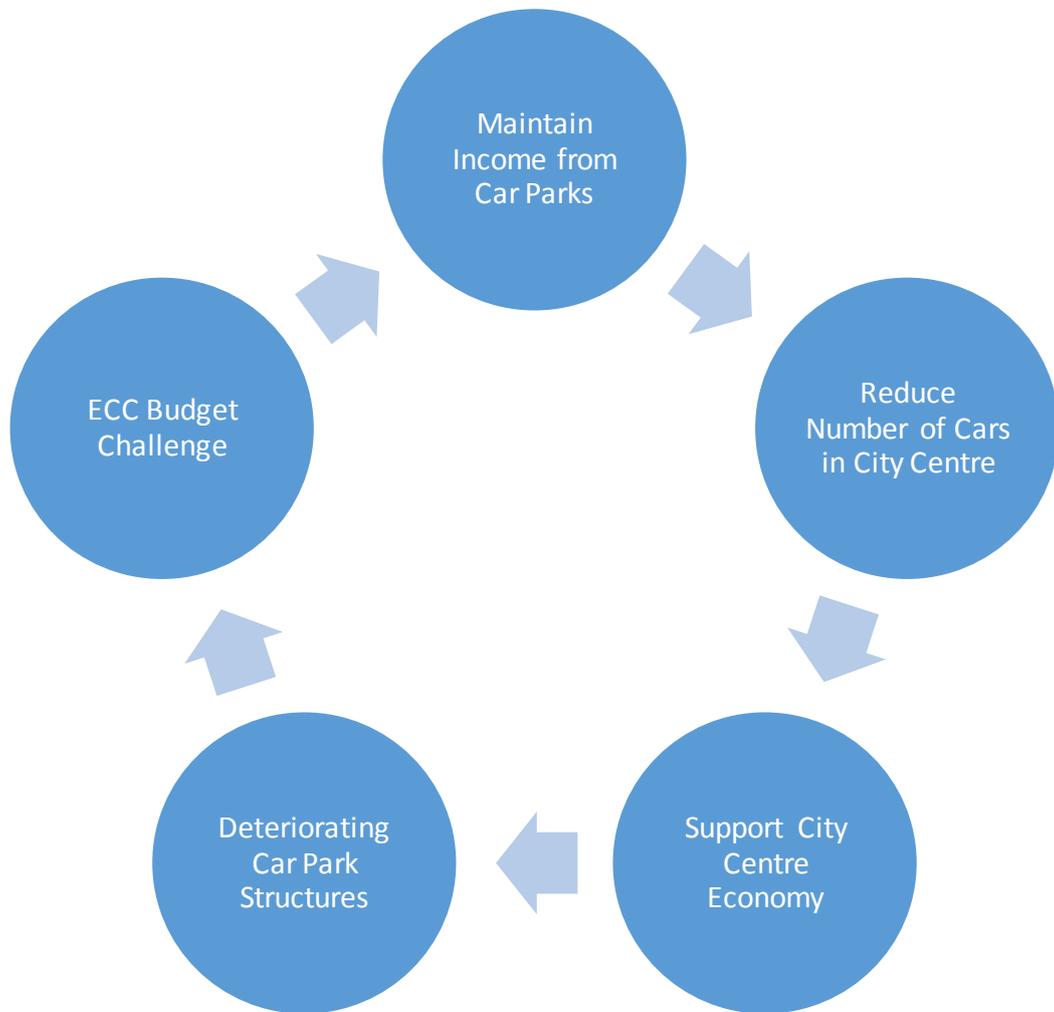
All the above estimated to deliver an additional £300K

Lead-in time extended as no existing Executive approval

Enforcement and compliance

Competitors meet market demand

Squaring the Circle:-



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