

Sustainable Communities Act 2007

Proposal Summary Form

Date of Panel Meeting: Wednesday 27 May 2009

Name of proposer or organisation

Transition Exeter Transport Group

Summary of proposal

Equate city centre parking and bus fares – Require Exeter City Council to set minimum city centre parking charges to equate with return bus fares from the outskirts of the city.

Details of Consultation carried out

This proposal was one of those suggested by the Exeter Traffic Reduction Group.

The proposal was supported at the Exeter Transport Conference 09/05/09.

Officers Comments

The proposal suggests that city centre parking charges should be legally required to be no less than a return bus fare from the outskirts of the City. Two sample return fares are:

Alphington to City Centre	:	£3.30
Pinhoe to City Centre	:	£3.50

On street parking charges are currently:

0-30 minutes	:	£0.70
30-60 minutes	:	£1.20

Off street parking charges are currently:

	Premium City Centre Car Parks (excl. Guildhall)	Other City Centre Car Parks
Under 1 hour	£1.00	£0.80
1 – 2 hours	£2.00	£1.30
2 – 3 hours	£3.00	£2.20

The proposal would result in increases in on street parking charges of up to 500% and off street parking charges of 350% for premium city centre car parks and up to 440% for other city centre car parks. To maintain price differentials for longer stays, such action would have a major effect across all tariffs. Members should note the Net income from car parks is 70% of Council Tax income – any radical policy change could put at risk the stability of this key income source.

Whilst satisfying a long standing campaigning objective of various local transport/environmental groups, the adoption of such a policy would have a major adverse impact on city centre activity. For off street parking, stays of less than 3 hours comprise 80% of total car park usage. It would be naïve to believe that equating car park tariffs and bus fares will simply result in car users switching to bus. Some car users will switch but many

will still perceive the 'generalised cost' of bus use (actual costs plus time costs) to be significantly greater than travelling by car, so will not switch modes. A more likely outcome is that those with discretion over their destination will switch to other neighbouring centres to conduct their business. There are therefore major risks with such a simplistic policy that the competitiveness of the city centre will be undermined.

The claimed benefits are likely to be illusory with higher levels of car use more likely as people travel to neighbouring centres with greater fuel usage and business stagnation leading to job losses in Exeter.

In conclusion, the City Council should continue to set parking tariffs on the same basis as previously – endeavouring to balance economic, environmental and financial objectives.

Panel Questions/Comments

- Is there a need for new legislation as ECC and DCC set parking charges already?
- Will private car park companies be included? It was suggested they should be.
- Can Stagecoach be asked to explain why their fares are so expensive? This proposal should give them an incentive to reduce fares if more people were using buses.
- Costs of running a car and how many people in each car should be taken into account.
- Could be counter productive in other regions as not all areas suffer from expensive bus fares.

Supported/Not Supported by Panel and reasons

Not supported via SCA but support for this to be taken forward at a local level and address through the Well-being Power in conjunction with Devon County Council.