

Gloucester City Council

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| Meeting: | Overview & Scrutiny Committee | Date: | 9 January 2023 |
| | Cabinet | | 11 January 2023 |
| | Council | | 26 January 2023 |
| Subject: | Car Parking- Tariff Increase | | |
| Report Of: | Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources | | |
| Wards Affected: | All | | |
| Key Decision: | yes | Budget/Policy Framework: | No |
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| Appendices: | 1. Proposed Car Park Tariffs | | |
| | 2. Tariff Comparisons with “Near Neighbours” | | |
| | 3. Car Park Visitor Numbers | | |

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To review and update the current car park tariffs and car park zoning across the City to ensure that they appropriately reflect changing local demand brought about by the regeneration of the City Centre and the Council’s carbon neutral aims.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the information in the report and make any recommendations to Cabinet.
- 2.2 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:
- (1) That the car parking tariffs are increased to reflect inflationary pressures, encourage people to consider other alternative modes of transport and better reflect current parking trends.
 - (2) To reduce the number of parking zones from 3 to 2 zones through the combination of the current zones 1 & 2 into a single zone to reflect the changes being brought about by the redevelopment of the City Centre and bring regularity across our City Centre car parks.
 - (3) Regularise the tariff options for purchasing tickets for users of the car parks, by removing the 1-hour option, in line with other comparable car parks and to encourage a longer visit to support our City Centre businesses.
 - (4) Authorise the Director of Policy and Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Policy and Resources to undertake the necessary statutory

procedures to implement these changes as outlined in this report and in Appendix 1.

- (5) A review of car parking charges be undertaken biennially.

2.3 Council is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) The car parking tariffs are increased to reflect inflationary pressures, encourage people to consider other alternative modes of transport and better reflect current parking trends.
- (2) The number of parking zones be reduced from 3 to 2 zones through the combination of the current zones 1 & 2 into a single zone to reflect the changes being brought about by the redevelopment of the City Centre and bring regularity across our City Centre car parks.
- (3) The tariff options be regularised for purchasing tickets for users of the car parks, by removing the 1-hour option, in line with other comparable car parks and to encourage a longer visit to support our City Centre businesses.
- (4) The Director of Policy and Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Policy and Resources be authorised to undertake the necessary statutory procedures to implement these changes as outlined in this report and in Appendix 1
- (5) A review of car parking charges be undertaken biennially.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council are aware of the importance of car parking sites to the development and prosperity of the city. The Council owns or manages 15 car parks across the City, 13 pay and display and 2 pay on foot. The purpose of the tariff review is to ensure the charges are appropriate to cover the costs of managing the car parks, their development and maintenance, whilst remaining competitive with other providers and comparable with other similar local authority providers.
- 3.2 The last amendment to City Centre car park tariffs was in 2017. Over the last five years the Retail Prices Index has increased by 28.5% and the Consumer Prices Index has increased by 18.5% (*based on Office of National Statistics reported figures for the period from April 2017 to September 2022*) with much of this increase having been seen in the past 18 months. During the review in 2017 the 'all day parking tariff' was not updated, which means it has not been amended since 2012, a period subject to even greater inflationary change.
- 3.3 Current charges remain historically low and do not align with the Council objectives of maintaining and improving a sustainable car parking infrastructure for the future whilst ensuring a balanced budget given the inflationary pressures noted above, and regarding taking the steps necessary to address the climate emergency.
- 3.4 This report is seeking approval for a policy-based increase in car park tariffs, to ensure the Council maintains a reasonable and consistent parking provision that encourages longer stays to help the City Centre economy, and less journeys to make a positive contribution to the Council's carbon neutral aims. This is whilst ensuring

that charging is at a level to encourage people to start considering more sustainable modes of transport and ensuring the most effective use of our City Centre car parks.

3.5 The review undertaken has considered the following:

- Identification of current parking trends based on information relating to our pay and display machines, MiPermit (pay by phone), and ANPR information.
- Data from those Councils designated as our 'nearest neighbours' under the CIPFA Code guidance (these are authorities who are considered to be similar in terms of size and economic make up to Gloucester) to compare their car parking tariffs with those of Gloucester.
- Revision of the current zoning to reflect current parking trends and changes in parking habits arising from the continuing regeneration of the City Centre.
- Current inflationary costs and the fact that the Council has not carried out a review of the tariffs for several years.

3.6 The attached Appendices provide background information from this review including an explanation of the current position, what other City Centre and "nearest neighbour" providers are charging, current and proposed zoning arrangements and alternative tariff rates.

3.7 This review has led to proposed amendments to the Car Park Tariffs that will lead to the standardisation of parking charges across the car parks in the current parking Zones 1 & 2, and the removal of the 1 hour tariff to encourage longer stays by visitors to the City Centre. These changes will ensure the service delivers on the approved budget and begins the process of driving the necessary behavioural changes in public travel to the City Centre to allow the achievement of the Council's carbon neutral aims.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

4.1 None

5.0 Environmental Implications

5.1 The review is trying to facilitate a longer City Centre stay by removing the 1 hour option, this should make a positive contribution to the Council's carbon neutral aims by encouraging a one stop pedestrian shop, rather than a number of car Journeys.

5.2 Also, with completed improvements to the Bus Station and upcoming improvements to the train station, in part the objective of any charging structure is to encourage private vehicle users to think about other potentially more sustainable modes of transport such as cycling, walking, park and ride, bus or train.

5.3 The Council has a priority to tackle the climate emergency. The Council will therefore be formulating a plan to install more electric vehicle charging stations in its car parks. This process has commenced with the investment in the regeneration of the Bruton Way car park as part of the Kings Quarter Forum development.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

6.1 To maintain tariffs at their current level which will continue to reduce net revenues to the Council creating an unsustainable position in the long term because of the inflationary pressures noted above. This also hinders future investment in the

enhancements to the car parking infrastructure required to achieve the Council's carbon neutral aims.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 Parking tariffs have not been reviewed for over 5 years and are not reflective of current trends or habits. The all day tariff has not been reviewed for over 10 years. Our current charging regime does not help change people's mindset in relation to other more sustainable transport methods. Our current regime encourages short stays for an hour or less which does not fit with the Council trying to encourage longer stays and more use of our City Centre businesses and actually encourages hopping into the car to drive to multiple places.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

8.1 Development and costing of a programme for an increase in the number of EV charging points in the City Centre car parks.

8.2 A biennial review of the car parking charges including a review of the impact of the proposed tariff changes on visitor car parking numbers.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 The car parking charging review as detailed in this report will deliver the targets identified in the Money Plan, while ensuring sustainable funding to ensure that the infrastructure of the car parks can be maintained and developed to meet the Council's net carbon zero plans.

9.2 Since 2017 there has been a real terms reduction in the value of the car park receipts of circa £315k (based on CPI) due to the maintaining of the same car park tariffs for the five year period. The proposed increases to the tariffs, the removal of the 1 hour tariff and the combining of Zones 1 & 2 into a single Zone A is estimated to increase the car park income by £560k. This addresses the real terms reduction noted above and subject to any reduction in car park visitors (the sensitivity to which is noted below) generates income for reinvestment in the car parks particularly with regard to the environmental measures needed to accommodate the expected increase in EV vehicles in the next five years.

9.3 The combining and standardising of Zones 1 & 2 generates an estimated £32k of this increase and the removal of the 1 hour tariff generates an estimated £125k of the noted increase.

9.4 The financial impact is based on current customer behaviour, however, the decision to implement the changes may result in changes to customer behaviour, so the financial outcomes may be different. The sensitivity to a 1% reduction in the number of people parking is estimated to be a reduction in income of £25k.

9.5 There are additional one-off costs to the Council:

- To change tariff boards.
- The cost of legal work to consolidate all the parking orders. This action is required whether the tariffs change or not.

10.0 Legal Implications

- 10.1 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 states that a local authority may provide on and off-street parking places for the purposes of relieving or preventing congestion of traffic. The local authority may also, by order, make provision as to the conditions for the use of such parking places, including applicable charges.
- 10.2 The primary purpose of imposing and setting the level of parking charges must be to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicles and other traffic in the locality concerned, having regard to the need to secure access to premises, the effect on the amenity of the locality, the national air quality strategy and the need to secure the passage of public service vehicles.
- 10.3 Recent cases confirm that whilst the cost of providing parking facilities may be an appropriate secondary consideration in the setting of parking charges, it must not be the primary determining factor. A local authority may not set parking charges for the purposes of generating revenue even though it is an obvious by product of the lawful charging purpose(s) outlined. However providing the charges are for lawful purposes, it is permissible to generate a surplus income.
- 10.4 By virtue of section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the Council must keep accounts of income and expenditure in respect of parking places and such income should only be used towards the provision and maintenance of each parking place amongst other parking related objectives.
- 10.5 Further legal advice can be provided upon request in relation to the statutory procedures for implementing the proposed tariff increases.

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 11.1 The proposed increases pose no direct financial risk other than the potential of reducing the use of the car parks. This will be monitored to ensure if there is an adverse impact, corrective action can be considered.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

- 12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed against the protected characteristics.
- 12.2 Full consultation will be carried out as part of the Order changes.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

- 13.1 Investment in the security of our car parks will reduce anti-social behaviour and encourage more users to use our car parks safely.

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

- 14.1 None