

Decision Maker: Environment Portfolio Holder

Date: Following Environment PDS Committee on 1st October 2013

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: PARKING IN CHISLEHURST

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Chief Officer: Nigel Davies, Executive Director of Environment & Community Services

Ward: Chislehurst;

1. Reason for report

This report reviews parking tariffs in Chislehurst. It recommends a reduction in the all day charge for the town centre's car parks to attract more usage, and an increase in the hourly rate for on-street parking charges to ensure a sufficient turn-over of spaces to meet parking demand and reduce congestion.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Environment Portfolio Holder agrees:

- 2.1 **To a reduction in the maximum all day charge at the Hornbrook House and High Street car parks, Chislehurst from the current £3.50 to £2.00 as set out in paragraph 3.15 and 3.16; and**
- 2.2 **To an increase in the hourly charge for on-street parking in Chislehurst by 10p per hour, i.e. from 60p to 70p per hour.**

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
 2. BBB Priority: Quality Environment; Vibrant, Thriving Town Centres:
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost - £500 implementation costs
 2. Ongoing costs: Recurring Cost None - cost neutral
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Parking
 4. Total current budget for this head: £216,350 parking income from Chislehurst
 5. Source of funding: Existing revenue budget 2013/14
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 2
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Less than 0.2 fte
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Non-Statutory - Government Guidance
 2. Call-in: Applicable:
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Residents, visitors and businesses in Chislehurst
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Yes
2. Summary of Ward Councillors' comments: Cllr Boughey's comments are set out in paragraph 3.20.

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The Council last reviewed parking charges in April 2012 (ES12029, 28th Feb 2012 Parking Charges report). The Environment Portfolio Holder agreed to increases in a number of locations, including Chislehurst town centre.
- 3.2 Prices across the borough were broadly increased in line with the effects of inflation since the previous round of charge increases during 2004-2008, and the overall charging structure was simplified. This means that charges are now set consistently across the borough, classified under four broad charging groups. The report agreed that a review of the new parking charges would be undertaken and that this would provide the Council the opportunity to take corrective action if demand fell significantly at particular locations or if other significant problems have arisen. This report examines the current parking situation in Chislehurst town centre and makes recommendations on adjusting charges there in the light of experience.
- 3.3 The charges in Chislehurst were banded in charging group 4 (off-street car parks outside Bromley town centre). The previous charges per hour of 30p (High Street), 40p (Hornbrook House) and 20p (Red Hill) were changed to 40p per hour for all three car parks, consistent with the new approach set out in the report. On-street charges were increased by 10p from 50p to 60p per hour.
- 3.4 The all-day charge at the High Street car park was increased from £1.50 to £3.50 per day. The all day charge at Hornbrook House was increased from £2.00 to £3.50. This was a significant increase in the all-day charge at these facilities.

The current situation

- 3.5 The price increases do appear to have had an impact on use of the High Street and Red Hill car parks, with some displacement to Hornbrook House car park. The table shows usage for the 12 months before the charge increase and for the 12 months afterwards.

Car Park Usage	High Street	Hornbrook House	Red Hill	Total
Before	97,737	59,751	30,406	102,432
After	85,956	61,095	26,463	98,173
% Change	-12%	2%	-13%	-4%

- 3.6 In response to the increases the Council, was contacted by the Chislehurst Society and the Chislehurst Town Team which is developing proposals for the improvement of the town centre. They voiced their concern that the increase in car parking charges may have impacted on local businesses and visitors, and may have led to an increase in parking in local streets where no charge is made.

Consultation with Chislehurst traders

- 3.7 In response, consultation has been undertaken by the Council with local traders and businesses on options for a further limited review of parking charges in Chislehurst.

- 3.8 The Council's aim is to encourage longer stay motorists to use car park facilities (off-street), which would contribute to higher turnover and availability of pay and display bays (on-street).
- 3.9 This would not only benefit shoppers and visitors to the town, but also traders and businesses relying on the availability of nearby on-street parking spaces to facilitate access for their customers.
- 3.10 The following options are available for consideration.
- Adjust the current charging structure for both pay & display bays and car parks to meet parking demand and reduce congestion; or
 - Leave all charges as they are.
- 3.11 Local traders were asked to complete a questionnaire and return by Thursday 28th March 2013.
- 3.12 90 questionnaires were distributed to all shops and businesses in High Street, Chislehurst on 14th March 2013. 36 completed questionnaires were returned by the 28th March. The following questions were asked:

1	Is there a problem of parking availability near your business?			Yes	No
2	Would you support an increase in on-street parking charges?			Yes	No
3	If yes, what level per hour would you consider reasonable?			70p	80p
4	Would you support a linked decrease in all-day car park charges?			Yes	No
5	Where do you and your staff currently park?	In a public car park	On-street	Other	
6	Are you aware that parking season tickets are available?			Yes	No
7	Other comments				

Summary of analysis

3.13 Of all respondents:

1. Almost 60% indicated that there is a parking availability problem near their business.
2. Over half would support an increase in on-street parking charges.
3. Of those that supported an increase, the most popular option was 70p per hour.
4. A clear majority (almost 90%) would support a linked decrease in all-day parking charges in nearby car parks.
5. Less than 20% are using our car parks.
6. Half (exactly 50%) did not know that season tickets were available.

3.14 Some additional comments on parking issues were made and these are being addressed.

The way forward

3.15 It appears from the consultation exercise that the majority of traders would support a decrease in all-day parking charge in car parks in combination with a small increase in on-street charges. It is also evident that the availability of season tickets is not widely recognised.

3.16 It is therefore recommended that the following changes be implemented: -

- Increase the on-street charges to 70p per hour
- reduce the all-day charges in the High Street and Hornbrook House car parks from £3.50 to £2.00 (Red Hill car park is not directly affected as it has a 4 hour maximum stay), with a new charging structure as follows:

0 – 1 hour	£0.40
1 – 2 hours	£0.80
2 – 3 hours	£1.20
3 – 4 hours	£1.60
Over 4 hours	£2.00

- Advertise the capability to pay by the minute at on-street P&D bays.
- Advertise mobile phone parking (through RingGo) by leaflets to all traders following this consultation
- Advertise the availability of parking season tickets.

3.17 The sale of season tickets at the High Street car parks is low, with only 19 season tickets sold during the 2012/13 financial year, and none being sold at Hornbrook House car park. Only one season ticket has been sold this financial year at the High Street car park.

3.18 Although a reduction in the all-day charge could adversely affect income, this would be mitigated if demand for car park spaces increased or if more users bought season tickets.

3.19 The proposed tariff changes are consistent with the underlying principles of the Parking Charges strategy agreed in report ES 12029 (28th February 2012). On-street charges in Chislehurst would in effect move into the charging band shared by Orpington and Beckenham town centres; whilst charges within all three Chislehurst car parks would remain consistent with each other.

3.20 **Ward Member Comments**

Cllr Boughey has commented:

“When the parking increases were introduced it was agreed a review be undertaken to monitor the effect and consequences. With regard to Chislehurst Village & High Street there is strong evidence that increased charges have had a detrimental impact on the parking habits of drivers, resulting in more long term on-street parking in local residential roads.

“It would encourage the take up of season tickets if the savings were more widely publicised. At present, motorists have to phone a number to obtain this information. May I suggest if the proposed reduced charges are accepted, the new signs also display the cost of a season ticket. The more aware motorists are of the savings, the more likely they are to take up the option.

“I support the proposed new parking tariff to encourage the use of off-street car parks.”

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposals in this report are consistent with the objectives of the Council's new Parking Strategy, agreed by the Environment Portfolio Holder following Environment PDS Committee on 18th January 2012. They are also consistent with the objective of the Environment Portfolio Plan 2013-16 to "ensure that good parking facilities and reasonable charges support the vitality of the borough's town centres".

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 **Summary:** Taking all factors into account, it is considered that the changes proposed in this report would be cost neutral.
- 5.2 The number of motorists parking in the High Street car park for short periods has not changed significantly. However, the number parking all day has reduced from over 9,500 to fewer than 2,000. This shows that drivers have accepted the 10p increase in the hourly rate for shorter stays, but have rejected the all-day charge. The decrease in demand for all day parking has reduced the corresponding income from approximately £15,000 to just under £6,400. A change in the all-day tariff may encourage an increase in car park use and a reduction in on-street parking.
- 5.3 Income from on street parking following the price increase was not as high as expected due to users staying for shorter periods. It is likely that a further 10p increase may have some negative impact on overall demand for on-street bays, but it is hoped that this would be mitigated by migration from the on-street parking bays back to the car parks. Assuming a similar rejection rate as experienced after the 10p increase in 2012, the impact of a further 10p per hour rise in on-street charges could be an increase in income of around £8,200.
- 5.4 The reduction in the all day charge in the car parks to £2.00, assuming the number of users does not change, could result in a loss in annual income of:
- about £4,100 for the High Street car park,
 - about £5,200 loss of income for Hornbrook House

Therefore the total income loss from car parks could be in the region of about £9,300.

- 5.5 The proposed tariff changes would therefore reduce income by about £1,100 if: there were no migration to car parks; and rejection levels for on-street were similar to the 2012 experience.
- 5.6 Realistically, however, the reduction in the all day charge for car parks could encourage some users back to the car park. If, say, 25% of 'rejected' users returned, income would increase by £3,800.
- 5.7 There is also a possibility that the increase in the hourly rate for on street parking should encourage many of these motorists to return to park in the nearby car parks. If most of these users pay the car park hourly rate of 40p instead of the current on-street 60p charge, this could reduce income by a further £2,500. Taking all factors into account, it is therefore considered likely that the changes proposed in this report would be cost neutral.
- 5.8 The one-off cost of implementing these changes is £500 and this can be funded from the parking contract budget which has an amount of £16,300 set aside for tariff changes.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 To implement the changes to the charging structure it will be necessary to amend The London Borough of Bromley (Off-Street Parking Places) Consolidation Order 2008 and any relevant On-Street Parking Orders
- 6.2 In relation to on-street parking, the service is required to operate in a tightly restricted legal environment. Although the Mayor's Transport Strategy has now superseded earlier Traffic Management and Parking Guidance for London, the boroughs continue to rely on the TMPG document as an authoritative interpretation of the legal framework. It advises:

“(2.23) The level of parking charges must be set for traffic management reasons, such as to ration available space and ensure that there is a rapid turnover of parking spaces, rather than to maximise revenue. This is because section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 does not include the maximisation of revenue from parking charges as one of the relevant considerations to be taken into account in securing the safe, expeditious and convenient movement of traffic”.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Personnel Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	(ES12029 28 th Feb 2012 Parking Charges report