

**Decision Maker:** Environment Portfolio Holder

**Date:** Following Environment PDS Committee on 1st October 2013

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

**Title:** **PARKING CHARGES: PLAISTOW LANE CAR PARK**

**Contact Officer:** Ben Stephens, Head of Parking  
Tel: 0208 313 4514 E-mail: ben.stephens@bromley.gov.uk

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

**Ward:** Plaistow and Sundridge;

---

1. Reason for report

The introduction of charges at Plaistow Car Park has resulted in a migration of commuter parking from Plaistow Car Park to on-street locations in the immediate vicinity. Income from parking charges only just covers the cost of cash-collection. Additional congestion and parking difficulties for local residents has resulted which needs to be addressed.

---

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Environment Portfolio Holder agrees:**

**That Plaistow Lane Car Park should revert to being a free car park, to encourage commuter parking and ease on-street parking congestion.**

## Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Parking Strategy 2012
2. BBB Priority: Vibrant, Thriving Town Centres: Quality Environment

## Financial

1. Cost of proposal: One-off costs of £500
  2. Ongoing costs: Net loss of income of £300 p.a.
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Off-street car parks
  4. Total current budget for this head: £6.7k, p.a. (Plaistow Lane car park)
  5. Source of funding: Existing revenue budget 2013/14
- 

## Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 1
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Less than 0.1 fte
- 

## Legal

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

## Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): All users of the car park, over 1,000 p.a.
- 

## Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Yes
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Ward Members support the recommendation.

### **3. COMMENTARY**

Prior to 2011 the Plaistow Lane car park was a free facility, requiring a subsidy of about £6.7k p.a. mainly to cover the costs of NNDR. In order to reduce this deficit a decision to introduce charges for the Plaistow Lane car park was taken by the Environment Portfolio Holder in April 2011. In light of the continued cost of the free facility, the decision to introduce charges was subsequently confirmed by the Executive.

The car park has had low usage by shoppers, compared with usage either by commuters and people working locally, both prior to the introduction of charges and subsequently. An initial free stay period was however agreed in order to provide an incentive for shoppers to use the facility.

Charging commenced in September 2011 at £3 per day. A reduction in usage of the car park followed, with displacement onto nearby residential streets. Local residents complained of increased commuter parking and in January 2012 a questioner/survey was undertaken involving those living in the surrounding roads including Lansdowne Road, Minster Road, Edward Road, Lodge Road, Garden Road and Lawn Close. Residents were asked about the effect of charging at Plaistow Road car park, and any views they had about the introduction of additional parking restrictions. The findings showed that where parking problems were reported they stemmed from the introduction of charging at Plaistow Road Car Park, and residents favoured returning the car park to free use rather than the introduction of new parking restrictions.

A reduction in the daily charge to £1 followed to try to encourage commuters back into the car park, but this met with only limited success.

The cost of managing the car park is approximately £4.3k p.a. which covers enforcement, cash collections, and the supply of tickets and maintenance of the machine. It also covers surface maintenance including minor works, plus signs and lines. This cost is only incurred because we charge i.e. it would not have to be paid to the contractor, Vinci, if the car park was free. If the car park reverted to free use, there would be a one-off cost of about £500 for removal of the Pay and Display machine and associated signs. The machine would be held in stock for future use, and the works paid for from within the existing contract repair and maintenance budget.

Income from charges currently exceeds the management fee cost by only about £300 p.a., taking account of mobile phone payments. Given that NNDR costs have to be met as well, the facility continues to make a substantial financial loss of about £6k p.a., together with the opportunity cost of not using the land for other potential purposes.

There are three charging options for the car park:

Stay as we are – with net income from charges generating only £300 towards business rate costs  
Increase prices to those originally agreed (from the current £1.50 per day to £3), and eliminating the initial free period, albeit risking further displacement into nearby streets  
Return to free parking and accept that while it remains operational the facility will lose about £6.7k p.a.

Taking into consideration the views of residents, the increase in street parking the introduction of charging has caused, and the marginal income generated from charging, it is proposed to remove the charge for parking at this car park with immediate effect.

### **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The proposals in this report are consistent with the policy and operational objectives of the Council's Parking Strategy agreed in January 2012:

**Policy objectives**

- To improve the safety of all road users.
- To provide sufficient affordable parking spaces in appropriate locations to promote and enhance the local economy.
- To assist in providing a choice of travel mode, and enable motorists to switch from unnecessary car journeys, to reduce traffic congestion and pollution.
- To ensure effective loading/unloading for local businesses.
- To provide the right balance between long, medium and short stay spaces...
- To provide a turnover of available parking space in areas of high demand.
- To assist the smooth flow of traffic and reduce traffic congestion.
- To enable residents to park near their homes.
- To assist users with special requirements, such as the disabled.

**Operational objectives**

- To set a level of charges which balances demand and supply for parking spaces across the borough.
- To provide an efficient service which offers Best Value.
- To control the budget within prescribed limits.
- To be seen as fair and responsive to customer needs.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Income from this car park is almost all used to pay for the costs of cash collection and therefore abolishing charges would have a negligible financial effect.

**Expenditure**

Management Costs (inc enforcement, cash collections and maintenance). £4.3k

**Income**

Receipts from Pay & Display and Mobile Phone payments. £4.6k

**Net Income**

**£0.3k**

5.2 There are one-off costs of £500 to remove the pay and display machine and change the signage. This cost will be met from the parking contract budget.

5.3 Note that the cost of NNDR for this facility amounts to £7k p.a. It will therefore continue to operate at a significant loss, whether charges are re-introduced or not.

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	Legal and Personnel.
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	London Borough of Bromley's Parking Strategy. Report ES12003, 18 <sup>th</sup> January 2012  Committee Report ES 11016, 5 <sup>th</sup> April 2011, Parking Enforcement and Management Issues; Committee Report RES 11014, 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2011 - Call-in of introduction of charges for Plaistow Lane Car Park.