

REPORT OF Planning and Economy Manager  
To: Community & Resources Committee  
Subject: Annual Review of Car Parking  
Date: 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018 Reference:

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To review the Council's car parking charges for 2019/20

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Council's parking charges are due for review. As in recent years this has been conducted by the Car Park Working Group (CPWG) at a meeting that consisted of Members, Officers and Town Councillors/ Clerks. Unfortunately this year representatives from Bideford and District Chamber of Commerce and Northam Town Council were unable to attend.

The purpose of the meeting was to seek the views of these stakeholders from the outset, thus enabling agreed proposals to be presented to this committee for approval.

It is imperative that the proposals outlined in this report, which has the full support of Councillor Hicks (Lead Member for the Torridge Economy) and the CPWG which met on 31<sup>st</sup> October, including any subsequent revisions, are finalised at this meeting. This will then provide sufficient time to make any necessary revisions to the Off Street Parking Order in accordance with the legal process if they are required. This is essential if the proposed implementation date of March 2019 is to be achieved.

As in previous years, the main thrust of this review is to consolidate our present position with a view to providing a sustainable and successful customer focused service, whilst maximising the use of our car parks and in doing so protecting the service cost base.

#### **REPORT**

##### **Background**

The last major review of parking charges occurred in 2017 and this was to ensure our charges and operating times better aligned to those of our immediate neighbours.

The following table shows Revenue Budget - income and expenditure for parking operations for the period 2017/18

	<b>2018/19 Budget £</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Car Park Fees	(1,101,850)
Reserved Bays	(37,159)
Season Tickets	(69,644)
Penalty Charge Notices (Off Street)	(74,580)
Wayleaves and Rentals	(3,615)
<b>Total Budgeted Income</b>	<b>(1,286,848)</b>
<b>Total Expenditure*</b>	<b>438,785</b>
<b>Net Contribution</b>	<b>(848,063)</b>

\*Exclusive of capital charges and recharges

### **2018/19 performance to end of quarter 2 (Sept 2018)**

Car parking revenue (Pay & Display Excluding Wilkey's Field Car Park) based on latest receipts at the end of October is exceeding budget by £28,469, up from the September result of £17,162 - £40,000 has already been declared as a forecast estimate and £36,000 has been included in next year's MTFS. It is to be noted that the parking income is volatile and has contracted since the forecast and this might have to be revised to a lower figure.

Pay & Display receipts were boosted earlier this year primarily due the fine weather experienced early this summer which attracted additional visitors to our region. Members will recall that in previous years when the summers have been predominantly wet, the Council has reported it was unlikely to achieve the budgeted forecast for Pay & Display receipts and the downturn in the weather this year might have a similar effect..

We had budgeted for £40,000 of income to be received from Wilkey's Field Car Park but delays in delivery have meant that this has not been achieved and therefore there has been a detrimental impact on the budgetary position.

Season ticket income is also likely to come in £10,000 above budget.

Penalty Charge Notice income is currently up by £3,879 and is likely to meet the budget forecast of £74,580.

Miscellaneous income (reserved bays) is on target to achieve the £37,159 budget.

The net effect of the above on the operating surplus if the situation does not deteriorate will be approximately £2,755 up on the budgeted forecast.

## Capital and Maintenance

In addition to the Revenue Income and Expenditure in the table above TDC invests resources to repair and maintain car parks. There is investment planned in new machines and equipment as well as a new car park at Wilkeys Field in Westward Ho!. The Capital Programme 2018-19 includes investment in car parks of £1.048m of which £0.64m is allocated to the Wilkeys Field site.

Further investment is planned in 2019-20 including the provision of new payments options as outlined in the report below.

### Charging Proposals

As stated in the introduction, the Car Park Working Group (CPWG) met on the 31<sup>st</sup> October. The group considered a number of matters including:

- **Parking charges.**

The working group considered the charges currently levied across all of the car parks in Torridge. The pay and display charges were increased for short stay car parks in March 2016 and the group considered that there would be no recommendation for further increase this year.

- **Permits**

With the introduction next year (2019) of PermitSmarti provided by Imperial Civil Enforcement Solutions (ICES), there will be a £2.50 charge to TDC per card transaction when members of the public are purchasing permits online from us. This upgrade to online Permits will save time and administration on the resource required at present.

At present members of the public have several options available to them when they wish to purchase a permit.

1. Complete an online application on the TDC website, where customers pay by credit/debit card, then the application, VAT receipt and payment confirmation is emailed to car parks, printed off and processed by a member of staff, the permit & VAT receipt is then sent out first class post (.65p).

2. Members of the public can call into TDC Reception office and complete a paper application, make their payment by credit/debit card or cheque, then this is emailed to the Parking Office, printed off, processed and posted out first class.

3. Members of the public can complete a paper application that we can send out in the post, again first class, they then send it back for us to process along with a cheque payable to TDC that has to go through our Banking system. The permit is then sent first class post.

PermitSmarti would eliminate all of the above cost and administration time. The £2.50 card transaction fee can be added to the permit price via an increase in all our permit prices, that haven't been increased in over 11 years by TDC.

An analysis of permit sales in recent years is shown in the table below.

<b>PERMIT SALES</b>	<b>2016/2017</b>	<b>2017/2018</b>	<b>01/04/18 – 31/08/18</b>
Business	167 £39,747	146 £35,353	70 £16,467
Business Monthly	479 £12,933	441 £11,907	167 £4,509
Season	123 £33,832	143 £40,761	75 £20,612
Season Monthly	327 £10,464	392 £12,544	158 £4,992
Tourist	240 £4,800	315 £6,300	232 £4,640
Other Tourist: Cust.Servs,Burton & Park Mobile)	76 £1,520	111 £2,220	88 £1,760
Reserved Bays	88 £34,610	88 £32,985	88 £29,246
Resident	31 £1,860	47 £2,820	24 £1,440
T – Pill Business	10 £6,426	9 £6,426	2 £1,512
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1541</b> <b>£146,192</b>	<b>1692</b> <b>£151,016</b>	<b>904</b> <b>£85,178</b>

With reference to the above figures (2017/18) if the administration fee of £2.50 per permit were added (excluding Reserved Bays, as they would not be available online due to waiting lists and it is intended to arrange for these to be monthly direct debits wef 2019/20), the Council could achieve an extra income of £4,010

In addition an increase of £20 per Reserved Bay permit we would achieve an extra income of £1,760 totalling extra income of £5,770 Per Annum.

If an administration fee of £5.00 per permit based on the same years figs. We would achieve an extra income of £8,020 per annum adding on the reserved bay income of £1,760 we would total an extra £9,780 per annum.

Reserved Bays are in high demand, with long waiting lists in Odun Road, West Appledore, Pannier Market & Windmill Lane.

There are 23 marked reserved bays in Riverbank car park of which only 14 are taken (the only car park without a waiting list). Of these there are 4 bays in

the short stay section available (potential loss of income of up to £10 a day per bay x 4 = £14,560 pa.) and 5 bays in the long stay section (potential loss of income of up to £3.00 per day per bay x 5 = £5,460 pa) that could be returned to Pay and Display parking thus negating a potential loss of £20,020 to TDC on an annual basis.

If we were to repair the bays in the short stay section (4 bays) that are not rented out at present because they have tree roots making the bays uneven, hence members of the public do not want to pay £447 for a bay for the year that is not really suitable for parking in.

It would then be possible to move the few rented bays in the long stay section up to the short stay section and release more bays to be pay and display in the long stay section.

### **Recommendation 1:**

Increase all permit charges by £5.00

Increase reserved bay charges from £447 to £500 (to include the £5 admin fee).

Increased double reserved bay charges (Willet St Only) from £693 to £775 (to include the £5.00 admin fee).

### **Other Proposals**

The CPWG has also considered a number of other options for Members approval as follows:

- **Additional Free parking from 12 noon Saturday until 6pm Sunday on Barley Grove car park, Well Park car park and Riverbank Short Stay car park –**

The group discussed a suggestion from Torrington Town Council that Barley Grove should have free parking in line with the charging hours in Sydney House. It was agreed, in the interests of fairness, that if this were to be considered that similar additional extra free parking arrangements should be considered in Bideford and Holsworthy. If these arrangements were to be considered it is likely that the council would experience the following loss of income (based on taking over the past 12 months in those car parks):

Barley Grove -	£2,200
Well Park -	£500
Riverbank -	£15,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>- £18,200 per annum</b>

The issues was discussed at length during the parking review in 2016 and dismissed on the grounds of affordability.

**Recommendation 2** – As there is no compelling evidence that free parking has had a demonstrably beneficial impact on town centre trading this request should be rejected. Free parking to support events or special occasions can be considered on request and agreed subject to approval by the Planning and Economy Manager and Lead Member for the Economy subject to the budget position at the time of request.

- **Payment methods –**

In the United Kingdom 78.4% of payments were made by credit or debit card in April 2017, a figure which continues to grow. Currently all of our machines are coin operated and do not accommodate for card payments. Through our current provider (CALE) Torridge District Council are able to upgrade the 'doors' within their machines providing customers with the option to pay with card.

The card payment facilities would include additional overheads, however will increase income due to the accessibility card payments provide, while also providing a more positive experience for our customers. Due to the additional overheads and through consultations with other local authorities, the minimum payment of which a machine should authorise is £3 per transaction.

Within Torridge District Council we operate 5 car parks of which either have an hourly charge of £1.00 per hour and/or a daily fee of which exceeds £3.00. Four of these car parks reside within Bideford (Bridge Street, The Pill, The Quay, Riverbank (Short) and one in Westward Ho! (Main).

The capital cost of installation is expected to be in the region of £35,000 based on a recent quote.

**Recommendation 3**– That members approve the installation of new doors to the existing pay and display machines on the five short stay car parks identified above to allow for card and contactless payment. The minimum transaction should be £3.00 to encourage longer stays in the town and to help to cover additional transaction costs.

If the transition is met with positive feedback and increases income within these car parks then it is proposed that the new doors are introduced to further car parks within Bideford (subject to suitable tariffs within these car parks).

- **Other issues –**

Improvements to the No Exit arrangements at the bottom of Bridge Street Car Park were also discussed. The Planning and Economy Manager will arrange for improved signage and bollards to make exit through the no exit section less attractive for those seeking to jump traffic queues on Bridge St. This matter does not require committee resolution as it is an operational/ issue.

In addition Cllr Tony Inch requested that further consideration be given to 2hrs free parking to support the town centres. This was discussed and it was

agreed that there would be no recommendation to provide 2hrs of free parking but that schemes to improve parking arrangements to support our town centres would be considered in further conversations with our chambers of Commerce, County Council and Town Councils.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Any change to existing charges would require a change to the District of Torridge Off Street (Parking Places) Order 2013 (as amended) in accordance with the due legal process.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Maintaining income streams from parking operations is essential in enabling the Council to provide the services our communities have come to expect.

It should be noted that any change to the Off Street Parking Places Order requires the Council to follow a legal process which will incur substantial advertising costs. In addition further costs will be incurred from machine and signage changes if required. The order was last changed for implementation in March 2016.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

There are no Human Resource implications identified.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

It is essential that income is generated from off street parking operations in order to support and sustain other essential services.

## **EQUALITY/DIVERSITY**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for Parking Services.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

There is potential for any shortfall in income to impact on our ability to deliver our own corporate goals and meet service delivery expectations.

## **COMPLIANCE WITH POLICIES AND STRATEGIES**

Parking is operated in accordance with the provisions of the Road Traffic Act 1984, The Traffic Management Act 2004 and any other relevant legislation.

## **LEAD MEMBER & CAR PARK WORKING GROUP VIEWS**

**Councillor Hicks** – the appropriate management of our car parks plays an important role in supporting out town centres, tourism economy and quality of life for our residents. I am pleased that we will not be recommending an increase to our pay and display tariffs but support the modest increase to permits and reserved bay

charging as proposed as these charges have not been increased for more than 10 years.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The Council recognises the integral role that car parks play in providing essential parking facilities for our communities, visitors and local business. Equally, we must not under estimate the impact any net increase in service cost would have on other essential services.

The proposals in this report, if adopted as recommended will require changes to be advertised and made to the Off Street Parking Places Order.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- I. Consider the commentary and 3 recommendations contained within this report and decide if any, part or all of them should be accepted.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Consultations: Car Park Working Group  
Head of Paid Service  
Legal Services Manager and Interim Monitoring Officer  
Strategic Manager Resources

Contact Officer: Planning and Economy Manager

Background Papers: Notes of the Car Park Working Group and car park data.