

REPORT

SUBJECT: Proposals for the future provision of public car parks by MCC

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 6th July 2016

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: all

Note: A summary of consultation feedback is provided – appendix 3. The complete record of the consultation feedback (appendix 2) is available as hard copy upon request.

1. PURPOSE

To seek approval to advertise and implement a new car park order and implement other changes to the provision of public car parks by Monmouthshire County Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That members note the contents of the draft car park order and statement of reasons– appendices 1a, 1b, 1c and subsequent to the consultation exercise and feedback from the Economy and Development Select Committee, amend the order as follows:

2.1.1 That no charge be introduced for blue badge holders but that all other regulations apply (short stay, parking outside bays etc.)

2.1.2 That the current charging arrangements for Byefield Lane car Park, Abergavenny continue (i.e. that no daily charge be introduced but the Tuesday charge remains).

2.1.3 That the current charging and management arrangements for Welsh Street Car Park, Chepstow continue (i.e. that Welsh Street does not become a short stay car park and remains as a long stay car park).

2.1.4 That the offer of a 'free hour' parking in Chepstow short stay car parks and after 4.00 in Abergavenny be suspended until the financial implications of the new car park order (inclusive of the amendments listed above and capital investment demands) can be re-assessed to ascertain the affordability of the free hour offer.

2.1.5 That the 30 minute free spaces scheduled for introduction in Glendower Street car park, Monmouth be suspended again awaiting financial assessment.

2.2 Following amendment that the order be advertised and implementation commence following the statutory advertisement period (assuming no judicial challenge).

- 2.3 That the introduction of Electric vehicle (EV) charging points proceed (subject to future income analysis and affordability) in one car park in Abergavenny, Chepstow and Monmouth and that car park income revenue be used to create any capital investment required (if over and above the capital budgets recommended in 2.4 below)
- 2.5 That members acknowledge receipt of a petition titled ' Petition to prevent Monmouthshire County Council introducing daily parking fees at Byefield car park' – appendix 6
- 2.4 That capital budgets of (i) £250,000 for new car park ticket machines, (ii) £300,000 for improvements/refurbishment to existing car parks, EV points and signage be created and that these be funded by 'invest to save' using revenue generated through the new car park order and management regime (subject to Council approval of revised 2016/17 capital budget).
- 2.5 That the feasibility of a discounted car park charge for rail users parking in the Station Car Park, Chepstow be assessed and implemented.
- 2.6 That the asset, maintenance and management of Usk car parks be transferred to Usk Town Council (subject to 'claw back' arrangements should the car parks or any part thereof be required for some alternative use).
- 2.7 That Cabinet acknowledge the need and confirm that investigations continue into the provision of parking facilities for HGV and buses in and around our towns.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 In September 2014 Cabinet received a report on the future management of car parks. Some decisions were implemented (increase charges, development of new car parks) but to change the charging regime for all car parks requires the preparation and publication of a draft car parking order.
- 3.2 The draft car park order includes all changes to the car park management regime and is subject to statutory consultation. The consultation exercise took place in April of this year and the feedback (including a summary schedule) received is provided in appendix 2 and 3.
- 3.3 The feedback from the consultation exercise was scrutinized by the Economy and Development Select Committee on the 22nd April 2016.
Link to minutes:

<http://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/documents/g284/Printed%20minutes%2014th-Apr-2016%2010.00%20Economy%20and%20Development%20Select%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

The minutes reflect that members of the select committee showed particular concern about the impact of blue badge charging and asked Cabinet to give this due consideration when reviewing the outcome of the consultation exercise.

- 3.3 The reason behind the service review has been to better reflect the demands of the various communities and stakeholder groups whilst also providing a budget to sustain the service and create investment into the service infrastructure. The exercise has been protracted but the recommendations in this report will complete the exercise. It should be acknowledged that implementation will also take significant time and resource to implement.

4. REASONS

- 4.1 The proposals were developed after extensive consultation and research into priorities of various stakeholder groups. The need to modernise the car park equipment and the general condition of the car parks were also highlighted and incorporated into the financial modelling for the service. As a result of the consultation feedback and scrutiny by select committee Cabinet are now provided with recommendations for amendments to the draft order that recognise some of the major themes arising through the consultation exercise but that also include amendments that render the necessary investment demands affordable. The rationale behind the amendments is discussed below:

- 4.1.2 The draft order proposes the introduction of charges for blue badge holders. The proposal includes mitigation of an extra hour (for example three hours parking for the price of two). The consultation highlighted concern about affordability quoting evidence indicating that a larger proportion of disabled people are in poverty than within the general population. This was not tested out in the context of those disabled that have use of a car but generally scrutiny members seemed sympathetic.

Charging blue badge holders has been introduced in some other local authorities (evidenced in the select committee reports). However it is suggested that the authority does not proceed with charging blue badge holders at this time. There is a financial impact by taking this decision but it is feasible if other recommendations of amendments to the draft order (included in the recommendations discussed below) are also pursued.

- 4.1.3 The draft order proposes introducing a daily charge for Byefield Lane car park. Consultation highlighted that this is presently the only free car park (excluding Tuesdays) In Abergavenny so to introduce a daily charge would have a significant impact upon retail workers and others working within the town centre. Although it was recognised early on in the review that the demands of each town are different, the loss of any free parking provision is recognised as of major impact for part time, low paid workers. As such it is suggested that the car park charging remain as is i.e. free (excluding Tuesdays) and financial modelling be adjusted accordingly.

- 4.1.4 The draft order proposes that Welsh Street Car park is designated a short stay car park (i.e. parking for a maximum of 4 hours) but that the Drill Hall car park should have a reduced (long stay) daily charge of £1 to increase its usage and make it an attractive alternative for long stay parking when Welsh St becomes short stay. The consultation highlighted concern amongst workers that routinely use Welsh Street all day that the alternative long stay parking is too remote from their workplace. The exercise also generated feedback that the reduced charge in the Drill Hall would increase usage significantly rendering it more difficult to park for the local residents that rely upon the car park to provide off street parking to park, the outcome being the risk of greater congestion by increased on street parking. The feedback suggests that the assessment of long stay users in Welsh Street may have been underestimated so the proposal will create unanticipated parking problems. As such it is suggested that the order be revised that Welsh Street remains a long stay car park but in light of this amendment reducing pressure upon other long stay car parks that Drill Hall car park does become a £1 all day car park.
- 4.1.5 The draft order proposes a charge being introduced at the Station car park, Chepstow. Feedback indicated that the car park is widely used by train travellers and it would be unfortunate if public transport became less attractive to users due to the introduction of a charge for car parking. In discussion the feasibility of subsidised parking solely for rail users has been suggested. Therefore it is recommended that the order retains the charge but that officers investigate discounted parking for rail users parking in Station car park.
- 4.1.6 Some of the original proposals in the draft order, amongst others, create income which is used to invest back into the car park service. Following the consultation and in light of the recommendations above to amend the order, which will all reduce income, it is suggested that for the time being the free hour parking in Chepstow short stay car parks and in Abergavenny car parks after 4.00 p.m. also included in the draft order, are postponed until such time as the financial impact of the revised order is clear. Also that the proposed 30 minute free parking spaces in Glendower Street Car park, Monmouth do not proceed for the time being. A revised budget forecast to reflect the amendments is provided in appendix 4 but it should be emphasised that the actual outcome will obviously be affected by how motorists might change their travelling and parking arrangements so it would be prudent to assess this prior to introducing the new 'free parking' proposals which will further reduce revenue income.
- 4.1.7 The recommendations include the creation of budgets for reinvestment into the service infrastructure, particularly the pay and display machines, signage and essential repairs to the fabric (line markings surface conditions etc.). The need for investment is essential as the existing pay machine design is now obsolete. However the new machines will allow the various permutations on ticket selection now being offered to be easily managed and offer options to pay by card rather simply by cash. Similarly signage can be brought up to date and directional signage improved (one of the recommendations of the review). Furthermore EV points are recommended

for installation in one car park in each town (Abergavenny, Chepstow and Monmouth).

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS;

A forecast of the financial impact of the amended proposals is given in appendix 4 and includes a comparison to the original forecast that was first reported to the Economy and Development select Committee in July 2014. A summary of the resource implications is shown below highlighting a possible net benefit of £36,000 to the authority if proposals are approved.

Total New Commitments		Total Cash Savings/Benefits	
Loan For New Machines	30,000	Price Increases	156,312
Loan for Car Park Refurbishment	36,000	Introduction of New Charges	118,299
Loan For Granville/Rockfield Car Parks	50,000		
Historical Budget Deficit	110,000		
Free Spaces Glendower Street	12,000		
	238,000		274,611
		TOTAL NET BENEFIT	36,611

Members will note that the report recommends the creation of two capital budgets totalling £550,000 in 2016/17 that, if approved, will be reported to Council as an amendment to the Council's 2016/17 capital budget.

6. FUTURE GENERATIONS & EQUALITY ASSESSMENT:

An FGA assessment was presented to the Economy and Development Select committee in April 2016. This is replicated as appendix 6 as it remains relevant. However the FGA highlighted the impact upon the disabled of the introduction of a charge for parking for blue badge holders. If the recommendations of this report are approved then this negative impact will have been addressed by members.

SAFEGUARDING ASSESSMENT:

No risks arise in relation to safeguarding as a result of this report.

7. CONSULTEES:

SLT

Cabinet members

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Previous reports to Cabinet and the Economy and Development Select committee referenced within this report.

9. AUTHORS

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