



CABINET – 7 SEPTEMBER 2005

SETTING THE COST OF PARKING CLOCKS FOR PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2006 TO 31 DECEMBER 2006

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report sets out suggestions for the modification to the Council's existing Clock Parking Scheme and changes to the existing two hour short stay waiting restrictions.

2. LEADER'S COMMENTS

This next phase of our traffic management plans proposed expanding the clock scheme to cover on-street parking and to make more on-street parking available.

The proposal for a Shopper's Parking Clock is designed to encourage shoppers to use our village and town shops to help keep our villages vibrant, which is why we propose extending its use. The district-wide clock is aimed at motorists who use the village car parks for long-stay or all day parking and is less than half the price which commuters have to pay in neighbouring local authorities. It is hoped that employers who often refund employees' parking costs will consider green travel plans, public transport and car-share clubs for their employees, thus reducing demand on village and town car parks.

3. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS COMMENTS

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Existing Scheme

The Parking Clock Scheme is an integral tool in the management of the Council's Off Street Car Parks and has now been in operation since January 2004. Given the experience of operating the scheme for some 18 months it is opportune to consider whether or not any modifications should be considered. Overall the scheme has proved to be well used by the motorist with over 106000 clocks being sold since its inception. The scheme provides convenient parking for the motorists, assisting in the management of parking and provides an income to maintaining services.

4.1.1 Comments on Working of Existing Scheme.

On 19 January the Economy and Planning Review Panel considered a report, which reviewed the clock-parking scheme. In the summary of the report the following observations were made:

"There appears to be an improvement in the turnover of many town centre short stay car parks. This creates more parking opportunities. However there are some car parks where this has not happened and this needs to be followed up to try and improve compliance rates. There has

been little impact on long stay parking, there is probably a combination of reasons for this including, the lack of alternative public transport and the relatively low cost of the clock.“

4.1.2 Comments on Observations made in Review Panel Report

In order to try and encourage a consistent improvement in Town Centre short stay car parks wardening procedures have been amended. The main aspect of this being an increased emphasis on random number plate surveys to check that Clocks are being correctly set. However, this does not address the problem of turnover and the capacity problems being experienced in many long stay car parks, this is particularly the case in Ringwood and Lymington.

4.1.3 Cost of Parking Clocks Compared with permits/Clocks issued by adjacent Local Authorities.

Table Setting Out Comparative Costs

NFDC 2005	CHRISTCHURCH	WEST DORSET	EAST DORSET	SOUTHAMPTON	TEST VALLEY
£6.00	£62 (Shoppers) £180 / £299 Full	£16 Clock (6 months limited Car Parks) £175 Full	£185.00 Full £37 short stay	£1500 / £1850	£530 per annum named Car Park only

The above table indicates that the cost of parking, particularly long stay, is much higher elsewhere and may be considered as a possible reason why turnover in long stay car parks has not altered since the inception of the clock scheme. Long stay car parks in the District seem particularly attractive to commuters, particularly when the cost of parking in neighbouring areas is considered.

4.1.4 Representations have been received by Community Centres and some businesses indicating that a 2 hour short stay period gives inadequate time to attend activities in the Centres or undertake all necessary activities required during a shopping visit. The Council recognises this but is also concerned that a turnover of vehicles is maintained. This is important in light of the extremely high occupancy rates of short stay car parks. However the problems being experienced by some organisations are recognised and it is therefore considered reasonable to change the maximum waiting period in all two-hour car parks to 3 hours. The turnover in the car parks will be monitored and if there is an adverse impact, the ratio of Long to Short stay spaces could be reviewed.

5. SUGGESTIONS FOR REVISION OF EXISTING CLOCK SCHEME.

5.1 There appear to be three key objectives in considering amendments to the scheme. They are:

- To maintain the financial viability of our Town/Village Centres.
- Encourage a turnover of vehicles in our car parks and provide as many parking opportunities as possible.
- Set charges and regulations, for long stay parking that will encourage individuals to consider not using their own cars for commuting, but, at the same time, not be overburdening on those who have no choice but to travel by car.

5.2 Set out below is a suggested revision to the existing scheme that should help meet the objectives set out in 5.1

5.2.1 Two Classes of Clocks to be issued,

- **A Shopper's Clock** giving a maximum 3 hours parking in any Town /Village car park currently covered by the existing Scheme. The cost of this clock to be £8 for period 1/1/2006 to 31/12/2006. If used everyday it offers 3 hours parking at under 2 pence a day. A charge set at this level is not expected to discourage people from making use of Local Shops and facilities.
- **District Wide Clock** covering Town Car Parks (long and short stay) and Amenity Car Parks. The cost of this needs to be set at a level that reflects it's value, makes motorists consider alternative transport but, not at a level that is unreasonable for those who work in our Towns/Villages. Setting the cost of the Clock at £80 per annum would meet these requirements and it is substantially below the charge levied by neighbouring Councils. To assist those who might find the full amount difficult to raise, it is suggested that a District Wide Clock valid for a 6 months period, (1Jan to 30 June or 1 July to 31 December) be made available at a cost of £44.

5.2.2 Administration of Clock Scheme

- The suggested new scheme would be administered in the same way as the existing one.

5.2.3 Seasonal Amenity Car Park Permits

- Seasonal Amenity Permits will continue to be made available if the suggested changes to the Clock scheme are implemented. Cabinet may wish to consider the below mentioned charging structure and whether or not Amenity Permits should only be available to residents and those who pay Council Tax within the District. Members may wish to bear in mind that beach hut owners do pay Council Tax on their hut. Last year some 1892 residents permits were sold and 90 non residents.

Suggested Amenity Car Park Permit Charges

Residents -1 Registration No	£45
Non-Residents -1 Registration .No	£50
Additional Registration Number (permit –max 2 vehicles)	£6
Replacement Permit	£6

6. HYTHE FERRY

- 6.1 Hythe Ferry provides an important transport link giving an alternative to using the already congested A326 and approach roads to Southampton. In order to help maintain this link, special arrangements for Hythe will be needed. This could be in the form of a reduced rate "Ferry Users" long stay clock. Before any final arrangements were made consultations would need to take place with the ferry operator and Hythe and Dibden Parish Council.

7. OVERALL DEVELOPMENT OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

- 7.1 The suggested changes to the Clock Scheme set out in this report fit in with the overall objectives by
- making better use of existing facilities,
 - help maintain the viability of our Town centres,
 - sets the cost of long stay parking at a level which may make motorists consider alternatives to commuting in individual cars.
- 7.2 The Council will be well placed to address any significant parking problems, as it takes over responsibility for the enforcement of on street waiting regulations on 2 January 2006.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 As with the introduction of any new scheme there are risks that all concerned need to be aware of and consideration given to how these risks are managed.
- The impact of the scheme on motorists parking patterns cannot be precisely measured. As previously stated in this report the Council is well placed to deal with any problems that arise because it takes over responsibility for enforcement of on street regulations on 2 January 2006.
 - There is a risk that income projections may not reflect the actual position but the risk is negated by the fact that if a clock is not purchased then pay and display income will increase.
 - The timetable for the decision making process is very tight. Delays could make it necessary to order clocks/signs etc at short notices possibly incurring additional costs.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The scheme suggested in Section 5 of this report should help protect the viability of our Town centres at the same time as making motorists consider car sharing or alternative forms of transport to the car.

11. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION

11.1 Given that in excess of 60,000 clocks and 1800 amenity permits will be sold for year 2005 it is reasonable to assume the following sales under the suggested new scheme.

45,000 short stay clocks	£306,400
5,000 District wide clocks	£340,400
2000 half year District wide	£74,900

The above gives a Total Income of £721,700, which compares to a budgeted income from clocks of £332,200 for year 2005. The Introduction of a District wide Clock may result in a small reduction in the sale of Amenity Clocks in the region of possibly £30,000 pa

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 The suggested scheme set out in Section 5 of this report builds on the existing scheme,

- Provides for a “shoppers” clock, which is convenient and priced at a level that should not discourage people from coming into our Towns/Villages.
- The extending of the short stay waiting limits from 2 to 3 hours should address the concerns of Community Centres and businesses, which are concerned about the detrimental effects that a two-hour restriction is having on their activities.
- The suggested District wide Clock provides the holder with access to all Council Off Street Parking facilities with no further payment , this includes all long-stay, short-stay and amenity car parks .
- The Amenity Seasonal Permit will remain available.
- The risks involved have been assessed and consideration given to how these can be overcome.

13. RECOMMENDATION

13.1 That the Cabinet recommend to Council that officers be authorised to take the appropriate steps laid down in the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) Regulations to advertise amendments to the District Of New Forest (Off-Street) Parking Order to implement the suggested clock scheme as set out in section 5.2.1 of this report and to change the maximum waiting period in all 2 hour short stay car parks to 3 hours.

13.2 That Cabinet give consideration to the suggested charges and changes for Amenity Permits as set out in 5.2.3. Following this Cabinet recommend to Council that officers be authorised to take the appropriate steps laid down in the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) Regulations to amend the District Of New Forest (Off-Street) Parking Order to reflect the recommendation.

13.3 Consultation be undertaken with the Hythe Ferry owners and Hythe and Dibden Parish Council with a view to establishing special arrangements for Hythe Ferry users. This will be in relation to providing a clock system/cost that continues to ensure the Ferry is an attractive alternative to commuting to Southampton by car.

For Further Information:

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Background Papers:

None