

OPTIONS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF ON STREET PARKING CHARGES

1. BACKGROUND TO REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out options for the introduction of On Street Parking Charges following the Review Panel's consideration of the issue on 15 November 2006 and in support of the District Council's Traffic Management Strategy. There are no statutory obligations to introduce on-street charges. On street charges are essentially a traffic management measure to try and improve compliance with waiting restrictions and increase the turnover of parked vehicles.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Providing convenient parking is a key factor in maintaining the economic viability of Town Centres. In order to achieve this effective use of existing parking facilities must be made. Given economic, land use and environmental pressures there is little likelihood of significant additional parking being provided. The provision of on street parking plays an important part in overall parking provision.
- 2.2 Any decision to introduce on street charging would need to be jointly taken with Hampshire County Council and full consultations undertaken with local councils and numerous interested groups, such as Chambers of Commerce and Business Organisations.

3. BENEFITS THAT CHARGING BRINGS TO THE ON STREET ENFORCEMENT PROCESS

- 3.1 Charging for parking in strategically located on street parking bays can have the following benefits:
- Improve waiting regulation compliance.
 - Make enforcement of regulations more effective and self financing.
 - Influence demand between on and off street parking.
 - Influence the length of stay and parking turnover. Reducing the length of stay will increase the number of parking opportunities for those wishing to visit Town Centres.
 - Contribute towards the cost of enforcing on street parking regulations.

4. WHICH LOCATIONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED?

- 4.1 Given the scale and complexity of the project the assumption has been made that:-
- That consideration at this stage will only be given to the introduction of on street charges in three key towns where it is felt that traffic congestion and pressure on parking is greatest. These locations being Lymington, New Milton, Ringwood.

- That the areas of greatest parking pressure are in the core commercial/shopping areas where parking is already regulated by on street designated parking bays which are free of charge. The majority are restricted to a maximum stay of one-hour. There are some exceptions to this depending on particular circumstances. Appendix 1 sets out the suggested areas which could be considered for charging. These locations may well alter after consultations have been undertaken.

5. TARIFF STRUCTURE

- 5.1 In order for any on street scheme to be successful careful consideration has to be given to the tariff structure and waiting times. In order to encourage the use of off street car parks and a good turnover of vehicles on street the tariffs should provide motorists with the ability to purchase parking for short intervals. For example ½ hour with longer periods set at a charge higher.

The key consideration in setting charges is to encourage short stay parking and the use of off street car parks. Set out below are some options for consideration.

OPTION A	
Up to:	£
30 Mins	60p
1 Hour	£2.00
2 Hours	£3.00

OPTION B	
Up to:	£
30 Mins	60p
1 Hour	£1.20
2 Hours	£3.00

OPTION C	
Up to:	£
30 Mins	60p
1 Hour	£1.50
2 Hours	£3.00

6. METHODS OF PAYMENT FOR ON STREET PARKING --OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION.

- 6.1 Option 1 - Pay and Display system only

The most widely used and understood method of charging for on street parking is through the use of “pay and display” parking. This is easy to use, accessible and allows for effective enforcement.

- 6.1.1 Set out in Appendix 2 are tables illustrating costs and payback periods for this option.

- 6.1.2 Consideration of Pay and Display only Option

From an operational and financial view point a simple pay and display system is the most straight forward to enforce and the most financially secure option. However, it does not provide any targeted concessions for residents or regular visitors and does not utilise the already well established Clock Scheme

6.1.3 The option of using Pay and Display as the only means of payment is not compatible with this Council's Traffic Management Strategy but it's inclusion in the report enables comparisons to be made and considered.

6.2 Option 2 - Combined Pay and Display and Existing Clock Scheme

The Dual Clock and Pay and Display system is well established and provides economic and convenient parking for residents and regular visitors and an easy to use pay and display system for non clock holders. To use clocks on street the clock scheme would need to be modified to accommodate the differing waiting periods.

6.2.1 Set out in Appendix 2 are tables illustrating costs and payback periods for this option

6.2.2 Consideration of Dual Clock/Pay and Display System.

A dual system provides an opportunity to utilise the well established clock parking scheme on street which would be convenient to the approximately 60,000 existing clock holders. It is unlikely that using the clock on street would generate any significant additional sales of clocks. A dual system would assist enforcement by having a visual display of the time vehicles arrived. The use of the clocks on street significantly reduces income generation potential and increases the pay back period.

6.3 Option 3 Payment solely by extension of Clock Scheme.

The Planning and Transportation Scrutiny Panel wished the cabinet to consider a scheme which only used an extension of the existing clock scheme. Such a scheme would restrict on street parking to clock holders only in the locations included in the scheme.

6.3.1 The Introduction of a clock only system would involve resigning all the areas involved at an approximate cost of £10,000 per town and making the necessary Parking Orders. Such a scheme may generate marginal additional clock income; however this may be negligible given the large number of residents that already hold parking clocks.

6.3.2 Consideration of a Clock Only system.

Visitors could be deterred from stopping in our Towns if they found that it was inconvenient or over complex to pay for parking. The availability of convenient on street parking is important to many local shops and businesses. An all clock scheme would mean that there would be no financial incentive for motorists to park for a short period and thus reduce the effectiveness of the scheme. An all clock scheme would encounter many of the problems found with the now rarely used voucher schemes, for example poorly understood by those from outside the locality, concerns about availability of clocks. The major advantages being there would be no need for meters to be placed on the streets and there is minimal capital outlay.

6.4 Option 4

If the Council believes that there should be more enforcement of on street waiting restrictions in permitted parking places then this could be achieved by increased patrolling of these locations. Inevitably this would lead to a change in patrol patterns with reduced patrolling in other areas.

6.5 Option 5

An option which is open to the Council is to maintain the status quo with consideration of setting dates for this matter to be reviewed.

7. NEW PARKING CONTROL SYSTEMS

7.1 Recent developments have seen the limited use of mobile phones and vehicle mounted individual electronic parking devices. These have a role to play in making parking more convenient and warrant further investigation. However, at the present time these are additions to more conventional systems of parking management rather than replacement systems.

8. CONSIDERATION OF PHASED INTRODUCTION

8.1 On street charging is new to the District and it is not possible to predict precisely what driver reaction will be; it may be prudent to consider a staggered introduction of on street charging. Lymington appears to have the greatest pressures on parking and the most positive financial position. An option which can be considered is that On Street charges be introduced as a pilot in Lymington and rolled out into Ringwood and New Milton pending the experienced gained in Lymington.

9. AREAS OF CONCERN

9.1. Environment-Street Clutter

The environment of all Town Centres is important and particularly sensitive in conservation areas. Signing must be at a level to inform motorists and be compliant with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002.

The areas in which charging is likely to be considered are already covered by parking regulations which require signage. The design of any signage would need to be undertaken in a sensitive manner with due regard to the environment. The design and appearance of parking meters has greatly improved over the years with the size of the machine becoming increasingly smaller. If the clock scheme is extended for use on street it may well be possible to reduce the number of meters required.

9.2 Traders concerns are that it may discourage customers

Naturally traders will be concerned at any developments which they feel may be prejudicial to their business. Experience in Winchester suggests that the introduction of reasonable on street charges did not result in a reduction of the numbers of vehicles parked but improved compliance with regulations and created additional parking opportunities. Eastleigh have only recently introduced on street charges, their expectation is that there is likely to be an initial reduction in occupancy levels but within a comparatively short period of time occupancy will return to pre charging levels. It is reasonable to assume there may be some initial consumer resistance when a charging scheme is introduced but this is likely to be short term. Experience of introducing charging in off street car parks confirms this. If this Council's Clock scheme is extended to on street use any initial resistance may be reduced as residents are likely to already have a clock.

9.3 Charging may result in the displacement of parked vehicles to undesirable locations

When considering the problem of displacement it is important to bear in mind that charging is only being considered in existing short stay designated bays and these are situated within regulated town centres where there is little opportunity for alternative on street parking.

10. ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL PROCESS.

10.1 The administrative and legal processes required in introducing on street charging should not be underestimated, particularly if the clock scheme is involved. Traffic Orders will have to be made and agreement reached with the Department of Transport concerning signing. The Parking Adjudication Service will need to be requested to extend clock contraventions to On Street locations.

11. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

11.1 There are two distinct stages to this process, the first is informal consultation to help the Council formulate its policy, and the second is a formal statutory consultation that has to be undertaken during the order making process. The informal consultation needs to encompass as wide a group of people as possible. The details of any consultation process will need to be carefully considered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation.

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Appendix 2 sets out the financial details of options involving the use of ticket machines. A one off Capital bid of £127500 (all 3 towns) or £48500 (Lymington only) would need to be made if ticket machines are to be installed. Revenue provision would have to be made to cover the pay back periods set out in Appendix 2. An all clock scheme would require a one off cost in the region of £12,500 per town; it is unlikely that such a scheme would generate any significant additional income. All financial information given in this report must be considered as provisional as actual costs and will not be available until a decision

on which option should be followed is made and tenders sought. If a surplus is made in the "on Street" parking account it can only be used for transportation related matters and with the agreement of the Highway Authority.

13. SUMMARY

- 13.1 The introduction of on street charging can play an important role in traffic management by gaining better utilisation of scarce parking spaces allowing more people to park. The use of some form of timed ticket whether that is a pay and display ticket or a clock does improve enforcement and compliance. Comprehensive consultations need to be undertaken with various interested groups and individuals. Particular note should be taken of environmental and economic concerns.

There are a number of options to consider and a balance needs to be struck between traffic management, economic, environmental and consumer issues.

- 13.2 The Traffic Management Act 2004

The Government has indicated that new Regulations Concerning Local Authority enforcement of Traffic Regulations will come into force on 1 April 2008. The regulations change the procedures under which the Council enforces Traffic Regulation Orders and give responsibility for the enforcement of additional contraventions such as parking on Zig Zag lines and double parking.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 Better waiting restriction compliance and the encouragement of short stay parking should provide additional parking opportunities in town centres, without using additional land space for the parking of cars. This assists in maintaining the economic vitality of town centres. However, charging on street does require signage and parking meters to be installed. This can be done sensitively to reduce the visual impact. Given many Town and City centres have meters within environmentally sensitive areas I am sure this issue can be resolved.

15. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

- 15.1 The only practical charging option is the combined clock/ticket scheme (Option 2). The financial implications for the Council of this Option are very fragile, largely because it is anticipated (but not stated in this Report) that 70% of parking acts will occur with drivers using their existing clocks. Charging will however give a greater degree of compliance with restrictions and parking turnover rates will increase. However, even the latter maybe a tough target, as (according to surveys of on-street parking reported to the Economy and Planning Review Panel 15 November 2006, Item C, Appendix 1(B)1, p13) already 60-70% of on-street parking acts are for 30 minutes or less (taking the two Lympington streets as an example).

- 15.2 Bearing in mind the estimated longer payback periods for Ringwood and New Milton, the Portfolio Holder recommends that Option 2(b) be progressed but **only** in Lymington for a trial period. The trial must test whether (i) the payback period looks like being 1-2 years, (ii) that compliance is improved, and (iii) the number of 30 minute parking acts increases.

16. RECOMMENDATION

- 16.1 That Cabinet consider the options set out in Sections 5 and 6 which, if any, should be subject to consultation with the Highway Authority, and local organisations. If Cabinet believe that consultations should take place concerning the introduction of on street charging they may wish to particularly consider whether a pilot scheme should be set up in one town.

Further Information:

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Background Papers

Published documents

4. STREETS CONSIDERED FOR ON STREET CHARGES

LYMINGTON

High Street

Emsworth Road

RINGWOOD

Market Place

Southampton Road

NEW MILTON

Elm Avenue

Station Road (part)

Whitefield Road

Spencer Road (part)

Gore Road

Appendix 2 (1)

Provisional cost of introducing on street charging prior to detailed scheme:

Assume life for machines: 5 years.

			Capital £	Revenue £
<u>Lymington</u>				
Machines	12	£2,400 per machine	28,800	
Installation		£600 per machine	7,200	
Signage		(inc installation)	10,000	
Order Advertising			2,500	
Depreciation of machines				5,760
5 year maintenance contract		£500 per machine		6,000
Cash Collection				7,287
Annual cost				19,047
One off first year cost			48,500	
<u>Ringwood</u>				
Machines	6	£2,400 per machine	14,400	
Installation		£600 per machine	3,600	
Signage		(inc installation)	10,000	
Order Advertising			2,500	
Depreciation of machines				2,880
5 year maintenance contract		£500 per machine		3,000
Cash Collection				3,644
Annual cost				9,524
One off first year cost			30,500	
<u>New Milton</u>				
Machines	12	£2,400 per machine	28,800	
Installation		£600 per machine	7,200	
Signage		(inc installation)	10,000	
Order Advertising			2,500	
Depreciation of machines				5,760
5 year maintenance contract		£500 per machine		6,000
Cash Collection				7,287
Annual cost				19,047
One off first year cost			48,500	

Note:

The interest lost on the initial capital outlay would impact on the payback period - not reflected in the figures above.

Appendix 2 (2)

Provisional pay back period prior to detailed scheme:

	Capital cost £	Net revenue surplus per year £	Pay back period in years
<u>Lymington</u>			
Meters Only	19,700	128,530	0.15
Meters&Clocks	19,700	25,226	0.78
<u>Ringwood</u>			
Meters Only	16,100	44,739	0.36
Meters&Clocks	16,100	6,755	2.38
<u>New Milton</u>			
Meters Only	19,700	67,165	0.29
Meters&Clocks	19,700	6,816	2.89
<u>All 3 Areas</u>			
Meters Only	55,500	240,433	0.23
Meters&Clocks	55,500	38,798	1.43

Notes:

The capital cost excludes the purchase of the machines as this is allowed for in the on-going annual depreciation figure.
The 'Net revenue surplus per year' is derived from total anticipated income from meters less the annual revenue costs.