

CONSIDERATION OF INTRODUCTION OF ON STREET PARKING CHARGES IN LYMINGTON

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Consideration of the introduction of on street charging as a means of better managing traffic forms part of this Council's Traffic Management Plan which was agreed by Cabinet on the 16 December 2006. As a result investigations have taken place to ascertain if proposals for the introduction of on street charges in Lyminster should be put before Cabinet.
- 1.2 The key objectives when considering the introduction of on street charging are:
- That it makes a significant and positive contribution to traffic management by increasing the number of parking opportunities available and reducing congestion.
 - That it does not have a detrimental effect on the commercial viability of the Town or its environment.

2. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

- 2.1 Observations on existing parking patterns/Compliance rates

Consultants undertook a survey in 2007 and revealed that:

Vehicles overstaying the 1 hour limit:	182	17%
Vehicles only observed on one 20 minute patrol:	475	43%
Vehicles observed on two 20 minute patrols:	245	23%
Vehicles observed on three 20 minute patrols:	190	17%
Total number of parking acts observed:	1092	

The above pattern is confirmed by an early survey undertaken in 2006 which indicated that approximately 69% of vehicles stayed up to 30 minutes and 15% of vehicles stayed beyond the one hour limit.

3. COMMENT ON OBSERVATIONS ON EXISTING PARKING PATTERNS AND CONSULTANTS CONSIDERATION OF EFFECT OF CHARGES.

- 3.1 The consultants felt that present non-compliance rates were broadly, as they would expect with the type of regulations in force and free parking. They made a conservative prediction that if charges were introduced a 15% non compliant rate should be assumed although it was hoped this could be lower. The difference between existing non compliance rates and those after the introduction of charges seem very small and would make only a marginal difference.

4. CONCERNS OF LOCAL GROUPS.

4.1 Local Groups including the Chamber of Trade and Town Council have expressed grave concerns about the introduction of on street charging. The concerns centre on the belief that the proposals will discourage people from using local shops and businesses and that necessary infrastructure, signs / ticket machines will have an adverse visual impact on the Town's environment.

5. USE OF VOUCHERS

5.1 A suggestion has been put forward that a voucher scheme be introduced similar to that which operates in Chichester. The major advantage of such a scheme is that it requires fewer infrastructures (no ticket machines required) which are environmentally desirable. There is however, some major concerns relating to voucher schemes, which include,

- How to ensure that a selling outlet is available and open within a reasonable distance from a parking place during all of the period that regulations are in force. It would be extremely difficult to rebut an appeal against a Penalty Charge Notice if a motorist could not purchase a voucher a short distance from where their vehicle was parked.
- The scheme is unusual and would be difficult for visitors to understand.
- The non compliance rate is likely to be higher than that set out in 3.1 where a conventional pay and display system is considered.

6. THE DISTRICT COUNCIL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

6.1 Aim H – To set and review on and off street parking charges that are compatible with other strategy aims.

6.2 Policies

H 1 - To regularly review the charges for on and off street parking with the aim of:

- Influencing supply and demand for spaces
- Influencing demand as between charged on-street parking and off-street parking
- Influencing the length of stay and parking turnover
- Meeting the costs associated with decriminalised parking enforcement, transport/traffic/street management and CCTV related services and projects
- Complying with Local Authority Circular 1/95 (Decriminalised Parking Enforcement Outside London). This circular has been superseded by Traffic Management Act 2004 and its associated Statutory Instruments/Guidance Notes.
- Having a significant degree of local acceptability

6.3 Comments on Management Plan Aims

- Influencing supply and demand for spaces – Given the relatively small increase in compliance that can be expected if charging is introduced together with survey information that suggests that 75% of those who park in Lymington High Street do so for approximately 40 minutes or less at the present time, it is unlikely that the introduction of charging will create a significant number of additional parking opportunities. Charging may influence the choice of mode (car, walking, public transport etc.) but is also likely to displace parking to areas within walking distance of the town centre
- Influencing demand as between charged on-street parking and off-street parking – As off street car parks are currently well used there would be no benefit in seeking to displace on street parking into off street car parks.
- Influencing the length of stay and parking turnover - the time restrictions ensure there is satisfactory turnover, charging is unlikely to influence this any more effectively than the current restrictions do.
- Meeting the costs associated with decriminalised parking enforcement, transport/traffic/street management related services and projects - The on street parking proposals considered would create some surplus income in the medium term but as the operating cost are high it would not be significant.
- Complying with Local Authority Circular 1/95 (Decriminalised Parking Enforcement outside London) – Any proposal would need to comply with particular attention to signing and availability of payment points. It is likely that this will conflict with environmental considerations.
- Having a significant degree of local acceptability – The on street parking proposals considered are not acceptable to either The Chamber of Commerce and the Town Council so this aim is not met.

7. FUTURE PROVISION

- 7.1 The Council recognise the importance of parking provision in maintaining the environment and economy of Lymington. In recognition of this the Council is in the process of commissioning a study to consider how to manage parking in future years in a way that supports the economy of the town and at the same time has as little adverse effect on the environment as possible.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The advice received is that in Lymington, on the basis that the clock scheme will operate on street, it will take approximately two years to pay back the costs involved in setting up the system and over a five year period a surplus of around £67,000 could be expected.
- 8.2 Not proceeding with the introduction of on street charging will have no effect on existing budgets.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The introduction of on street charges may create a small increase in the availability of parking, however, the possible detriment to the economic viability and the physical environment of the town outweigh the marginal benefits gained.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS/ EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 None.

11. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS COMMENTS

- 11.1 "After careful research and objective analyses, it is clear that the Traffic Management advantages over the present system originally anticipated for on-street charging are not likely to be achieved. Furthermore, if the existing clock is used for on-street parking as well as pay-and-display, the cost implications look difficult to justify. I therefore agree with the recommendation of this Report".

12. RECOMMENDATION

- 12.1 The traffic management benefits of introducing on street charges appear to be marginal; these need to be balanced against the concerns raised by local groups and the inevitable disruption that would be caused by their introduction. Given this it is recommended that the Council do not request that the Highway Authority (Hampshire County Council) to consider the implementation of on street charging in Lymington at the present time.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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BACKGROUND PAPERS