

COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES, LEADER	STRONG LEADER DECISION REPORT 20 FEBRUARY 2017 CAR PARKING CHARGES BUDGET SAVINGS OPTIONS – TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS
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Councillor Phil Davies said:

“These proposals were put forward in an attempt to help us achieve £45 million in savings without cutting back on the services which people most rely on.

“I have visited businesses all over the borough, and I have been speaking to residents every day and it was clear to me almost immediately that the unintended negative consequences these proposals would bring to local traders and the local economy far outweighed the benefits.

“I am pleased and relieved we have been able to withdraw the original proposals. I’d like to thank every business and resident who took the time to get in touch with us.”

REPORT SUMMARY

This report considers objections submitted against the Traffic Regulation Order consulted upon in respect of the following proposed car parking charges budget savings options:

- Option 1: Increase car parking tariffs at all council operated car parks by 50p
- Option 2: Introduce car parking charges in country parks with a suggested flat rate tariff of £4.00 (Arrowe Country Park, Royden Country Park, Eastham Country Park and Thurstaston Country Park)
- Option 3: Introduce car parking charges in New Brighton and other town centre areas. (Forth Perch Rock car park / Marine Promenade, Birkenhead Park and on-street in town centre locations such as West Kirby, Hoylake, Heswall, Liscard, Bromborough, Bebington, Irby, Upton and Moreton).

The report recommends approval of a revised set of proposals taking into account the high levels of objections to the published proposals.

The Wirral Plan 2020 pledge relevant to this report, and to the parking service area, is Pledge Thirteen: Transport and Technology Infrastructure fit for the future, and the

proposal supports the Transport Strategy priority to keep traffic moving safely and efficiently.

This matter affects all wards within the Borough.

This is a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Leader of the Council is recommended to:

- i. Note the report and the objections received to the published Traffic Regulation Order consultation.
- ii. Increase car parking tariffs at all council operated car parks, where charges already apply, by 20p
- iii. Introduce car parking charges in country parks with charges of 50p for 1 hour, £1 for 2 hours and £2 all day in Arrove Country Park, Royden Country Park, Eastham Country Park and Thurstaston Country Park
- iv. Withdraw the published proposals to introduce parking charges at Birkenhead Park, New Brighton and other town/villages centre locations at West Kirby, Hoylake, Heswall, Liscard, Bromborough, Bebington, Irby, Upton and Moreton.
- v. Refer the revised proposals to Council for endorsement, including approval of the budget implications which result.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 A budget proposal to increase parking tariffs at existing sites and introduce car parking charges at various country park sites to increase income from car parking has been put forward to assist the Council to manage the pressures in a planned way not only to meet the legal requirements for a balanced Budget for 2017/18 but also contribute towards addressing the forecast funding gap over the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 – 2020/21, in order to continue to fund high quality transport services.
- 1.2 The Constitution makes provision for the consideration of objections to TROs through the Highways and Traffic Representation Panel, as appointed by the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The latter Committee would then make a recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure after consideration of the Panel's findings. In this circumstance, with a high number of objections and the need to resolve the budget implications without delay, the consideration of the objections to the TRO is being undertaken directly by the Leader of the Council.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The published TRO proposals and the revised proposals set out in this report are the options which have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 On 8 December 2016 Cabinet agreed a report 'Medium Term Financial Strategy and Council Budget 2017/18' which outlined proposals for increasing income from car parking charges. The proposals included a 50p increase in tariffs across the borough and proposals to introduce charges at some currently free car parks and parking areas. [Minute 71 refers].
- 3.2 On 24 January 2017 details of the 2017/18 Budget Savings Proposals for Car Parking Charges was presented at the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee. [Minute 50 refers]. It was resolved: *This Committee requests officers to develop a full report which considers the impact on small businesses, traffic and the wider community to enable Councillors to fully scrutinise all aspects of the affects which may occur in an increase or implementation of parking charges.*
- 3.3 In order to implement car parking charges the Council has been undertaking consultation as part of the required Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process.

4.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The initial statutory advertising process for the TRO proposals included publication of notices at all sites affected by the proposals and in the press on 18th January 2017 with an objection period from 18th January 2017 to 10th February 2017. All Party Spokespersons and Ward Councillors were informed.
- 4.2 During the formal consultation exercise the following numbers of objections have been received:
- i. 8552 people signed an on-line and paper petition objecting to car parking charges in the country parks. In addition there are 2389 individual comments from signatories
 - ii. 2472 people signed an on-line and paper petition objecting to car parking charges in Hoylake
 - iii. 2450 people signed an on-line and paper petition objecting to car parking charges in Bromborough
 - iv. 3735 people signed an on-line and paper petition objecting to car parking charges in Moreton
 - v. 4026 people signed an on-line and paper petition objecting to car parking charges in the Bromborough / Eastham and Eastham Country Park areas
 - vi. 4011 people signed an on-line and paper petition objecting to car parking charges in New Brighton area including Fort Perch Rock car park. In addition there are 1202 individual comments from signatories
 - vii. 3268 people signed a petition objecting to car parking charges in Royden Park
 - viii. Over 700 individual objections (via letter or email) to all of the car parking charges budget proposals.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 A separate bid to the Capital Programme has been prepared for £80,000 to pay for the supply and installation of Pay and Display equipment and implementation of a cashless parking system, also known as phone to park.
- 5.2 The revenue implications of the revised proposals are set out in the Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2017/18 report to this meeting of Cabinet [Agenda item 6A].

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council follows statutory processes to consult upon and implement this type of proposal.
- 6.2 The management of traffic is a statutory duty for the Council.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

7.1 Existing staff resources would be utilised in the progression and implementation of these proposals.

8.0 RELEVANT RISKS

8.1 Increasing charges at existing locations may result in customers being lost to private car parking operations and a reduction in parking visits.

8.2 Introducing charges at country parks may result in reduced visitor numbers to the country parks affecting the economy of the visitor centres and cafes. The proposals may impact on the numbers of people who join the parks friends and volunteer groups.

8.3 Not implementing these revised proposals at all will require alternative budget savings proposals to offset the budget saving in 2017/18 from income which will not be achieved.

9.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

9.1 As part of the TRO consultation exercise for these proposals Notices were erected at the sites and a public notice was also formally advertised in the local press. In addition consultation was undertaken with Party Spokespersons and Ward Councillors.

10.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review is attached – <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-regeneration-envir>

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Information from the petitioners/objectors has been used in the preparation of this report, and is held by the report author.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee	24 January 2017
Cabinet – Medium Term Financial Strategy and Council Budget 2017/2018	8 December 2016