



**COUNCILLOR
STUART WHITTINGHAM**

CABINET
19 JUNE 2017

**CAR PARKING CHARGES TRAFFIC
REGULATION ORDER - CONSIDERATION
OF FURTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

Councillor Stuart Whittingham said:

“These proposals have been put forward as part of the plan to help us achieve £45 million in savings without cutting back on the services which people most rely on.

A key area of concern has been the possible impact on the local residents and businesses that rely on the use of our parks on a daily basis and we are looking to introduce a household membership scheme that will equate to a cost of £1 a week in response to this.

It is important that we properly consider these further representations received and I would like to thank everyone for their comments, however I am satisfied that all important points have been taken into account and the Council should now press ahead with implementing these proposals as quickly as possible.”

REPORT SUMMARY

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

- Increase car parking tariffs at all council operated car parks by 20p
- Introduce car parking charges in country parks with charges of 50p for 1 hour, £1 for 2 hours and £2 all day in Arrowe Country Park, Royden Country Park, Eastham Country Park and Thurstaston Country Park

The report recommends approval of a revised set of proposals taking into account the representations received to the modified 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 and is a Key Decision included on the Council's Forward Plan.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Cabinet is requested to:

- i. Note the report and the objections received to the modified charges and published Traffic Regulation Order consultation;
- ii. Approve the increase in car parking tariffs at all Council operated car parks, where charges already apply, by 20p;
- iii. Approve the introduction of car parking charges in country parks with charges of 50p for 1 hour, £1 for 2 hours and £2 all day in Arrowe Country Park, Royden Country Park, Eastham Country Park and Thurstaston Country Park;
- iv. Approve the introduction of a household membership scheme for the use of the country parks in (iii) at a cost of £50 per annum;
- v. Approve and confirm the draft Traffic Regulation Order appended to this report giving effect to (ii) to (iv) above.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 These proposals are part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy approved by the Council in March 2017 which has the key purpose of ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council and the continued funding of high quality transport related services.
- 1.2 Under the Traffic Orders Procedure Regulations there is an important requirement to give notice to persons affected of any modifications to the proposed Traffic Regulation Order that was subject to initial statutory consultation. There is also a requirement to give due consideration to any further representations received during this final stage of the process before the Order is made and implemented, hence this requires a further Executive Decision by the Council.
- 1.3 The annual membership scheme involving the issue of permits on a household basis for the use of the country park car parks will significantly reduce the cost and increase the convenience for regular users of these sites.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The initial TRO proposals which formed the basis of the assumptions in the Financial Strategy report to Cabinet in December 2016 and subsequent formal consultation in January 2017 were rejected because of their potential adverse impact on local traders and the local economy.
- 2.2 If the proposals in this report are not implemented then this will result in a deficit in the Council's approved financial plan for 2017/18 of £370,000 which would need to be covered by compensatory savings or income from other service areas.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In order to implement car parking charges the Council has undertaken consultation as part of the required Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process.
- 3.2 With a high number of objections (30,000 plus signature petitions and over 700 individual objections) to the original proposals and the need to resolve the budget implications without delay, the consideration of the objections to the TRO was undertaken directly by the Leader of the Council.
- 3.3 After consideration of the objections, in a Strong Leader Decision Report of 20th February 2017 the Leader resolved that:
 - Car parking tariffs at all Council operated car parks, where charges already apply, be increased by 20p (reduced from the original 50p increase); and

- Car parking charges be introduced in country parks with charges of 50p for 1 hour, £1 for 2 hours and £2 all day in Arrowe County Park, Royden Park, Eastham Country Park and Thurstaston Country Park (reduced from the original flat rate fee of £4)

3.4 This decision was called-in and a special meeting of the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee was held on Monday, 13th March 2017 [Minute 60 refers].

3.5 After considering representations from a number of witnesses and debating the matter in detail, the Committee upheld the decision taken by the Leader of the Council in respect of the car parking charges budget savings options – Traffic Regulation Orders. It is also important to note that this matter was debated at an Extraordinary Council meeting dedicated to this matter on 6th March 2017 [Minute 119 refers].

3.6 Once this decision was confirmed, officers proceeded with publishing the amended proposals via a Modification Order in accordance with the statutory process.

4.0 RESPONSE TO PUBLICATION OF MODIFIED ORDER AND OFFICER COMMENTS

4.1 Even though the proposals have been reduced from those originally consulted on back in January 2017, there is still an important requirement of the statutory process to give notice to inform persons affected of the modifications and give due consideration to any further representations received.

4.2 Notices were erected at the sites and a public notice was also formally advertised in the local press on 8th March 2017. During this formal notice period the following further representations have been received:

- i. 141 individual representations (via letter or email) to all of the modified car parking charges budget proposals.
- ii. 16 of the individual representations included specific traffic management concerns. The general concern is of the traffic impact in other areas, displaced parking in to adjacent roads, traffic congestion, blocked access, dangerous parking, road safety concerns, conflict and inconvenience with residents.

4.3 On detailed assessment, officers are satisfied that there are no fundamentally different or new points being raised that have not already been considered hence it is recommended that authority is given to implement these proposals without further delay. All representations have been made available to members of the Cabinet in advance of the meeting.

5.0 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SCHEME

5.1 During this process a key area of concern has been in relation to the local residents and corresponding businesses that rely on the very regular use of

our country park sites. In response it is proposed that a household based annual membership scheme is developed which will enable all persons in a household to park at any of the country park sites for a fee of £50 per annum or around £1 per week.

- 5.2 It is hoped that this initiative will largely address the concerns of the local businesses that rely on the use of our country parks and these proposals will be carefully monitored following implementation. In addition it is proposed that a cashless parking system (also known as 'Phone to Park') is introduced to enhance user convenience at country park sites.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Capital Programme includes £80,000 to pay for the supply and installation of Pay and Display equipment including the implementation of a cashless parking system subject to approval of the scheme.

- 6.2 These proposals are predicted to bring increased income to the Council of £370,000 p.a. which has been included in the Council budget for 2017/18 approved in March 2017.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 These proposals are being implemented in accordance with the process set out in the Traffic Order Procedure Regulations 1996.

- 7.2 The management of traffic is a statutory duty for the Council.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

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

9.0 RELEVANT RISKS

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

- 9.2 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.

- 9.3 Not implementing these revised proposals will require alternative budget savings proposals to be identified to offset the loss of predicted income included in the Council's approved budget for 2017/18.

10.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

10.1 The legal requirement to give notice to inform persons affected of the modified/ reduced charges has been followed. Notices were erected at the sites and a public notice was also formally advertised in the local press on 8 March 2017. Members have been aware of the proposals and the modifications made via the initial advertisement/ consultation then the executive decision and call-in processes.

11.0 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

Draft Traffic Regulation Order

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 |
|---|------------------|
| Call-in | 13 March 2017 |
| Extraordinary Council | 6 March 2017 |
| Strong Leader Decision Report | 20 February 2017 |
| Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee | 24 January 2017 |
| Cabinet – Medium Term Financial Strategy and Council Budget 2017/2018 | 8 December 2016 |