

Appendix 4 – Consultation Summary, Key Themes and Responses to Objections Received.

TRO Consultation: The recommendation requires the introduction of parking charges at some new locations that are currently free. These parking charges and controls are planned to be introduced at a number of on-street and off-street parking spots and car parks both in coastal and town centre locations. Seven such schemes were put forward for consultation:

- Kings Parade / Coastal Drive, New Brighton - Scheme ref no. TO/18/06
- North Parade / Meols Parade, Hoylake and Meols – Scheme ref no. TO/18/07
- South Parade, West Kirby – Scheme ref no. TO/18/08
- Bayview Drive / Harrison Drive – Scheme ref no. TO/18/09
- Derby Pool Car Park, New Brighton – Scheme ref no. TO/18/10A
- The Gunsite Car Park, Leasowe – Scheme ref no. TO/18/10B
- Other Off-Street Car Parks – Scheme ref no. TO/21/19

Through this consultation people were asked to provide their comments on the proposal, including any objections, and reasons for objection for each of the potentially affected sites. The consultation was carried out between 1 December – 24 December 2022. The approach used was an on online public consultation through the ‘Have your say’ consultation portal at www.haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk with a page dedicated to the Car Parking Charges Consultation. Documents provided on the site included a summary of each of the proposed parking scheme sites, illustrating the areas affected, charges and existing restrictions. One online questionnaire was provided for residents to engage with. Respondents were also able to submit additional comments via a dedicated email address, which was published on the ‘Have your say’ website alongside the online tool.

The consultation questionnaire was developed to enabled stakeholders to record their support or objection to each, or all, proposed schemes, and provide additional free text comments as to the reasons for their support or objection. No questions were mandatory so respondents could choose which questions to respond to.

Following closure of the consultation, the responses to each of the questions were collated and combined with the email submissions. The questionnaire was responded to by 3902 people, with an additional 157 direct representations received via the dedicated email address supplied for the consultation process. These are included in full within the supplementary pack. In terms of the results, it is important to note that the public consultation is not representative of the overall population but provides information on the opinion of those residents who engaged only.

Summary:

- **Kings Parade / Coastal Drive, New Brighton. Scheme reference number TO/18/06.**
 - Around 3158 people answered YES to objecting to this scheme with around 528 answering NO to objecting to this scheme.
 - Around 2014 people added a comment.

- **North Parade / Meols Parade, Hoylake and Meols. Scheme reference number TO/18/07**
 - Around 3185 people answered YES to objecting to this scheme with around 481 answering NO to objecting to this scheme.
 - Around 1862 people added a comment.
- **South Parade, West Kirby – Scheme ref no. TO/18/08**
 - Around 3185 people answered YES to objecting to this scheme with around 462 answering NO to objecting to this scheme.
 - Around 1753 people added a comment.
- **Bayview Drive / Harrison Drive – Scheme ref no. TO/18/09**
 - Around 2873 people answered YES to objecting to this scheme with around 663 answering NO to objecting to this scheme.
 - Around 1280 people added a comment.
- **Derby Pool Car Park, New Brighton – Scheme ref no. TO/18/10A**
 - Around 2948 people answered YES to objecting to this scheme with around 614 answering NO to objecting to this scheme.
 - Around 1386 people added a comment.
- **The Gunsite Car Park, Leasowe – Scheme ref no. TO/18/10B**
 - Around 2872 people answered YES to objecting to this scheme with around 645 answering NO to objecting to this scheme.
 - Around 1329 people added a comment.
- **Other Off-Street Car Parks – Scheme ref no. TO/21/19**
 - Around 3402 people answered YES to objecting to this scheme with around 310 answering NO to objecting to this scheme.
 - Around 2008 people added a comment.

Free text comments were examined, and common themes identified. The most prevalent themes have been extracted and highlighted below along with officers' comments. All comments can be viewed in the supplementary pack.

Key Objection Themes and Officers Response:

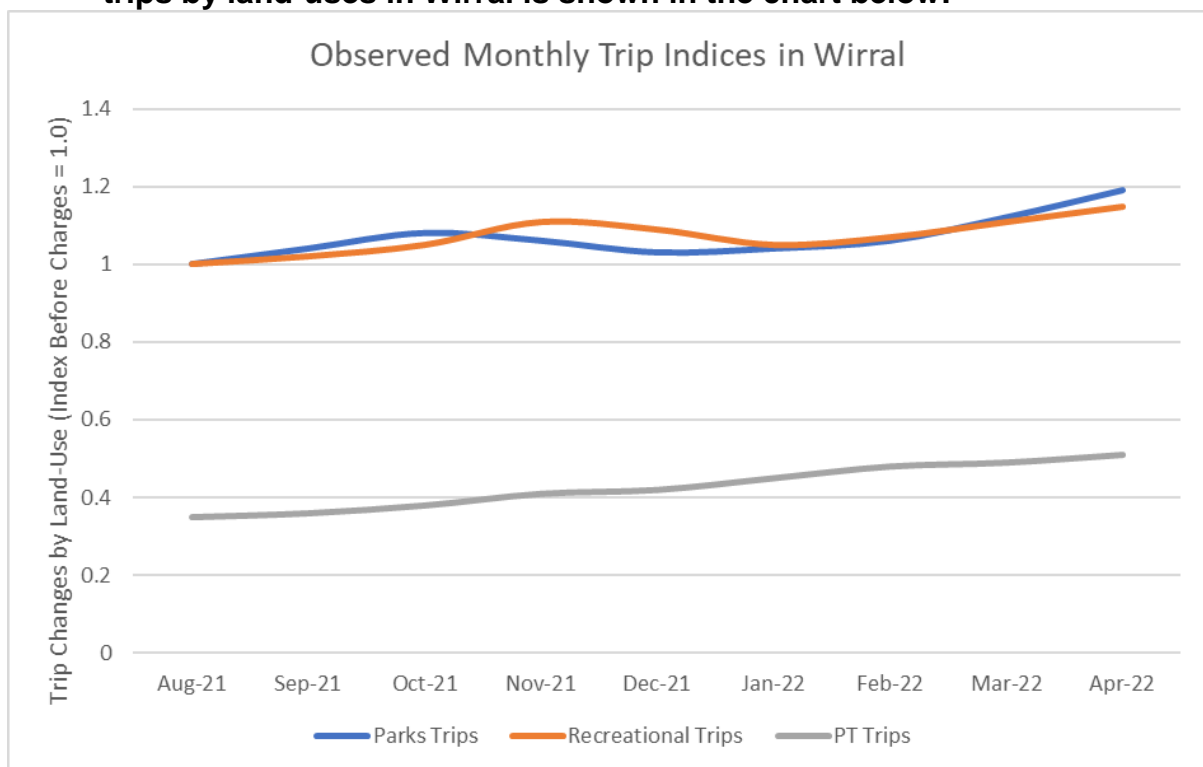
Effect on businesses: *Introducing parking charges will have a **detrimental effect on the businesses**. The parking charges will keep a lot of people away and so the businesses and libraries will suffer.*

- **There is considerable research and evidence which demonstrates that carefully co-ordinated pricing charges do not negatively impact businesses. For example, the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) has studied towns and cities across the UK and also carried out a review of available research and literature on parking impacts on local businesses. This study, published in 2010, found that customers usually adapt their travel behaviour in a more responsible manner by consolidating trips (for example, the weekly shopping trip). They still spend as much in the local shops, and even often spend more if they bring their families with them to make it a day out.**
- **This evidence has been demonstrated in Wirral. The Council has employed parking consultants to study and develop their Multimodal Parking Strategy. The consultants have examined parking ticket**

machine data before and after the standardised tariffs were introduced, including over 25 weeks of weekly parking machine data after the charges were standardised on 6 September 2021. This analysis has shown no discernible drop in the issue of parking charges after the new tariffs were implemented.

Impact on health and wellbeing: *Charges will impact people’s health and wellbeing resulting in the decline in the physical and mental health of visitors and residents if these parking charges are introduced as they will not exercise. We are supposed to be a leisure peninsular. people exercise walking, cycling and running along the coastal paths. Greater pollution from vehicles being driven around looking for free parking spaces.*

- The parking consultants developing the Wirral Council Multimodal Parking Strategy have collected observed trips before and after the introduction of the new parking charges. The data of observed trips was collected for various locations and types of land-uses (parks, recreational areas and on Public Transport (PT)) and was averaged across Wirral on a monthly basis. The observed monthly changes in trips by land-uses in Wirral is shown in the chart below:



- The observed trends are from August 2021 to April 2022, i.e. 5 weeks before the introduction of your standard parking charges and 25 weeks after. This factual observed trips data clearly shows the parking charges have not negatively impacted the use of parks/leisure and have even helped the return to PT users suffered by Covid-19. There is a dip around the Christmas period, but this is normal given the bad weather at this period and the recent Easter period has shown very high usage levels.

- **Clearly, the above surveys demonstrates that there has not been any significant impacts to parks and recreational areas in Wirral.**

Displaced Parking: *The proposals will lead to displaced parking - creating other traffic related issues. Risks will occur with people parking on pavements, close to existing driveways, and on double and single yellow lines. Will have an impact on local residents as they will be unable to park in their roads.*

- **Controlled parking in towns and city centres are a potentially important policy measures, especially when accompanied with suitable enforcement. The 2010 TRL research concluded that “critics often claim that parking pricing spoils local economic activity by discouraging customers, but it actually provides both economic benefits and costs. It increases turnover of parking spaces which makes finding a space easier, reduces the number of parking spaces required at a location which can provide financial savings, and can reduce traffic problems such as congestion”. (Page 11, Parking Measures and Policies Research Review, TRL Limited, 2010).**
- **This research was recently updated in 2017 by the Welsh Government which concluded the same findings and no significant change in public behaviour. In fact, the view of the Welsh Government update research is that cheaper or even free parking may “have a negative effect as it is used mainly by workers or nearby residents as a free private garaging facility” (page 18, Research into Car Park Charging Strategies, Welsh Government, 2017).**
- **One of the measures available to manage parking in residential streets is a Resident Only Parking Scheme. In deciding whether or not a new or amended residents parking scheme should be introduced, the desirability of the scheme is measured against certain criteria guidelines to determine the need, the acceptability and its practicality. As part of the Wirral Council Multimodal Parking Strategy Commission, a review of existing parking provision and car parking capacity will be considered including residents parking schemes.**
- **With regards to pavement parking enforcement, currently only the police have powers to take action. Local authorities outside of London are waiting on the outcome of recent government consultation regarding devolving these powers from the police to local authorities. This requires an Act of Parliament to be passed. Unfortunately, there are no timescales for this.**
- **Where parking problems occur on existing yellow lines then the Council can take enforcement action.**

Impact on Cost of Living Crisis: *Parking charges on top of the ‘Cost of Living Crisis’ will have an additional impact on the poorer families / residents. Residents are hit enough by higher gas and electricity and water and petrol and our rates.*

- **The analysis of observed trip patterns by the parking consultants supporting Wirral Council has demonstrated that the new parking charges have even helped public transport which has significantly suffered by Covid-19. The observed trends show a positive rise in the demand for public transport, helping the socially excluded and more vulnerable members of the local community by providing cost-effective alternatives to the rise in motoring costs. It is also worth noting that the increases in motoring costs are mainly due to non-parking rises such as fuel (up 30% from 2021) and insurance according to research by Autocar.co.uk ([How rising costs will affect UK drivers | Autocar](#))**

The proposed parking charges are Unlawful: *I feel the council is acting unlawfully given its declaration is to raise money through implementation of parking charges to support financial strains in other areas. It is also unlawful to implement parking charges in coastal locations.*

- **The objective of the Wirral Multimodal Parking Strategy is not to raise revenues but to manage the negative transport impacts and provide sustainable options for residents, businesses and visitors to Wirral. This includes managing demand and encouraging responsible travel. All proposed changes to existing parking arrangements are being developed under the UK legislative process for implementing traffic regulation orders**

As well as receiving several thousand comments objecting to the parking charges we also received in the region of 100 comments supporting the proposals. Some of these are highlighted below:

- **Kings Parade / Coastal Drive, New Brighton. Scheme reference number TO/18/06.**
‘I know you will receive a lot of opposition for this, but I don’t feel the charges are excessive compared to the overall costs of car ownership. As part of a strategy to encourage active travel/greater public transport use this is to be welcomed’
- **North Parade / Meols Parade, Hoylake and Meols – Scheme ref no. TO/18/07**
‘Plenty of parking available, some concerns about displaced parking affecting residential properties but most residential properties in the affected area have driveways etc. Not convinced there are viable alternative, sustainable transport options for visitors to the location but on balance, in favour of scheme.’
- **South Parade, West Kirby – Scheme ref no. TO/18/08**
‘This should stop people using South Parade as long term car park for commercial vehicles and caravans and motorhomes, allowing more visitor use. Resident permits should be for NON commercial vehicles.’
- **Bayview Drive / Harrison Drive – Scheme ref no. TO/18/09**

'The road is so busy it might reduce traffic. Mother in law lives in Barmouth road and it can take ages to get out onto main road to Harrison Drive'

- **Derby Pool Car Park, New Brighton – Scheme ref no. TO/18/10A**
'I support this on the grounds that it will help council finances, put an end to non-car owners subsidising car parking (and therefore help reduce inequality), reduce carbon emissions and help improve air quality. It will also help reduce congestion and the risk of traffic related collisions.'
- **The Gunsite Car Park, Leasowe – Scheme ref no. TO/18/10B**
I have no problem with charges if the money is generated back into our community. As long as this is included in the country parks permit scheme. Blue badge holder should not be exempt from parking charges, so long as there are payment stations close to their parking bays.
- **Other Off-Street Car Parks – Scheme ref no. TO/21/19**
'Purpose built car parks need to be maintained and that cost will have to be met, so yes charge for those car parks, but not residential streets like South Parade.'
- **Other - All Schemes**
'Due to the increased popularity of Staycations many visitors are coming to the Wirral Coast from outside the Local Area, enjoying the coast but leaving Wirral to foot the bill to clean up the vast amounts of litter they often leave behind. Therefore some charges on car parks in leisure areas on the Coast are, I believe, acceptable but they need to be at a level of charge that does not impact unduly on the local population. Or only charge in car parks most used by incoming day trippers.'

Key Supportive Themes:

- Car parks need to be maintained; charging would support this.
- Parking charges may lead to a reduction in vehicles which would reduce congestion.
- Parking charges support the climate emergency, reduction of emissions.
- Camper Van's charges would reduce the number of campervans parking.

Recommendations:

Appendices 1 and 2 to this report set out officers' specific recommendations for those locations where parking charges should be introduced to meet the £500,000 budget requirement. In summary, these are as follows.

Recommended locations for car parking charges / parking restrictions:

- Kings Parade / Coastal Drive, New Brighton. Scheme reference number TO/18/06.
- South Parade, West Kirby – Scheme ref no. TO/18/08
- Bayview Drive / Harrison Drive – Scheme ref no. TO/18/09
- Derby Pool Car Park, New Brighton – Scheme ref no. TO/18/10A
- The Gunsite Car Park, Leasowe – Scheme ref no. TO/18/10B

- Other Off-Street Car Parks – Scheme ref no. TO/21/19
 - Old Chester Road (Chamberlain Street), Birkenhead
 - Chamberlain Street, Birkenhead
 - Banks Road, Heswall
 - Carr Lane, Hoylake
 - Barlow Avenue, Bebington
 - Church Road, Bebington
 - Fort Perch Rock, New Brighton
 - Thurstaston Common, Thurstaston