

TITLE	Borough Wide Parking Charges
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on 22 nd February 2018
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR	Josie Wragg, Interim Director of Customer and Locality Services
LEAD MEMBER	Keith Baker, Executive Member for Highways and Transport

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

- From 1st April 2018, a consistent approach to car parking charges across the borough
- From 1st April 2018, free evening and Sunday parking in all off-street car parks
- Support for evening and weekend economies in town centres
- Increase in parking enforcement on street during the evenings and on Sundays
- Free parking in Wokingham Town Centre after 3pm until 31 March 2018

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive is asked to:

- 1) approve the extension of the 'Free after 3' scheme within Wokingham Town Centre until 31st March 2018;
- 2) approve a supplementary estimate for £36,000 for 2017/18 to cover the cost of lost income during the extended period for 'Free after 3';
- 3) approve 1 year trial (from 1st April 2018) to increase the 1 hour parking charge from 70p to 80p in the Wokingham car parks (Carnival MSCP, Elms Road MSCP, The Paddocks, Easthampstead Road East and West, Cockpit Path, Denmark Street and Wellington House and Rose Street temporary car park). Approve a trial (from 1st April 2018) to increase the 1 hour parking charge from 40p to 50p in Polehampton Close Car Park in Twyford and School Lane Car Park in Wargrave;
- 4) from 1st April 2018, suspend the evening and Sunday charging in all car parks (in Wokingham Borough (except Station Road Earley and Winnersh Triangle Rail Station) until the trial results are considered;
- 5) to note the range of estimated financial implications with regard to the trial period for WBC car parks in the borough (excluding station car parks) of between a £65,000 deficit to a £100,000 surplus and that the specific budget requirement (if any) will be requested at a future Executive following an assessment of the impact;
- 6) instruct Officers to amend signing and equipment in the car parks as required;

- 7) to note that the results of the trial will be brought back to Executive for longer term decision to be made regarding car parking charges in the Borough.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report proposes a trial commencing in 1st April 2018 of the 1 hour daily rate parking charge increase by 10p in Wokingham Town Centre, Tywford and Wargrave and the suspension of evening and Sunday charges for a period of 1 year. This is in line with the approach for Woodley that has been approved permanently by the Executive in January 2018. The trial could have a financial impact of between £65,000 deficit to a £100,000 surplus. Also, the extension of the 'Free After 3' scheme within Wokingham Town Centre until 31st March 2018.

Background

On the 17th May 2016 Executive approved the introduction and implementation of the borough wide Evening and Sunday Charges regime.

After the Council introduced the borough wide Evening and Sunday Charges regime, The Woodley Town Centre Management Initiative (WTCMI) and Woodley Town Council proposed an alternative to the Evening and Sunday Charges regime in Woodley and on 28 July 2016, the Executive approved to trial this.

This scheme amended the charges for car parking in the Woodley car parks (Crockhamwell Road, Headley Road, Lytham Road East, and Lytham Road West) to provide free parking in the evenings after 6pm and on Sundays. The loss of income was mitigated by an increase in the hourly rate for parking by an extra 10 pence (70p to 80p for a stay up to 1 hour for all car parks except).

The trial ran for a 1 year between September 2016 and September 2017. At the conclusion of the trial, analysis of parking data demonstrated that this alternative approach did not result in loss of income to the Council but increased this income by 11%. On 25 January 2018 the Executive agreed to make the trial arrangement in Woodley permanent.

In October 2017, the Council's Executive approved the temporary provision of free parking between 15:00 Hrs and 08:00 Hrs the following day until the end of January 2018 at all Council owned car parks located within Wokingham Town Centre. A supplementary estimate for £49,000 to cover the cost of lost income during this period and signage was also agreed.

Proposal

As a result of the successful trial of the different parking charges regime in Woodley, it is proposed to extend this across all WBC car parks that charge a 1 hour parking fee for a trial period of one year effective from 1st April 2018. This is with the exception of Polehampton Close Car Park in Twyford and School Lane Car Park in Wargrave that would increase the hour rate from 40 pence to 50 pence. The impact of the trial will be monitored and the outcomes reported to the Executive.

The objectives of the trial will be to determine if the proposed charging regime is financially viable i.e. that the level of income from parking is sufficient to maintain the current level of parking services in the borough without additional cost to the council when compared with the evening and Sunday charges since their introduction in 2017. Also, whether there is support from the community for the amended parking charges to be made permanent.

The following car parks will have the charge for up to 1 hour stay changed from 70p to 80p;

Wokingham Town Centre	Rose Street, Denmark Street, Easthampstead Road (West), Elms Road Multi-Storey, Cockpit Path, Easthampstead Road (East), The Paddocks, Wellington House, Shute End and Carnival MSCP
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The following two car parks will have the charge for up to 1 hour stay changed from 40p to 50p.

Wargrave	School Lane
Twyford	Polehampton Close

All car parks named above will have the charges for Sunday and Bank Holiday (8am to 6pm) and Overnight 6pm to 8am the next day removed. The 3 hour maximum restriction on Wellington House on a Sunday will also be removed.

All other charges will remain unchanged and there is no proposal to reduce resident parking permit fees to reflect the free parking in the evenings/weekends as permit fees were not increased when the evening and weekend charges were introduced.

The Council agreed the 'Free after 3' scheme for Wokingham Town Centre in October intended to mitigate the impact on town centre trade on the disruptions during the town centre regeneration and Market Place improvements. This report also proposes to extend this scheme to allow the continued support to businesses until 31st March 2018 after which the new borough wide trial regime will be implemented.

Issues to be Considered

The extension of the 'Free after 3' scheme for Wokingham Town Centre until 31st March 2018 is expected to cost £36,000 and a supplementary estimate to cover this is recommended.

In respect of the more extensive proposal for the change to the parking costs across the whole borough, whilst the Woodley scheme achieved the financial objectives, there is the risk that it may not be financial viable when extended to all other areas in Wokingham, particularly Wokingham Town Centre (see Financial analysis below). In addition, the proposal may not meet the aims of the 'user pays' principle that were established for the evening and Sunday charges. The impact of this will be monitored by the Council and at the end of the trial period, the financial impact of the amended parking charges regime will be reported by the Council's Executive to allow it to determine if this should be made permanent.

The proposal will have benefits as residents in the borough will be able to park for free during the evenings and on Sundays/bank holidays, and it could also provide a boost to the night time economy in the borough. However, the proposal does place an additional burden on daytime users of the car parks. There benefits and risks are set out in the table below;

Benefits	Risk/Costs
The proposal will create a more consistent and equal approach for all car parks and residents across Wokingham Borough (except Twyford and Wargrave)	Reduction of car park fee income during evenings and on Sundays (circa £95,000 pa)
Ease of administering a more consistent approach across the borough	Reduction in PCNs being issued in car parks during evenings and on Sundays (circa £29,500 pa)
Redeployment of car park attendants to administer on street CPE during evenings and on Sundays as a result of not being required in the car parks – this will have benefits for congestion and highway safety	Reduce car park patrolling by enforcement staff in evenings and on Sundays and therefore potential community safety implications
There could be additional income generated from the issuing of PCNs for on street parking offences during evenings and on Sundays. (to be determined)	The requirement for new signing in car parks and the related cost and resource required
Increase in revenue as a result of the increased in the 1 hour charge. (circa £40,000 pa)	There will be a need to renegotiate the agreement with our parking contractor which could have financial implications
An increase in visitors to the town Centres during the evenings and on Sunday resulting in benefits to the local economy	Reduction in the number of visitors during the week which may have a disproportionately negative impact on the local economy when compared to the potential increase in visitors in the evening and Sundays. Some traders will not benefit from the increase visitors during the evenings if they are not trading during these periods.
Benefits to residents from free evening and Sunday/bank holiday parking	

Financial analysis

It is difficult to determine the financial impact of the trail. While the Woodley trail generated additional income from car parking charges, this outcome may not be replicated across the borough as this is dependent on the type and nature of the area. The worst case scenario based on the analysis of the existing usage of our car parks during the evening and on Sundays is as follows:-

- Reduction in car park income = £95,603 p[a
- Reduction of revenue generated from PCN issued in car park during the evening and Sundays = £29,518 pa
- Predicted additional income from the 10p increase for up to 1 hour stay = £40, 590 pa

These figures indicate that there could be a potential net loss of income to the Council of £65,540. However some of this could be offset through additional PCN income from additional on street enforcement.

As with any trial there is a risk of not achieving the stated objective or only achieving a partial success of the stated objective. If there was minimal or even no risk associated with an action then there would be no need for a trial as is proposed and the action would simply be implemented. This is not the case here. As set out, while initial analysis indicates a financial risk, this is difficult to determine in the absence of a trial because of the complexity of the various interactions between the individual duration of stay charges e.g. car park users moving to a longer duration of stay thus bringing in additional revenue as was observed in the Woodley trial.

The Woodley trail delivered an increase in income of 11% and the trail will enable the Council to establish if this could be achieved through the new arrangement for other car parks in the borough. However, as there is a risk that the trial could miss the objective by £65,000 pa. Therefore, members are asked to note that this proposals could have a range of financial impacts as below :-

- Loss of income (based on ticket sale calculations) of £65,000 pa deficit
- No change to income as a result of removal of evening and Sunday/ bank holiday charges with the loss of income being cancelled out by the increase of 10p on the daytime 1 hour charge
- Increased income of up to £100,000 pa surplus if the financial impact of the Woodley trail is replicated across the borough.

The impact will be closely monitored and should the trail period result in a deficit a supplementary estimate the loss in fee income against current targets will be requested as a supplementary estimate at a later date in 2018/19.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year	£36k for the Free after 3pm for Wokingham Town Centre	No.	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Assuming the trail is unsuccessful £65k	Assuming the trail is unsuccessful – No and a supplementary estimate will be requested at a later date	Revenue

Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0k	Yes	Revenue
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Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
None

Cross-Council Implications
None

List of Background Papers
None

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Date 14 February 2018	Version No. 1

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