

REPRESENTATIONS BY SUSTRANS

We note the Proposed Order for parking permits at Love Lane, Snow Hill and First Wood Street car parks in Nantwich.

We have no particular view on the permits themselves, but we do object strongly to the low cost and discount being offered for 3 months and 12 months permits, for the following reasons:

- 1) This sends out a clear message to the public that the authority wants them to drive to work and will reward them with a 35% discount for the year.
- 2) This undermines totally the nascent efforts by other sections of the council and other bodies such as community groups and Sustrans in trying to reduce the affects of too much traffic, particularly congestion at peak periods in Nantwich, and poor air quality in Hospital Street, Nantwich.
- 3) It also undermines any effort to encourage public transport use as would-be commuters will compare the 35% discounted cost of £495 favourably with the cost say of an Arriva annual bus pass.
- 4) It also undermines any effort to encourage walking and cycling for health reasons for those many short journeys in Nantwich. (Typically two-thirds of all journeys are under 5 miles and half of those are made by car)
- 5) It also fails to recognise that the carbon emissions from transport (21% of the nation's total) have to reduce; encouraging more driving with the current dependence on diesel/petrol engines will not help achieve this.

In summary this would be a retrograde step for Nantwich. Please do not go ahead with discounted pricing for parking.

Response from Parking Services Manager to issues raised within Sustans representation

I thought I should clarify the reasoning behind the proposal for contract permit sale in Nantwich, perhaps amplifying that included in the Statement of Reasons.

The proposal comes as we work towards a harmonized parking prices structure throughout Cheshire East. Until now we have not offered contract permits for sale in either Crewe or Nantwich. However in the towns of former Macclesfield Borough, such contracts have been available for some years. We felt that such contracts should be available in Nantwich. They are intended to offer an alternative to regular, long stay customers who comprise mainly town centre workers with little or no choice other than to bring their cars into town. In doing so we are trying to achieve a balance in applying reasonable charges whilst recognizing the particular

situation of different user groups in each town. This is in line with Cheshire East's Parking Strategy.

Some points are relevant to our efforts:

- 1. Although it is true that technically the discount is 35% from a daily charge, in practice that is accrued only to those who buy the permit and park for at least 300 days a year. This limits the number of people to whom it will be applicable.*
- 2. As the contract will appeal mainly to these existing customers it is unlikely to result in increased traffic or parking volume.*
- 3. The chief benefit in the contract to an individual is, and is intended to be, that they may pay upfront for a permit and avoid daily change- finding. The Council benefits by saving on cash handling and an improved cash flow and so can transmit some of that saving to the customer.*
- 4. Finally you may have noticed that in the change to tariff structures in Nantwich prior to Christmas, we rectified two aspects : firstly, the cost of long stay parking both absolutely, and relative to short stay) was increased in line with our structure elsewhere in the Borough; secondly, we established a separate tariff for Nantwich , differentiating it from Crewe at last. This should help ensure we react appropriately in controlling parking in respect of the distinct pressures of the two towns.*

I can assure you also that we will apply strict upper limits to the number of permits that may be granted on any of the three car parks- which will be kept in proportion to the demand for parking in the town from daily customers; and that in any event the permit does not guarantee a space on any car park.

I do hope that this allays most of your fears and concerns; however note that under the statutory regulations, there will be a public meeting with the Portfolio Holder next month at which your objection will be considered under the formal statutory procedure. You will be advised of the date should you wish to attend.

Further comments from Sustrans

Thank you for your reply which sets out the context in relation to harmonizing car parking throughout Cheshire East.

However, we are trying to widen this discussion to take into account the overall transport picture, and the desire to reduce carbon, congestion, to improve people's health etc.

We would like to make the following points:

1. Offering the discount favours car commuting, contrary to the aims of the Cheshire East car parking strategy objectives.

Response: it is also in the Strategy that we will offer a contract permit where possible on long stay car parks. Our Strategy says:

5. Key Principles

The key principles that flow from the overall context of the Parking Strategy are:

5.1 Parking should be managed in a way that assists the vitality/viability of town centres and villages through local parking policies and standards which take into account the needs of local residents, disabled drivers, shops, businesses, employment and education.

And later:

7. Proposals and Action to Achieve Objectives

7.1 Encourage alternative travel choices through availability and pricing of town centre car parking

We will impose charges for parking at levels reflecting local pressures and needs.

Long Stay Parking: we will manage the provision of long stay parking in the town centres typically through pricing, to encourage the use of more sustainable transport and by a system of differential charging to promote the use of peripheral car parks where such parking is to be accommodated. This recognises that:

- Commuters travel at peak periods and are a major contribution to congestion of the road network.*
- Commuter parking monopolises parking spaces for the entire working day*
- Transport objectives may be achieved more easily through parking policy interventions aimed at the commuter. It is more practicable for example for the commuter to change their travel patterns than it is to continually expand the road network and parking stock.*
- Long stay parking provision in connection with bus or rail commuter travel is supported in order to reduce the level of dependency on the motor car as a means of commuting to work.*

Contracts parking, at discounted prices, will be made available on selected non central car parks for regular long stay customers.

Thus in offering contracts we do recognise the need to encourage responsible travel choices, but are seeking to provide a balanced approach to parking management. The emphasis will therefore be on limited choices of contract permit availability.

2. This issue has nothing to do with the vitality of town centre shops. It is purely about how people get to work.

3. You state that town centre workers have little choice but to drive. Can you substantiate that statement? Have you carried out any travel planning to see how workers travel and how far? There are plenty of ways of getting to work, walking, cycling, using the bus service, using the local train service etc.

Response; I think the missing word is “those” commuters with little choice. There are many people who work in towns whose personal circumstances and where they live effectively limit their choices. The response should not have implied that ALL workers are in this category, but we will not and cannot anyway, offer permits to all workers.

We would like our objection to the discounted rate for the permits to stand. We believe the cost should be in excess of comparable yearly bus travel.

It is acknowledged that where possible the cost of yearly bus travel should be taken into account when calculating the contract price, though in practice it is difficult to arrive at an acceptable average for this.