

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: ENVIRONMENT AND PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting:	20 December 2011
Report of:	Parking Services Manager
Subject/Title:	Proposed Cheshire East Car Park Tariff Structure 2012/13
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Rod Menlove

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 The current car park tariff structures vary between different locations in the Borough. They represent a mixture of inherited tariffs from pre-LGR authorities, along with new Cheshire East tariffs and some pre-LGR tariffs partly adjusted in 2011 to achieve a fairer structure for some individual towns. This report contains a proposal to create a new Cheshire East Council Tariff Structure which conforms to the Parking Strategy and takes full account of the classification of towns and villages as assessed by this Scrutiny Committee. In addition, the proposal includes a 'zonal' approach to parking tariffs in larger towns, reflecting different demands in central business centres and the needs of shoppers.

2.0 Decision Requested

- 2.1 The Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee is requested:

- 2.1.1 to consider the rationale behind the proposed tariff structure as set out within the report; and
- 2.1.2 to make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services in relation to the structure of the proposed tariff and the timeframe for the implementation of any changes to the current tariffs.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Cheshire East Parking Strategy sets out the principles for the application of tariffs to car parks as follows:

Off Street Parking Management

It is expected that an appropriate charging level combined with the enforcement will help the authority to make the best use of the car park assets which in turn is likely to make parking easier and more attractive to the short term customers upon whom our towns rely heavily. Longer stay parking in the most convenient central car parks puts undue pressure on visitor and short term parking.

Long stay parking will continue to be priced more cheaply per hour than short stay and usually limited to less central car parks. (Where the capacity of central car parks can cope, long stay is allowed but controlled with higher fees).

The pricing mechanism adopted is appropriate for the following purposes:

- Managing demand, required to promote the use of town centre short stay spaces for shoppers
- Ensuring that direct users pay for the service wherever practical.
- Providing finance to implement other strategic transport aims

Key Principles

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

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.
2. Local parking policies and standards to be consistent with regional and national guidance.
3. Parking management will seek to assist with environmental improvement in town centres.
4. Parking charges should be set at levels, to
 - reflect the role and economic strength of centres,
 - effectively manage demand, and
 - respond to integrated transport and sustainability

Objectives

The objectives of the Strategy are linked to the wider Local Transport Plan “Areas for Action”:

Primary Local Transport Plan Area for Action (secondary areas)	Parking Strategy Objective
<p><i>Create conditions for business growth</i></p> <p><i>(Unlock the potential of our towns)</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Control and manage parking so as to sustain the economic vitality of Cheshire East town centres and villages 2. Provide excellent parking facilities, at an appropriate cost, to users and Council tax payers.

The Strategy also sets out how these objectives are to be achieved:

Provide excellent parking facilities, at an appropriate charge, to customers and Council tax payers

- Review charges annually, in accordance with the Council’s Fees and Charges policy, at least recovering the cost of the car park service. The annual review

should consider the charges applied at comparator Councils and similarities in demand profile of each of the town centres and villages.

- **The scale of charges should conform to a consistent pattern across the stay periods in all towns, to improve choice and optimise management of parking supply. The steps in charge level from one time period to the next should be broadly consistent throughout all locations.**

4.0 This Scrutiny Committee has previously studied the town centres of the Borough from a parking perspective and has devised a scheme of classification or ranking for these towns. This reflects the type of town in terms of services provided, as well as attractions and type or character. The results of the study were summarized in the table attached to the Committee's October 2010 Report (appendix 2):

***Review of Towns and Villages within Cheshire East – July/August 2010
Draft Report of the Car Parking Task and Finish Group***

Agreed Terms of Reference

To rank towns and villages by criteria, to ensure that, if parking charges are reviewed sometime in the future, comparable towns and villages are treated equally and a reasonable tariff is created.

4.1 We have used this classification to allocate the proposed new tariffs to the towns where charges currently apply. The tables below show, in order, the current position and broadly, the towns in which each tariff grade is applied.

Table 1 Current Tariffs

Tariff	Up to 1 hr	Up to 2 hrs	Up to 3 hrs	Up to 4 hrs	up to 5 hrs	up to 6 hrs	up to 10 hrs
A (mainly Macclesfield centre)	£ 0.70	£ 1.10	£ 2.30	£ 3.40	£ 3.40	£ 4.30	£ 5.50
B (Macc outer, Knutsford, Wilmslow)	£ 0.60	£ 1.00	£ 2.10	£ 3.10	£ 3.10	£ 3.90	£ 4.30
C (outer zone of north towns)	£ 0.50	£ 1.00	£ 1.70	£ 2.50	£ 2.50	£ 3.10	£ 3.30
D (Alderley Edge)	£ 0.40	£ 0.80	£ 1.80	£ 2.10	£ 2.10	£ 2.60	£ 2.90
Congleton	£ 0.30	£ 0.50	£ 1.00	£ 1.00	£ 1.00		£ 1.50
A/D (Crewe)	£ 0.70	£ 1.10	£ 2.10	£ 2.10	£ 2.10	£ 2.60	£ 2.90
B/D (Nantwich)	£ 0.60	£ 1.00	£ 1.80	£ 2.10	£ 2.10	£ 2.60	£ 2.90

**Table 2 New Proposed Cheshire East Tariff Structure
(ratio / weightings to a one hour base)**

Uses	Examples	Tariff	1/2 hr	up to 1 hr	up to 2 hrs	up to 3 hrs	up to 4 hrs	Up to 5 Hrs	up to 6 hrs	up to 10hrs
town centre shoppers	Crewe, Macc TC	A1	0.6	1	2	3	4	6	7	8
town centre and nearby	Crewe, Knuts, Nantw	B1		1	2	3	4	6	7	8
small towns/edge of centre	Congleton, Ald Edge	C1		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
suburbs/villages	Macc (outer), Crewe (outer)	D1		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
rural/leisure/new		E1		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4.2 In table 2, the ratios of the charge for each time period to that for 1 hour, are shown. This is to make clear how the steps in tariffs have been calculated. (ie the price for 2 hours is 2 x the price for 1 hour, etc). There is a deliberate larger step at over 4 hours in central town car parks to reflect the need to discourage longer stay there. This is in line with the policy stated above. However it has been amended from the current position where the step, in Macclesfield, occurs at 3 hours. Consultation has indicated that this is felt to be discouraging to business in the town centre and so this 'step' has been moved to a 5 hour stay.

4.3 Charges are calculated from the starting point of the 1 hour charge. This ensures that given the need to keep the minimum stay charge at a level not to discourage shoppers, all other charges are then in proportion. (The charts below are a representation of the steps to illustrate the improved position in the proposed structure). ***The Tariffs used are for illustrative purposes only.***

4.4 The new tariff would have the advantage of a clear, logical background rooted in both the agreed Parking Strategy and the work of this committee. However, if towns are allocated to new tariffs based on the earlier classifications, this would mean a significant increase in charges for long stay car parking in Crewe centre and Nantwich and Congleton Town Centre across all stay periods.

4.5 Members may consider that a further intermediate step or transitional arrangements need to be considered to minimise the immediate impact on customers.

5.0 Wards Affected : All

6.0 Local Ward Members : All

7.0 Policy Implications including

7.1 - Carbon reduction: Parking facilities should assist with reducing carbon emissions through reduced congestion in town centres and encourage public transport use.

7.2 - Health: As above, effective parking services can help improve air quality by reducing vehicle emissions.

8.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Director of Finance and Business Services)

- 8.1 The proposed structure has been evaluated and it is estimated that (if demand levels remained similar to this year) it would not significantly affect total income to the Council. This is mainly because the greatest part of that income comes from up to 2 hours parking, the prices for which are little changed on average.
- 8.2 However the effect in Crewe and Congleton would be to cause sharp increases in the cost of all day parking.
- 8.3 An increase affecting so many car parks would result in a significant cost for the statutory notice publication of approximately £7000. If it were to be decided that the changes would take place in several stages, this figure should be multiplied accordingly.

9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 9.1 The proposed changes, if approved, will be subject to a Statutory Notice of Variation. Public statutory consultation is not required for parking fee changes.
- 9.2 Section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 states that when an order made under section 35(1)(iii) of the 1984 Act makes provision as to the charges to be paid in connection with the use of an off-street parking place, the charges may be varied by notice. Regulation 25 of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 provide that a 'notice of variation' given under section 35C must be published at least once in a newspaper circulating in the area in which the parking places to which the notice relates are situated at least 21 days before it is due to come into force. In addition, the authority is required by regulation 25(5) to display copies of the notice in the relevant parking places.

10.0 Risk Management

- 10.1 There is a high risk of public complaints in some of the locations affected by any proposed changes which may be mitigated by any suggested transitional arrangements for those areas most affected. However, given the financial costs of changes and the possibility of confusion for the customer, the number of steps to achieve any new harmonised tariff structure should be kept to a minimum. Members may consider that the timing of any change should therefore be set at a one year interval from the last.

11.0 Options

- 11.1 Members may wish to propose a different tariff structure, or to recommend no change this year.

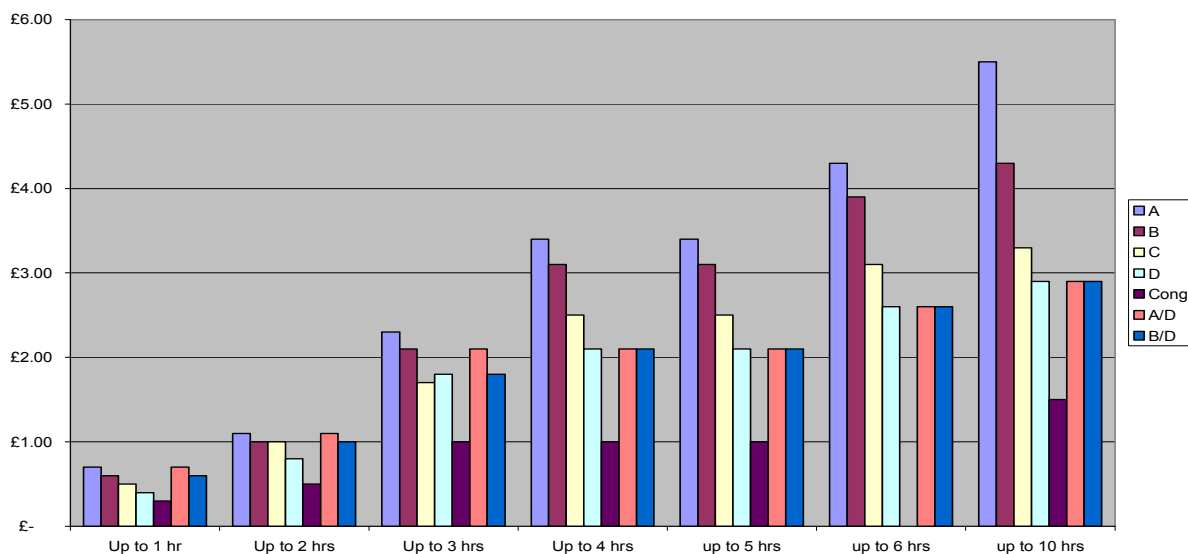
12.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

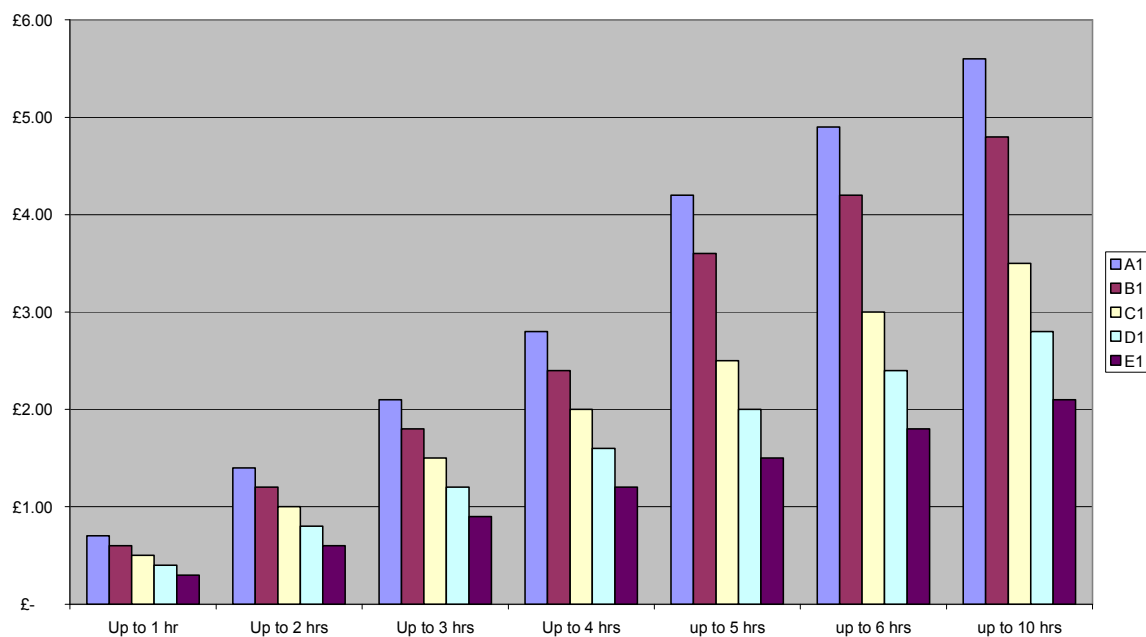
Name: Paul Burns
Designation: Parking Services Manager
Tel No: 01270 537805
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Appendix 1: Charts of Current and Proposed Tariff Grades

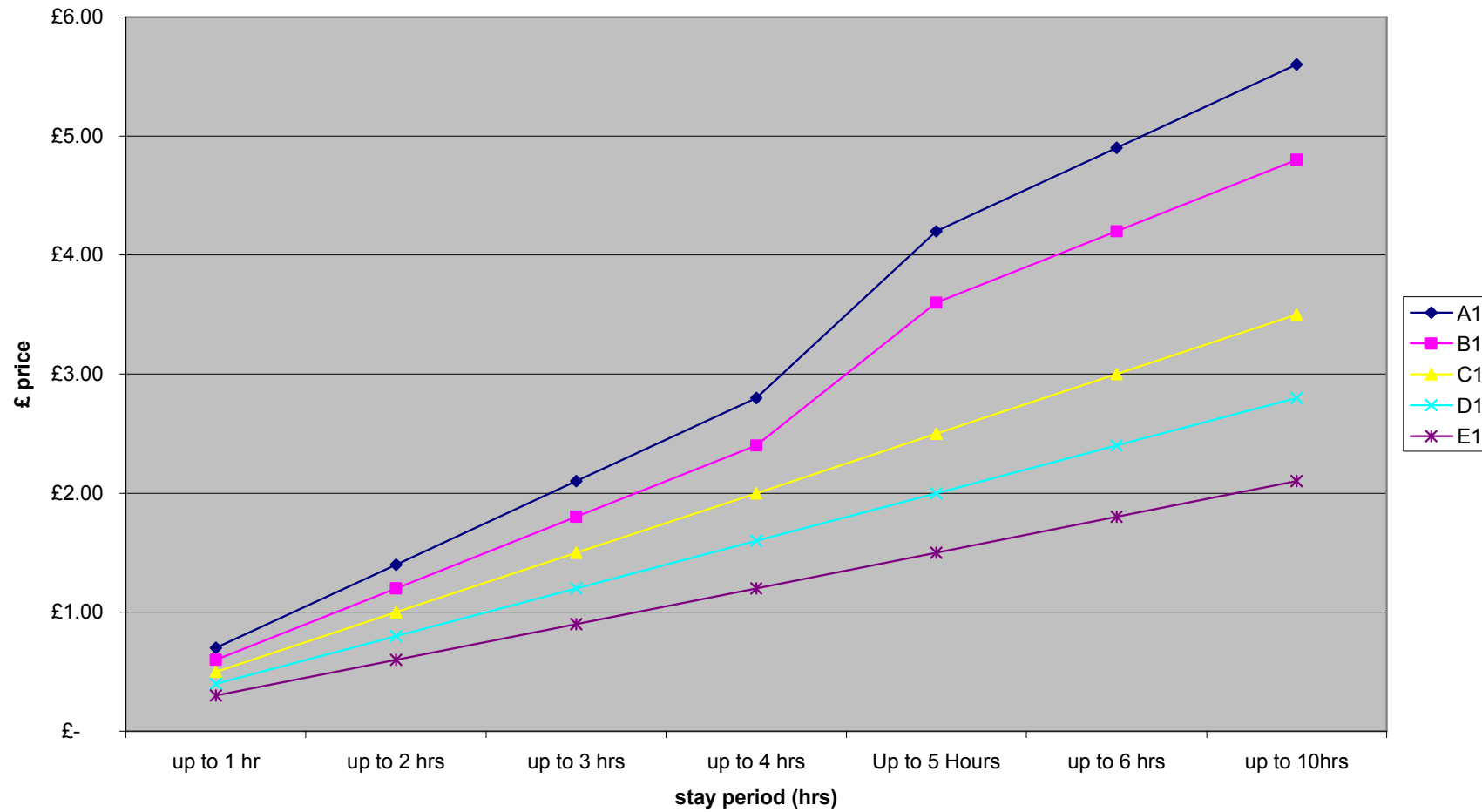
Car Park Charges Tariff Steps, as at Aug 2011



Car Park Tariff Steps Projected 2011 12



CEC Proposed Tariffs



Appendix 2: Scrutiny Committee Assessment – Towns & Villages

TOWN	POPULATION	UNEMPLOYMENT LEVELS as at Oct 09 (%)	FACILITIES	RAILWAY	CCTV	RETAIL	FOOD AND DRINK PROVISION	NIGHT TIME ECONOMY	EASE OF ACCESS	PUBLIC TRANSPORT	NUMBER OF SPACES ON CHESHIRE EAST CAR PARKS	TOTAL	RANK
CREWE	(50600) 10	5	10	10	(48) 6	10	8	6	5	9	(2643) 10	86	A
MACCLESFIELD	(50470) 10	3.5	8	10	(78) 10	8	10	8	8	9	(2166) 9	90	A
WILMSLOW	(30020) 6	2.5	7	10	(62) 8	9	10	8	9	8	(1239) 6	81	A
NANTWICH	(14100) 2	2.6	9	8	(15) 5	9	10	8	9	8	(750) 4	72	B
KNUTSFORD	(12650) 2	2.7	10	8	(14) 5	9	10	9	8	8	(635) 4	73	B
CONGLETON	(26350) 5	3.2	7	7	(8) 3	7	8	6	7	7	(799) 4	61	C
SANDBACH	(17840) 3	3.1	5	7	(5) 3	6	8	7	9	8	(487) 3	59	C
POYNTON	(14360) 2	2	7	8	(6) 3	6	7	6	7	7	(204) 2	55	C
ALDERLEY	(4710) 1	1.4	6	8	(3) 2	6	7	8	8	7	(181) 2	55	C
MIDDLEWICH	(13450) 2	3.1	5	0	(5) 3	6	7	3	5	4	(133) 2	37	D
ALSAGER	(12440) 2	2.6	5	7	(6) 3	5	7	3	8	7	(403) 3	50	D
HANDFORTH	(8014) 1	3.5	5	8	(3) 2	6	6	4	8	8	(102) 1	49	D
BOLLINGTON	(7400) 1	3.5	6	0	(0) 0	4	6	8	7	4	(71) 1	37	D
HOLMES CHAPEL	(5780) 1	1.3	5	8	(3) 2	5	7	4	8	6	(47) 1	47	D
DISLEY	(4210) 1	2.1	4	7	(3) 2	4	6	4	6	7	(60) 1	42	D
PRESTBURY	(3290) 1	1.1	4	7	(0) 0	3	7	7	5	7	(122) 2	42	D
HASLINGTON	(6670) 1	1.8	2	0	(0) 0	3	2	2	8	4	(15) 1	23	E
AUDLEM	(1940) 0	1.7	2	0	(0) 0	4	7	6	7	4	(59) 1	31	E

The above criteria have been scored out of 10

The population, number of CCTV cameras and number of carparking spaces for each town are quoted in brackets.