

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

## CABINET

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**Date of meeting:** 14 July 2009

**Report of:** Strategic Director Places

**Title:** Supplementary Information in response to the Call-In Advice of Environment & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee Meeting 8<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

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### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with further information in respect of their previous decision on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2009 to consult on the introduction of Car Parking Control & Charging in the former Borough of Congleton.

### **2.0 Decision Required**

- 2.1 To consider the call-in advice from the Scrutiny Committee in light of this supplementary information.
- 2.2 To consider amending the Cabinet decisions from 16<sup>th</sup> June 2009 as deemed appropriate.

### **3 Financial Implications: Transition Costs:** None

### **4 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond**

- 4.1 As set out in the original report to Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2009. The existing budget was set to achieve £375,000 in 09/10 assuming charges were introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009.
- 4.2 If standard Tariff Bands are introduced across the whole Cheshire East Borough this year, they must achieve the budget projections for 2009/10 and this will be hugely dependent on the final implementation date.
- 4.3 Whilst initial financial modelling suggests the proposed Tariff Bands at Appendix Two would achieve this break-even position in a full year, it has not been possible to accurately model any effects of consumer behaviour on income.

### **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The legal implications are addressed in the original Part II report to Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2009 and now updated for this meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

## **6.0 Risk Assessment**

- 6.1 Objections to the proposed car park control order could be received which may prevent or further delay the introduction of control and charging.
- 6.2 A delay in the implementation of car parking control will result in a further reduction in the budgeted income for 2009/10.
- 6.3 The introduction of standard Tariff Bands may affect consumer behaviour in the short to medium term.

## **7.0 Background and Options**

### **Scrutiny Committee advice:**

- 7.1 Environment & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee met on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2009 and offered Cabinet the following advice;
  - i) That Cabinet ensure that the facts and figures contained within the report are correct.
  - ii) That the Charging Policy be standardised across the Borough.
  - iii) That parking be free for the first hour.
  - iv) That the Consultation period for the off street car parking order be extended to two months.
  - v) That the Council's Parking Strategy be adhered to

### **Response**

- 7.2 **Advice: (i)** *That Cabinet ensure that the facts and figures contained within the report are correct.*

An amended schedule of Car Parks is attached at Appendix One. This covers all Car Parks suggested by the Scrutiny Committee as being suitable for control & charging. A commentary is provided for each which explains the rationale for its inclusion or omission at this time. (NB. All Car Parks across Cheshire East Borough will eventually be considered for control and charging at the appropriate time by the Portfolio-holder for Environment). In addition the number of bays or spaces have been re-checked by Parking Services staff.

- 7.3 **Advice: (ii)** *That the Charging Policy be standardised across the Borough*

The original scale of charges (or Tariff Bands) agreed for consultation purposes by Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2009 sought to phase-in charging in the former Borough of Congleton by using the lower tariff option suggested by RTA Associates as a starting point.

A complete financial evaluation of the existing 'mixed economy' of Tariffs is already planned to take place as part of the 2010/11 budget-setting timetable. This would seek to harmonise charges across the whole Borough and allow time

for the involvement of Scrutiny Committees and others as part of the normal budget consultation process.

Scrutiny Committee have suggested that standard charges should be introduced now. Appendix Two of this report sets out the preferred option for this approach, listing the detailed Tariff Bands and rationale for each.

Finally, charges in the former Macclesfield Borough area were increased from April 2009 and further changes to all tariffs to standardise now will require extensive consultation across the whole of Cheshire East Borough.

**7.4 Advice: (iii) *That parking be free for the first hour.***

Almost 50% of the pay & display income from car parks is derived from users parking for up-to One Hour. Subject to changes in consumer behaviour, this would result in a loss of income to Cheshire East Borough Council of approximately £2.2M per annum.

In addition, this would make enforcement and monitoring more complex and result in the need for a greater patrol presence to ensure compliance. It is estimated that a minimum of 5 Civil Enforcement Officers would be needed across the Borough to maintain the effectiveness of both our on-street and off-street controls at a cost of £75,000 per annum.

Finally, the Pay & Display equipment and all individual car park signage would need to be amended.

**7.5 Advice: (iv) *That the Consultation period for the off street car parking order be extended to two months***

The original proposed 21 day consultation period is the statutory minimum required under the Act. Scrutiny Committee's advice was made to take into account the forthcoming school holiday period and a view that 8 weeks is regarded as good practice for effective consultation.

The policy decision to introduce charging and control in the former Congleton Borough area was agreed as part of the 2009/10 budget process and by Full Council on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2009. Since that time, Officers have received a significant number of responses from both members of the public, local councillors and local organisations. All of which will be taken into account as part of any formal consultation process that Cabinet may agree.

The loss of income from the set 2009/10 budget is estimated to be £42,000 per week based on the original estimate of £375k from a start date of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009.

**7.6 Advice: (v) *That the Council's Parking Strategy be adhered to***

For the sake of clarity, the strategic rationale for the inclusion, or otherwise, of each Car Park in the proposed off-street parking places order has been added to the list of Car Parks in Appendix One.

As a general statement the proposal to introduce charging on car parks in the former Borough of Congleton has been drafted in support of the Strategy's main objectives as follows:

### **Strategy Objectives**

*The Council's existing parking objectives set out to be consistent with and contribute to the overall aims of the National and Regional transport strategies which seek to:*

- *Achieve a reduction in overall traffic*
- *To increase use of more sustainable and healthy forms of travel*
- *To achieve a more effective and efficient transport system, whilst taking into account:*
  - *The economic vitality of the town centre*
  - *The parking needs of people with disabilities*
  - *The parking needs of local residents, shops and businesses*

Parking charges regulate use of car parks in line with this objective in that customers purchase time in accordance with their needs, and then move on, rendering spaces available for subsequent customers. In town centre car parks this encourages increased possibility for visits to the retail centre.

By structuring the tariffs and applying them to individual car parks as shown in the report, charging also leads to improved management of long stay parking away from the centre, again maximising possible visit frequency.

### **Charging Policy**

**In terms of charging, the proposed tariff structure and application does reflect the Parking Strategy which states:**

*Policy: This Authority will in principle impose charges for parking at levels reflecting local pressures and needs. These may vary:*

- *as between the different towns and smaller centres*
- *as between zones within the larger towns*

*However the scale of charges should conform to a consistent pattern across the stay periods in all towns. These should follow national guidelines. Thus the percentage increase in charge from one time period to the next should be consistent throughout all locations.*

The car parks have been allocated a tariff according to the principles for charging set out in the Strategy, as follows:

#### **5.2 Short Stay Parking**

***Policy: To give priority to and manage the provision of short stay parking in the town centre***

- *Short stay visitors to the town centre are less likely to travel at peak periods i.e. reduce congestion, improve efficiency of the road network.*
- *Short stay parking generates a high turnover of spaces allowing more visitors to be accommodated per space.*
- *Availability of short stay spaces is essential to maintaining the commercial viability of the town centres.*

### 5.3 **Long Stay Parking**

***Policy: To manage the provision of long stay parking in the town centres 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.***

- *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 motorcar as a means of commuting to work.*
- *Contract parking: contracts will be made available on selected car parks for regular long stay customers, sold at competitive rates.*

## 8.0 **Overview of Day One, Year One and Term One Issues**

None

### ***For further information:***

*Portfolio Holder: Councillor Brickhill*

*Officer : Paul Burns*

*Tel No:01270 537805*

*Email: [paul.burns@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:paul.burns@cheshireeast.gov.uk)*

*Officer: Peter Hartwell*

*Tel No: 01270 529614*

*Email: [peter.hartwell@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:peter.hartwell@cheshireeast.gov.uk)*

### ***Background Documents:***

*As original report to Cabinet 16<sup>th</sup> June 2009.*

**Appendix One:** Revised Schedule of Car Parks in former Borough of Congleton following Scrutiny Committee advice.

**Appendix Two:** Suggested standard Tariff Bands for Cheshire East Borough