

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet Member for Environmental Services

Date of Meeting: 10 December 2009
Report of: Head of Safer and Stronger Communities
Subject/Title: Proposed Off Street Parking Places Order (to introduce a pay and display system of parking at Thomas Street East and West Car Parks, Crewe): Consideration of Objections Received

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 Notice of the proposal to make an Off Street Parking Places Order to introduce a system of pay and display system of parking at Thomas Street (East and West) Car Parks, Crewe as detailed in a previous report dated 9th July 2009, has been advertised in accordance with statutory requirements. Five objections were received, copies of which are attached to this report. The Cabinet Member is now required to consider these together with officer comments and decide whether or not to sustain any or all of the objections. A summary of each objection appears below together with a response in italics from the relevant officer giving reasons why the objections should not be sustained. The Cabinet Member is also reminded of the original reasons for requesting the Car Park Order (also attached).

2.0 Objections and Responses

- 2.1 K. Brierley objected on the grounds that she cannot afford to pay the fee every day as she has to come to work by car for shifts; that displacement caused by charging will cause problems and inconvenience to local residents; and that if charging must be introduced, a small tariff of 50p or £1 a day be imposed.

Parking policy as applied throughout Cheshire East established that the Council wishes to apply charges set at a reasonable level, balancing local needs with the need to improve control and availability. The proposed charges at Thomas Street are considered currently to achieve this. However, a different tariff rate may be considered for a range of similar sites as part of the overall tariff review planned for Cheshire East.

Previous consultation with Highways Engineers has confirmed that the total volume of cars in the area is already leading to on street parking, and that charges on the car park may lead to street parking first followed by use of the car park, instead of vice versa as now. However, Cheshire East is committed to review displacement issues affecting residents in due course and may consider a proposal of a resident parking scheme where it proves practical and required by a majority residents.

- 2.2 K. Barrow objected to charges proposed for motorcycles.

The existing Car Park Order for Crewe and Nantwich, of which this proposal is to be an extension, already includes motorcycles as chargeable vehicles when parked in a bay intended for any vehicle. Motorcycle bays are provided at Thomas Street Car Park and motorcycles parked in them will not be chargeable.

- 2.3 Peter Davies objected on behalf of Brierley St Primary School teachers and visitors who have no on-site parking and he requests free parking for them.

Existing policy as applied elsewhere would suggest that this is not appropriate as this user group is not significantly different from any other.

- 2.4 Jane Allen objects on grounds of:

- 2.4.1 Displacement onto streets.

Car park use will drop due to distance from the town; this is contested as the site is within easy walking distance of the town.

- 2.4.2 The need for a reduced rate of £1 per day for such less central car parks.

This may be considered as part of the overall tariff review planned for Cheshire East.

- 2.4.3 Cheshire East workers who need the car for work cannot use public transport.

If this is the case, they may be eligible for reimbursement of parking costs and should apply to their line manager.

- 2.4.4 Westfields staff car park is uncharged.

This is under review and subject to consideration of the terms and conditions of staff using this site.

- 2.5 John Spencer objects because:

- 2.5.1 He feels that this proposal will reduce trade for town centre businesses and the market.

This is contested as the decision to visit any given retail outlet is rarely decided by parking charges alone, but rather by the nature of the retail offer itself and the goodness of fit to customer requirements.

- 2.5.2 He is concerned that car park ticket machines have already been installed on the car park, and that charging is a “foregone conclusion...however many of the local populace express objections”.

The current proposal follows two previous consultations carried out by this Council's predecessor authority, Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council, in March 2007 and May 2008, and has been drafted with the knowledge of the

response generated by those previous consultations. In the meantime, the surface of the Thomas Street Car Park was deteriorating to the point where resurfacing works were required. It was considered that on balance there remained a higher probability that charging in some form would be introduced on the car park in the future, rather than not, so on that basis the ticket machines and cabling were installed at the same time to avoid the risk of further expense and disruption to the newly-surfaced car park by possibly having to install the machines at a later date. It is entirely feasible to remove the machines for re-use elsewhere should the decision be taken not to introduce charges.

- 2.5.3 M. Smith objects on the grounds that vehicles parking in surrounding streets will impede emergency vehicles. M. Smith also queries the possibility of Residents Schemes, the risk of further problems from visitors to the Cumberland Track, and whether a one-way system could be installed in the area around Brierley Street to assist with traffic flows, especially when schools' days finish.

Street Parking – *again it is not considered that charges on Thomas Street will add to this overall problem as stated above.*

Residents' Schemes: *these may be put forward under the terms of the Council's Resident Parking Policy recently approved, subject to observation of issues arising in the area.*

Cumberland Track: *following previous consultation results, the hours of charging have already been adjusted to avoid the main timetabled sporting events at the track, ie after 5pm in the week and at weekends, when no charges are proposed.*

The question of one-way schemes is beyond the scope of this consultation and is unlikely to affect the parking situation.

- 2.6 46 Market Traders objected, saying that they were granted the right to park without charge on this car park on market days by the former Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council, owing to the loss of parking for them when land to the rear of what is now Wilkinson's store was sold.
- 2.6.1 No formal record of such an arrangement can be traced. What may have been suggested, or even promised at some time in the past, was not a promise in perpetuity but a suggested solution relevant to the times, as a gesture. Under the current circumstances, and the review of car parking, such an allocation is no longer seen as the correct approach given that no other group or individual is to be accorded such an offer.

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 That the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services does not sustain the objections for the reasons given by the Officers in this report, and authorises the making of the proposed order to amend the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich (General) (Off Street Parking Places) (Consolidation) (Minor) Order

2008 to introduce a pay and display system of parking on Thomas Street (East and West) Car Parks, Crewe.

4.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 Charges are to be imposed on car parks within the town centre as defined in the previous report. The charge recommended was put forward as a reasonable rate which takes account of the need to encourage people to find other means of getting to work, and of the need to price to reflect the scarce resource of car parking spaces in town centres as well as their operation cost.

5.0 Wards Affected

- 5.1 Crewe (East)

6.0 Local Ward Members

- 6.1 Councillors Steve Conquest, Margaret Martin and Chris Thorley.

7.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

- 7.1 Control of car parks through charges assists in encouraging customers to limit vehicle use and thus reduce carbon emissions and pollution.

8.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

- 8.1 N/A

9.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

- 9.1 Charges will increase income and cover operational costs as previously reported to Portfolio Holder

10.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 10.1 These were covered in the previous report to the Cabinet Member dated 9th July 2009.

11.0 Risk Management

- 11.1 Estimated income from charges is dependent on estimates of occupancy which are dependent on economic activity to some extent.

12.0 Options

- 12.1 To agree with any or all of the objections and either to not introduce charges on Thomas Street (East and West) Car Parks, or to consider an amendment to the

current proposal. In the latter case, any amendment must again be advertised for public consultation in accordance with statutory requirements.

13.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

13.1 N/A

14.0 Access to Information

Copies of the letters and e-mails of objection and Statement of Reasons (for the Proposal) are attached. Consultation documents for the proposal can be found on the Council's website.

Copies of relevant previous reports and minutes can be found on the Council's website or by contacting Democratic Services at Westfields, Sandbach.

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