

Division(s): All

## **CABINET - 16 OCTOBER 2012**

### **THORNHILL AND WATER EATON PARK & RIDES INTRODUCTION OF PARKING CHARGES**

**Report by Director for Environment, Economy & Customer Services**

#### **Introduction**

1. Park and ride has been an integral part of Oxford's transport strategy for many years and is critical to support the continued growth of the city and other growth points in the county. The County Council considers the prime purpose of Park & Ride is to reduce congestion in Oxford by intercepting journeys that would otherwise continue by car to destinations in the City.
2. A requirement to fund an identified revenue gap of £150,000 a year has been established as set out in the Environment & Economy Business Strategy 2011-15. A system of charging has been proposed to achieve at least this.
3. This report summarises the public consultation on the advertised Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for charging; the outcome of a customer survey via citizen panel; and recommends to Cabinet members a proposed level of charging.
4. This proposal complements the proposals to extend the Thornhill Site and the introduction of a refreshment facility which are also being progressed.

#### **Business Case for Proposed Parking Charges**

5. Various levels of duration and charges have been modelled however the proposed level of charging as detailed within this report is considered to be the most appropriate level for commencement of charging based on evidence gathered however, officers recommend that a review of these matters is undertaken between 6-12 months of implementation when the effects of the extended Thornhill site can also be included. This review could also consider whether the introduction of the charges requires any complementary measures to protect local communities from extraneous parking.
7. Clearly it is imperative that the Council communicates the introduction of a charging scheme in an appropriate and timely manner ensuring a coherent explanation and advance notice of the scheme. A comprehensive plan has been developed and agreed to achieve this.

## Consultation on Charging

### Traffic Regulation Order – Public Consultation

8. The statutory consultation (through the TRO) for the introduction of charging was advertised on the 16<sup>th</sup> August 2012 with public consultation on its content continuing up to 14<sup>th</sup> September 2012 ( a copy of the draft Order is available for inspection in the Members Resource Centre) .
9. The proposed level of charging was as follows:
  - a. Less than 24 hours but more than 11 hours - £3 charge;
  - b. A further £3, for every 24 hours (or part thereof), up to a maximum of 72 hours;
  - c. £100 penalty for more than 72 hours (£40 currently)
10. Disabled Blue Badge holders would be exempt from the charge; it is also proposed to exempt key workers from the initial £3 charge if they are working at the hospitals in Headington. This would be achieved through identifying appropriate registration numbers and including them in the system. Work to identify a list of registration numbers is currently on-going with the Trust which is also giving extensive consideration to their employee/site travel plans.
11. A total of 111 responses were received via e-consultation, email and letter.
12. Notably, over 40% of the respondents use the park and ride for commuting to London (that is, not part of the Council's key customer group for the site) and over 60% of the respondents believe that 11 hours is not long enough before charges apply. Other issues raised include:
  - Concern on the effect on surrounding streets (19 of 111)
  - Charge rate should be consistent with other P & R sites (17 of 111)
  - Additional traffic encouraged onto County road network (19 of 111)
13. A summary of responses received, including officer responses, is included as Annex 1 to this report. Copies of the responses are available in the Members Resource Centre.
14. As with most TRO consultation exercises, the majority of the responses focused on objections. To ensure this was balanced against a wider,

richer view, officers supplemented the TRO consultation with a customer survey through a citizen's panel.

### **Oxfordshire Voice**

15. Oxfordshire Voice is a citizen's panel made up of over 3,000 Oxfordshire residents who have volunteered to give up some time to answer surveys on a wide variety of issues. Panel members are carefully recruited to be representative of the population of Oxfordshire. The second panel survey of 2012 concentrated on Park & Ride and was undertaken between 8<sup>th</sup> June and 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2012.
16. Questions asked of the panel in the survey included ;
  - Length of stay
  - Views regarding charging
  - How much to charge
  - Impact of introducing charging.
17. Key findings include:
  - The majority (59%) agreed it was reasonable to charge for parking
  - a charge in excess of £5 was considered as reasonable
  - One in ten complain about a lack of available parking at the Thornhill Site
  - Among users of the site, just over half (53%) had experienced it being full on occasion. For 84% of regular users (i.e. those using at least monthly), they had previously experienced arriving at the site only to find that it was full.
  - Among users of the site, just over a third (35%) had parked for more than 11 hours. Of those using the site regularly (i.e. at least monthly), 57% had parked their car there for more than 11 hours, however, in three-quarters (76%) of cases the driver had parked for more than 11 hours when travelling to London. One in five (20%) were travelling to the airport.

### **Monitoring arrangements**

18. Monitoring of the parking and payment of charges will be done through ANPR cameras which will match number plates of vehicles entering and leaving the park and ride sites. This will enable the duration of the stay to be identified and determine whether a charge is applicable. The payment method will use a range of mechanisms including via the internet and mobile phone as well as payment facilities at the terminal buildings at the sites. This will be achieved by using industry tried and tested equipment and is open to further alterations / additions when demand and technology develops.

## **Financial and Staff Implications**

19. Infrastructure related costs required for car parking charging at Thornhill and Water Eaton was included in the programme of schemes accepted for £5 million of government grant through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund. Of this total, a sum of £200,000 was provisionally allocated for this element, but this estimate has been reduced as the project has developed. In 2011/12 £131,000 was spent on technology trialling and equipment purchase, with £60,000 remaining available in 2012/13 for installation.
20. Staff from Environment & Economy will deliver the project with the assistance of staff from Legal Services.
21. The reintroduction of charging will result in additional Excess Charge Notices ('parking tickets') being issued by NSL (the Council's parking enforcement contractor) which is within scope of that contract. There will be additional work for the in-house Parking Team – at this stage it is not anticipated this will require additional resources but the matter will be kept under review.

### **Cabinet is recommended to:**

- (a) approve the making of the Oxfordshire County Council (Park and Ride Parking Places - Thornhill and Water Eaton) Order 201\* as advertised
- (b) confirm the timing of the introduction of charges as identified in paragraph 9; and
- (c) instruct officers to undertake a review between 6 – 12 months of commencement of charging.

**NAME : HUW JONES**

**Director for Environment, Economy & Customer Services**

Background papers: results from the ANPR data Feb/Mar/April 2012, public consultation responses, draft Traffic Regulation Order

Contact Officer: Jim Daughton, Service Manager, Tel: 01865 815083

**October 2012**

**Summary of comments received during Consultation**

Consultee	Comments	Times Raised	Officer Comments
Facility Users (Oxford bound)	11 hours is not long enough, please consider increasing it to at least 12 hours (or even 14 – 15 hours)	32	11 hours is based on a typical 8 hour working day, 1 hour travel allowance each direction plus an additional 1 hour. This was thought to be applicable to the majority of Oxford (and area) bound users for whose use the site is primarily provided for. Increasing the free time beyond this will mean more non-Oxford travellers having free parking
	University employees who work longer than 11 hours	8	
	John Radcliffe hospital worker and would be parked for more than 11 hours	7	
	In favour of targeting London bound users as car park is often full and Oxford workers / visitors cannot use the facility	6	
	What NHS staff will be exempt	3	
	Are there plans to introduce additional bus services, in particular to cover earlier times into the City	3	This consultation covers the introduction of long stay parking charging only

## CA8

Consultee	Comments	Times Raised	Officer Comments
Facility Users (London bound)	11hours is not long enough, please consider increasing it to at least 12 hours (or even 14 – 15 hours)	30	11 hours is based on a typical 8 hour working day, 1 hour travel allowance each direction plus an additional1 hour. This was thought to be applicable to the majority of Oxford (and area) bound users for whose use the site is primarily provided.
	Is the charge specifically targeted at London commuters why are commuters to London being discriminated against?	22	The County Council considers the prime purpose of Park & Ride is to reduce congestion in Oxford by intercepting journeys that would otherwise continue by car to destinations in the City.
	Will the X90 and Oxford Tube continue to be allowed at Thornhill	4	These services will continue to use Thornhill as at present. There are no plans to change this.
Facility Users (General)	Have the County Council considered the potential impact on adjacent streets due to users seeking alternative, free parking	19	The County Council is aware of this potential and will continue to monitor the situation following the introduction of charging.
	The introduction of a charge may encourage more drivers on the County road network, including within the town centre to avoid paying the parking charge	19	The County Council is aware of this potential but as there are higher Parking charges than those proposed for the P & R sites exist within the town centre it is not anticipated this will be a significant issue
	There should be a charge consistent with that of the City Council	17	This was the case when all the sites were operated by the County Council and

## CA8

Consultee	Comments	Times Raised	Officer Comments
Facility Users (General cont)	controlled car parks (why is the County Council charging double that of other park and ride sites)		all sites were free.
	Will there be a means of purchasing a season ticket for parking, including suitable discount	15	This has not been progressed at this point in time but the adopted system will allow this development in the future should it be considered appropriate in the future.
	What arrangements are in place for when there are problems / accidents / coach breakdowns on the adjacent road network leading to traffic delays	13	On site staff will be aware of any such occurrences / delays and will not issue excess charge notices during those times.
	Witnessed vehicles that have parked overnight and for several days, these should be targeted	9	Under the proposed charging regime those who stay longer will pay more and the maximum stay of 72 hours will be enforced
	Have the Council analysed the use of Thornhill P & R	5	Yes. Surveys have been undertaken and analysis undertaken on the data gathered.
	There are too many trade vans etc early morning that park up and consolidate vehicles thus taking up spaces all day	4	These will be subjected to the same monitoring and charges. Available spaces will increase following the completion of the car park extension project.
Concerned that the	4	The system chosen	

## CA8

Consultee	Comments	Times Raised	Officer Comments
	<p>system for payment looks complicated.</p> <p>Is the Council aware of the high volume of Nielsen employees who use the car park</p> <p>Why has the 11 hour time frame been chosen</p> <p>What is the function of Thornhill P &amp; R</p>	<p></p> <p>4</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p>	<p>maximises the means in which payments can be made and can be easily amended if improvements are identified. The aim is to have it as user friendly as possible from the outset.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>11 hours is based on a typical 8 hour working day, 1 hour travel allowance each direction plus an additional 1 hour. This was thought to be applicable to the majority of Oxford (and area) bound users for whose use the site is primarily provided for.</p> <p>The County Council considers the prime purpose of Park &amp; Ride is to reduce congestion in Oxford by intercepting journeys that would otherwise continue by car to destinations in the City.</p>
Local Residents	Have the County Council considered the potential impact on adjacent streets due to users seeking alternative, free parking	5	The County Council is aware of this potential and will continue to monitor the situation following the introduction of charging.
Lewknor Parish Council	Understands there may be a need for charging but strongly opposes the long stay proposal as it could have a profound effect on Lewknor parish.	1	The County Council is aware of this potential and will continue to monitor the situation following the introduction of charging.



