

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 28 MARCH 2019
OXFORD: AMENDMENTS TO ON-STREET PAY AND DISPLAY
PARKING CHARGES AND TIMES OF OPERATION

Report by Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed increases to the fees for on-street pay and display parking, and the additional times for which such fees apply on Sundays as advertised.

Executive summary

2. This change is to create a joined-up charging policy across for the City of Oxford so that the Car Parks operated by the City Council and the on-street parking operated by the County become aligned. The aim of this proposal is to improve the management of parking demand in the city through a more structured approach to demand management by:
 - the use of Park and Ride as a more favourable alternative to parking in Oxford city centre, whilst enabling those who need to drive in the city to do so (e.g. deliveries, disabled parking).
 - incentivising off-street parking through the charging structure and time restrictions.
 - harmonise Park and Ride Season ticket charges across the city and allow such ticket holders to park in any Park and Ride location
 - Introducing a zonal charging structure to on-street parking charges that is consistent with the city's existing zonal tariff structure for its off-street car parks, to limit growth of traffic, particularly where congestion is most severe.

Introduction

3. This report presents responses received to a Statutory consultation to change the operational hours for the use of the on-street pay and display parking and increases in tariffs.

Background

4. The new charging structure was submitted into the County budget review process and has been subject to review by Scrutiny committee on the 10 January 2019 and was subsequently signed off at Cabinet on the 22 January 2019.

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- Following Cabinet approval, the County Council was obliged to advertise its intention to alter the Traffic Regulation Order that changes the operational hours for when parking charges apply. As part of the process the Council is statutorily required to invite comments and objections to the proposals.

Exemption from Call-in

- Under Standing Orders (Section 6.2, paragraph 19 (a) to (c) the Chairman of the Council has agreed that that part of this report applying to the revised hours of operation should not be subject to call-in in order that the 2 elements of this proposal i.e. the charges and hours of operation come into force simultaneously on 1 April 2019. The main part of the proposals relating to the fee charges has already been through the scrutiny process in January 2019 prior to being subsequently agreed at Cabinet on 22 January 2019 as part of the Financial Budget submission and so the call-in process for that element of the proposal does not apply under Standing Orders (Section 6.2, paragraph 18 (h)). However, part of the supporting process for the increased charges involves the need to make a Traffic Regulation Order to change the hours of operation to come into operation on 1 April and that would normally be subject to call-in. However, doing so raises the potential for a problem of timing between the 2 elements if the hours of operation decision was to be called in. As the main fee charges has already been through the Scrutiny process before going to Cabinet the Chairman of the Council has agreed to waive the process for the hours of operation as any delay could prejudice the Council's or public's interest.

Consultation

- Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 21 February and 15 March 2019. A public notice was placed in the Oxford Times newspaper and sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Oxford City Council, local County & City Councillors and other parties judged to have an interest, with street notices placed by the on-street affected Pay and Display parking places.
- 19 responses were received. These are summarised in the table below with full responses included at Annex 1. Copies of the full responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Proposal	Support	Object	Neither
Increase in Charging	3 (16%)	13 (68%)	3 (16%)
Charging hours change	5 (26%)	8 (42%)	6 (32%)

Response to objections and other comments

9. The main objection to the increased parking charges is that they are too high. As outlined above, the purpose for the increases are two-fold; 1) to bring them in line with the City Council's Car parks and 2) to incentivise parking more towards Park & Ride sites and off-street car parks to improve traffic flow, reduce emissions and maintain road safety.
10. The 30-minute parking band encourages very short stay visits to the city, with the associated impact on congestion and air pollution, as drivers cruise around looking for spaces. It is proposed to remove this 30-minute parking band to discourage these very short stay visits and to help reduce the associated congestion and air pollution.
11. There are seven on-street parking areas (Keble Road; Mansfield Road; Merton Street; Savile Road; Great Clarendon Street; Norham Gardens; Walton Street) that have a separate tariff for Sundays to allow for people to attend Church. The new structure removes this separate tariff to bring on-street parking bands in line with the city council's and the zonal approach. It is noted that the council cannot either positively nor negatively discriminate on religious beliefs and to do so would involve granting concessions to all religious & faith groups. Ultimately, the council feels this would not be practical nor desirable in helping achieve the stated aims.
12. One objection has raised concerns that this proposal will restrict the elderly and people with mobility issues from going to church and suggests that a permit scheme is generated to allow free parking. It is noted that free parking is already available to Blue Badge holders to assist people with mobility issues.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

13. These changes are in-line with LTP4 Objectives which are to improve air quality and making better provision for walking and cycling

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

14. There are no staffing implications and any financial surplus that may arise out of the proposed increases will be redirected into improving transportation measures and assisting the objectives of LTP4.

OWEN JENKINS
Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Background papers: Consultation responses

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March 2019

RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – No objection – <i>No comment</i></p> <p><u>Charging Hours</u> – No objection – <i>No comment</i></p>
(2) Oxford City Cllr, (Littlemore Ward)	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – Support – I am very much in favour of these increased charges. It would be helpful if the County increases for on-street parking were co-ordinated with City charges for off-street, of course.</p> <p><u>Charging Hours</u> – Support – (<i>See above</i>)</p>
(3) Oxford Bus Company	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – Support – supports the aim to encourage parking off street rather than on-street. We welcome the principle of substantially increasing in charges which we hope would encourage drivers to choose to park off street or at the park and ride.</p> <p>We note that when using the park and ride, there is an additional cost in time to the user due to changing from car to bus. In practise it appears to us that a lone driver will now make a saving when using the park and ride which they may feel will offset the loss of time. However, with any passengers parking on street is still a lower total cost, thus we would say the increase in price for parking on street is certainly not too high.</p> <p><u>Charging Hours</u> – Support – We welcome the principle of simplifying the charging zones which we hope would make it easier for drivers to decide where best to park.</p>
(4) Local Church, (Oxford)	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – Object – Our church became established in St Giles' in the 1930s and we have seen changes from totally unrestricted parking on a Sunday and in the evening to the now excessively restricted and very costly parking. Many of our members and those in the congregation are elderly and already protest at the charges. Using P&R on a Sunday is not really an option for those who are limited in their walking although not requiring a blue badge. And this is true for those with young families.</p>

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	<p>To park outside our church for a maximum of two hours is not long enough when some of us have important jobs to do like conduct the services, which need preparation both before and afterwards. The existing cost is too high, and the new cost will be prohibitive. We are a lay church without priests or ministers. Some of us try to use Walton Street or other places, which allow a longer, less expensive, stay on a Sunday. Not so long ago the cost there was only £2.00. Making it £3.00 seems exorbitant and does result in people coming less frequently and certainly putting less money in the collection. Pensioners and other good folk are not made of money. The sums really mount up. To park outside the church for say 45 times a year, for just one vehicle -on Sundays and Wednesdays when we have our public services --will cost just over £400 We need to be at the church at other times as well.</p> <p>We would ask you to make an exception for churches and allow us to run a permit scheme, as do other cities and boroughs. There are a number of other places of worship in the immediate area and you may feel this is excessive to include them. However, we are the only Christian Science Church in the whole of Oxfordshire and therefore ask for special consideration. We feel that we are an asset to the city. Some in our congregation come a great distance such as Bicester, Chipping Norton and Horton-Cum-Studley. Buses are not always the answer. Attending church is a pleasure and should not need to be made stressful by worrying about whether one's parking is about to run out and how much it will cost.</p> <p>We feel that these increases are unnecessary and too high. Although you may not have thought about a permit scheme now is the time to include this. Sunday from 9.30 am to 12.30 and Wednesday from 6.00 pm would be ideal. We would be more than happy to work out with you how to arrange this with minimum effort from the Council.</p> <p><u>Charging Hours</u> – No objection – We understand the need to simplify the zones, which makes sense but object to the increase in charges.</p>
<p>(5) Local Business, (Oxford)</p>	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – Object – The parking charges are extremely high and do not represent good value in any way, they are and have been for a decade the reason so many valuable visitors either stop using the city centre and the business within it or only use them as a last resort.</p> <p>The population of Oxford cannot support the businesses within the city now that the Westgate is open. We need to keep all of Oxford thriving so a more welcoming and fairer pricing strategy would be ""peak & off peak"" pricing cutting the parking prices will make people stay longer and use more of the city, longer stays will also cut traffic jams and incentivise people to use the off peak times where the roads are quieter.</p>

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	<p>A fairer more constructive way would be to look at the traffic flow and opening up the High St, Cornmarket, and Broad St, removing the restrictions in St Ebbes, George St, Magdalen St, Turl St and the High St Junction with Magdalen Bridge would probably enable traffic to flow more smoothly, reducing pollution and putting a 20mph speed limit everywhere will help safety</p> <p><u>Charging Hours</u> – Neither – I would only support this if the parking fees were in line with other similar cities, were designed to invite people rather than rip them off.</p>
<p>(6) Local Resident, (Horspath)</p>	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – Object – We have no buses running from our village into town. These policies just encourage people to travel in cars more. Make buses available and cheap and then you can make parking more expensive. At a time when high streets are in trouble you are suggesting putting up parking. This does seem a strange decision.</p> <p><u>Charging Hours</u> – Object – I would have thought that parking further out of the centre should be cheaper to encourage people not to drive into the centre of town.</p>
<p>(7) Local Group/Organisation, (Oxford)</p>	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – Object – The concern is over the increase of charges on a Sunday morning when people who coming to the City centre to church will have an increased cost. Given that most of the shops do not open until late morning, can consideration be given for a reduced rate up to midday to assist those people coming to Oxford for worship.</p> <p><u>Charging Hours</u> – Object – <i>As above.</i></p>
<p>(8) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – Object – Parking charges in Oxford are already extortionate and it has done nothing to alleviate the volume of traffic in the time that I have lived in the city.</p> <p><u>Charging Hours</u> – Neither – <i>No comment</i></p>
<p>(9) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – Neither – <i>No comment</i></p> <p><u>Charging Hours</u> – Object – I disagree with the loss of the half hour parking facility. The Wednesday Market weekly shop would impossibly expensive (I do this on the behalf of a number of families).</p>

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<p>(10) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – Object – The parking charges will restrict many to reach city centre as the bus fares are not so reasonable when a family of 4 or 5 travels to town for shopping, theatre etc. so it will adversely impact on business as many shops are already getting empty today's Oxford Mail wrote about 30 is the recent count.</p> <p>So if the parking charges needs to be increased to save the town from pollution and traffic then the bus fares should be made more affordable and in the reach of individuals which appears to be not hence I object this parking charges increase proposal.</p> <p><u>Charging Hours</u> – Object – <i>No comment</i></p>
<p>(11) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – Object – 1. The Council has asserted, but provided no quantified evidence, that there is benefit (other than increased raising of funds) from these proposals. It is not evident that increasing charges will reduce the number of vehicles circulating and therefore congestion. In fact, it is possible that more vehicles (including taxis) will circulate around the streets dropping people off. There are other actions which would have a higher impact on congestion, e.g. taxing workplace parking or helping schools to reengineer drop-offs.</p> <p>2. The additionally higher pricing for Saturdays is, again, not justified by a rationale based on congestion. Are there more cars on the streets on a Saturday afternoon than on Monday to Friday? Clearly not! There is no reason to raise Saturday prices other than to make more money from residents and visitors.</p> <p>3. Higher benefits to the City would result from more modern measures -- for example, adopting the scheme used by the City of Westminster to provide free parking for electric vehicles, which could significantly decrease pollution.</p> <p>4. If the goal is to reduce congestion, this could also be achieved by making the duration of parking longer. If the meters were changed to 4-hour meters, fewer cars would travel through the streets to get there. Has this been analysed? If not, this is further evidence that this is a tax-raising effort and not a congestion-reducing effort.</p> <p>5. The sharp rise in parking charges may have a negative impact on the cultural life of the City -- especially for those who regularly attend concerts at the Holywell Music Room or visit the University Museums. Note that some of these users live in Oxford but not in places with convenient bus links -- and it would make no sense for these users to travel out to the P&R sites only to come back in again.</p> <p>6. Part of the rationale is "to account for increasing costs". We would challenge that rationale: there are ways to reduce</p>

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	<p>costs of delivering parking charges with better technology and increased automation -- these should be pursued before passing on more costs to taxpayers.</p> <p><u>Charging Hours</u> – Object – The Council proposes to standardise charges across the zones to reduce confusion, but provides no evidence that drivers are in fact confused. The consequence of this so-called standardisation is a very steep increase in charges in less-used streets. This has no benefit to visitors or residents other than raising money for the Council.</p> <p>If the Council wishes to reduce confusion, perhaps it would be better to focus on the user interface, and reliability, of the pay and display meters. In the last week we have had to help half a dozen visitors to Oxford who were completely confused by the terrible user interface design on these meters. That is real confusion; pricing which varies between streets is not confusion.</p>
<p>(12) Local Group/Organisation, (Oxford)</p>	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – Object – <i>No comment</i></p> <p><u>Charging Hours</u> – Object – <i>No comment</i></p>
<p>(13) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – Object – The prices are already expensive. I only come town when I need to do something e.g. bank if I stay few hours that is my lunch money.</p> <p><u>Charging Hours</u> – Object – <i>No comment</i></p>
<p>(14) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – Object – Elderly people, those who are not able to walk any distances, and families with young children need to be able to park close to the church.</p> <p>I ask you to make an exception for churches and allow all the churches in the city to run a permit scheme, as do other cities and boroughs. Otherwise you are discouraging church going through taxing those who attend.</p> <p><u>Charging Hours</u> – Neither – <i>No comment</i></p>

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<p>(15) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – Object – on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The proposed costs for parking are prohibitive and are a significant increase on what many motorists perceive to be already high charges• This will have the effect of reducing footfall to an already endangered high street and have a direct impact on struggling businesses; the latest casualty being Fopp which will further exacerbate the struggling Gloucester Green area• Removal of free parking after 1 pm on Saturdays and free parking on Sundays will affect footfall on local businesses and nearby museums on important trading days• Removal of free parking after 6:30pm will reduce customers to already struggling restaurants and evening entertainment venues• The proposals threatens the dwindling supply of free parking• People who rely on services in town will be put off from accessing shops and services when personal resources are already severely stretched• Those on lower incomes face discrimination by disproportionately higher charges vs income or by removal of free parking times, reducing ability to access local shops and services <p>The parking in the aforementioned area is approximately one mile out from the centre in which is hardly a congested area. I have parked in this area many times and it is not an area where residents struggle to find spaces, there are always parking spaces available at all times during the day, any day of the week. Local residents are either students without cars or adequate residential parking is provided on driveways.</p> <p>MPs are quick enough to condemn the very real ' death of the high street', yet this sentiment is undermined by overly burdensome council proposals. Both the consumer and local businesses loose out by higher charges. Long term, this will have the effect of reducing council revenues.</p> <p>As a council tax paying Oxford resident, I can attest the proposals will have a negative effect on my family and our use and support of local services. The council will be no richer in revenue as travel into town will be restricted, but it will have detrimental effects on local businesses.</p> <p><u>Charging Hours</u> – Object – (As above)</p>
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<p>(16) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – Object – Parking prices are already high enough and it isn't clear what the council spends the money on. You will drive people to use the Westgate Car Park which is more reasonable.</p> <p><u>Charging Hours</u> – Support – <i>No comment</i></p>
<p>(17) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – Object – The so-called Oxford Transport Strategy has already caused widespread damage to shops and businesses within the city. It has done nothing to reduce the traffic going through. Now, though, it doesn't stop to use the facilities. Many tourists come by car, as well, and these outrageous charges are having the same effect. The council complains that its revenue from parking has reduced. It doesn't take a genius to work out why. Take a look at Witney. It's a lovely place to visit, with many individual and interesting shops. Could parking charges have something to do with this?</p> <p><u>Charging Hours</u> – Support – Standardisation of hours makes life less complicated.</p>
<p>(18) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Concerns - Naturally the council wishes to raise more revenue in order cover high maintenance costs such as repairing some of the road surfaces in Oxford city. However, this heavy-handed approach is not suitable for the vast majority of residents and will only deter visitors to our great city.</p> <p>Some proposed charges are quite out of keeping with those charged in other towns nearby, notably in Stratford upon Avon which I visit regularly, where evening charges are £2 for the period until 8am the following day. Similarly, charging so much on a Sunday morning would appear to select against those in our community who choose to use churches in Oxford for their weekly religious worship; special provision should be made for these and people of other faiths to allow free or reduced fee parking for a couple of relevant hours each week: special permits to accommodate them would surely be possible.</p> <p>Our elected representatives must not allow fiscal practicality to overcome compassion when considering fund raising to improve cash flow for the city. Please think again about this matter. We do depend on you for sensible and sensitive maintenance of the good name and well-being of Oxford City.</p>
<p>(19) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p><u>Increased Charging</u> – Support – <i>No comment</i></p>

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	<u>Charging Hours</u> – Support – <i>No comment</i>
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