

Urgency Committee

26 June 2007

Report of the Director of City Strategy

EVENING PARKING CHARGES

Summary

1. This report is brought forward to the Urgency Committee following the approval of the "policy prospectus" by the Executive on the 12th June. A decision on this is now considered urgent owing to the perceived impact on York's evening economy.

Background

2. Evening Parking charges in use within the city apply to both car parks and most on street Pay and Display areas. The current tariff is a flat rate of £2 with a 50% discount for residents. To claim the discount residents must display a Minster Badge. This Minster Badge is issued free of charge.
3. Holders of a Minster Badge may also claim a 30p an hour discount on daytime parking rates.
4. In 2006/7 the evening parking charges were budgeted to raise £271,000. Due to software problems with the Pay and Display ticket machine issuing analysis programme it is not possible to say with absolute certainty just how much of the income taken by each machine was taken after 6pm. Reasonable estimates can, however be made by reference to data obtained prior to the software difficulties occurring.
5. On the assumption that the 2006/7 sales after 6pm performance was similar to the 2005/06 the following is estimated :

Income	Resident	Non Resident	
Car park	£65,900	£308,000	
Street	£9,100	£43,000	
TOTAL	£75,000	£351,000	£426,000

6. It will be seen from this that the bulk of income is derived from non residents.

Evening Parking Survey

7. There have been repeated claims that the imposition of evening parking charges has damaged the evening economy of York. There is, however only anecdotal evidence to support this allegation. So as to provide some sound evidence the volume of parking taking place in the evening was surveyed over a two week period immediately prior to the publication of this report. This survey covered both on and off street parking areas and yellow line contraventions and was undertaken at 8pm each evening.
8. In order to test out the possibility that there might be a different volume or pattern of evening parking during a week with a bank Holiday to one without, the survey included the whole of a Bank Holiday weekend and the following week and then the weekend/week following.
9. There are a total of 327 on street parking spaces within a five minute walk of the evening economy attractions of the city centre and 2142 off street spaces available (all under the control of the city council). The vast majority of these spaces are, however not convenient to the bulk of the evening economy attractions.
10. Prior to the introduction of evening parking charges there were 247 on street parking spaces and 2191 off street spaces available. The additional spaces (80) were added around the St Helens Square area (40) and Walmgate area (40).
11. The evening surveys were benchmarked using daytime use data taken from the automatic car park counters and ticket sales.
12. On the hypothesis that the evening parking charges were affecting the evening economy the following conditions should have been apparent from the survey work:

Evening conditions

Car parks – generally empty and much lower use than during the day

On street Pay and Display – generally empty and much lower use than during the day

Yellow line contraventions – much higher than in the day

The survey showed no discernable difference between a Bank Holiday weekend/week and a normal weekend/week. The following generalised results summarise what was found:

Car Parks

Castle	generally at between 80 to 95% full
Nunnery Lane	generally at between 25 to 35% full
Other	generally at between 8 to 15% full

On street

Spaces close to Micklegate 60% full	generally at between 40 to 60% full
Spaces close to Parliament St 60% full	generally at between 50 to 60% full
Spaces close to Kings Staith	generally at around 50 full

Yellow line contraventions

Micklegate area	minimal
Parliament Street area	significant
Kings Staith area	minimal

13. In general there were around 180 on street spaces in use in the evening and around 180 off street

Daytime benchmarking showed the following:

Car Parks

Castle	generally at between 30 to 40% full
Nunnery Lane	generally at between 30 to 45% full
Other	generally at between 20 to 40% full

On street

Spaces close to Micklegate 100% full	generally at between 80 to 100% full
Spaces close to Parliament St 100% full	generally at between 90 to 100% full
Spaces close to Kings Staith	generally at around 100% full

Yellow line contraventions

Micklegate area	minimal
Parliament Street area	minimal
Kings Staith area	minimal

Analysis

14. The survey indicates that the on street parking take up in the evening is lower than during the day. Conversely Castle car park is used more extensively in the evening than during the day.
15. Apart from the Parliament Street area there is little contravention of yellow lines. This indicates that those who are wishing to park are using the parking bays provided. If drivers were being deterred from

parking in the city by the evening charges it would have been expected that in areas of high demand paid for parking spaces would be empty whilst yellow line contraventions would be high. Given the high contraventions in the Parliament Street area it cannot be that drivers are fearing being issued with a PCN that is deterring them from shunning paid for parking.

Conclusions from Survey work

16. The above results suggest that there may be some impact around the Parliament Street area but elsewhere the situation seems to suggest that parking customers are not being deterred by the parking charges.

Practical issues

Pay and Display machines

17. Evening Parking charges are collected through Pay and Display machines. Should Members wish to alter the current charges it will therefore be necessary to alter these machines so as to reflect any new charge to be made. This will affect the Tariff Boards – ie the on machine or on car park publicity which advises customers of the charges that apply at different times of the day – and the internal ticket machine software. Depending upon the action required both have cost and time implications. These are detailed in the table below:

Option		Tariff Boards		Machine software	
		Cost	Timescale	Cost	Timescale
A	Remove Evening charges completely	£3,000	3 weeks	£4,500	6 weeks*
B	Modify the charges for both resident and non residents	£3,000	3 weeks	£4,500	6 weeks**
C	Allow Minster badge holders to park free of charge	£3,000	3 weeks	£Nil***	

Notes

- * There are 9 Pay and Display machines which only operate in the evening. If Members were to abolish Evening Tariffs completely these machines would need to be removed from street at a total cost of £2,700. All the machines can be reused to replace older machines that have come to the end of their useful life so reinstatement costs and revised software costs will be met from the allocated maintenance budget.

** Depending upon the tariff selected it may not be possible to technically deliver a software solution as the city council machines are currently operating at the limit of what any Pay and Display systems can operate. If this option is favoured Officer advice in detail should be sought.

*** The necessary change can be made at the time that any other tariff changes are introduced so there is no direct cost just associated with the Evening Parking consideration.

Traffic Order

18. Any change in tariffs will require the controlling Traffic Order to be modified before any new charges can be levied. This applies irrespective of an increase or a decrease in the level of charge and a £Nil charge for Minster Badge holders in Option C has to be treated in the same way as if an actual fee was being required to be paid. This change can be made by publication of a Notice. The Notice must appear in a local newspaper regularly circulating in the area and at every point where tariffs are published (ie on Pay and Display machines and Tariff Boards).
19. Revised charges cannot be brought into effect until a minimum of three weeks after the publication of the Notice. This process will cost £1,250.

Budget

20. There are no budget allocations within the approved 2007/8 budget that could meet the cost of practically introducing a revised Evening parking charge. The sum of up to £10,000 (depending upon the option selected) will need to be found from within existing budgets to cover these start up costs.
21. It would be possible to introduce changes to the evening parking arrangements at any point in the Financial year. Any part year effect on current budgets would thus need to be considered should a change be made in 2007/8
22. A decision today to eliminate Evening Parking charges for Minster Badge holders would cost in the region of £55,000 in this Financial year. The cost in a full year would be £75,000

Implications

Financial

23. The expected loss of revenue from the introduction of free evening parking for residents in 2007/08 is estimated to be £55,000. Given the council has a gross income budget of £6,200k it is considered that the reduced income from this proposal could be contained within the parking budgets. However this will need to be carefully monitored throughout the year and any shortfall reported through the council's financial monitoring process.
24. In a full year the cost will be £75,000 and it will therefore be necessary to address this ongoing cost through the 2008/09 budget process.
25. The cost of changing signage of up to £10,000 will be met from existing budgets established for this purpose.

Other Implications

26. There are no Human Resources, Equalities, Legal, Crime and Disorder, Information Technology, or Property implications.

Risk Management

27. In compliance with the Councils risk management strategy the main risks that have been identified in this report are those which could lead to the inability to meet business objectives (Strategic) and to deliver services (Operational), leading to financial loss (Financial). Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score all risks has been assessed at more than 16, This means that at this point the risks need to be balanced against any gains and if Members do decide to modify Evening Parking Charges the implications be very closely monitored particularly with regard to potential impacts upon the council's ability to deliver services and its Statutory Duty to have a balanced budget.

Recommendations

28. It is recommended that:
 - a the views of Members be sought

Reason: As requested in the 'policy prospectus'.

Contact Details

Author:

Peter Evely
Head of Network Management
Network Management
Tel No. (55) Ext No 1414

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Bill Woolley
Director of City Strategy

Report Approved **Date**

Specialist Implications Officer: Patrick Looker, Finance Manager, City Strategy

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None