

REVIEW OF CAR PARK CHARGING POLICY

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members are requested to consider the charging policy for fee paying car parks as part of the budget making process for 2001/2002.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Members will recall that a full review of the car park service commenced in September 1999 and that a revised scale of charges was agreed at Extraordinary Council on 28 June 2000 (min. 212). The new charges were introduced on 11 September 2000.
- 2.2 On 21st September 2000 Members agreed to a further full review of the Council's Car Park Charging Policy as part of the 2001/2 Budget Process.

3. REVIEW

- 3.1 In order to predict the likely income from any new scale of parking fees it is essential that reliable base information is used. This enables an accurate assessment of ticket sales within any particular tariff band, together with the income generated from those sales. Over the years, based on the former tariff bands, considerable information had been gathered about parking patterns and seasonal variations. This enabled Members to make an informed decision about the new tariffs at the Special Council Meeting of 28 June 2000.
- 3.2 Unfortunately, because of the revised tariff bands and other influencing factors mentioned in the paragraphs below, there is insufficient data flow to be able to produce a meaningful report at this stage.
- 3.3 During the first week of operation of the new tariff the country suffered a severe shortage of fuel due to industrial action which resulted in markedly reduced usage of the Authority's car parks. At the time of preparation of this report, there have been only five weeks normal operation/usage of the District's car parks. Additionally, Bellingham Lane car park has suffered disruption because of demolition and improvement works.
- 3.4 Officers consider that period is too short to assess usage trends and make an accurate forecast of the potential usage and income. Based on the sketchy information to hand it would appear that the likely yield

for a full year at the new tariff would be around £430,000. No effect has been given in these figures of the seasonal uplift at Christmas and the New Year.

- 3.5 What is evident is that with the lack of a “one hour ticket” option more motorists are choosing to purchase the half-hour ticket rather than the two hour ticket as predicted in the financial model. Ticket sales of the half-hour ticket have increased from 28% to nearly 34% of all ticket sales. This migration is, perhaps, an early indication that the new tariff is not having the effect of encouraging motorists to stay longer in our Town Centres.
- 3.6 At Southend Road, Hockley car park which has now a minimum stay of two hours, there is strong evidence of ticket swapping amongst motorists and Members may wish to consider returning this car park to the standard tariff which applies across the remainder of the District or to purchase ticket issuing machines which prevent abuse.
- 3.7 There have been ten complaints received in respect of the new charges at Hockley. No complaints have been received regarding the revised tariffs which apply to the remainder of the District.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Car Park income provides a vital financial resource for all the Council which is used to stabilise the Council Tax. Any fluctuation in the income stream will have a marked effect on the Tax levy.

5 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

- (1) That no further action be taken to revise the Car Park tariff at present.
- (2) That consideration be given to bringing the Hockley Car Park tariff in line with the rest of the District. (HRHM)

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Background Papers:

None

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