

EAST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

COMMITTEE: COUNCIL

DATE: 9TH JANUARY 2013

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF CAR PARKING FEES & CHARGES

PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNCILLOR BRIDGES

Ward(s) affected: All

Brief description of report content and the decision being asked for:

Summary:

This report presents proposals for changes to the fee structure on car parks operated by East Lindsey District Council along with proposed parking policy changes. In considering how important car parking is to the local economy as well as how important car parking income is to the Council in helping to fund services to local people, the following recommendations are proposed.

Recommendations:

That Council agrees:

1. The fee increases proposed at 3.1a of this report in relation to short / medium stay amenity car parks, to be adopted from April 2013;
2. The fee increases proposed at 3.1b of this report in relation to long stay amenity car parks, to be adopted from April 2013;
3. The fee increases proposed at 3.1c of this report in relation to the tariffs on foreshore car parks, to be adopted from April 2013;
4. An alignment of the fees for the months of March and October on the foreshore car parks to the main season tariffs, with effect from October 2013 as proposed in paragraph 3.2;
5. An equalisation of the daily charging period on all ELDC operated car parks to 8am – 6pm as proposed in paragraph 3.3;
6. That those car parks currently providing all day free parking become chargeable allowing an hour of free parking as proposed at paragraph 3.4;
7. An amendment to the capital programme to incorporate the capital investment of approximately £56,000 to be sourced from the Technology Reserve and repaid over a period of five years;

8. That parking charges are applied across all ELDC car parks on Sundays as proposed at paragraph 3.6; and
9. A change in the approach to parking provision for disabled drivers as set out at 3.7.

REASON: To ensure the Council has an appropriate and balanced approach to parking across the district, addressing current policy shortcomings and securing an appropriate level of revenues to ensure services to local people can be maintained.

This report has been prepared by:

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This report was prepared after consultation with:

Portfolio Holder for the Environment; All ELDC Councillors and relevant Town and Parish Councils – as part of the Scrutiny process; Car Parks Manager and the Team Leader, Enforcement; and Senior Management Team.

This report is number 1 in a series of 1.

This report has been signed off by:

Rob Barlow, Deputy Chief Executive; Cllr Bridges, Portfolio Holder for the Environment

The following policies form a context to this report:

Current ELDC car parking policies

This report is a key decision included in the Forward Plan.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(papers relied on to write the report but which are not published and do not contain exempt information)

1. None

OTHER HELPFUL PAPERS

(papers which the report author considers might be helpful – this might include published material)

1. ELDC Car Parking Scrutiny Panel, report to Council on 10th October 2012
2. Report to Executive Board 13th November 2012
3. All supporting information is included as Appendices to the report

Local Government (Access to Information Act) 1985

Is the report Exempt –No

Please contact the person who has written this report or Duncan Hollingworth

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e-mail: duncan.hollingworth@e-lindsey.gov.uk , if you want more information about this report or the background papers.

1.0. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. As part of its Medium Term Budget Strategy, the Council identified that car parking fees and charges should be reviewed for 2013. On 10th October the Council debated a report of the Scrutiny Panel into car parking arrangements and this report brings forward the Executive Board's recommendations following that work.

2.0. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. ELDC has fifty seven areas included within its car parking order of which forty two are 'pay and display' car parks. **Appendix A** includes details of these. There are three categories of 'pay and display' parking:
- 18 Foreshore car parks – primarily provided for use by holidaymakers;
 - 18 Short/Medium Stay Amenity car parks - principally provided for use by shoppers in the market towns;
 - 6 Long Stay Amenity car parks - provided for customers who require competitively priced parking for extended periods e.g. shop and office staff.
- The remaining fifteen areas are free car parks.
- 2.2. At its meeting on 13th November 2012 Executive Board agreed that nine areas previously included within the car parking order should be removed. Those areas and the associated rationale are listed in **Appendix B**.
- 2.3. Current charging arrangements generate approximately £2.6M net income to the Council annually, which amounts to more than 10% of the Council's total income and more than 60% of income generated from trading activities over and above the Rate Support Settlement/Council Tax income.
- 2.4. With the exception of the renegotiation of fees with the Hildreds Centre in relation to the Lawn Car Park in Skegness in 2009, this authority has made no changes to its car parking charges since 2008 and has contained the VAT increase to 20% since January 2011.

3.0. SUBJECT INFORMATION AND ISSUES/FACTS AND FIGURES

- 3.1. The following tariff increase proposals are recommended

a) Increase only the 1-hour and 2-hour tariff bands on short/medium stay amenity car parks.

It is proposed that tariff changes are made to twelve of the short/medium stay amenity car parks, those being:

- Skegness - Arcadia and Lawn*
- Mablethorpe - High Street and Park Square Car Park
- Spilsby - Market Place and Buttercross
- Horncastle - St. Lawrence Street
- Louth - Queen Street, Northgate East, Broadbank, Kidgate, Co-op*

Comparison of the changes to the tariff bands for the twelve car parks is as follows:

Duration	Existing	Proposed
Up to ½ hr	50p	50p
1 hr	80p	£1
2 hrs	£1.20	£1.50
3 hrs	£2	£2
4 hrs	£3	£3
*Subject to agreement with land owner		

The remaining short/medium stay car parks already have a tariff of £1 for a maximum 1hour stay.

b) Increase the tariffs in all long stay amenity car parks.

An amended tariff structure for all six Long Stay Amenity car parks is proposed as follows. The facilities are:

- Louth - Kiln Lane and Newmarket
- Mablethorpe - Seacroft
- Spilsby - Post Office Lane
- Alford - South Street
- Horncastle - Bain

Comparison of the changes to the tariff bands is as follows:

Duration	Existing	Proposed
Up to 1 hr	50p *	Minimum 2 hr stay*
2 hrs	80p	£1
4 hrs	£1.20	£1.50
6 hrs	£1.60	Remove 6 hr option
8 hrs	£1.80	Remove 8 hr option

All Day	£2	£3
* 1hr free at Post Office Lane, Spilsby		

c) Increase only the all-day tariffs on foreshore car parks

It is proposed that those foreshore car parks providing an all-day stay option are subject to tariff changes as follows. The facilities are:

- Skegness - Northend, Pierside, Festival, Prince’s Parade
- Mablethorpe - Queen’s Park South, Queen’s Park Main, Seaview
- Sutton on Sea - Broadway

Comparison of the changes to the tariff bands is as follows:

Skegness			Mablethorpe/Sutton On Sea		
Time	Existing	Proposed	Time	Existing	Proposed
Up to 2hrs	£2.50	£2.50	Up to 2hrs	£1.60	£1.60
All Day	£6	£7	All Day	£4	£5
After 2pm	£3.50	£3.50	After 2pm	£2.50	£2.50
After 6pm	£1.50	Free*	After 6pm	£1.20	Free*
* Links to 3.3 below					

- 3.2. Fourteen foreshore car parks across Skegness, Mablethorpe and Sutton-on-Sea are subject to stepped tariffs which apply only during the months of **March** and **October**. **Appendices C and D** show the current tariffs for these months with the respective winter and main season charges. It is recommended that the main season charges are applied to the months of March and October with effect from October 2013.
- 3.3. Currently the coastal car parks have charges applied until 10pm. In order to better support the night-time economy on the coast and to bring more uniformity across the district, it is recommended that all car park charging periods cease at 6pm.
- 3.4. There are fifteen car parks that are currently free to use. It is proposed that pay and display charges are introduced on thirteen of these locations to reflect costs incurred by the Council in their maintenance and upkeep, incorporating a ‘one hour free’ arrangement. The remaining two to become permit only parking. The fifteen sites are listed at **Appendix E**. The proposed charging arrangement will align with the arrangements for long-stay amenity car parks at 3.1b above allowing additionally for a period of 1 hr free parking as follows:

Duration	£
Up to 1hr	Free
Up to 2hrs	£1
Up to 4hrs	£1.50
All Day	£3

It is proposed that the existing 'one hour free' arrangement at Post Office Lane, Spilsby is retained to be reviewed when the issue of free parking periods is reviewed by the Scrutiny Panel in 2013.

Appendix F provides an amended list of car parks to be included in the Parking Order from April 2013. Fifty five would be 'Pay and Display' and two would be Permit only parking.

- 3.5. In order to facilitate the introduction of charges on those car parks that are currently free it will be necessary to install approximately 16 new pay and display machines at a cost of £3,500 each. It is proposed that the capital investment of approximately £56,000 is funded from the IT reserve and repaid over a period of five years from the parking income received.
- 3.6. With regard to Sunday charging, current practice allows for charges to be levied on the coastal car parks but not on the inland car parks which creates disparity across the district. It is proposed to end this disparity by introducing charges across the district.
- 3.7. Arrangements for disabled drivers to park in ELDC car parks are different in different areas of the district which causes confusion for disabled residents and visitors alike. The recommendations with regard to the current inconsistencies are that:
- Disabled parking bays should continue to be provided on all marked car parks and strategically placed to ensure ease of exit and entry, and proximity to the end destination, within which:
 - All Disabled badge holders should be charged to park but a longer time period should be given to reflect the potential for slower movement to and from the area visited;
 - The rationale for this being that disability is not a matter of 'ability to pay' it is a matter of proximity and time needed;
 - Following best practice adopted in other areas it is suggested that when purchasing parking, disabled drivers should receive an additional free period of time equivalent to that purchased e.g. one hour purchased would allow two hours parking.

4.0. SUPPLEMENTARY FACTS

- 4.1. When considering the proposed tariff increases against the inflation and VAT changes since 2008 the changes proposed at 3.1 bring the fees broadly into line with where they would be had the annual inflationary etc increases been applied. The table below provides an example of this:

Year	8/9	9/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	Proposal
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RPI		-1.4%	4.78%	4.96%	3.15%	4%est	
VAT				2.5%			
Charge	80p	79p	83p	89p	92p	95p	£1
Charge	£4	£3.94	£4.13	£4.45	£4.59	£4.77	£5
Charge	£6	£5.91	£6.20	£6.67	£6.88	£7.15	£7

- 4.2. There is currently an 'agreement' that each of the main settlements across the district will have one free car park. This is an historic arrangement to some extent stemming from the 1974 local government reorganisation, when agreements were made with local towns with regard to the provision of car parking.
- 4.3. With regard to Sunday charging, the scrutiny review challenged the historical arrangements and proposed more of a standardised approach. The panel argued that it is the 'offer' that attracts visitors and travel decisions are not determined by the cost to park, provided those parking charges are reasonable.
- 4.4. Benchmarking was undertaken as part of the scrutiny work which demonstrated that the proposals put forward will have little impact on our parking charges in comparison to those of other similar and neighbouring locations.
- 4.5. The Council has continued to receive representations against the proposals contained in this report through discussions at Area Committees and specific correspondence from some stakeholders; along with significant negative press coverage. One concern is that people will choose to visit the larger towns of Grimbsy, Cleethorpes, Gainsborough or Lincoln to do their shopping in larger supermarkets with free parking. However, given the cost of fuel to travel to these outlying destinations it is not felt that the changes proposed will have any detrimental effect on the local market towns.
- 4.6. In acknowledging the work of the Scrutiny Panel and the subsequent pre-decision recommendations presented to Council on 10th October, **Appendix G** provides a summary rationale for how those proposals have been reflected in the recommendations presented in this report.

5.0. COUNCILLOR COMMENTS

- 5.1. As part of the Council debate on the scrutiny report at the 10th October 2012 meeting, several points were raised and are reflected in the draft meeting minutes. In line with the Council resolution on the matter those points have been given due regard in shaping the proposals presented in this report. **Appendix H** provides a summary of those points and the respective rationale for the Executive Board proposals presented in this report.

6.0. DISCUSSION / CONSIDERATION – ISSUES / CONCLUSION

- 6.1. The matter of introducing charges on free car parks raised some challenges amongst members both through the scrutiny process and during the subsequent Council debate. Representations were broadly concerned that charging would create problems for the 'school run'; would push drivers to park on the streets; would require investment to bring car parks to a

standard expected of a charged car park; and could jeopardise the viability of local businesses and community events.

Solutions discussed to overcome these concerns include the use of Lincolnshire County Council's 'Park and Stride' permit scheme for schools; the introduction of decriminalised parking enforcement will deter inappropriate on street parking; investment will seek to achieve a minimum standard of provision; the approach to charging seeks to balance the need for a period of free parking alongside charging a 'reasonable' tariff for long-stay and all-day parking.

Feedback received from other stakeholders, including Town and Parish Councils, has argued for the retention of the all-day free parking arrangement but suggested that, if this was not possible, consideration is given to retaining a period of free parking. The proposals presented have very much taken account of those concerns.

- 6.2. In considering the proposals on parking for disabled drivers it should be noted that this would require all disabled drivers to pay to park in ELDC car parks and may force more of them to seek free parking on-street.
- 6.3. Doing nothing is not an option. Achieving an appropriate balance of measures district wide, creating greater equality in the approach to parking policy and charges underpins the recommendations in this report.

7.0. OTHER OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 7.1. Car park charges are an emotive issue and there are a wide range of options that could be introduced in terms of charging for parking in the District. The Executive Board has considered the range of issues and options and produced a report that takes account of the scrutiny recommendations; concerns raised by stakeholders and from the 10th October Council debate. Further scrutiny work will shape our future parking strategy and refine the charging arrangements.

8.0. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1. As with the current car parking revenues, achievement of the budget estimates is very much influenced by the weather. The revenue projections within this report assume the average visitor numbers to our car parks are maintained. Should the weather be unfavourable for a significant period of time, particularly through the main summer season, there is a risk that estimated revenues will not be achieved.
- 8.2. There is a risk that changing all public car parks to become 'pay and display' will force more drivers to park on-street. The introduction of on-street parking enforcement from December 2012 will ensure that on-street parking is effectively policed to discourage unlawful parking.

9.0. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. The proposals within this report will support the MTFs and budget setting process for 2013/14 in accordance with the desire to achieve circa £400k in additional parking revenue. This is made up of:

Item	£000's
3.1a) 1hr & 2hr tariffs on short/medium stay	160
3.1b) All tariffs in long stay car parks	90
3.1c) All-day tariffs on foreshore car parks	115
3.2 Align Mar & Oct tariffs on foreshore car parks	30
3.3 Equalise charged period to 8am-6pm	-55
3.4 Charging on free car parks	20 to 90
3.6 Equalise Sunday charges	10 to 35
3.7 Change and equalise disabled parking	0
	370 - 520

(Mark Humphreys)

- 9.2. As noted at paragraph 3.5 the Council will require an investment of £56,000 in order to install pay and display machines in the thirteen car parks that will become chargeable. It is recommended that this capital investment is funded from the Council's Technology Reserve (the uncommitted balance at the 31.3.2012 after payment for these machines is £866,252). Based on the estimated new income from these car parks the cost of these machines will be repaid to the reserve over a five year period, with future income thereafter contributing to the repairs and maintenance of these car parks (Jane Crosby).
- 9.3. The cost of the procurement of the car park machines will be included in a revised 2012/13 capital programme, which members are asked to approve. The revised programme for approval is summarised below. (NB this revised programme also includes the procurement of new refuse vehicles as detailed in another report on this meetings agenda). (Jane Crosby)

	£
Approved capital programme	3,760,034
Additions	
Refuse Fleet Vehicles	2,600,000
Car Park machines	56,000
Revised capital programme for approval	6,416,034

10.0. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS / IMPLICATIONS.

- 10.1. Provision needs to be made to amend the Car Park Order once recommendations are agreed by Council (Anne Heard).

11.0. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1. **Human Resources** – The Human Resource implications of the recommendations within this report i.e. increased enforcement activity on Sundays; and the increased number of car parks on which to undertake enforcement will be contained within revenue budgets (Duncan Hollingworth).
- 11.2. **Section 17** – Increased staff presence and enforcement activity on current free car parks will reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour on those areas that are currently unsupervised (Duncan Hollingworth).
- 11.3. **Equality and Diversity** – The policy change proposals for disabled drivers provide a more equitable approach district wide. New and improved information will be provided to ensure the policy changes are clearly communicated (Duncan Hollingworth).

12.0. HOW DO THE ACTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT DELIVER OUR COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE STRATEGIES?

- 12.1. The recommendations within the report support our mission to be an efficient, entrepreneurial and effective local authority.