

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Corporate Director of Enterprise, Tourism and
the Environment

to

**Traffic and Parking Working Party and
Cabinet Committee**

on

28th July 2011

Agenda
Item No.

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Proposed New Parking Charging Areas

Executive Councillor: Councillor Tony Cox
A Part 1 Public Agenda Item

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Traffic and Parking Working Party and Cabinet Committee is asked to consider details of the objections to the proposals to introduce parking charges along sections of Eastern Esplanade and the proposal to extend parking charges to cover 1800-2100 hours and decide upon the way forward.

2. Recommendation

A. Changes to the Parking Arrangements on Eastern Esplanade

- 2.1 That the Traffic and Parking Working Party consider the objections to the Formal Consultation on changes to the parking arrangements on Eastern Esplanade and:

- 2.1.1 Implement the proposals without amendments; or
- 2.1.2 Implement the proposals with amendments; or
- 2.1.3 Take no further action.

- 2.2 That the Cabinet Committee considers the views of the Traffic and Parking Working Party in respect of the objections on changes to the parking arrangements on Eastern Esplanade and:

- 2.2.1 Implement the proposals without amendments; or
- 2.2.2 Implement the proposals with amendments; or
- 2.2.3 Take no further action.

B. Changes to the hours for Car Park Charges

- 2.3 That the Traffic and Parking Working Party consider the objections to the Formal Consultation on changes to the hours for car park charges to include the period from 1800hrs until 2100hrs and:

- 2.3.1 Implement the proposals without amendments; or
 - 2.3.2 Implement the proposals with amendments; or
 - 2.3.3 Take no further action.
- 2.4 That the Cabinet Committee considers the views of the Traffic and Parking Working Party on changes to the hours for car park charges to include the period from 1800hrs until 2100hrs:
- 2.4.1 Implement the proposals without amendments; or
 - 2.4.2 Implement the proposals with amendments; or
 - 2.4.3 Take no further action.
- 2.5 In the event of either 2.2.1 or 2.2.2 and 2.4.1 or 2.4.2 being agreed to authorise the implementation of the scheme as advertised, or to amend to reduce the impact, as appropriate.

C. Changes to the Streets off Eastern Esplanade

- 2.6 It is also recommended that the Cabinet Committee instructs officers to consider the concerns of residents and local businesses and bring back detailed proposals for the streets around the Eastern Esplanade to consider wider impact of the proposed new charges as part of the Project prioritisation report referred to in paragraph 8.2.1 of this report.

3. Background

- 3.1 The proposal to introduce parking charges along the proposed section of Eastern Esplanade and extending operational hours from 1800-2100 were agreed by the Council as part of the 20011/12 budget process.

Eastern Esplanade

- 3.2 The eastern seafront area from Victoria Road to Thorpe Hall Avenue has on street parking provision for which historically no charges have been applied, which is inconsistent with the majority of the seafront where charges are made. These bays are currently being used by residents, businesses as well as visitors to the seafront area. Whilst this serves a useful purpose to enable local residents to park in this area, it does create an anomaly across seafront and is an historic practice that needs to be brought in line for consistency.
- 3.3 It is proposed to introduce charges consistent with those promoted in the Council's agreed *Fees & Charges* document as follows:

UPTO:	COST:
1 hour	£1.00
2 hours	£1.80
3 hours	£2.60
4 hours	£4.20
5 hours	£5.30
6 hours	£6.50
6 hours+	£8.00

- 3.4 It is anticipated that there will be some parking displacement of residential parking from Eastern Esplanade, which will be monitored, and recommendation C is designed to mitigate this impact.

- 3.5 It is evident from the level of objections that there are substantial representations against the implementation of the extended hours. Ward Councillors and key businesses have raised strong objections against the proposed change. As such it is evident that the proposal for the changes to parking arrangements is seen by respondents in a way that places a heavy burden on them.

Southend East Railway Station & Riviera Drive

- 3.6 The Council is also considering revising the parking arrangements in Riviera Drive, adjacent to Southend East Station, which are also currently free of charge. This is the only station in the borough where this situation exists and therefore it is an opportunity to create consistency and to relieve commuter parking pressures. In the future, it is intended to provide off street parking in this location and to offer a premium service, for an annual charge. The changes to car parking arrangements around Southend East railway station will also need to be accompanied by restrictions in the vicinity to prevent commuters using the surrounding residential streets at the expense of residents. However, at this time no decision has been taken as to the details of these proposals.

- 3.7 It is intended to consult local communities on possibility of introducing limited hours parking restrictions or Controlled Parking Zone in this area. Questionnaires designed to assess degree of support for any changes regarding parking restrictions and zone are programmed to be sent out during the next two weeks and analysis of responses will be reported to the Committee at the earliest opportunity.

Southchurch East Park

- 3.8 It has also been suggested that Southchurch East Car Park could be used as a “Pay and Display” car park to provide parking for those wishing to park close to the seafront. Currently this car park provides a “Park and Walk” facility for the parents and children attending Thorpe Greenways Schools. The majority of this car park is not surfaced and is not marked out and some investment is required to bring the condition of the car park up to a suitable standard where car parking could be charged for and, as a consequence, enforced. Investment is required in terms of surfacing and for surveillance via the Council’s CCTV system. It also needs to be noted that the streets around this car park currently provide free parking which will need to be reviewed with a view to enhancing parking controls in order to encourage car park use. This will be put forward by officers as part of future budgetary growth items.

General

- 3.9 When considering making changes to the parking arrangements in the Borough, it is important that the concerns of residents and local businesses are taken into consideration, impact assessed and arrangements considered for mitigating any adverse effects that the proposed new charges may lead to. In these locations it is also important that we consider the impact of other developments such as Roslin Hotel and the existing “*Summer Only*” restrictions along certain streets. Some parking restrictions may be better implemented as a parallel process rather than sequentially.
- 3.10 Levying charges in these areas contributes to the overall maintenance and enforcement costs of the parking and waiting restrictions in the Borough, but also brings these areas in line with nearby facilities for which charges are payable.

3.11 The proposals to implement the Cabinet decision were advertised in March 2011 and this report provides summary details of the objections in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

4. Outcome of the Statutory Consultation

a) Proposed introduction of parking charges along Eastern Esplanade

4.1 The properties fronting the proposed changes represent a mixture of residential and business properties. The statutory notices were posted at key locations in the proposed area and advertised in *The Echo*. There have been 144 valid responses received, 141 opposing charges whilst 3 in support of the proposed charges. In addition, a petition signed by 65 residents of Riviera Drive, stating that the proposed charges will impact on residents was also received. It should also be noted that Ward Councillors also objected to this proposal, although did not do so through the budget setting process.

4.2 The key areas of concerns expressed during consultation can be summarised as follows:

- Impact on residents and business parking;
- Displacement of parking to residential streets which already have limited parking capacity;
- Existing off street parking also limits on street provision due to permanent vehicle crossovers; and
- Few streets in the adjoining areas already have waiting restrictions.

4.3 Whilst objecting to the proposed introduction of charges, most objections also expressed concerns in relation to the impact of the proposed charges on the surrounding streets. Residents took the opportunity to make various comments regarding general parking and traffic issues, etc. Feedback from residents forms an integral part of the Council's process and plans for improving parking, public safety and ensuring the strategic objectives of balancing competing priorities.

4.4 As such officers will consider these as part of a wider area review when assessing impact of these proposals subject to the agreement of the Committee. There is also a Section 106 provision as part of a planning permission granted for the Roslin Hotel and any proposals in this area will be looked at holistically to ensure public safety and achieving a balance in terms of meeting residents parking needs and determine funding options and priorities. As such, in recognising the concerns of residents, it is proposed that Members authorise officers to review parking and traffic management situation in the vicinity and bring proposals back to the Committee as a priority.

4.5 A map showing the details of the area affected by the proposed charges, roads subject to current summer only restrictions (0900hrs until 1800hrs) and a map detailing the proposed area for wider assessment, is attached as Appendix 3.

b) Extension of Parking Charges from 1800hrs until 2100hrs.

4.6 As stated previously, these proposals were part of the budget process and resulted from the significant budget pressure created by reductions in support

from Central Government. Like other Council's across the country, Southend-on-Sea has had to look at all possible avenues to meet its financial targets.

- 4.7 The scheme as proposed was to increase operational hours from 6pm to 9pm in car parks and on street. As the proposals were to extend the operational hours, it resulted in a need for a revised Traffic Regulations Order. As such the statutory consultation process was undertaken and the notices were placed at key locations to seek public views in this regard.
- 4.8 The breakdown of representations is shown in Appendix 1 (for charges) and Appendix 2 (for extended hours).
- 4.9 It is evident from the level of objections that there are substantial representations against the implementation of the extended hours. Ward Councillors as well as key businesses and other organisations, such as Salvation Army had raised strong objections against the proposed change. As such it is evident that the proposal for the extension of hours has been seen by the respondents in a way that places a heavy burden on local communities and businesses, particularly as this is in addition to the increase in the parking tariffs.
- 4.10 It needs to be noted that the Council operates charging at a number of car parks beyond 1800hrs (Seaway, Fairheads Green, University Square, Tylers Avenue) and there are other private cars parks within the borough, which also operate during such extended hours. At the same time, there is considerable visitor and tourist activity along seafront during the summer months. This was a consideration in the decision to increase proposed operational hours.
- 4.11 Officers have also considered the option of withdrawing the proposed extension of increased hours in car parks but implement them for on-street car parking bays. Whilst this may be feasible in some areas, it is not recommended as it would add more pressure on car parks where people will be able to park without paying and could potentially lead to hazardous situations as essentially we will not be able to enforce indiscriminate use of car parks during these hours.

5. Conclusions and Recommendation

a) Proposed introduction of parking charges along Eastern Esplanade

- 5.1 The responses from the residents to the statutory notices are quite clear and there is string of opposition from those responded. However, it needs to be noted that this represents a small percentage of the total households in the immediate area. Not withstanding this, these are strong objections and the underlying trend is the impact that these charges could have on residential and business parking.
- 5.2 Parking along the proposed stretch is well used and it is not possible at this stage to assess the split of use between residents, businesses or visitors. It is recognised however, that there is visitor parking demand during the summer months. The Council had introduced "*Summer Only*" waiting restrictions along adjoining streets to deter visitor parking in residential streets thereby strongly encouraging visitors to use seafront parking opportunities. These restrictions are effective from March to October between 0900hrs until 1800hrs, seven days a week.

5.3 As such any survey works undertaken during these months will not enable a clear picture of the problems that may be occurring in the residential streets, as there is some displacement of parking to the neighbouring areas including, possibly, Eastern Esplanade. However, the extent of this may be rather small as there have not been any significant issues raised by the residents.

b) Extension of Parking Charges from 1800 – 2100 hours

5.4 Similarly in view of the high level of representations from residents, businesses ward Councillors and other key organisations, It is recommended that these proposals are no longer progressed this year and therefore there is no further need to revise the Traffic Regulation Order. Instead alternative savings will need to be found from within the Traffic & Highways budget to mitigate this impact.

6. Other Options

6.1 In terms of the proposed increase which is budget led there are no other options which would deliver the additional income target. However, with regard to mitigating against the residents concerns, this report seeks Members approval with regard to examining traffic and parking issues for detailed proposals in due course.

7. Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 To achieve financial target set as part of the budget process and to enable consistency in parking enforcement across the seafront area as well as recognising the strength of representations on individual proposals.

8. Corporate Implications

8.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities.

8.1.1 Controlling parking improves safety and enables businesses have adequate turnover of customers able to park near to their business.

8.2 Financial Implications

8.2.1 The proposals were intended to assist in meeting the Council's financial targets and a decision not to implement in full or part will have an impact on our ability to deliver the income target set through the budget process and would lead to an ongoing budget pressure. As there is limited budgetary provision for revenue supported schemes of this nature if the decision is to develop a traffic and parking management scheme around Eastern Esplanade then this project will need to be assessed for funding in competition with the other projects. A separate report is on the Committee's agenda seeking decision on the priority projects.

8.3 Legal Implications

8.3.1 The formal statutory consultative process has been completed in accordance with the requirements of the legislation. Any subsequent changes that may result from any scheme design will be undertaken to ensure compliance with all legal requirements.

8.4 People Implications

8.4.1 Work required to design and implement this scheme will be met by existing staff resources based on the priority indicated by the Committee in relation to the work programme.

8.5 *Property Implications*

8.5.1 None

8.6 *Consultation*

8.6.1 Statutory consultation process has been undertaken which resulted in a substantial number of objections from the local residents, businesses. These are covered in Section 4 of the report

8.7 *Equalities and Diversity Implications*

8.7.1 None

8.8 *Risk Assessment*

8.8.1 None undertaken

8.9 *Value for Money*

8.9.1 The proposals represent good value for money for the Council offering potential significant income for a modest outlay.

8.10 *Community Safety Implications*

8.10.1 None

8.11 *Environmental Impact*

8.11.1 None

9. **Background Papers**

None

10. **Appendices**

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| Appendix 1 | Details of representations received from Streets around Eastern Esplanade |
| Appendix 2 | Details of representations received on extension of hours from 1800-2100 |
| Appendix 3 | Map showing details of Eastern Esplanade |

APPENDIX 1 – THE BREAKDOWN OF REPRESENTATIONS REGARDING CHARGES

Source of representations	Total	In support	Against	Summary of observations
Businesses	6		6	Displaced parking, impact on residents
Seafront residents	46		46	Impact on business
Side streets	88	3	85	Impact on residents, visitors, businesses and displaced parking on side streets
Non-residents	4		4	Impact on residents and displaced parking in side streets
TOTALS	144	3	141	
Petitions (total signatures)	65		65	Charges will impact on residents - petition signed by residents of Riviera Drive
Ward Councillors	3		3	Objections to the proposal

APPENDIX 2 – SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED ON EXTENSION OF HOURS FROM 1800-2100 HOURS

Car Park/ On street	Councillors	Residents	Non Residents	Businesses	Comments
Clarence Road	1		29		Adverse impact on worshippers and activities of the Salvation Army Hall and general Leisure and business in town
Town Centre		4	3	1	Impact on residents when using car park in evenings and impact on Leisure activities.
North Street		24			Impact on residents when using car park in evenings and impact on Leisure activities.
Increased charging hours - all		1			
On and off street hours		1	6	1	Impact on businesses, church and Leisure
Leigh Car Parks	1	1	1	2	Impact on parking – aggrieved by charges
Rivera Drive		61(petition)	1		Impact on residents – commuters will not pay and park in streets to the detriment of residents
On Street Clifftown		4			Impact on residents and visitors
North Road			4		Will deter parking – cost of enforcement will outweigh increased revenue.
Borough wide		1	1		Will drive away visitors and businesses

