

APPENDIX 1: ROD 20/URGENCY/P&T/12

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The City Council has made changes to its arrangements for parking since March and the lockdown owing to the Covid-19 pandemic to support key public and voluntary workers in their roles, and since June providing discounted business permits to support businesses re-opening in the city centre.
- 1.2 The city centre is still going through the process of re-opening, with most retail able to trade now with social distancing measures, and with others opening up over the next few weeks.
- 1.3 Whilst there is a balance to be struck between the public health requirements for restricting numbers of customers inside shops etc, and the economic desire and need to welcome visitors back into Cambridge, it is acknowledged the international and student numbers usually prevalent during the summer, will not be present this time. However, in addition to that, the Centre for Cities latest report on the return of customer to the high street indicates that Cambridge has currently one of the lowest footfalls in the country.
- 1.4 Recorded footfall in the City last weekend rose by 27%, with a 10% increase during the weeks but at only circa 30-40% of the figures applying at the same time last year, there is a need to make some further changes to welcome customers back into the city centre.
- 1.5 The Government have announced support for more of those that can, to return to the workplace again, where it is safe to do so. They have also announced retail and hospitality stimulus, e.g. offering the Eat to Help Out Scheme. Additionally, feedback from city centre businesses is that a reduction in parking tariffs would have an immediate and positive effect on retail performance, especially the food and beverage sector.
- 1.6 The City Councillors are very aware that, alongside the need to balance public health requirements with economic need, there is also a need to balance support to business with the potential increase in city centre traffic that such a reduction in car park pricing may bring. They remain fully committed to reducing the Council's carbon emissions which are circa 1% of the city's overarching emissions, but in an unprecedented situation of this type, believe that a short-term intervention is required to further kick start the economy. The current car park usage remains at around 30-40%.
- 1.7 An urgent decision is therefore required to enable timely messaging and a seamless change for permit holders and pay-for-use customers. The parking system software requires updating with 5 working days' notice to allow the new tariff to work.

2. The Proposal

- 2.1 The Executive Councillors have considered relevant changes or amendments to the parking arrangements as part of the wider plans for the City centre recovery, to help ensure that people can stay safe in Cambridge over the next period.
- 2.2. It is considered that the proposals outlined and recommended continue to provide a relevant balance between:
- Supporting the on-going recovery of the city centre within Government and public health guidelines in line with 'Staying Safe in Cambridge'
 - Supporting the current Government advice that travellers may consider public transport if safe, but that other forms of transport are still preferred.
 - Continues to provide key public and voluntary sector workers with a free alternative option to public transport to maintain social distancing to and from their workplace, and helps them to meet workplace needs during the critical period.
 - Provides a recovery stimulus over a short term period, but will not increase vehicular traffic into the city in the longer term.

2.3 The proposal is to :

1. The creation of a single tariff of £1 per hour Monday to Sunday 24/7 at city Council owned multi-storey and surface car parks for up to three months until the 31st October with the ability to review on a monthly basis to determine need and efficacy of the arrangements.
2. Reinstatement of the enforcement of parking fees in City Council owned surface car parks from the end of August. This would bring these car parks into line with the County Council's on-street parking
3. The retention of a free parking permit for Public and Voluntary key sector workers until 31st October 2020
4. The removal of the City Centre Worker Permit discounted permit before the planned review date 31st August 2020.

3.0 Rationale and Benefits

3.1 **The creation of a single tariff of £1 per hour Monday to Sunday 24/7 for the month of August with the ability to extend this pricing structure into September and October.**

A £1 an hour tariff is for the customer to understand and for easy promotion of the message, and is also simple in its deployment and management. Although the Government has suggested that the use of public transport may increase where safe, the focus for travel remains on other forms. Where there is a need to travel by car, it allows for easier social distancing.

- 3.2 This charging structure would support the recovery of the city centre whilst supplying an underlying message of welcoming back to customers and businesses alike. It will allow visitors to shop in a more 'relaxed' frame of mind and be more willing to extend their stay potentially visiting the food and beverage offer in the city. Last weekend only about 40-50% of the food and beverage offer were open vs 60% of shops. Additionally, cinemas and gyms are planned to reopen in August both of which require longer stays.
- 3.3. Additionally, John Lewis in the Queensgate shopping centre Peterborough is due to reopen on Thursday 30th July 2020 pitching directly against Cambridge. John Lewis is a halo store that draws in customers that the whole City benefits from, this pricing tariff will compete directly with the Queensgate shopping centre tariff.
- 3.4 Reinstatement of the enforcement of parking fees in City Council owned surface car parks from the end of August**
Since the lifting of lockdown restrictions there has been a marked increase in usage especially in Adam and Eve and Gwydir St car parks. To ensure that there is fair access to these car parks the pausing of enforcement in the surface car parks should cease. This would bring these car parks into line with the County Council's on street parking.
- 3.5 The retention of a free parking permit for Public and Voluntary key sector workers until 31st October 2020**
The free parking permit for Public and Voluntary key sector workers was committed to be until the end of August and this should remain in place until October when this will be reviewed. 181 permits have been issued to date. 32 of those were issued to council employees.
- 3.6 The removal of the City Centre Worker Permit discounted permit before the planned review date 31st August 2020.**
The city centre worker permit has had minimal uptake with only 7 being purchased since its introduction and it cost more than the proposed £1 per hour rate (assuming an 8-hour day and 5 day working week).

4.0 Implications of the Changes

a) Financial Modelling The likely effect of the proposed change

The £1 an hour charge is likely to see a moderate increase in visitor numbers, but these visitors are likely to stay for an increased length of time.

The forecast for slightly more visitors, staying for longer forecasts an opportunity cost in the region of a -10%to -25% reduction in income which equates to £50k- £150k per month.

Avg Spend per customer in car parks

- Over the period 15th June to date the avg spend was £5.16
- Over the same period last year, the avg spend was £5.66

It is likely that the spend per customer will fall slightly to be around £4+ per car

Data feeding into this forecast

- Customers of the car parks stay for relatively the same length of time in the Q1 FY19/20 as they did in Q1 FY18/19 – 135mins vs 145min.
- Yield per customer has increased slightly from this time last year £5.16 vs £5.60 last year.
- This yield increase may be due to proportionally more customers choosing to park in the Grand Arcade than other MSCPs this year than last year 45% vs 39% (the GA is more expensive).
- Footfall in the centre of Cambridge increased in the region of 25%-27% however car park usage only increased by 14% but the CCTV counter outside the main railway station saw a double-digit increase in footfall.
- Current COVID 19 Financial Impact Forecast for car parking is overachieving by £100k however the overall end of year forecast has been downgraded by £300k due to the slower opening of the retail offer and the slow consumer confidence growth.

a) Staffing Implications

None for this report

b) Equality and Poverty Implications

None for this report.

c) Environmental Implications

Whilst there will be an increase in the negative effect on air quality in comparison to figures for April/May the overall volume is expected to remain lower than in previous years over the next here months owing to the phased plans. The actions are driven by city centre recovery needs in the short term.

d) Procurement Implications

None for this report

e) Community Safety Implications

Socially distanced car parking is considered effectively unenforceable in car parks, bollards would simply be moved. More substantial and enforceable measures would be costly, time consuming and likely to be superseded as the guidance morphs. It is advised that the current model of supermarket car parking should be replicated; there are no restrictions and the public actively self-police, but the Council would also put in place the measures shown below.

Socially distanced parking enforcement would likely require the removal of 50% of the available 3000 parking spaces, this would have a detrimental effect on the City's ability to return to 'normal'.

Risks

| Risk | Mitigation/Comment |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Inability to maintain social distance in car parks | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To encourage the use of contactless payment at exit, reducing the risk presented by use of a keypad and possible infringement of social distancing at pay machines• Restricting the occupancy car park lifts by using the Addenbrookes model of footprints sticker in the lift designating where to stand and changing behaviour• Stairwells to have keep left signs to maintain social distancing• Signs to encourage the able bodied to use the stairs• Provision of hand sanitiser to be provided in line with the wider city centre recovery plan when that is published |
| The requirement to support the government's advice on an increased use of cars where necessary within the early days of recovery provides a risk on numbers accessing the city via this mode of transport | Traffic in Cambridge remains at 30% below pre-COVID levels, this is out of kilter with the surrounding regions who are at or, in some cases above per-COVID levels. It is likely that this tariff change will only marginally increase road traffic levels, and congestion less likely to occur. |

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reduction in Income | <p>Forecast reduction in income for financial year of circa £3.5m. Actual income in the last four months exceeded forecast by c£100k. The proposed changes will deliver opportunity cost of circa 50-150k per month. However, the short term impact is considered worthwhile to support economic recovery.</p> <p>There is a possibility that the loss of income may be covered to a certain extent by Government intervention, but the losses to date remain largely unmet.</p> |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

The assumptions made in regard to these proposals are based on an unprecedented situation. The recovery plan proposed may well vary dependent on the impacts of return to work and public health concerns over a second wave of the pandemic.