



PRCC.03 16/17

Prosperous Communities

7th June 2016

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Subject: Update and Comments from the Public on the Implementation of Parking Charges in Market Rasen

Report by:

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Purpose / Summary:

To provide an update on progress and implementation costs, and an overview of the public feedback on the implementation notice

RECOMMENDATION(S):

Members are asked to:

- 1. Welcome the summary of responses to the consultation.**
- 2. Agree to progress with the current charging proposals in Market Rasen.**
- 3. Request a further report from Officers six months after charging is implemented.**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: The legal process to implement parking charges in Market Rasen is underway, and the period for the public to make comments closed on 20th May 2016. Once these comments have been reviewed by elected members WLDC will send a response to each individual to provide an overview of the comments received, and any potential changes and timescales for implementation.

The next stage of the process is to complete the order making process, which is a legal document to formalise the arrangement and allow charging to commence. Any significant changes made to the charging proposal at this point would require a further period of advertisement to give an opportunity for further public concerns to be raised.

Financial: FIN/26/17

The implementation costs for the Market Rasen parking charges are becoming more accurate, following tendering of the works and acquisition of parking machines.

Provision was made in the original report for capital works including new machines. The prices for these are being firmed up as the project develops and is within the agreed budget.

Staffing: The enforcement and monitoring of the car parks will be undertaken by an external contractor, in the same way as the Gainsborough car parks are managed, which will not have any direct staffing implications.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

The parking charges will apply equitably to all members of the community, however as agreed in the policy there will be no charges for disabled permit holders in designated spaces, at this time.

Risk Assessment: Failure to implement this policy will have an impact on the agreed budget for WLDC for the current and future years, and may impact on other services' budgets in order to cover costs.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities: N/A

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

C&I 13th October 2015

PC 8th December 2015

CP&R 17th December 2015

<https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/my-council/decision-making-and-council-meetings/meetings-agendas-minutes-and-reports/>

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the comments received back from the public in response to the proposed implementation of parking charges in Market Rasen, as outlined in the WLDC Car Parking Strategy.

In total over 120 responses were received during the 28 day period during which the proposals were advertised in affected car parks and the public were able to submit comments, prior to the order being formally made and implemented. Alongside these comments there was also a petition submitted, which will be considered at Council on 4th July 2016.

The responses have been reviewed and categorised into the following themes:

- Businesses and Shops
- Prices and Times
- Residents
- Town Centre

There are concerns about the sustainability of the town following the implementation of the charges, however given the level of charging that is proposed the Council's commitment reducing its bottom line costs and the subsequent need to cover existing liability and maintenance costs the recommendation would be to continue with the implementation of the parking charges as planned, with a commitment to closely monitor the impact on the town for the initial 6 month period to ensure any appropriate changes can be made promptly.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Following focussed workshops with elected members on 28th September and 9th November 2015, discussion with Challenge and Improvement Committee on 13th October and approval of the Car Parking Strategy at Prosperous Communities Committee on 8th December 2015 and Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 17th December, the legal process to implement parking charges in the WLDC car parks in Market Rasen is underway.
- 1.2 Discussion with members established the key principles of the Car Parking Strategy to be:
 - Full cost recovery for operating and maintaining West Lindsey District Council car parks
 - Equity in approach across all West Lindsey District Council car parks e.g. charging, season tickets
 - Support for local businesses with an element of free parking
- 1.3 As set out in the legal process, following advice from Legal Services Lincolnshire, statutory consultees were contacted to give an opportunity for objections to be raised and considered. No objections were received.
- 1.4 The next step was to advertise the intention to commence charging in the local press and on signs in the relevant car parks for a period of 21 days, which WLDC opted to extend to 28 days in this instance, owing to the level of public interest. The 28 day period ended on 20th May 2016, and the feedback has now been collated.

2 Feedback

- 2.1 During the advertised period WLDC received 120 comments from the public, raising a range of points and questions around the parking charges. There are a number of common themes which are identified within the comments, which include:

Businesses and Shops

- Will deter visitors and footfall in the town
- Will reduce the competitiveness of the town centre against local supermarkets
- Will reduce the number of people making short trips to the town to make a single purchase
- Gainsborough has received significant financial support from WLDC, which Market Rasen has not
- Some businesses in the town are already in decline, which may be exacerbated
- Town centre businesses and shopkeepers will be penalised
- Inconvenient for drivers to have to find change for the machines

Times and Prices

- Should offer the first 2-3 hours free to support shoppers
- ELDC have recently removed their parking charges in Louth

- Brigg offer 2 hours free parking
- The all-day and season ticket prices are too low and will not deter the all-day commuters
- Should be a 2-hour maximum stay to deter the all-day commuters
- High installation costs reduce the revenue benefit
- The revenue generated will not cover the cost of operation and servicing
- Shops should refund the parking fees when a customer makes a purchase

Residents

- Parking in side streets is likely to increase to avoid the charges
- Town centre residents will be penalised
- Should issue free permits for residents
- WLDC Planning should not approve new homes in the town centre without allocated parking provision

Town Centre

- There will be empty car parks
- Inconsistent message with the 'Home of Free Parking' signs
- Market Rasen does not have a wide range of facilities to attract visitors
- Patients attending dental and GP appointments will have to pay to park
- WLDC should acquire another car park to create more spaces

2.2 There has also been a petition against the implementation of the charges prepared by a local business owner, which has also been submitted to WLDC and is expected to be discussed by Council on 4th July 2016, in line with the Constitution.

3 Response

3.1 The feedback has been considered and responses to each area of concern identified below

3.2 Businesses and Shops

3.3 The implementation of charging may have an initial impact on the level of visitors and footfall in the town, however given the level of charges it seems unlikely that these would create a significant long-term impact on the town, and indeed the increased turnover and availability of spaces may in fact have the opposite effect.

3.4 Supermarkets and town centres provide a very different offer for customers, with many people regularly using both to meet all of their needs. The impact on the supermarkets is likely to be an increase in cars using their free spaces, however they both have time limits on the use of their spaces, which will be enforced as necessary.

- 3.5 Those making short trips to the town centre are likely to be those who live locally, and use the town regularly, and may therefore benefit from purchasing a season ticket to reduce costs. The minimum 1 hour parking charge may also encourage them to stay in the town longer to maximise their parking time.
- 3.6 Gainsborough has a significantly different population profile to Market Rasen. WLDC did not financially support the Marshall's Yard development when it was constructed, and the business support provided by WLDC is the same across the district for any qualifying enterprise, although growth funding is only currently available in Gainsborough due to the scale of need in the town. Market Rasen has received support from external sources which Gainsborough did not benefit from, including the Portas Pilot and High Street Renewal Award. In addition to this WLDC are currently organising an arts festival to be held in Market Rasen in the Autumn and are actively exploring the potential for an enhanced leisure provision in the town.
- 3.7 The stability of many small businesses across the UK is fragile, despite progress in the economic recovery following the credit crunch. Given the level of parking charges proposed it is unlikely that this will have a significant impact on trade, and the availability of spaces could make the town more attractive for visitors and increase the footfall.
- 3.8 Town centre shopkeepers and businesses will be able to purchase season tickets to reduce the cost impact for those parking in the town regularly.
- 3.9 As with the existing Gainsborough parking machines, there will be an option to pay by phone using a debit or credit card, for people who do not have the correct coins to purchase a ticket.

Times and Prices

- 3.10 At the workshops held with elected members a number of charging options were presented, including the potential to offer an initial period of free parking, (for the first 2 hours), however the financial impact of this was so significant that the option was discounted.
- 3.11 ELDC have recently advertised the removal of parking charges from some of their 12 Louth car parks, however this is not the case for all facilities. In Louth there are now 2 free ELDC car parks, which are both around 0.5 miles from the town centre. ELDC also operate 4 car parks in the centre of town, which are limited in stay to between 0.5 and 1 hour, and are charged at 50p for 0.5 hour and £1.00 for an hour. The remaining 6 ELDC car parks in the town are predominantly limited to 4-hour maximum stays, with a charge of £3.00, and the option of an annual season ticket at £120 per annum, but again limited to 4-hour maximum stays. Fees are chargeable between 8am and 6pm Monday to Sunday.
- 3.12 In Brigg where 2-hours of free parking are offered, they are able to offset this discount against significantly higher prices for 5-day season

tickets at £36.80 per month, or £367.70 per year. This is in contrast to the proposed maximum season ticket charge in Market Rasen of £106.42 (as can be seen in Appendix 1), which is less than 30% of the price. Fees are chargeable between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday.

- 3.13 There has been an aspiration within the pricing to achieve a balance between charging commuters for all-day parking in the town to free-up some space for visitors, and the needs of town centre residents who use the car parks in lieu of their own on-site provision. The season ticket price sought to hit this balance, along with retaining the ability to park in the car parks all-day.
- 3.14 The tenders to supply and install the required parking machines and for the tarmac repair work have now been received, which along with the, re-lining, replacement signage and other associated costs, are expected to be lower than the original estimate used in the forecasting, at £37,298.
- 3.15 The potential for shops to refund their customers' parking fees is something they are welcome to offer, but they would not be reimbursed for this by WLDC, as this would severely impact on the aim of full cost recovery for all assets.

Residents

- 3.16 Inevitably there is likely to be some displacement of cars from the existing car parks, both temporarily and permanently, who are avoiding paying the charges. On-street parking is the responsibility of Lincolnshire County Council, who operate their own enforcement service to ensure vehicles are not causing an obstruction and are not exceeding any time limitations. LCC have been advised of the intention to introduce parking charges and will act accordingly.
- 3.17 Town centre residents have many advantages from their location, including easy access to local shops and services. In many town centre settings there is old and new housing which does not include off-site parking provision, and residents instead park on street or make alternative arrangements. The car parks will be free after 3pm each day, which would coincide with most work patterns, and free on Sundays, and the option to purchase a season ticket at a very low cost will provide 24 hour parking in any of the WLDC Market Rasen car parks.
- 3.18 The potential to issue free permits to residents has not previously been considered, however there will still be free parking on the Town Council's site on the Market Place, which will be available for all drivers. The implementation of a scheme could be considered in future, however would need to be limited to a single permit per household, and to properties within a specific area of the town centre, which may result in higher charges for other car park users to off-set the revenue loss.
- 3.19 WLDC Development Management Team follow national planning policy to determine applications across the district, along with the Local Plan and other relevant documents. In most cases applications will be

considered on a case by case basis in agreement with the Highways Authority. That assessment will take into account parking provision in the town at that time and assess feasible alternatives to on-site parking.

Town Centre

- 3.20 There is likely to be an initial reduction on car park use as the charges are introduced, however over time it is likely that this will stabilise and the use will provide spaces for those who want and need to park for long periods of time, and those who want spaces for shorter visits.
- 3.21 The 'Home of Free Parking' signs were not something that WLDC were involved with or supportive of at the time of their implementation.
- 3.22 The facilities and offer available in Market Rasen has been reflected in the prices outlined in Appendix 1, which offer a 50% discount on WLDC car parks in Gainsborough to take into account the difference between the towns.
- 3.23 Patients attending dental and GP appointments in many town centre locations are required to pay for parking. Patients with valid Disabled Permits will be able to park in WLDC car parks without a charge.
- 3.24 Were there to be an additional car park site available in Market Rasen for WLDC to acquire, this would need to be funded for both purchase, and ongoing maintenance costs. This would increase the liability on the Council and would be more likely to result in increased parking charges or reduced Council services to cover the additional costs.

4 Options

- 4.1 There could be various amendments made to the fees and charges to address some of these concerns, including the potential to offer an initial period of free parking by increasing the price of season tickets, or by offering free season tickets to eligible households by increasing the other charges accordingly.
- 4.2 There could also be amendments made to the hours of charging, especially if there was to be an initial period of free parking implemented, as this would then remove the requirement for free parking from 3pm, and this could be increased until 6pm, as it is in neighbouring areas. This could however be seen as an inconsistency within the district.
- 4.3 Consideration could be given to a two tier season ticket price for town centre residents (within a very strict postcode area), as opposed to those travelling from outside the town, however this could be difficult to administer and would generate additional costs to implement.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 Given the level of charges proposed for Market Rasen, and the principles of the Car Parking Strategy as set out in paragraph 1.2 of this report, the

recommendation is to continue the implementation of charges at the levels stated in Appendix 1, and closely monitor the impact on the car parks, side streets, local shops and businesses, to ensure that any necessary changes can be made swiftly. The usage and impact will be monitored closely for the initial 6-month period, and a further update will be provided to highlight any proposals for changes to the agreed arrangement, and to ensure members are aware of any associated issues.

6 Next Steps

- 6.1 All those who provided comments in response to the parking order will receive a response from WLDC to advise on the overall comments received, and the outcome of discussion with elected members around implementation. If minor changes are proposed to the charging process this could be done within the making of the order, however if significant changes are proposed then a further objection period would need to be implemented.
- 6.2 The petition from local businesses and residents is due to be considered by Council on 4th July, in line with the Constitution. Following this, if Council continue to support the charges, the formal parking order can be made, and installation of machines, surface upgrading and re-lining work to the car parks can commence with a view to implementing the charges from early Autumn 2016.

Appendix 1

Parking charges to be implemented in Market Rasen between the hours of 8am and 3pm Monday to Saturday.

Time	Price
0-1 Hour	30p
1-2 Hours	50p
2-3 Hours	80p
3-4 Hours	£1.00
4-6 Hours	£1.70
Over 6 Hours	£2.00
Mon – Fri Season Ticket	£74.62 per annum (monthly direct debit)
Mon – Fri Season Ticket	£90.52 per annum (non-direct debit)
Mon – Sat Season Ticket	£92.02 per annum (monthly direct debit)
Mon – Sat Season Ticket	£106.42 per annum (non-direct debit)