



PRCC.14 16/17

Prosperous Communities

19 July 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. Agree to progress with implementing current charging proposals in Market Rasen.**
- 2. Request a further report after six months after charging is implemented to review the impact.**

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. Comments have been reviewed and an initial response has been sent to each individual following consideration by committee a further response will be sent 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 now 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 and are 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. An Equalities Assessment has been undertaken and is included in Appendix 1.

Risk Assessment: Failure to implement this policy will have an impact on the agreed budget for Council for the current and future years. Any budget pressure would need to be funded from the other sources.

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

Full Council 4th July 2016 (Petition)

<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

X

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 West Lindsey District Council Car Parking Strategy.

In total over 120 responses were received during the 28 day period. 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 a petition objecting to the introduction of Market Rasen was also submitted and debated at Council on 4th July 2016. Council resolved to refer the matter back to Prosperous Communities for further consideration.

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. 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 it is recommended that the Council continues 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 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 Council owned car parks in Market Rasen was initiated.
- 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 offering an element of free parking
- The car parking strategy report that was considered by Prosperous Communities on 8th December 2015 referred the fact that the legal process for establishing a new car parking order in Market Rasen would take a minimum of 12 weeks and would involve consultation with statutory consultees and the general public in line with current legislation. The legal process required consultation with statutory consultees prior to publishing statutory notices in the local press affected car parks for 21 days.
- 1.3 Statutory consultees were contacted to give an opportunity for objections to be raised and considered. No objections were received.
- 1.4 Following consultation to advertise with the Statutory Consultees the proposed order, setting out the intention to charge in the Councils car parks was in the local press and on signs in the relevant car parks for a period of 21 days. The Council 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. Subsequently collated.

2 Feedback

- 2.1 During the advertised period the Council 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
- East Lindsey District Council 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
- The Council 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
- The Council should acquire another car park to create more spaces

2.2 The Council have also received a petition with 2669 signatories making the following request:

"We the undersigned object to WLDC's proposal to charge for car parking in its 3 Market Rasen car parks. We call upon the Council to withdraw the proposal, investigate further the likely effect on businesses and other ways to create more car park spaces. We ask that the council fully consults with local residents and businesses on any future proposals."

The petition was debated by Council on 4th July 2016. Council resolved that the matter be referred back to Prosperous Communities Committee for further consideration.

3 Response

3.1 The feedback has been analysed and responses to each area of concern are summarised 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. Informal feedback from the Chamber of Commerce suggests that there are some Market Rasen businesses who support the introduction of charges for this reason, although clearly a significant number object.

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. In addition, the proposals include a 3-hour free car parking from 3pm onwards, intended to help increase footfall at a quiet time for of day.

3.6 Gainsborough has a significantly different population profile to Market Rasen. The business support provided by the Council 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 also received support from other external sources including the Portas Pilot and High Street Renewal Award. In addition to this, the Council is 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 and would significantly impact on revenue.
- 3.11 East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) recently advertised the removal of parking charges from some of its 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 and will be approximately £37K.
- 3.15 The potential for shops to refund their customers' parking fees is something they are welcome to offer. However businesses would not be reimbursed for this by the Council, 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 wish to avoid 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 low cost will provide 24 hour parking in any of the Council's 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 The Council's 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 the Council was involved with or supportive of at the time of implementation. Free parking will remain available at the market place, on-street and after 3pm in the Council's car parks.
- 3.22 The facilities and town centre offer available in Market Rasen has been reflected in the prices outlined in Appendix 1, which offers a 50% discount on the cost of Gainsborough car parks 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 Council car parks without a charge.
- 3.24 Were there to be an additional car park site available in Market Rasen for the Council 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 to cover the additional costs.

Petition

- 3.25 The petition was heard by Full Council on 4th July 2016, where elected members had a full debate on the subject of introducing parking charges in Market Rasen. A summary of the debate is reflected in the council minutes. (See background papers). The Council resolution was:
- RESOLVED that the Market Rasen Car Parking report be considered by the Prosperous Communities Committee at its next meeting.

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 and 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 and would be contrary to the principals of equity in approach across 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 have received an initial response from the Council to thank them for their comments. A further response will follow this committee to advise the outcome of discussion 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 If the Committee recommends continuing 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 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)