

**Environment  
Scrutiny and Performance Panel**

**Agenda  
Item No.**

**12 January, 2012**

**9**

**Monitoring/update of Town Centre Parking Working Group**

**Ward(s)**                      St. Matthews

**Portfolios:**    Cllr T Ansell – Transport and Environment

**Executive Summary:**

This report provides an update on the financial implications following the introduction of reduced parking charges for town centre car parks effective 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011. The report details the negligible impact seen as a result of the reduction of £2 in the all day charge in Ward Street and Dudley Street car parks and the financial loss experienced as a result of the reduction of £1 in the up to 4 hour charge on all town centre car parks.

The report further outlines progress with implementing new permit holder / pay and display parking charges in Frederick Street, Charles Street and Brook Street car parks.

**Reason for scrutiny:**

As requested by the Panel, to provide an update on the progress with implementation of actions arising from their report to Cabinet 27 July 2011.

**Recommendations:**

**That:**

- That the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel note the contents of this report.

**Background papers:**

None

**Resource and legal considerations:**

The changes have been introduced and progressed in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996

**Citizen impact:**

Parking charges have been reduced for all motorists using Council operated car parks. Specific business parking needs will also be addressed through the introduction of permit holder only parking arrangements

**Environmental impact:**

The introduction of reduced parking charges coupled with permit parking arrangements for Town Wharf and Premier Business park employees will encourage more use of off street car parks. By doing so, instances of inappropriate parking that have a negative impact on the local environment will be reduced.

**Performance management:**

No direct impact

**Equality Implications:**

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out? No, however the reduction in parking charges will financially benefit all sections of the community equally.

**Consultation:**

Consultation has been undertaken with the Town Wharf and Premier business parks through the business park coordinator.

The opportunity for objections to be raised and considered have been undertaken through the appropriate statutory procedures.

**Contact Officer:**

Paul Leighton – Group Leader

 01922 652458

leightonp@walsall.gov.uk

## 1. Report

The Panel will recall reviewing town centre parking arrangements and making a series of recommendations for change. Those recommendations were considered by Cabinet at its meetings 27<sup>th</sup> July 2011 and 14<sup>th</sup> September 2011, with the following approved for implementation.

- That the cost of parking at Ward Street and Dudley Street car parks be reduced to £3.00 per day, for a trial period of 3 months with delegated authority given to the Executive Director for Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to continue the trial for a further 3 months if found to be successful at this stage.
- That the 4 hour parking charge on all town centre car parks be reduced by £1.00 to £2.80 for 4 hours for an initial trial period of 3 months with delegated authority given to the Executive Director for Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to continue the trial for a further 3 months if found to be successful at this stage.
- That officers, in conjunction with representatives of the Town Wharf and Premier Business Parks, determine the demand for dedicated permit holder only car parks in Frederick Street, Charles Street and Brook Street. Subject to a suitable level of demand, to introduce permit holder business parking at a cost of £30 per month.
- That pay and display parking be introduced at the above car parks subject to the demand for permit holder business parking. The level of charge to be set at £3 per day but to be reviewed after 6 months.

The reduction in existing pay and display charges was implemented through the statutory procedures with effect 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011. Prior to this reduction, significant publicity advising of the change was generated through on street notices, the Council web site and press coverage.

Despite the publicity, early monitoring shows the reduction in price has failed to attract a significant increase in levels of occupancy anticipated as a result of the reduced price.

For the first 3 weeks following the change, occupancy levels on the Ward Street and Dudley Street car parks remain very low and at similar levels to those experienced prior to the reduction in price. This change has produced no material financial implications.

Overall occupancy levels for 4 hour parking on town centre car parks have increased following the £1 reduction. However, the increase was only 2.5% equating to an average additional 3 vehicles per day. The overall financial implications of the £1 reduction combined with a slight increase in occupancy levels has been a loss of approximately £2,000 that would have been achieved had the £1 reduction not been introduced. Should this profile continue, the annual loss would be approximately £34,000

Prior to advertising the proposal to introduce permit holder parking / pay and display parking in Frederick Street, Charles Street and Brook Street car parks, representatives of the Town Wharf and Premier business parks were consulted through the business park coordinator. An interest in obtaining approximately 60 permits was given with one business planning to pay for their employee's individual permits. On the basis of the anticipated demand for permit holder parking, it was determined to allow a combination of permit holder and pay and display parking on all 3 car parks.

The statutory process that has to be followed to implement permit holder / pay and display parking commenced 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2011. The process requires that the proposals are publicly advertised allowing for any objections to be raised and considered before a final decision is made to implement the changes. The objection period closed 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2011; in this instance no objections to the proposals were received.

Delegated authority will now be sought to seal the legal order allowing the changes to be implemented. Given the remaining process and the need to process applications for permits / introduce pay and display machines, it is likely to be mid February before the new system is fully operational.

Ongoing monitoring of the practical and financial implications of the changes will continue. This will be used as the basis for a report to the Director for Neighbourhood Services and Portfolio Holder for Transport and Environment in early March 2012 detailing the impact of the trial price reductions.