



REPORT of CAR PARKING CHARGES REVIEW TASK AND FINISH WORKING GROUP

to
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
28 FEBRUARY 2017

PARKING UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a review on the implementation of the car parking charges that commenced in April 2016.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) that the report is noted and that no amendments are made to the existing charges within the 2017/18 financial year;
- (ii) that the Car Parking Task and Finish Group is concluded;
- (iii) that an annual Parking liaison group composed of Members, Officers and invited representatives of the community is formed, Council membership to be agreed at the first annual meeting of this Committee.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 On 19 January 2016 this Committee considered the report of the Director of Customers and Community on the review of parking charges which had been undertaken by the Task and Finish Working Group. The report was recommended to the Finance and Corporate Services Committee with the proposed changes to Parking Policy and Fees and Charges for Maldon. This report was then taken to the Council on 4 February 2016 and changes approved.
- 3.2 At the meeting of the Council on 4 February 2016 (Minute No. 875 refers) the following was agreed:

Car Parking Charges:

- a) That a 10% increase be made appropriately rounded to all tariffs with the exception of the all-day charge in the respective car park.
- b) That the linear charging option is removed from all car parks.
- c) That variable charging Monday to Saturday 8 am to 5 pm in all town centre car parks remains and that a fixed fee of £1.00 be introduced during the evening period (up to 10pm) and £1.00 on a Sunday (8am to 10pm).

- d) That a Resident's off street Town Centre Permit be introduced for valid Town Centre residents only in line with existing residents' permits.
 - e) That a 10% increase be applied to the Promenade Park tariffs with the exception of the all day rate which is to be increased to £7 at the Promenade Park.
 - f) That charging be introduced at weekends at the Council Offices based upon the rates set for Butt Lane Car Park.
- 3.3 Due to the discontent at the introduction of these chargers by various community, business and church groups it was proposed and agreed that there would be a review of new arrangements after they had been in place for 6 months to assess their impact. Consequently on 23 February a second report was brought to Members at the Community Services Committee (Minute No. 934 refers) where it was resolved;
- that the Car Parking Charges Review Task and Finish Working Group (CPCRT&FWG) shall formulate and report back to this Committee the findings of a parking review six months after the implementation of new charges with evidence to support their views. The timetable for reporting back was further extended (minute 489 refers) to allow more data to be collected before reporting back.
- 3.4 The CPCRT&FWG last met on 7 February 2017. Data from both the Council and the Community / Business / Religious groups was presented to the working group for discussion and consideration.
- 3.5 The key areas that were monitored by the Council were;
- (i) Comparison of income during the same months before and after charge (**APPENDIX 1**) this captures total income for 2015/16 and total income during 2016/17 for the same months
 - (ii) The level of ticket sales for Sundays (**APPENDIX 2**) and evenings (**APPENDIX 3**). This demonstrates that the level of use pre charges in March 2016 is similar to the level of use for the months following March up to present.
 - (iii) List of charges in neighbouring councils (**APPENDIX 4**).
 - (iv) The number of empty shop units on the High Street in March 2016 was four, there are three in January 2017 (data collected following visual inspection)
- 3.6 Since the introduction of the new charges five meetings have been held by the working group. There has been stakeholder involvement at all of the meetings with representatives attending from community groups, the voluntary sector, the religious fraternity and business groups however it should be noted that the business community did not send a representative to the February 2017 meeting. The focus of the group has been on Town Centre Car Parks.
- 3.7 The information presented by the by the community leaders (**APPENDIX 5**) at the February meeting of the working group was a survey which carried out by the Maldon and District Community Voluntary Services (CVS) between August 2016 and January 2017 which attracted six responses four from community Groups and two from the Church.

- 3.3.5 It was agreed that the response was limited despite the five months that interested persons or groups had been given to respond. The six that did respond said that the increased charges would be likely to have a negative impact on their activities. However it was also felt that if only six people have responded then it may not be an issue which concerns people enough to warrant responding. Therefore, it is difficult to draw any meaningful conclusion from this data.
- 3.8 With regard to the Religious Community no firm evidence was presented to the working group on the impact on Church attendance by volunteers or worshipers. The Representative of the Business Community said at the July CPCRT&FWG, anecdotally, that she felt there had not been a detrimental effect on the business community but as mentioned above no representative attended the latest working group.
- 3.9 The community Group representative felt it was important that any future plans for increased charges be communicated at the earliest opportunity to ensure comprehensive feedback, to this end it was agreed that before the annual budget setting process began there would be a meeting with council Officers and Members if appropriate to review potential car parking charge increases. The best time for this would be annually in September / October.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 From the data supplied by and to the Council (as included with the appendices to this report) it is concluded that there is no demonstrable evidence that the increase of car parking charges and implementation of evening and weekend charges has had any material effect upon those raising initial concerns.
- 4.2 The level of participation in community and voluntary groups has not been monitored by the independent partners of the CPCRT&FWG, nor has the attendance at Church or the profitability of businesses in the town Centre. However a survey was undertaken of volunteers but the level of response at six is so minimal as to not be significant.
- 4.3 As there is no ongoing function for the CPCRT&FWG therefore it is recommended that it should be wound up and concluded. It is recommended an annual liaison meeting is held each year as detailed in the recommendations to this report.

5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE GOALS

- 5.1 This work contributes to the Councils Corporate Goals of ‘Creating opportunities for economic growth and prosperity’ and ‘Delivering good quality, cost effective and valued services’.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The Council is applying the principle of making a fair charge for services providers to users of Council facilities and no clear

evidence upon the negative impact following the introduction of new charges has been forthcoming.

- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – The Council provides services to the whole community and strives to ensure that none of those with protective characteristics stated within legislation are adversely affected.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – None identified.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – Income from car parking is in line with budget estimates.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – None identified.

Background Papers: None.

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