

Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance & Strategy

Cabinet – 21 April 2016

UPDATE ON CONTROL OF VISITOR CAR PARKING AT THE CIVIC CENTRE

Purpose:	To update on proposed arrangements for visitor parking at the Civic Centre and introduction of the previously agreed charging regime.
Policy Framework:	Local Transport Plan and Asset Management Plan 2013/17
Reason for Decision:	To update on the introduction of the car parking charging system for visitors in according with the decision agreed by Cabinet on the 17 th November 2011.
Consultation:	Legal, Finance, Highways, Access to Swansea
Recommendations:	It is recommended that Cabinet: 1) Proceed with implementation of Pay and Display system in the Civic Centre Visitors Car Park.
Report Author:	Geoff Bacon
Finance Officer:	Paul Roach / Jayne James
Legal Officer:	Patrick Arran/Wendy Parkin
Access to Services Officer:	Phil Couch

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following an initial report in 2011 and subsequently in November 2015, it was agreed that a further report be brought back to consider the options available for charging Civic Centre. More specifically that report stated:-

Members are reminded that a proposal was agreed by the previous administration to implement charges for visitors to the Civic Centre to aid congestion. The recommendations of this report dated Thursday 17th November 2011 have not yet been implemented although the TRO process was completed.

Whilst it is understood that the suggested charging of visitors who are often invited to the Civic Centre to access council services may be sensitive this should be considered alongside many of the other council proposals for budget reductions which are likely to be extremely onerous. As such it is recommended that this proposal is “revisited” with a revised report outlining potential income opportunities being considered as part of the “charging and trading” setting during the 2016 budget process

- 1.2 It is apparent that there is continued abuse of the visitors parking arrangements. This has led to long term blocking of spaces which needs to be remedied by way of proper enforcement to ensure the Civic Centre operates effectively not only as a public access building but also as an office base for 1400 staff.

2.0 Options

- 2.1 **Consideration is being given to charging** for visitors to both the East and West Car Parks, although this will rely on enabling works which differ, depending on the chosen option. It is though expected that proposals to charge for visitors in the East car park will be implemented as soon as the Traffic Regulation Order is in place (See Para. 5.0 below) however, implementation at the West will not be brought in until it is considered that it is a viable commercial opportunity. There are two options that can be considered and both are in place at various Council Car Parks.

2.1.1 Option 1 – Pay on Exit.

This would involve visitors collecting a ticket on entry. Once they exit the building, the ticket will need to be validated at a pay station and the appropriate payment made. The ticket will then be endorsed allowing exit. This system is common place in many car parks. The new infrastructure which would be required includes entry ticket machines, pay on foot terminals and new barriers to the East and West Car Parks.

As all individuals have to pay to exit the car park, it is not possible to avoid payment and limited management of the system for compliance is required.

Total Cost Option 1 - £65,000 per car park inclusive of equipment, civils costs and installation.

2.1.2 **Option 2 – Pay and Display.**

With this option, visitors would pay on entry based on the amount of time they expect to be in the building. As with option 1 above, some infrastructure works would be required, including new pay and display terminals. However, there would not be a requirement for new barriers, as the system would rely on parking enforcement for its “policing”.

This could mean some avoidance and is dependent on the extent of resourcing and enforcement which could also yield fines, in addition to the parking charges themselves.

Total Costs Option 2 - £22,000 per car park inclusive of equipment, civils costs and installation

2.2 **Charges**

It was previously agreed that rates over this time would be based on other Council car parks in the City Centre, with the equivalent charges being levied in excess of any free period, i.e. up to 3 hours charged at £3.50;

Currently the charges to the City Centres, City and County of Swansea Pay and Display (P&D) Car Parks are as follows:

- Up to 1hour £1.20
- Up to 2 hours £2.40
- Up to 3 hours £3.50
- Up to 4 hours £4.50
- All day £7.00

The previous Cabinet decision in 2011 agreed to allow an initial two hour free parking for visitors with the view that this was to be reviewed after three months of operation to gauge its effectiveness in reducing congestion and any ongoing abuse of the system.

The Council could propose free parking after a certain time, which would be 9.00 p.m. in line with Paxton Street.

3.0 **Other Considerations**

3.1 **Staff Visitors**

If charging is to be implemented, a decision will be required on how to deal with staff visiting from other buildings. If they were required to pay for visitor parking, in addition to their permit for another location, then this would seem unreasonable.

The intention is that staff or invited guests would be directed to the West Car Park, so that the visitors car park is used as intended for short stay visitors to the Civic Centre. Arrangements for staff visitor parking will be managed through the Facilities Team.

3.2 Staff permit arrangements

An important consideration that Cabinet need to be aware of is the existing permit arrangement for staff car parking.

Since 2011, in accordance with the agreed accommodation strategy there have been a number of moves in and out of the Civic Centre with little effect on parking. The recent disposal of external office accommodation as a result of the accommodation strategy and the introduction of agile working has resulted in a significant improvement in the efficient use of office accommodation at the building. Consequently more staff will be accommodated at the Civic Centre than previously. The recent relocation of the Housing department has already caused some congestion under the current allocation of spaces.

Furthermore the accommodation team are currently working on a programme to relocate approximately 100 staff from one floor of the Oldway centre and a further 135 Community Hub staff into the Civic Centre by June 2016. This influx of staff will result in the demand for parking exceeding the number of available spaces.

The intention has always been to revisit all permit allocations at the building prior to any further moves to align the parking arrangements with those already in place at the Guildhall. This will mean that staff will be allocated into one of the 3 work style categories (mobile, flexible or static). As a result of this categorisation the assumption will be that only mobile and flexible staff will be allocated a parking space at the building. Those staff allocated as a 'static worker' will not automatically qualify for a permit under the new arrangements but will be offered alternative travel options for example High street car parking or the use of one of the staff travel discount schemes. Any future moves into the Civic Centre (including Oldway and the Community Hub) will be allocated permits under these arrangements.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed to reflect the changes in the scheme and discussed with the Equalities team, with the details shown in section 4 below. In relation to employees, information on staff currently allocated a permit has been sent to Heads of Service to be assigned into one of the 3 work style categories.

It is aimed to inform staff of their allocation by mid-April to enable staff to make alternative arrangements where needed prior to the go live date in May. A communication plan will be drafted to ensure staff are kept up to date with these changes prior to implementation in May 2016.

4.0 Equality Impact Assessment

A full EIA report has been undertaken with agreed actions implemented. The action plan does include monitoring the effects of the proposal on attendance at the Civic Centre (for whatever reason) and this will need to be undertaken at the relevant time to ensure the implementation is proceeding as expected.

There is dispensation available for Members of the Public and other external visitors who have been invited to attend meetings or events in the Civic Centre as it is the main building with public access and so hosts events, etc which attract People from across our area and beyond.

Publicity and notice should be given to those individuals and groups who are regular visitors - to enable them, if necessary, to make other arrangements.

5.0 Traffic Regulation Orders

In order to enforce the above proposals Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) would be required. Officers in Highways and Transportation have advised that due to insufficient resources, implementation of updated TROs would not be possible until the end of 2016/17. For this reason it is considered that the previous barrier/token system is reintroduced to gain some form of control in the interim, this can be continually reviewed and monitored for effectiveness up to that point.

6.0 Financial Implications

Capital

- 6.1 The capital cost of the works and traffic regulations cost are estimated to cost £65k or £22k for each car park depending on which option is chosen, a total of £130k or £44k. This will be funded from the unallocated balance in the Building Capital Maintenance budget. Appropriate FPR and CPR procedures will be complied with.

Revenue

- 6.2 The ongoing revenue costs will involve maintenance on the new machines and in the case of option 2 the potential of extra policing costs. These additional costs for administration will be funded by income received. Any income achieved as a result of the proposals will be taken into account as part of the budget setting process.
- 6.3 It is difficult to estimate the income generated from visitors currently using the car park as an analysis of time spent has not been carried out and in any event, charging is likely to reduce overall usage. On the basis that there will be a free period then it is not expected that any significant revenue will be generated.

6.4 It should be noted that any payments received will be inclusive of VAT and as such the income to the Authority would need to reflect the net amount received.

6.5 The cost of reintroducing the barrier/token system to the East Car Park is minimal other than the cost of purchasing tokens.

7.0 Legal Implications

7.1 The Traffic Regulation Orders detailed in paragraph 5.0 of this report would have to be implemented in accordance with Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None