

Report to	Lead Member for Transport and Environment
Date	25 July 2005
Report By	Director of Transport and Environment
Title of Report	Lewes Parking Review
Purpose of Report	To consider the results of a review of the Lewes Parking Scheme

RECOMMENDATION:

That detailed proposals be developed and draft Traffic Regulation Orders be published as necessary to give effect to changes set out in Appendix B.

1 Financial Appraisal

1.1 Costs cannot be estimated accurately until detailed design has been carried out. Revenue (especially revenue from penalty charge notices) is inevitably subject to uncertainty. It is estimated that the implementation of the proposed changes would cost in the order of £80,000. This would be funded from the capital programme and would be recovered from surplus revenue in future years. The contract with NCP provides for variations and the additional annual cost of operating the revised scheme is estimated to be in the order of £6750. Additional income from the increased number of parking spaces and from permits (but excluding any additional income from penalty charge notices) is estimated to amount to £45,500 so the changes would result in a net increase in annual income of £38,250, covering capital costs in just over two years.

1.2 Decriminalised parking schemes are required to be self-financing and the charges will be reviewed annually each autumn.

2 Supporting Information

2.1 In September 2004 decriminalised parking enforcement was introduced in Lewes District. At the same time, a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) was introduced in the centre of the town of Lewes. No changes were made on the ground outside Lewes town.

2.2 A commitment was given that the scheme in Lewes town would be reviewed after six months and that arrangements in the rest of the District, including the possibility of introducing further CPZs, would be reviewed after that. This report deals with the review in the town of Lewes only. A report will be presented on the situation elsewhere in the District later in the year, following consultations in the areas concerned.

2.3 Consultants, Alpha Parking, were commissioned to undertake the review and their conclusions and recommendations are presented in their report, a copy of which is available in the Members' Room. As part of the review, leaflets were delivered to every residential and business address within the existing CPZ and in surrounding areas in which the extension of the zone was considered to be a possibility. The views expressed in letters received since the launch of the scheme were also taken into account. Some minor technical issues raised in the consultation have already been dealt with during recent snagging works.

3 Consideration

3.1 As intended, the scheme has significantly affected patterns of parking in the town. There is now greater turnover of parking in the main shopping street and in many car parks. In the main shopper car parks, approximately 10% more vehicles than before are now paying to park and this is likely to benefit commerce. It is too early to draw firm conclusions about any impact on travel patterns. However, there is some evidence that, since the scheme was introduced, about 3.4% less traffic is driving into Lewes and there are anecdotal reports of an increase in public transport use.

3.2 Some 1293 questionnaires were completed by residents and businesses within the CPZ. This represents over a third of the total number of addresses. Approximately 21% of respondents felt that the CPZ should be removed completely. Some 79% felt that it should be retained either unaltered (19%) or with various modifications (60%). The views expressed are summarised in Appendix A.

3.3 The Lewes Joint Parking Board, comprising representatives of the County and District Councils and of the Chamber of Commerce, considered the findings of the consultation and the recommendations made by the Consultant, together with advice from Officers. The recommendations set out in Appendix B incorporate the views expressed by the Board. These resulting recommendations, therefore, differ slightly from those set out in the Consultant's report.

3.4 Two informal petitions with a total of 1379 signatures calling for free short-stay parking near community-based stores were received during the consultation period and are reflected in the recommendations. Further informal petitions will be presented at the meeting by Councillor O'Keeffe.

3.5 A number of consultees were critical of the County Council, claiming that the Council's presence in the town was a major cause of parking problems. Some respondents believed that the introduction of parking charges at County Hall had displaced more staff onto the streets. The reality is that the Council accounts for about 10% of the employment in Lewes and has more on-site parking per employee than the town average. Parking on County Hall campus is now managed much more efficiently than before and there is no evidence that the introduction of charges has pushed more cars onto the street. The parking charges are set in the context of a comprehensive travel plan, which aims to promote sustainable travel choices.

4 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 I consider that, generally, the scheme is achieving its objectives and is working well. The consultant's report sets out a number of changes which will improve the scheme and I endorse those recommendations with variations as supported by the Joint Board. The modified recommendations will, I consider, better reflect the specific character of Lewes and, in particular, retain the "light touch" that has been a key objective of the scheme from the outset.

4.2 My full recommendations are set out in Appendix B.

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Director of Transport and Environment

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Local Member : Councillor O'Keeffe & Councillor St Pierre

BACKGROUND PAPERS - The Six Month Review of the Lewes CPZ, Alpha Parking, June 2005

SYNOPSIS OF CONSULTATION RESULTS

1 Some 1293 questionnaires were completed by residents and businesses within the CPZ. This represents over a third of the total number of addresses. Approximately 21% of respondents felt that the CPZ should be removed completely. Some 79% felt that it should be retained either unaltered (19%) or with various modifications (60%). Whilst most respondents wish to see *some* change to the scheme, no *single* potential change attracted majority support. However, there was significant geographical variation and there was support for reducing the scheme to Monday to Friday only in the outer western areas of the scheme.

2 Within the CPZ, the principal concerns were about the availability of parking at night. This was particularly evident in sub zone B (the Pells and surrounding area) where some residents stated that they also experience difficulties during the daytime. Some 80% of respondents supported proposals for the selective removal of yellow lines to create approximately 166 additional parking spaces and the downgrading of other double lines to single to allow a further 122 vehicles to park at night.

3 One of the most contentious issues has been the impact of the scheme on residential areas immediately outside the CPZ. It was anticipated that problems were likely to arise in these areas but, when specifically asked at the time of the scheme's introduction, residents indicated that they would rather remain outside the scheme initially and see how things turned out. Residents were asked, in the latest consultation, whether they would still wish to remain outside the scheme, to be included fully within the scheme, or to have selected localised waiting restrictions to protect junctions and the like. There was support for extending the scheme to parts of Wallands and Winterbourne and for localised restrictions in areas slightly further out including the Houndean area, northern parts of Wallands, southern parts of Nevill and, on a very limited basis, to Malling.

4 Several respondents commented on congestion caused by loading in some locations and this needs to be addressed. Although bus operators and others have reported an overall improvement, some problem spots associated with loading continue to give rise to concern.