

Report to: Lead Member for Transport & Environment

Date of meeting: 20 January 2020

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Proposal for East Sussex Parking Charges

Purpose: To consider the proposed increases to parking pay & display charges and the proposed changes to permit charges.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to:

- (1) Note the response to the public consultation on increasing parking pay & display charges and the proposed changes to permit charges; and**
 - (2) Approve the proposals:**
 - a. to increase parking pay & display tariffs and permit charges as detailed in Appendix 1; and**
 - b. agree that pay & display tariffs and permit charges across the county should be reviewed annually.**
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1. Background Information

1.1. Parking management supports a range of transport strategies aimed at influencing travel choice. With increasing car ownership and use, parking pressures add to the traffic management problems experienced by many towns both in terms of congestion on major routes and increases in vehicle emitted pollutants to the detriment of air quality.

1.2. There is strong evidence that air pollution is a cause of both short-term and long-term health effects in susceptible groups, such as the elderly and those with underlying health problems of heart disease or breathing problems. Long-term exposure to air pollutants decreases life expectancy by around 6 months on average, mainly because of the role that small, sooty particles from vehicle exhaust fumes play in lung cancer and heart disease. Air pollution causes many extra admissions to hospital as well as damaging the natural environment. The annual health costs associated with air pollution are estimated to be £15 billion to UK citizens, which is about the same as the health costs of obesity.

1.3. Air pollution also has effects on the natural environment. Ground-level ozone, a common pollutant in East Sussex in the summer months, is formed when pollutants react in sunlight. It can seriously damage crops and vegetation and affect habitats.

1.4. Alongside strategies that aim to encourage more sustainable modes of travel (e.g. car sharing, public transport, cycling or walking), the 'rationing' of the supply of parking can contribute to wider transport planning objectives. The main way in which parking controls are rationed has tended to be by limiting the supply of spaces available to those who elect to commute by car and thereby need to park longer term (often referred to as 'all-day' parking). Highway authorities have traditionally achieved this by means of on-street parking schemes with controls on who is able to park (e.g. short-period single yellow lines or residents-only schemes), maximum stay (e.g. time-limited restrictions) or by pricing (e.g. discourage parking by making it a more expensive option than alternative travel modes). Pricing also tends to be set at a level to encourage use of nearby off-street car parks first and foremost.

1.5. In Eastbourne, Hastings and Lewes, all-day parking is already limited in central parking spaces as charges are levied by means of pay and display or pay by phone. Increases in tariffs are therefore considered to be an important component of continuing support for general transport strategies aimed at encouraging more sustainable forms of travel and to assist with tackling air quality issues generally.

1.6. Parking tariffs have not been increased for over 10 years and the charging regime is therefore having a reduced impact as a demand management tool on influencing travel choices. It is therefore proposed that parking tariffs are increased to influence driver behaviour and encourage them to use alternative sustainable forms of transport.

1.7. Increasing concerns about reductions in air quality are leading to many local authorities setting higher parking prices for higher emission vehicles and some authorities are also investigating traffic management schemes that prohibit certain vehicle emission types altogether in city centres. In Lewes, and to some extent Falmer, the permit price arrangements already include differential pricing to encourage lower emission vehicles for residents' permits, however this is not the case in Eastbourne where it only applies to business permits and no differential exists in Hastings. Officers recommend a consistent approach is introduced across the three towns with an increasing differential to encourage lower emission vehicles. Therefore, it is recommended that the resident permit tariffs charged in Eastbourne and Hastings are changed to follow the Lewes District model for resident permit charges. This links the cost of residents' permits to the CO₂ emissions of pollution from the vehicle the permit covers, with owners of low emission vehicles paying less than those with higher emissions.

1.8. The effective management of parking not only addresses local parking problems, it helps achieve some of the broader transport objectives set out in our Local Transport Plan (LTP3). These include improving road safety, achieving better flows of traffic through town centres improving safety, health and security, improving quality of life, encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of transport reducing damage to the environment and improving the economic viability of areas through the efficient management and use of parking spaces.

1.9. The Traffic Management Act 2004 allows councils, which are also local traffic authorities, to apply to the Secretary of State for Transport for a Civil Enforcement Area Order that allows the de-criminalising of parking enforcement in their area. Under this arrangement, councils can undertake enforcement of all parking restrictions in their area and retain the income received from parking charges and penalties to help fund the costs of parking services, with any resulting surplus being used within the prescribed parameters under the legislation. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) has three Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) schemes covering Hastings Borough, Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough.

1.10. ESCC is also working with Rother District Council to introduce CPE into Rother District: the proposed changes to parking charges will not apply in the Rother District.

1.11. The expenditure and income for the existing CPE schemes is published in our Annual Reports. Income is received from the sale of various parking permits, Pay and Display (P&D) charges and Penalty Charge Notices (PCN).

1.12. ESCC's statutory power to impose parking charges derives from sections 35 and 34 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Under sections 35C and 45A of the same Act ESCC may vary these charges. The changes can be introduced 21 days after the publication of a notice in a newspaper circulating in the area in which the changes are to be introduced.

2. General context of parking charges and tariffs

2.1. Each of the three Controlled Parking Areas were set up some years apart and with varying types of parking provision to satisfy the particular needs of the local community. Although there are similarities between the three areas, there are different levels of charging in each area and the difference is particularly noticeable in the charges for permits. Parking charges are set at a level to ensure that at least the costs of managing, enforcing and administering parking controls are met, and no financial burden is passed on to council tax payers. As a principle, it also conforms to central government guidance that parking schemes should at least be self-financing.

2.2. The level of charging is a vital tool to manage the demand for parking. Whether this is by type of user (e.g. permit user or pay and display), by location (e.g. differential pricing between on-street parking and off-street car parks) or by type of vehicle (e.g. second residents' permits or lower-emission vehicles).

2.3. The effective control of parking is a crucial element of wider transport strategies as set out in the LTP3. It supports the local economy by assisting with the management of congestion and the availability and demand for parking spaces as well as encouraging greater use of more sustainable forms of transport.

2.4. The aims of the proposals include acting as a disincentive to multiple vehicle ownership and a move to encourage greater use of sustainable alternatives, whilst not limiting the availability of permits for those that need them. As such, it is important that charges are set at a level that has some meaningful effect on parking behaviour.

2.5. Charges for on-street parking have not been significantly changed for many years. In Eastbourne and Hastings the charges were last increased in 2008 and in Lewes in 2007. Since then, the Retail Prices Index (RPI) has increased by the order of 35%.

2.6. At the meeting of the Lead Member for Transport and Environment on Monday 17 June, it was agreed to hold a public consultation on the proposed changes to the parking charges in Lewes, Eastbourne and Hastings. Appendix 1 contains the consultation analysis for the proposals for East Sussex parking charges, within this Appendix 1B provides the current and proposed permit charges and Appendix 1C provides the current and proposed pay and display charges across the county.

2.7. The consultation ran from 1 July to 11 August. Appendix 1E provides the public consultation questionnaire. The key changes proposed, which were consulted on, are:

- standardising the price of residents' permits across Lewes, Eastbourne and Hastings for the first time.
- linking the cost of residents' permits to the CO₂ emissions of pollution from the vehicle the permit covers, with owners of low emission vehicles paying less than those with higher emissions. Charges for first permits in Hastings would remain the same or reduce for residents with a vehicle in car tax bands A to F, while the majority of motorists in Eastbourne would pay more for annual permits. The cost of a first permit would be between £15 and £95 per year.
- that the cost of visitor and day permits should be higher in all three scheme areas to encourage people to make more sustainable travel choices.
- increasing the cost of on-street P&D charges to encourage people to use alternative sustainable forms of transport, which will help reduce congestion and improve air quality in our towns. The increase in charges for on-street parking across Eastbourne, Hastings and Lewes would range from 20p to £1.90 per hour depending on the location. Blue Badge holders are not impacted by this proposal as they do not have to pay for on-street parking.
- targeted increases in on-street parking charges in a small number of locations where nearby off-street car park prices have higher charges than on-street prices. This will help encourage people to use car parks first and minimise the pressure on on-street parking in these locations. Blue Badge holders are not impacted by this proposal as they do not have to pay for on-street parking.

3. Public consultation

3.1. The consultation sought to understand the views of residents, businesses and stakeholders on the Council's proposed approach to the management of parking demand across the county through the increase in on-street pay & display parking tariffs and parking permit charges. The consultation also looked to better understand whether these proposed changes would encourage drivers to use sustainable forms of transport and/or to use vehicles that emit lower levels of pollutants. Appendix 1 contains the consultation analysis for the proposals for East Sussex parking charges.

3.2. The majority of feedback to the consultation was submitted via the ESCC Consultation Hub but responses were also received via the dedicated consultation email address: parking.consultations@eastsussex.gov.uk. Parking reviews in Eastbourne and Lewes were also running at the same time as the Proposal for East Sussex Parking Charges, comments relating to these proposals were submitted and have been included within the comments of this consultation. Two petitions were also received as part of the consultation process. Copies of all the verbatim

responses received as part of the consultation have been placed in the Members' room. The total number of consultation responses received is:

Online Questionnaire	Emails/Letters	Petitions
2161	40	2

3.3. The consultation questionnaire has received a large majority of responses from residents of Eastbourne (76.1%), followed by Lewes (13.8%) and Hastings (7.6%). Analysis of those responses where a postcode was given showed that around 2.5% of respondents were from outside the county.

3.4. When considering the environmental aspects of the consultation:

- 54.33% of respondents indicated they strongly agreed or agreed the Council should take measures to reduce congestion in our town centres.
- 66.64% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed the Council should take measures to improve local air quality and reduce vehicle emissions.
- 57.75% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed the Council should take measures to encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport and use vehicles that emit lower levels of pollution.

3.5. When considering parking habits and the cost of parking in our town centres there was varying opinion:

- 65.43% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the cost of parking charges influence where people park.
- 50.48% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed the cost of off-street parking should be lower than that of on-street parking.
- 38.6% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that less polluting vehicles should pay less for the resident permit compared to 40.35% who disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- Only 12.08% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed permit charges should be aligned with those in Lewes compared to 59.6% who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

3.6. The consultation also proposed changes to day permits with 10.04% of respondents indicating they strongly agreed or agreed the cost should increase compared to 74.46% respondents indicating they disagree or strongly disagree.

3.7. The consultation sought to understand local opinion on proposed increase to on-street pay and display charges, 11.48% respondents indicated they strongly agreed or agreed with 82.37% of respondents indicating they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposed increases.

3.8. The questionnaire responses also indicated 84.96% of the respondents did not have any type of permit.

3.9. Following analysis of the questionnaire responses which included additional comments and alternative suggestions to help reduce congestion and air quality, it is evident that the main point of concern is the negative economic impact the proposed charges will have on the town centres. The top ten additional themed comments were identified as follows:

Rank	Comment Theme	Final Quantity
1	Concerned about the negative effect (mainly economic) on the area	614
2	Need to improve buses and bus services - mainly around cost, reliability, availability	568
3	Alternative parking (regulation and pricing) suggestions	282
4	Need to improve railways and rail services - mainly around cost and reliability	280
5	Need to develop Park & Ride services	249
6	This is just a stealth tax / just a revenue making proposal	178
7	Cycling related comments - more / better cycle lanes and priorities needed	158

8	After investing in the development in Eastbourne (The Beacon), it would be counter productive to increase charges	150
9	General comments about the difficulties presented by roadworks, and the need to improve road links	136
10	It's unfair to compare the three areas as they have different parking requirements and are demographically different	114

3.10. The consultation questionnaire attracted 2,161 responses in total, with 1,704 completing the open text comment box. The full response to the top ten comments is contained in Appendix 1.

3.11. All of the responses, comments and feedback received as part of the consultation process have been read and considered to help inform the recommendations in this report.

3.12. Proposals relate to on-street parking places, they do not extend to off-street car parks anywhere in the county. As the Highway Authority ESCC encourages the use of off-street car parks to help minimise journeys, congestion and any environmental impacts within our town centres. The proposed increase in on-street parking charges will also help to encourage greater use of more sustainable transport options which include bus travel, walking and cycling. There is little published evidence which demonstrates a direct correlation between changes in parking charges and changes in town centre footfall. Other factors will have an influence on people's choice on where they shop or access services and, therefore, the level of footfall in a town centre. These include the amount and availability of paid and free parking; the cost and quality of off-street parking; the accessibility of the town centre by different transport modes (e.g. by train, bus etc); and most fundamentally the quality of the retail, leisure and services on offer.

3.13. The management of parking, including through appropriate charging, is an important part of the demand management toolkit in the LPT3 which complements the investment we are making to improve travel choices which encourage the use of walking, cycling and public transport in East Sussex, with the overall aim of supporting sustainable economic growth.

3.14. Charging at a sufficient level to impact driver behaviour, can bolster the local economy by encouraging a 'churn' of visitors and shoppers, rather than spaces being occupied by a single user for a long period of time. It should also encourage drivers to:

- consider how they travel and whether it is alternative mode of travel – walk, cycle, bus or train
- park in off-street car parks,

3.15. ESCC has reviewed the number of on-street parking spaces that would be affected by the proposals compared to the number of off-street parking spaces in the town centres. In Eastbourne, of the 2,008 on-street parking spaces which provide pay and display parking 425 parking spaces in the town centre (Zone A and Zone G), those within a short walking distance of the main retail area, will be most affected by the proposals. As an alternative to parking on-street there are 1,718 off-street parking places in the Railway Station, Beacon, Junction Road and Hyde Gardens car parks that will offer cheaper and longer stay parking. The proposals seek to encourage visitors to utilise the off-street parking places which will help to reduce vehicle movements in the town centre and in turn reduce air pollution.

3.16. In Lewes, of the 1,084 on-street parking spaces that provide pay & display parking; of these 149 parking spaces in the town centre, close to the local amenities will see the highest increase in the parking charges. As an alternative there are 706 parking spaces in 12 off-street car parks within walking distance of the town centre which will offer cheaper and longer stay parking.

3.17. In Hastings 463 pay and display parking spaces across the town centre will be affected by the proposed increases, as an alternative there are 2,749 off-street parking spaces in 16 car parks across the town centre which will offer cheaper and longer stay parking options. There are also 31 pay and display coach parking spaces in the town centre. There are a further 127 off-street parking spaces in St. Leonards.

3.18. The above analysis demonstrates that the majority of car parking capacity in Eastbourne, Lewes and Hastings is in off-street car parks. So, the proposed increases to Pay and Display charges should not have a detrimental impact on the economic viability of these towns. The proposals are

intended to encourage, wherever possible, visitors to use the off-street parking facilities, but also provide all day parking where there is limited off-street parking provision.

3.19. Offering a discount based on the vehicle emissions resident parking permits can help to encourage greater use of less polluting vehicles which will help to reduce harmful emissions and improve air quality in our town centres and across the county. The proposals for the on-street parking charges aim to encourage greater use of off-street car parks, reduce the number of vehicles driving on our town centre roads searching for parking spaces and aim to encourage greater use of alternative modes of transport which in turn will reduce harmful emissions and improve air quality. These outcomes will make these towns a more appealing place to work, live and visit and thereby boost the local economy.

3.20. The Place Scrutiny Committee has considered the proposals and any comments will be included with the Lead Member meeting papers as a separate note for consideration by the Lead Member.

4. Equality Impact Assessment

4.1. Members must have 'due regard' to the duties set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty or PSED).

4.2. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) (Appendix 2) has been carried out to identify adverse impacts that may arise as a result of the proposals for those with protected characteristics. This assessment details potential actions to help minimise, avoid or mitigate negative impacts of the proposals. The Lead Member must read the Equalities Impact Assessment and take its findings into consideration when determining these proposals.

4.3. ESCC received no direct complaints about the proposed parking charges discriminating against anyone with a protected characteristic.

4.4. The EqIA has considered the impact of the proposals on different groups. ESCC considers that by delivering these proposals and with the general provisions of the parking schemes as a whole, it is meeting its statutory duties under the Traffic Management Act, Local Transport Plan, the Equalities Act 2010 and its commitment to improve the environment.

4.5. The proposals have been developed to avoid a disproportionate impact on current users while helping to continue meeting the costs of the parking schemes. The proposed changes to on-street parking charges (including permits) do not alter the nature of the provisions of the parking service.

4.6. The proposals do not change any concessions currently afforded to Blue Badge holders. People of all ages who park in an area of the CPE scheme where charges apply will be impacted by the increased charges. Retired people may have less disposable income to be able to pay the increased parking charges, but also have access to free bus travel. Children and young people under the age of 17 who do not drive will not be directly impacted by the proposals.

4.7. The proposals are not expected to have any specific impact on individuals from different ethnic backgrounds as it is considered that the service will continue to meet or support the needs of current and future users, regardless of ethnicity.

4.8. The proposals are not expected to have any specific impact on individuals or organisations that provide care as the service will continue to meet or support the needs of current and future users. An increase to the cost of carer permits may impact some carers.

5. Implementation

5.1. If the proposals are approved the Parking Team will draft the Notice of Variation that will be advertised in the Eastbourne Herald, Sussex Express and Hastings Observer for a minimum of 21 days. All permit holders, Councillors and Stakeholders will receive notification along with copies of the notices displayed in prominent positions in every road which has a bay that is affected across all three CPE areas.

5.2. If the proposals are approved the new charging regime should be operational by the end of April 2020.

6. Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1. A total of 2,161 responses were received via the online consultation hub, a further 32 comments relating to the proposals were submitted via the Eastbourne Parking Review consultation that was running at the same time. 40 email responses were received via the parking.consultation@eastsussex.gov.uk email address, two petitions were also received relating to the proposed parking charges increases, one specific to Lewes and one specific to Eastbourne and two parish councils responded to the consultation
- 6.2. There appears to be strong support for ESCC to introduce measures to reduce traffic congestion in our town centres. The proposed increase to parking charges will help to reduce vehicle trips and encourage greater use of sustainable modes of transport.
- 6.3. Concerns about the local air quality of our town centres were identified through the online questionnaire with almost two thirds of respondents indicating they feel ESCC should take measures to improve air quality across the county. Incentives such as a reduced resident parking permit for the least polluting vehicles will encourage a modal shift to electric vehicles.
- 6.4. Over half of respondents to the online questionnaire indicated measures should be taken by ESCC to encourage more sustainable modes of transport across the county.
- 6.5. The responses suggest almost two thirds of respondents feel parking charges do influence where people park.
- 6.6. Just over half of the respondents felt off-street parking charges should be lower than those on-street.
- 6.7. There was no clear majority from the responses that either agreed or disagreed with aligning permit charges or discounting less polluting vehicles. This may be due to the low number of permit holders that responded to the consultation just 6% of all current resident permit holders. By offering a reduction in the permit charge based on vehicle CO₂ emissions ESCC can help to encourage greater use and ownership of less polluting vehicles in Eastbourne, Hastings and Lewes which in turn will help to reduce pollution in our town centres. Introducing such an incentive will help to achieve one of the main objectives set out in the LTP3 which is to reduce air pollution across the county.
- 6.8. The responses to the proposed increases to visitor and day permit charges suggest there is not widespread support for increasing these charges. The purpose of the proposed increase is to encourage greater use of sustainable modes of transport wherever possible, using alternative modes of transport will help to reduce vehicle congestion and pollution in the town centres. The level of the proposed day permits still represent good value for money, for example resident visitor day permits only increase to £1.20 per day in Lewes and Eastbourne. The proposed increase for hotel parking permits will still offer value for money and will be cheaper than the standard on-street parking charge. For example, in Eastbourne the proposed cost of this permit would be £2 per day. The terms of use of the hotel permit is not changing and all vehicles will be permitted to park until 11 am the following day. The relatively low cost of this permit will continue to assist in helping to boost the visitor economy to East Sussex.
- 6.9. The majority of respondents suggested they did not support the proposed increase to on-street pay and display charges. Parking charges have remained static since they were first introduced, and therefore the proposed new tariffs not only take account of the RPI increase during that time (of approximately 35%) but also reflect the impact of increasing car use in the intervening period, changes to controlled parking zones and other changes through our parking review process.
- 6.10. The proposed tariffs will also help to address issues of air quality by reducing congestion in our town centres through better demand management and increasing the churn of vehicles. In addition, the proposed tariff increases will incentivise the use of alternative means of transport such as active travel, which will contribute to the wider carbon emissions reductions which are part of a suite of measures to support East Sussex become net carbon zero by 2050.
- 6.11. The increase in charges for on-street parking across Eastbourne, Hastings and Lewes would range from 20p to £1.90 per hour depending on the location. Blue Badge holders are not impacted by this proposal as they do not have to pay for on-street parking.
- 6.12. The majority of the comments submitted via the online questionnaire or email indicated that respondents felt the proposed increases to parking charges would have a negative effect on the local

economy and would contribute to even harder times for the High Street. ESCC do not agree that the proposals will have a negative effect on the local economy. Whilst there is often anecdotal evidence there is little published evidence which demonstrates a direct correlation between changes in car park charges and changes in town centre footfall. Charging at a sufficient level to impact driver behaviour, can bolster the local economy by encouraging a 'churn' of visitors and shoppers, rather than spaces being occupied by a single user for a long period of time. The proposals for the on-street parking charges aim to encourage greater use of off-street car parks, reduce the number of vehicles driving on our town centre roads searching for parking spaces and aim to encourage greater use of alternative modes of transport which in turn will reduce harmful emissions and improve air quality. These outcomes will make these towns a more appealing place to work, live and visit and thereby boost the local economy.

6.13. As alternative options to the proposals for parking charges, many respondents suggested that the public transport offer could be improved if more people are to change to more sustainable modes of transport, this included the frequency and reliability of bus services and improved cycle routes and cycle storage across the county. The cost of using public transport was also a popular issue. A significant part of the LTP3 Strategy and future direction for East Sussex is to implement infrastructure to support integrated sustainable travel – walking, cycling, public transport, car sharing etc. For example – bus priority measures, cycle lanes and facilities, improvements to pedestrian routes to key trip attractors, better rail / bus /cycle interchanges, less street clutter and enhanced public spaces. ESCC cannot set rail fares or increase the frequency of rail services. It will continue to lobby and work with the rail network to provide as best a service as possible to ensure our town centres are accessible and continue to be a desired destination for our many visitors. With the ongoing pressure on Council budgets, any future Parking Surplus, excluding existing commitments, could be used as a further contribution towards ESCC's public transport costs. The investment in these activities is complimentary to the objectives of the LTP3 in the provision of sustainable transport which assists in reducing congestion and improving air quality in the county. However, these improvements alone will not enable the change in behaviour that the proposals to parking tariffs is seeking to achieve.

6.14. In order to achieve our objective of influencing driver behaviour and encourage people to use alternative sustainable forms of transport, additional tariff increases are likely to be required. It is proposed that any further increases to Parking Tariffs will be reviewed as part of the annual review of fees and charges.

6.15. We have considered all the feedback and concerns received during the consultation process and do not feel that the proposals should be withdrawn as a result of the information received.

6.16. Lead Member is therefore recommended to agree the recommendations in this report.

RUPERT CLUBB

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All members whose electoral divisions are within areas with on-street parking charges in Eastbourne and Hastings Borough and Lewes District.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None