

**Meeting:** Council

**Date:** 19 July 2018

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

**Report Title:** Proposal to Vary Parking Charges

**Is the decision a key decision?** No

**When does the decision need to be implemented?** Immediately

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## **1. Proposal and Introduction**

- 1.1 To introduce a new set of parking tariffs that will apply all year round across all parking places managed by the Council throughout Torbay.
- 1.2 At the present time there is a set of summer charges that typically apply between the 21st March and 31st October and a set of winter charges that typically apply between the 1st November and 20th March of each year.
- 1.3 The introduction of a new set of parking tariffs that will apply all year round will ensure that the charges remain consistent throughout the year and will remove the costs of re-programming the machines and changing the tariff signage twice a year.

## **2. Reason for Proposal**

- 2.1 The setting of fees and charges is a Council decision and therefore, following the request of the Mayor, the matter has been referred to Council to make the final decision.
- 2.2 The current Traffic Regulation Order ensures if a decision is not made in time for fees and charges the current summer tariff will remain in place.

## **3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision**

- 3.1 That the Chief Executive be requested to progress the publishing of a new Traffic Regulation Order to confirm the new year-round pay and display charges for on-street and off-street parking, along with the amended parking permit charges, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

- 3.2 That the parking charges set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report be implemented on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 2018 or as otherwise indicated by the new Traffic Regulation Order.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 Proposed new year-round pay and display charges for on-street/off-street parking and revised parking permit charges for November 2018
- Appendix 2 History of Parking Charges ~ May 2015 to date
- Appendix 3 Benchmarking

## **Background Documents**

- Torbay Council's Parking Strategy - 2016 ~ 2021

## Section 1: Background Information

### 1. What is the proposal / issue?

To vary the on street and off street parking charges from November 2018 to remove the existing seasonal variations. This will make the parking charges easier to understand and avoid the annual misconception that these charges go up every March, when in reality they simply return to the summer rate.

The Council's medium term financial plan and therefore the Council's base budget assumes a 3% year on year growth in income associated with fees and charges across the authority.

The recommendations have proposed a variation to the parking charges that would see the removal of a seasonal tariff for on street and off street parking. This change would see the tariffs remain consistent across all Council operated off and on street pay and display spaces, throughout the year, with no seasonal summer/winter tariffs being implemented. This would reduce costs for tariff overlays and the significant staff time taken up by writing and uploading new tariffs to all 200 machines, two times a year. Furthermore, by adopting 'all-year-round' parking tariffs the Council will be providing greater clarity to users and will be following the approach used by the vast majority of other authorities.

Full details of the proposed tariffs can be found in Appendix 1.

### 2. What is the current situation?

The Council approved summer and winter tariffs as part of the budget setting process for 2017/18 and at a meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017 the Council agreed for the winter tariff to remain in place for the winter of 17/18. It was highlighted at the Council meeting in October 2017 that parking income may not reach target with the re-introduction of the winter tariff. During the debate Members were persuaded that income levels would be sustained and they therefore voted to keep the winter tariff in place.

The end of year finances for 2017/18 show that there was a shortfall in the pay and display income for off street parking areas of 1%. However, with the reduction of the annual permit charge there was a 40% rise in the permit income and the extra income generated equated to a further 1% increase in the overall income for car parks. Although this outcome managed to satisfy the income target for 2017/18 there is clearly a risk that this may not occur in future years where the expectation of a 3% year on year uplift remains.

It is the view of the Executive Head of Assets & Business Services that the current seasonal parking charges are confusing to the public who perceive the reversion to the summer tariff, each spring, as an increase in the charges. If the Council adopt a set of parking tariffs that apply all-year-round the system would be easier to understand for consumers and more efficient to operate for managers. It would reduce the need to re-programme all of the

	<p>parking machines twice a year and avoid the negative impact experienced at the beginning of the summer charges, each March. Seasonal charging is not common practice with neighbouring local authorities or indeed others across the country.</p>
3.	<p><b>What options have been considered?</b></p> <p><u>Recommended Proposal ~ All-Year-Round Tariff System</u></p> <p>This proposal would see a move away from the pattern of recent years whereby tariffs are different depending on the season. Higher in the summer and lower in the winter. The Council is recommended to adopt the tariff system set out in Appendix 1 and these will apply throughout the year.</p> <p>The current seasonal approach assumes that the entire winter period is one big promotion to encourage the use of parking facilities. However, with this recommended proposal the Council will be able to offer a reduced tariff in designated beach car parks during the winter and special promotions in any area by working in close liaison with local businesses in order to promote the Bay and in particular our Town Centres. If the Council accepts the recommendations, the new charges will be implemented on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2018. Torbay is being promoted as an all year round destination for visitors and therefore a consistency of charges will support this.</p> <p>Many tariff options have been considered at meetings with a range of stakeholders, which include Brixham Town Council, Paignton and Torquay Chambers of Trade, Torbay Business Forum and the English Riviera Tourism BID Company (ERTBID). All of these groups made comments and suggestions as to the possible tariff system and all have been considered in line with the budgetary requirements of the Council. It is important to note that all of the stakeholders accepted the need to move away from a seasonally based tariff system and they understood that a new unified set of tariffs would need to be pitched much closer to the summer rate due to the higher percentage of ticket sales during that period.</p> <p>The history of parking charges between 2013 and 2018 can be seen in Appendix 2. The Parking Review, which was completed in 2016, saw the cessation of different charging rates in different locations i.e. Beach car parks or Town Centre/Leisure car parks. When compared to the previous charging for Beach car parks, the prices in the summer have not increased since before May 2013. Also, the proposed one hour charge will only be 10p more than the 2015 tariff for a Town Centre car park. The recommendation is to decrease the all-day off-street charge to £8 compared with the existing summer tariff of £10.</p> <p>Currently the Council's parking permit prices are well below other comparative local authorities and the 'annual' permit offer provides the opportunity to park in all of the 38 Council off-street car parks for £1 per day. Similarly, the 'off-peak' permit allows for parking in 36 of the Council's pay and display car parks throughout the Bay for less than 17p per day (subject to time restrictions). In combination the 'annual' permit and the 'off-peak' permit provide local consumers with an extremely affordable option for parking their vehicles, whether it is for work or leisure.</p>

	<p><u>Do nothing</u></p> <p>This would see the existing permit charges and summer tariffs for on-street and off-street parking continue until a further Council decision is taken in respect of parking charges. The normal winter charges would not return without a further and different decision.</p>
4.	<p><b>How does this proposal support the ambitions, principles and delivery of the Corporate Plan?</b></p> <p>Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use reducing resources to best effect</li> </ul> <p>Targeted actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring Torbay remains an attractive and safe place to live and visit</li> </ul> <p>Torbay Council's Parking Strategy (2016 ~ 2021) includes a Strategic Action Plan. One of the objectives within that plan is to <b><i>"Keep parking charges under review"</i></b>, which includes the following <b>Key Actions</b> :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking tariffs for off-street to reflect the needs of long and short stay customers; within the context of this Strategy</li> <li>• Parking tariffs to factor in demand for parking and the charges set at levels that meet these requirements</li> <li>• Promote usage which will include summer and winter demands in line with budgetary requirements</li> <li>• Revenue growth to be increased by encouraging the use of both on and off-street pay and display parking areas and other income opportunities in the car parks</li> <li>• Set charges for reserved parking bays to reflect the demand and usage. Also, consider reverting to pay and display in reserved bay areas where demand is low</li> <li>• Review annual car park permit charges in line with the daily parking charges</li> </ul>
5.	<p><b>How does this proposal contribute towards the Council's responsibilities as corporate parents?</b></p> <p>This proposal has no direct link to the Council's responsibilities as corporate parents.</p>
6.	<p><b>How does this proposal tackle deprivation?</b></p>

	This proposal provides a consistent approach across all Council car parks and on street parking.
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>How does this proposal tackle inequalities?</b></p> <p>Not applicable.</p>
<b>8.</b>	<p><b>How does the proposal impact on people with learning disabilities?</b></p> <p>Not applicable.</p>
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>Who will be affected by this proposal and who do you need to consult with?</b></p> <p>The following were consulted on the proposal to vary parking tariffs for on-street and off-street as well as the range of parking permits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Robert Excell, Executive Lead for Community Services</li> <li>• Mayor's Executive Group</li> <li>• Political Group Meetings</li> <li>• Brixham Town Council</li> <li>• Torquay Chamber of Trade</li> <li>• Paignton Chamber of Trade</li> <li>• Torbay Business Forum</li> <li>• The English Riviera Tourism BID Company (ERTBID)</li> <li>• Torbay Council's Senior Leadership Team (SLT)</li> <li>• Martin Phillips, Chief Accountant</li> <li>• Chief Executive officer</li> </ul>
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>How will you propose to consult?</b></p> <p>The consultation has been concluded other than the formal process undertaken by the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).</p>

## Section 2: Implications and Impact Assessment

11.	<p><b>What are the financial and legal implications?</b></p> <p>In order to implement change to parking charges the Council is required to draft a new Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and lodge public notices with the Herald Express advising of the details and the date the new changes will come into operation. There is no appeal process for this.</p> <p>The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, and therefore the base budget assumes a 3% year on year growth in income associated with parking fees and charges.</p>
12.	<p><b>What are the risks?</b></p> <p>If the Council does not support the recommendation set out in this report then Members will be accepting the risk that the annual income may well fall significantly short of the target and consequently place further pressure on the Council's revenue budget.</p> <p>The Council generates 75% of its parking income through the application of the summer tariffs and therefore the proposed year-round pay and display charges for on-street and off-street parking are pitched much closer to the summer rate than the winter rate. If the proposed year-round tariffs were to represent a considerable reduction on the existing summer charges then it is clear that such a decision would have a negative impact on income.</p>
13.	<p><b>Public Services Value (Social Value) Act 2012</b></p> <p>Not applicable.</p>
14.	<p><b>What evidence / data / research have you gathered in relation to this proposal?</b></p> <p>Officers have analysed the parking income figures for the previous two years and the results clearly indicate that the proposed year-round pay and display charges for on-street and off-street parking, as set out in Appendix 1, should generate the income target.</p>
15.	<p><b>What are key findings from the consultation you have carried out?</b></p> <p>As part of the consultation feedback it was agreed that the Council will work with key stakeholder groups to consider promotional campaigns, rather than offering the winter period as one single campaign. The view was taken that a more targeted approach would help to drive footfall. Officers will work with business groups to identify the nature of such campaigns and everyone agreed that any marketing of parking services, including promotional offers, should be undertaken jointly. Community leaders were seeking a tariff</p>

	<p>system that encouraged residents to make greater use of some of our beach car parks during the winter months and the proposals have incorporated this request.</p> <p>There was good support for the reduction of the 24 hour rate and for the permits charges to remain in line with the current prices with moderate increases.</p> <p>Brixham town centre has very little on-street parking nearby and it was therefore suggested that a half-hour tariff remains for the off-street Brixham Central car park only. This will ensure that there is the opportunity, as there is in Torquay and Paignton town centres through on-street parking, to visit one or two shops only using the half-hour tariff. Consequently this suggestion has been incorporated in the proposals set out in Appendix 1.</p>
<b>16.</b>	<p><b>Amendments to Proposal / Mitigating Actions</b></p> <p>The tariffs have been amended in light of the comments received during the consultation process as highlighted in 15 above.</p>



## Equality Impacts

17.	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups			
		Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
	Older or younger people			There is no differential impact
	People with caring Responsibilities			There is no differential impact
	People with a disability			There is no differential impact
	Women or men			There is no differential impact
	People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i>			There is no differential impact
	Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			There is no differential impact
	People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			There is no differential impact
	People who are transgendered			There is no differential impact
	People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			There is no differential impact
	Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			There is no differential impact

	Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)			There is no differential impact
	Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)			There is no differential impact
<b>16</b>	<b>Cumulative Impacts – Council wide</b> (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	None		
<b>17</b>	<b>Cumulative Impacts – Other public services</b> (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	None		