

Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

Highways and Transportation Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet

14 March 2001
19 March 2001

On Street Parking in the City Centre

Report of the Director of Environment and Development

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report reviews experience with the operation of on-street parking during the past year, and recommends increasing the level of fines. It also contains revised proposals for spending the surplus income generated by the scheme.

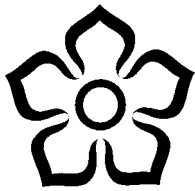
2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Cabinet Lead Member seeks the views of the Highways and Transportation Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.2 Cabinet is recommended to approve:
- a) the increase in the level of the fine from £20 to £30
 - b) the proposals for spending the surplus income set out in Appendix A
 - c) that the Director has power to vary the amounts spent on the various items referred to in Appendix A, subject to funding being available

3 Financial and legal Implications

- 4.1 There is no net effect on revenue spending arising from these proposals. No legal implications are foreseen to arise from this report.

5. Report Author/Officer to contact: Mike Pepper - Head of Traffic (Extn No: 6520)



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Supporting Papers

1 Report

1.1 Review of on-street parking operation

1.2 Charges for on-street parking were introduced in City Centre streets in September 1999.

1.3 To begin with, in some parts of the City Centre, usage was high, but in some streets there were very few takers. It was decided, therefore, to modify the tariffs last June to try to better match supply and demand. In the popular streets tariffs rose, but elsewhere there was a substantial reduction. This has resulted in increased take up of spaces in the less popular streets with little or no effect elsewhere.

1.4 Last year I reported that the number of fines being issued was greater than had been expected, which had compensated for the level of fee income being somewhat smaller than forecast. I can now report that, whilst fee income has increased significantly, the number of fines has fallen, though, unfortunately, a number of offenders have had to be taken to court to force them to pay.

1.5 No significant changes to the general method of operation is proposed. However, the level of fines for offences against other parking regulations was increased by the Government last November from £20 to £30. I propose that the fines for offences committed at the Council's on-street spaces should be similarly increased to keep them in line.

1.6 I will arrange for the appropriate orders to be made, following Cabinet approval, with the intention of effecting the changes from Sunday 3 June 2001. Because the larger fines may result in a reduction in the number of offenders, I have not, at this stage, anticipated any net increase in income arising from this change in the balance sheet.

1.7 Use of surplus income

- 1.8 Total income of £1.419 million is forecast to have been earned during the current financial year. Operating costs are expected to be £0.464 million, leaving a net surplus of £0.995 million, which is over £160,000 more than forecast last March.
- 1.9 Most of this surplus has been spent on various items approved by Committee, the details of which are shown in Appendix A. The largest items are support for local bus services, which it was agreed would be ongoing, and some essential repairs to Newarke Street car park.
- 1.10 Next financial year, I propose a number of new items, each of which is ongoing, apart from the Broad Avenue corridor feasibility study.
- 1.11 Under the terms of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the first call on this money is for the provision of off-street parking. Committee agreed at its meeting on 1 December 1999 that the provision in Leicester of further parking accommodation for vehicles otherwise than on the highway is, at present, unnecessary or undesirable. I see no reason to believe that this situation has changed.
- 1.12 Network tickets.
- 1.13 Under the terms of the Transport Act 2000, the City Council now has the power to require bus operators to provide network tickets valid on all services. I propose that this goal should be pursued as quickly as possible, and I have already started discussions with a company which operates such a scheme elsewhere. The availability of such a ticket is going to be essential if the Council's work on travel plans is to be successful.
- 1.14 I anticipate that it will be possible to commission design and implementation of a network ticket for a sum under £50,000, and that a scheme could start before the end of the next financial year. In a full year, at least prior to the introduction of smart cards, which I am also actively pursuing, I envisage annual administration costs of up to £100,000, to make sure that income is apportioned correctly to each of the bus operators.
- 1.15 Late night buses
- 1.16 With the increase in City Centre entertainments has come a rise in demand for late night public transport, particularly on Friday and Saturday night.
- 1.17 One operator tried to run such services fairly recently, but, although they proved very popular, they did not make sufficient profit for them to be run commercially. However, I believe that the ultimate goal of the City Council should be to arrange for 24 hour public transport, as one of the policies designed to encourage people to leave their cars at home.
- 1.18 I am recommending that, in a full year around £100,000 a year should be used to support a late night bus service on Friday and Saturday nights, with such a service being introduced from the start of October.
- 1.19 Victoria Road East to London Road feasibility study

- 1.20 A number of Members in East Leicester have expressed the view that the Council should be preparing schemes for the route from the junction of Gipsy Lane and Victoria Road East to the junction of London Road and Stoughton Road, which is expected to be affected by an increase in traffic following construction of the Victoria Road East Extension (VREE) next year.
- 1.21 I propose that consultants need to be appointed to carry out feasibility studies and prepare preliminary designs and estimates, anticipating that the schemes which will be developed will be eligible for funding from the Local Transport Plan next financial year. This will make it possible for the most important schemes to be completed prior to the opening of the VREE, which is currently scheduled for October 2002. The estimated cost of this work is £50,000.
- 1.22 Staffing
- 1.23 Originally, one of the key benefits that the Council saw arising from the introduction of on-street parking was that it would facilitate the introduction and operation of decriminalised parking enforcement and thus, the introduction of further residents' parking. The first step in this work is the re-writing and computerising of the City's Traffic Regulation Orders outside the Central Area, and this work has already begun. Funding for the advertisements needed as part of the legal process has previously been approved.
- 1.24 I had anticipated being able to carry out this work using existing staff resources. However, the substantial increase in the Transport Capital programme means that this will not be possible. I propose, therefore, that two extra members of staff be appointed and funded from on-street parking income to both implement and subsequently manage the new Leicester TRO, decriminalised parking enforcement and residents' parking schemes.
- 1.25 I have already advertised these posts, and would expect to be in a position to make offers to suitable candidates as soon as Cabinet approves the funding. A detailed report on the introduction of decriminalised parking enforcement and residents parking schemes is currently in preparation.
- 1.26 The expansion of the Traffic Group to cope with a larger capital programme, to manage and develop on-street parking arrangements, to introduce travel plans and to manage the Council funded public transport services properly means that there is no longer sufficient suitable accommodation for the Group at New Walk Centre.
- 1.27 A possible suitable alternative office has been identified, but there is a rental cost implication, currently estimated at around £40,000 a year. I recommend that this rent be funded from on-street parking income in order to enable the extra investment in parking, public transport and highway improvements to be delivered effectively and efficiently.
- 1.28 A summary of the on-street parking balance sheet is set out at Appendix A.

2. Details of Research & Consultation.

- 2.1 No research and consultation has been carried out in preparing this report. However, considerable work was carried out prior to the Council determining its policies and objectives, which the investment described above is designed to help deliver.

3. Implications.

3.1 Equal Opportunities Implications

There are no specific equal opportunities implications arising from this report.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	PARAGRAPH REFERENCES WITHIN SUPPORTING PAPERS
Policy	NO	
Sustainable and Environmental	YES	Throughout
Crime and Disorder	NO	
Human Rights Act	NO	

4 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 3.1 Report to Planning and Transportation Committee on 22 March 2000

CD/TG/MJP/00000/165
12 February 2001