

Decision maker:	Cabinet member Infrastructure and transport
Decision date:	Tuesday, 11 February 2020
Title of report:	Car Park Charges for Electric Vehicles
Report by:	Parking Strategy & Processing Manager

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

Central; Greyfriars; Hinton & Hunderton; Kington; Ledbury North; Leominster East; Leominster South; Ross East; Ross North; Ross West(All Wards); Widemarsh

Purpose and summary

To approve free parking for up to 30 minutes for electric vehicles when parked in an electric vehicle parking space and connected to a charge point in all council car parks in order to underpin the councils commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) The new schedule of charges, as outlined in appendix 1, to include free 30 minute parking for electric vehicles when parked in electric vehicle parking spaces in all council off street car parks, is approved to take effect from 16th March 2020.**

Alternative options

1. The current position remains where charges, in line with the specific car park tariff, apply at each location. This is not recommended as it fails to provide any incentive for residents to purchase an Electric Vehicle or visitors to use them.

2. Longer free parking periods were also considered, this is not recommended as the demand for parking these vehicles within a finite number of spaces still needs to be managed. 30 minutes is sufficient period to enable electric vehicles drivers to re-charge their vehicle, stays for longer should be considered as “parked” rather than “charging”.

Key considerations

3. In September 2019 the council passed a number of resolutions in relation to the Climate Emergency, which outlined the council’s commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. This recommendation supports these principles in promoting use of cleaner electric and hybrid vehicles in the county, particularly in town and city centres.
4. Research has shown that electric cars emit less greenhouse gases and air pollutants over their life than of a petrol or diesel car. The carbon emissions associated with driving 10,000 miles are as follows (source - www.carbonfootprint.com):

Electric (from UK mains)	- 0.96t CO ₂ e
Petrol	- 2.99t CO ₂ e
Diesel	- 2.88t CO ₂ e
5. The electric car market is growing quickly, with almost 265,000 models on UK roads at the end of December 2019. The most recent set of figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) show that plug-in models made up 6.3% of total UK new car registrations, with pure-electric models accounting for 3.3% of that figure (source - www.nextgreencar.com)
6. The impact of combustible engine vehicles on the environment when driving into our town and city centres must be considered, and where possible incentives should provide for use of cleaner methods of transport. Electric vehicles offer that cleaner way of travelling and all attempts to remove barriers to their use must be taken.
7. In September 2019 the Council switched its electricity supply to 100% renewable electricity. As such all the electricity supplied through the charging points is considered zero carbon which will further support the delivery of the countywide target for carbon neutrality by 2030.
8. A major factor for motorists when deciding the type of vehicle to purchase (diesel, petrol, electric etc.) is the availability of charging points in their local area. It is therefore essential that the supply of charging points meets this local demand as without an effective network of points that can be easily accessed the offer to purchasing an electric vehicle can be limited.
9. The current arrangement in council car parks for electric vehicles is that the car park charges apply in line with the tariff at the specific site, and in addition to this a 4 hour limit applies. These current arrangements are in place in order manage the demand for these spaces so that space turnover can be maximised.
10. Based on data from the councils cashless parking provider of 14,408 car park users in October 2019 electric vehicles represent around 1.9% of all car park use (whether charging or not). Annually there are circa 3,500 charging sessions at council owned car park charge points in Herefordshire. The following electric vehicle points are located in council owned car parks:

Location	Number of electric charging spaces
Garrick Multi-Storey, Widemarsh Street, Hereford	2
Plough Lane Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford	2
Shirehall, St Peters Square, Hereford	2
Venns Close Car Park, Symonds Street, Hereford	2
Mill Street Car Park, Kington	2
St Katherines Car Park, Bye Street, Ledbury	2
Etnam Street Car Park, Leominster	2
Red Meadow Car Park, Kyrle Street, Ross-on-Wye	1

11. Additional electric vehicle charging points are planned to be installed into car parks operated by Herefordshire Council in order to expand the network. However, this does create a problem: current parking charges at some of these locations only allow for payment of an all-day tariff. This would effectively require electric vehicle drivers to pay the all day fee for any length of stay, even if they were simply stopped to recharge.
12. The recommendation outlined in this report addresses this issue by providing an option for electric vehicle users to stay for short periods in long stay car parks. It is also important that charges are applied consistently across all council car parks, and therefore any parking tariff or time restriction for electric vehicles should be mirrored on all council car parks so as to avoid confusion for drivers.
13. Parking machines will be set up to allow electric vehicle drivers to obtain a free 30 minute ticket from the parking meter to display in their vehicle. This ticket will only be valid on an electric vehicle, when parked in an electric vehicle parking space and connected. Drivers wishing to stay longer will be required to pay the prevailing car park charge, at the hourly rate – the current maximum stay of 4 hours will continue.

Community impact

14. Herefordshire Council's Local Transport Plan 2016 – 2031 identifies the role that increased use of electric vehicles by the general public can deliver in terms of a reduction in carbon emissions and improved air quality within populated areas. This therefore supports the recommendations as outlined in this report.
15. Supporting the transition to electric vehicles will reduce the local emission of nitrous oxide and particulate matter which will positively impact local air quality. This will help to deliver the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Air Quality Strategy and will positively impact public health.

Equality duty

16. The concession in relation to the recommendation will be available to all, it is therefore anticipated that they will be no detrimental impact on any groups of people.

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
17. Disabled blue badge holders will still be able to use their badge to obtain a concession of 3 hours free parking in all council car parks, which include electric vehicle spaces. We therefore do not believe that this decision will have an adverse impact on the council fulfilling its public sector equality duty.

Resource implications

18. In approving these recommendations there is a negligible financial impact, based on a loss of parking revenue from current users staying 30 minutes or less. This small loss is considered acceptable given the environmental benefits as outlined in this report.
19. *Data from all charge points in the county demonstrates they have been used for charging sessions of 30 minutes or less in past 12 months 227 times. These sessions will be free under these recommendations and therefore at a loss of parking of £227 per annum (based on a £1.00 fee per session).*

Legal implications

20. This is a non-executive function and a non-key decision. Such decisions under the Constitution are delegated to the Chief Executive (Part 2 Article 10), to officers (Part 3 Section 3), and subsequently to named officers under the Directorate Scheme of Delegation Economy and Place Part 3 Section 7 (officer functions). This gives authority to officers to act on behalf of Herefordshire Council in highways and transportation matters in its statutory role as the traffic authority pursuant to S.121A(3) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ("RTRA"). The cabinet member as the decision maker in this instance has the authority to also take such decisions pursuant to Part 3 Section 3 of the council's constitution.
21. The council as the traffic authority has the powers to make Traffic Regulation Orders under the RTRA and to deal with off-street parking charges under Sections 32, 35 and 35C of the RTRA, where appropriate.
22. Section 32(1) of the RTRA gives traffic authorities powers to provide parking places where it is for the purpose of relieving or preventing congestion of traffic, and allows for the authority to provide off-street parking places together with means of entrance to and egress from them.

23. Section 35(1) of the RTRA allows for an authority to make provision as to the use of the parking space, the vehicle or class of vehicle which may be entitled to use it, the conditions on which it can be used, the charges to be paid in connection with its use for off-street parking, the ability to removal the vehicle left there in contravention of the order and the safe custody of the vehicle.
24. Where an order under section 35(1)(iii) of the RTRA makes provision as to the charges to be paid in connection with the use of off-street parking places, the authority making that order may vary those charges by notice given under Section 35C of the RTRA. Section 35C of the RTRA allows for the variation of parking charges only.
25. The procedure for making and varying such orders are set out in the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 as amended (“the Regulations”). As the notice is to vary parking charges only pursuant to Section 35C referred to in paragraph 23 above, the simplified procedure for publishing a notice of variation will apply. The procedure is set out in Regulation 25 of the Regulations.
26. Regulation 25 (3) of the Regulations stipulates that where an authority proposes to give a notice of variation, it shall be given by publishing it at least once in a newspaper circulating in the area in which the parking places to which the notice relates are situated at least 21 days before it is due to come into force. Subsection (4) requires that the notice of variation shall specify the date when it is due to come into force; identify every parking place to which the notice relates; the charges payable for the use of the parking place at the date the notice is given and the charges payable when the notice comes into force
27. Regulation 25(5) requires the notice to be displayed in the parking place on the date on which the notice is given and for all reasonable steps to be taken to ensure it continues to be displayed and remains legible until the date on which it comes into force.
28. The authority if it thinks fit, can display additional copies of the notice in the parking place and the roads giving access to the parking place.
29. If all of the above steps required by the Regulations are taken then following the expiry date given in the notice stating when the order will come into force the notice will come into force and the varied charges as set out in the notice will apply.

Risk management

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
<p><u>Risk</u></p> <p>The free parking period creates heavy demand for parking and results in an over-subscription of Electric Vehicles for the number of spaces.</p>	<p>Monitoring of Electric Vehicle parking spaces will take place to ensure that the restrictions on use, and any concessions meet current demand. Increases in provision of spaces may be required in the future.</p>

Opportunity

Residents and visitors with Electric Vehicles are encouraged to acquire a 'clean' vehicle and visit the county town and city centres as a result.

The council continually monitor air quality, and in supporting the use of Electric Vehicles this is expected to improve this.

30. All risks can be managed at service level by Parking Services and the Energy and Active Travel Team.

Consultees

31. Ward members where a car park is located within their ward have been consulted on this proposal. Feedback concludes support of this proposal as the use of electric vehicles is seen as a 'stepping stone' for future city transportation objectives.

Appendices

None

Background papers

None identified.