

Meeting:	Cabinet member Infrastructure and transport
Meeting date:	Monday, 23 March 2020
Title of report:	Parking Operations and Charges
Report by:	Parking Strategy & Processing Manager

Classification

Open

Decision type

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function concerned. A threshold of £500,000 is regarded as significant.

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 11 (Cases of Special Urgency) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) Regulations 2012.

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To consider and amend the current level of parking service operations, and scale of car parking charges applied in council off street car parks and on street parking places.

In response to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak this decision is to be considered to have 'special urgency' in accordance with 4.2.53 of the council constitution. This decision is being taken as soon as reasonable practical, and could not otherwise be deferred, in response to a fast paced and emerging priority for the council.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) **On and off street car parking charges are suspended from 1st April 2020 for up to 3 months, and;**
- (b) **The Bus Station car park, Hereford be closed to members of the public and allocated to frontline NHS and West Mercia Police workers from 1st April 2020 for up to 3 months, and**
- (c) **Authority be delegated to the Director of Economy and Place to decide, in consultation with the cabinet member, whether to extend the period of time these recommendations take effect for.**

Alternative options

- 1. 'Do nothing' is an option to continue business as usual, however this is rejected as it fails to support the community at this time or free council staff to be redeployed.

Key considerations

- 2. The council has Traffic Regulation Orders (off street from 2014 and on street from 2017) in respect of charges to be applied at various locations (these have been reviewed subsequently). The council enforces these charges by issuing penalty charge notice for non compliance with the charging policy.
- 3. In reviewing the impact of the Coronavirus on Herefordshire. It is considered appropriate to suspend charges and the enforcement of the charges for the next three months. This will enable those that need to park in the county to be able to do so without enforcement, and allow for council staff to be redeployed.
- 4. As the charges will no longer apply parking enforcement will be scaled back in these areas. This would allow the service to focus minimal resources on preventing obstructive parking, parking in disabled spaces and loading bays - to allow for food deliveries. The service may need to react to certain areas in this period so this should not be considered exhaustive, but a priority rationale with reduced cover.
- 5. The decision to scale back enforcement, and charges is contrary to previous decisions taken regarding implementing these Orders.
- 6. The Bus Station Car Park will be reallocated to NHS and West Mercia staff only during this period where staff may be required to show an ID badge on arrival. This is to assist NHS and police staff to be able to access car parking nearest to the hospital and police station.
- 7. All of these recommendations will be kept under review and a subsequent decision may be taken to amend or cease these within the 3 month period as delegated to the Director.

Community impact

8. The recommendations, as outlined, are necessary in order to allow members of the public to go about their essential business without need to find money to pay for parking during this immediate priority for the council and national government.
9. These recommendations will also free staff time to be deployed protecting our community during this outbreak.
10. Drivers should continue to be courteous of other when parking and communications / social media will be used to remind people of this.

Equality duty

11. 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.
12. The council is protecting enforcement of blue disabled badge spaces to ensure that those in need still have access to these spaces.

Resource implications

13. The financial impact of the current situation on car parking income for 2020/21 is thought to be very significant, and therefore in approving these recommendations it is going to have minimal further impact.

Legal implications

14. The council as the traffic authority has the powers to make Traffic Regulation Orders under the RTRA (Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984) and to deal with on and off-street parking charges under Sections 32, 35 and 35C of the RTRA, where appropriate.
15. Whilst the legal charging schedules for associated Traffic Regulation Orders currently in place for off street car parks and on street charging will remain the council will not, during the period, enforce these parts of the orders. Other TROs will continue to be enforced as required to ensure the safe and free flow of traffic and goods.

Risk management

16.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
<u>Risk</u> Free Parking will encourage commuters to use the most premium valued spaces, and result in less being available to shoppers.	 This decision approves these recommendations up to 3 months, and therefore can be reviewed in part or whole if abuse is discovered.

Consultees

17. Due to timescales and urgency there has been no time for any consultation other than in accordance with 4.2.53 of the council's constitution. The Chairperson of the relevant scrutiny committee has agreed to this decision being taken in this manner.

Appendices

None

Background papers

None identified.