

REGENERATION COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 DECEMBER 2008

PARKING CHARGES UPDATE

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture

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Summary

To provide the Committee with an update following the increased parking charges in Medway Council car parks and to detail the benefits that have been gained from the increases and any impact this may have had.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The provision of a good standard of off and on-street parking supports the effective management of traffic movements through the Medway area. This supports the delivery of Local Area Agreement targets around traffic congestion and the Local Transport Plan.

2. Background

- 2.1 It was agreed at Cabinet in September 2007 that the parking charges within Medway car parks would be increased by 10p each hour, the first increase was implemented on 5 November 2007 and the second on 31 August 2008.
- 2.2 The tariff charges had remained at the same level for four years and were considered low in comparison to our neighbouring Councils. Medway does provide an excellent range of on and off-street parking facilities, all of which require regular investment to keep them at the standard customers expect. This was becoming increasingly difficult due to the increases in inflation which had a significant impact on the costs required for maintaining the sites concerned.

- 2.3 The increase in revenue has helped reduce the under achievement of the Parking Service budget and officers are now in a strong position to meet and possibly exceed the predicted income levels that have been set. The increased tariff charges has brought Medway Council closer to neighbouring Councils but as other districts have raised their tariffs, Medway still remains one of the lowest charging authorities in Kent.
- 2.4 Since the implementation of the extended operational hours there has been an overall positive impact as Medway has a night time economy and the extended hours of operation reflect this.
- 2.5 The operational hours of the car parks were extended to include Sunday's, which raised some concerns by local churches and faith groups. In response to this, parking services introduced a worshippers permit, which has been a successful initiative. The Council now has a number of these schemes active and in place for various congregational groups.
- 2.6 There have been no adverse effects in relation to the volume of car park usage, this has remained relatively the same as it was prior to the implemented changes which is reflected in the positive income levels below.
- 2.7 On the initial increase in November 2007 there were approximately 300 complaints received from the public. However, on the second increase on 31 August 2008 the number reduced dramatically to approximately 10 complaints.
- 2.8 The costs incurred for the first charge increase in November 2007 amounted to £10,000 and the cost for the second increase in August 2008 amounted to a total of £9,000, the two combined totaling £19,000. This has proven to be a cost effective exercise as the income figures below demonstrate.
- 2.9 The income levels for the car parks from November 2006 to November 2007 were £2,411,391. The income from November 2007 to November 2008 has increased to £2,850,296 providing the Council with an additional £438,905. This figure has exceeded the initial expected return stated in the Cabinet report submitted in September 2007, in which officers predicted an increase of £200,000 in the first year.

2006 / 2007		2007 / 2008	
<i>Nov</i>	£219,698	<i>Nov</i>	£235,425
<i>Dec</i>	£219,560	<i>Dec</i>	£256,381
<i>Jan</i>	£198,174	<i>Jan</i>	£226,561
<i>Feb</i>	£182,266	<i>Feb</i>	£219,009
<i>Mar</i>	£201,259	<i>Mar</i>	£236,312
<i>April</i>	£195,745	<i>April</i>	£236,414
<i>May</i>	£203,856	<i>May</i>	£239,349
<i>June</i>	£199,977	<i>June</i>	£222,402
<i>July</i>	£202,551	<i>July</i>	£244,764
<i>Aug</i>	£187,668	<i>Aug</i>	£218,199
<i>Sept</i>	£188,943	<i>Sept</i>	£250,285
<i>Oct</i>	£211,694	<i>Oct</i>	£265,195
Total	= £2,411,391	Total	= £2,850,296

2.10 The benefits of this has enabled the Council to provide a stringent maintenance program ensuring assets are kept to a high standard and fit for purpose, the Council is also in a better position to manage the 40% increased energy costs.

2.11 The income stream generated from parking services is re-invested in highways, road safety initiatives, the road network and the maintenance of car parks. The increase in parking charges is therefore beneficial to the community as the Council is able to provide a better service.

3. Financial and legal implications

3.1 There are no financial implications contained in this report.

3.2 There are no legal implications.

4. Recommendations

4.1 The Committee is asked to consider the information relating to the increased parking charges.

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Background papers

None.