

# Report to Executive

Meeting Date: 21 February 2022  
Portfolio: Environment and Transport  
Key Decision: KD.03/22  
Within Policy and  
Budget Framework Yes  
Public / Private Public

Title: CAR PARKING: OPTIONS TO SUPPORT HIGH STREET  
RECOVERY

Report of: The Deputy Chief Executive  
Report Number: CS.09/22

## Purpose / Summary:

To review how car parking can support retail and footfall in the city centre.

## Recommendations:

Executive is recommended to review the feedback from the consultation and consider the impact of the proposals on the Council's budget.

## Tracking

Executive:	21 February 2022
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 As part of the budget discussions at the meeting of City Council on Tuesday 01 February 2022, it was announced that options were to be developed to further support the retail and leisure sector through a review of car parking offers designed to increase footfall and dwell-time in the city centre. The proposals would introduce, for up to one year:
- Free parking at weekends and on bank / public holidays
  - Reduced rate parking Monday to Friday for the first hour.
- 1.2 Following the Council meeting, a 14-day consultation process was initiated to seek the views of interested parties on the proposals. Feedback from this consultation was not available at the time of writing but will be available 21 February 2022 Executive.
- 1.3 This report highlights the potential impact of the proposed offers on income levels for 2022-23 and confirms the next steps and timescales to take this forward.

## **2.0 Free parking at weekends and on bank / public holidays**

- 2.1 This option will provide free parking in all Carlisle owned city centre pay and display car parks on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the year up to 31 March 2023. Free parking will also be available on English Bank and Public Holidays (nine days) across the year, including the extra day for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee (03 June 2022).
- 2.2 The estimated impact of this change on income levels for 2022-23 is provided in the table in 8.1 and has been provided for in the Executive's budget proposals presented to Council on 1 February 2022.
- 2.3 In addition to supporting the retail sector and visitor economy, this offer will also have some additional spin-off benefits in support of the Council's wider priorities. Civil Enforcement Officers currently share their time between monitoring car parks and enviro-crime activities. This offer will therefore enable this resource at weekends to be redirected to tackling issues such as littering in the city centre or for example responsible dog ownership in our parks, further building council image and reputation.

**Note:** Some reduced car park patrols may still be needed to ensure compliance and safe parking for example to ensure cars are parked within bays, not blocking access, or for those parking in restricted bays for example.

## **3.0 Mid-week offer**

- 3.1 In addition to the weekend offer, it is proposed to introduce a reduced rate parking charge of £1.00 for the first hour of parking across Carlisle owned city centre pay and display car parks. This is a saving of almost 25% on the current typical one-hour charge of £1.30, saving customers 30pence for those shorter trips to the city centre.

3.2 The estimated impact is provided in the table in 8.1.

#### 4.0 Exclusions

4.1 The offer is aimed at supporting recovery on the high street and does not therefore extend to parking at Paddy's Market (all-day car park) and Talkin Tarn car park.

4.2 The standard tariff will apply at all other times.

4.3 The offer will run to 31 March 2023.

4.4 Overnight barrier closures in Castle, Caldew Riverside and West Walls car parks will remain in place as per current arrangements. The overnight closure times may be reviewed / extended at weekends and bank holidays to reflect any changing demands but will be kept under review should this lead to any increase in anti-social behaviour.

#### 5.0 Eligible car parks and revised tariff

5.1 The table below confirms the list of nine car parks that will be included in the offer and confirms the changes to the charges.

		INCLUDED						NO-CHANGE	
		Caldew Riverside + Castle	Viaduct	Sands + Swifts	West Walls	Bits Park + Lowther Street	Civic Centre	Talkin Tarn	Paddy's Market
<b>Monday to Friday</b> Excluding bank and public holidays	1 hour	£1.00 for first hour						£1.20	£2.80
	2 hours	£2.20	£2.30					£2.40	(all-day parking)
	3 hours	£2.60	£2.60	£2.70	£2.90				
	3+ hours	£3.00	£3.00	£3.20	£3.50				
	4+ hours		£3.80	£3.80	£4.40	£5.50	£10.70		
<b>Weekend + Bank Holidays</b>	All-day	Free parking all day Saturday and Sunday Free parking all Bank and Public Holidays (England)						As above charges apply every day	

#### 6.0 Feedback from consultation

6.1 As mentioned above, the Council is required to consult with interested parties on proposals to significantly vary the charging structure for its car parks. The period of consultation was initiated after the meeting of Council on Tuesday 01 February 2022 and ran for 14 days (02 – 16 February 2022). Feedback from the consultation was not available at the time of writing but will be available for consideration by Executive at its meeting on 21 February 2022.

## 7.0 Permit holders

- 7.1 Customers are currently able to purchase permits / season tickets providing reduced cost parking over five, six and seven days. With the introduction of free parking at the weekend it will be necessary to review the cost of six-day and seven-day permits. Anyone who may have purchased a six or seven day permit will be offered the appropriate level of refund,
- 7.2 Recognising that permits already provide excellent value for money it is not proposed to adjust the permit prices beyond this to reflect the reduced charge for the first hour, nor to make any reduction for bank or public holidays. Refunds, pro-rata, will be available should customers feel that the permits no longer represent value for money, but the rates for five-day permits for 2022-23 will remain as previously agreed.
- 7.3 There are currently 87 permit holders of six-day or seven-day permits for the car parks covered by this offer:
- 32 customers hold monthly permits so will be able to renew their permits at the new reduced rate without the need for most to be issued with a refund.
  - 55 customers currently have permits for a mix of three, six and 12 months and will be offered a full or partial refund as appropriate.
- 7.4 Based on current numbers, and assuming each of the 87 existing permits renew their permits and pay for five days parking instead of six / seven days parking, this will result in a loss of income of £354 per month (£4,250 per year).

## 8.0 Impact on budget

- 8.1 The estimated impact as shown in the table below is based on 2019-2020 actual income level; the last typical year, pre-Covid lockdowns. To better reflect current demands for parking, the figures, where appropriate, have been adjusted to 70% levels. Car park occupancy rates were already in decline pre-lockdown, with an over-supply of parking spaces in the city centre and reflecting the ongoing challenges of the high street. Since the lockdown measures have eased, we have seen the occupancy rates steadily grow but they remain down on previous levels and are perhaps unlikely to return to pre-lockdown measures in the short to medium term given the changes to people's working and commuting patterns. Executive is reminded that the numbers provided below are in addition to the pressure on income from car parking as previously reported for the reasons outlined above.

		Est. impact on income
	Saturday: sale of tickets	£58,389
	Sunday: sale of tickets	£26,787

Free parking offer Weekends and Bank / Public Holidays	Bank holidays: sale of tickets	£12,606
	Loss of PCN income (weekends)	£7,000
	Loss of PCN income (bank holidays)	£1,625
	Change in permit income	£4,250
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>£110,657</b>
Mid-week offer	£1.00 for first hour	<b>£9,870</b>
	<b>Combined:</b>	<b>£120,527</b>

## 9.0 Timescale

- 9.1 Changes to the tariffs as proposed will require formal notices to be published. The earliest date would be from 05 March – 28 March providing for a 01 April 2022 start-date. Any delay in issuing the formal notices will impact on the start date.
- 9.2 The offers will run for up to one year, subject to review, ending on 31 March 2023.

## 10.0 Communications, marketing, monitoring and review

- 10.1 The new offers will be promoted and marketed across a range of media to maximise awareness of the offer locally and to support the visitor economy. Feedback from customers and businesses will be sought on the impact of the change to support planning going forward.

## 11.0 Recommendations

- 11.1 Executive is recommended to review the feedback from the consultation and to assess the implications on budget in reaching its decision to introduce the new offers to:
- Provide free parking at weekends, Bank and Public Holidays
  - Introduce a reduced fee of £1.00 for the first hour of parking in city centre Council pay and display car parks
  - Implement the changes from 01 April 2022 or at a date as soon as possible thereafter
  - Terminate the offer on 31 March 2023, subject to review.

## 12.0 Contribution to The Carlisle Plan Priorities

- 12.1 Car parking supports the local economy, providing access to shopping, leisure, hospitality, employment, training and education for local people, commuters and visitors. Income generated from car parking supports the delivery of key services for the people of Carlisle.

**Contact Officer:** Darren Crossley

**Ext:** 7120

**Appendices  
attached to report:**

Appendix one to follow: feedback from the consultation.

**Note:** in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- **None**

**CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:**

**LEGAL** - The formal procedure governing changes to parking charges is set out in Section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended) and Regulation 25 of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. This procedure stipulates that any proposed changes to such charges should be consulted on prior to formal approval and subsequently if approved publicly advertised prior to implementation. All new charges, or changes to existing charges, unless specifically approved, require the approval of the Executive in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules (D.31).

**FINANCE** – The Executive's Budget Proposals presented to Council on 1 February 2022 included a loss of income pressure for car parking in relation to supporting the high street and increasing footfall. The proposals of this report can be contained within that budgetary pressure.

**EQUALITY** - This report raises no explicit issues relating to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

**INFORMATION GOVERNANCE – N/A**

**PROPERTY SERVICES** – Any reduction in parking charges is likely to affect other car park operators in the city centre including The Lanes car park. The proposals may have a negative impact on the rental income received from The Lanes Shopping Centre however if the proposals are successful this may be offset by increased footfall and increased retailer demand.