

To: City Executive Board

Date: 12th September 2012

Report of: Head of Direct Services

Title of Report: PARKING IN THE PARKS REVIEW

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To review the introduction of charging for Parking in selected Parks

Key decision? No

Executive lead member: Councillor Colin Cook

Policy Framework:

Recommendation(s): (1) To continue with charging at the existing sites and review tariffs during the normal off street parking process. (2) To note the ongoing maintenance issues and that provision for this will be made in the forthcoming budget process.

Background

1. Charging for car parking within selected parks was agreed by Council during last years budget process. It was anticipated that charging would commence from 1st July 2011. A consultation process was undertaken and amendments were made to the proposed tariffs to accommodate the findings. A paper to Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 5th April 2011 detailed the findings and recommendations. Charging commenced on 1st September 2011 following the recommendations made in the report.
2. The delay in charging reflected additional time taken over the consultation and lead times required for changing parking orders and delivery of pay machines for each of the selected sites.
3. The parks subject to these parking tariffs are Walton Well Road, Alexandra Court, Hinksey Park and the two parks in Cutteslowe, (Harbord Road) and Cutteslowe A40.

4. The tariff structure is shown in the table in Appendix 2 attached to this report.

Usage Impact

5. There is no precise data per park usage to compare pre and post charge. However, the Parks Service has not identified any reduction in usage as a result. Gate data supplied from Hinksey Park suggests that usage has risen in each comparative month from November to March.
6. Vehicle usage data is available since the introduction of charging and this will become more useful in determining usage and assist in setting future tariff rates. However, at present there is only 10 months of data to 30th June 2012. Vehicle usage data and income generated compared to budget is shown in Appendix 1.

Customer Feedback

7. A small number of complaints have been received from residents not being able to park within Harbord Road. The claim is that Park users are using Harbord Road as an alternative to parking within the car park.
8. The County Council is currently consulting with residents in Harbord Road, as concerns have been raised regarding non-resident parking. The proposal is to install single yellow lines on Harbord Road, with a no waiting restriction being enforced between 9.00am – 5.00pm.
9. This restriction may assist the Council in achieving our desired revenue budget, as the enforcement undertaken may encourage usage of our facility.
10. The implementation of the charge in Alexandra Court has been successful in eliminating the overcrowding issues potentially caused by commuters that so often prevented Park users enjoying the facility.
11. The one negative response received regarding Alexandra Court was from the NHS staff who used this facility to park, and felt that they should be exempt from payment, or at least be eligible for the reduced permit rate.
12. NHS staff were advised that we would not be able to offer a reduction on the advertised tariff rates, and we recommended permits be purchased at the regular user tariff. The NHS Trust has now been issued with five permits charged at our regular user rates.

Financial Results

13. The budgeted income for the sites for 2011/12 was £48K, after a reduction of £10K for permit concessions. This project was delayed by two months and did not commence until September 2011, which gave an immediate budget pressure. However, for the 2011/12 period of seven months, the sites have generated £44K in revenue, giving only a small shortfall in the year. See Appendix 1 for detail.
14. In the 3 months of 2012/13 income of £26.5K is in line with budget.
15. The full year income anticipated from these parks in the original appraisal was £70,431. Based on usage during 2011/12 the anticipated income for 2012/13 for these parks is £86,842.

Costs

16. The capital sum of £109K was approved by Council during last year's budget process in the original report on December 2010 which related to eight sites. For those sites implemented, the budget was reduced to £67,250, which covered the installation costs.
17. We are still experiencing problems with vandalism and attempted thefts. To date, the Aura machines have not been penetrated and no revenue has been lost. However, a recent attack caused over £700 in damage. It should be noted that the remote location of these sites makes a future attack highly probable. A proportion of the increased income will need to be used for additional expenditure of this nature.
18. We are now taking steps to deter perpetrators in an attempt to discourage such attacks. We are also exploring the possibility of a modification being made to the existing stock of machines in an effort to enhance the security. This cost of this modification is being evaluated.

Financial details of the report approved by Lyn Barker.

Summary

19. The introduction of charging does not appear to have had any detrimental affect on park usage. Vandalism was experienced following implementation and continues to be a challenge. The remote location of these sites leaves the machines vulnerable to attack. Modifications are currently being investigated that will increase the security, however it will not eliminate acts of vandalism.

20. Alexandra Court and Walton Well Road is performing above our budget expectation. Walton Well Road has performed better than first anticipated. This may be due to its close proximity to the city centre, as customers can walk into the city within ten minutes. It can also be very challenging for residents to find parking within this vicinity, residents may be utilising the car park for either personal or guest parking.
21. It is hoped that now the infrastructure is in place we will be able to capitalise on the summer season and meet budget requirements.

Recommendations

22. To continue with charging at the existing sites and review tariffs during the normal off street parking process.
23. To note the ongoing maintenance issues and that provision for this will be made in the forthcoming budget process.

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List of background papers:

Version number: 2