

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 15 JANUARY 2019

DEVELOPMENT OF PARKING CHARGES

REPORT BY HEAD OF INFRASTRUCTURE

ABSTRACT

Following the introduction of parking charges on 1 November 2018, there has been feedback from the public. This report presents to committee potential developments to the application of off-street parking charges for Members' consideration.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

- (i) note this report on off-street parking charges is separate to the scrutiny review approved at Scrutiny and Audit Committee on 20 November 2018;
- (ii) approve the introduction of monthly and quarterly permits pro-rata the annual fee of £260 per annum;
- (iii) agree the situation in regard to introducing a Direct Debit payment scheme for parking permits;
- (iv) endorse the situation regarding the 72 hour parking restriction; and
- (v) note the options for additional customer choice for payment for off-street car parking and agree to the establishment of a Member Officer Group to bring back options with a view to a report being submitted to the next available communities committee in accordance with the terms of reference noted at Appendix 1.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/CORPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Locality Plans:

ECONOMY

- An inclusive and sustainable economy;

PEOPLE

- Improved physical, mental and emotional health and well-being;

PLACE

- Safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable communities;

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The introduction of parking changes in Angus were agreed as part of the budget setting process approved by Angus Council on 15 February 2018. (Reference - Report 59/18 Schedule 3e).

- 3.2 Parking charges were introduced to off-street car parks on 1 November 2018 in accordance with Report No. 193/18 presented to Angus Council on 14 June 2018, and through the Angus Council (Off-Street Car Parks) (Decriminalised Enforcement) (Variation) (No 2) Order, agreed in Report No. 294/18, on 25 September 2018 by the Communities Committee.
- 3.3 The implementation of parking charges has met with resistance from some businesses. Some members of the public have raised the method of payment, cashless, as requiring further consideration. For some, cash would be simpler. To date, estimates on income have been based on a low cost cashless method. To explore the impact of the introduction of any cash method both in terms of savings already identified and footfall requires further time.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The issues raised for development of off-street parking charges are as follows:
- Inclusion of additional one month and three month parking permits. This is offered in addition to the existing six month and annual periods, at a pro-rata cost £21.67 per calendar month;
 - A commitment to develop and implement a Direct Debit option for payment for permits;
 - Retaining the current policy of the 72 hour maximum parking stay;
 - Introduction of cash payment options either in the car parks or through a scratch card scheme
- 4.3 Details of the above are set out in the attached **Appendix 1**, for Members' consideration, and the recommendations are as listed in Section 1 of this report.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The identified financial implications of each of the issues are included in **Appendix 1**. In the case of cash payment options further investigation of the costs would be required for the reasons stated in the Appendix.
- 5.2 If members were minded to pursue options for change of car parking arrangements as set out in this report the costs would need to be met from the parking charges income. As members of the Committee are aware the income from parking charges is part of the Council's 2018/19 revenue budget and accordingly any additional costs incurred will reduce the income available to the council. If any changes made to existing parking charges arrangements increased car park usage that could offset the additional costs depending on the impact on current usage levels.

6. RISKS

The risks associated with this report are that the development will impact on the potential income to the council and there is no certainty that the potential developments will increase the usage of the car parks.

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NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

- Report No. 294/18 - Angus Council (Off-Street Car Parks) (Decriminalised Enforcement) (Variation) (No 2) Order 2018 - Car Parking Charges - Communities Committee – 25 September 2018
- Report No. 193/18 - Parking Charges – Angus Council - 14 June 2018
- Minute of Meeting of the Scrutiny and Audit Committee 20 November 2018

List of Appendices - Appendix 1 - Parking Development Opportunities

PARKING DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1 Permits

1.1 Report 193/18, paragraph 5.1.3 stated:

“Blue Badge holders will remain free to park; and an annual/half annual permit will be available to any permitted vehicle at a cost equivalent to £1 per day based on 5 days per week/per year parking.”

1.2 To revise the above, which was implemented in the parking orders, for example to include additional permit periods, the council need to give notice under the Local Authorities' Variation of Charges at Off-street and Designated Parking Places (Notice Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 1997. These Regulations allow charges to be varied by giving a minimum of 21 days' notice through newspaper and on site adverts. There is a lead in time for arranging the advert.

1.3 Consideration has been given to adding another choice on the menu options for purchasing a permit to include a monthly and quarterly permit option. This requires some changes with our website and with the charging provider. There will be associated costs which are estimated to be a one-off cost of £250 per additional option, and the timescale for implementing these changes would be within the timescale for the advertising.

1.4 The request was that the cost be at the pro-rata rate for the annual permit, which works out at £21.67 per calendar month or £65 per quarter.

1.5 Continuity of ensuring any permit for off-street car parking will be the responsibility of the user who may be subject to parking fines if they fail to renew timeously. Permits can be purchased in advance with a future start date, so this is considered to allow the user to plan the use of their permits. Permits are valid for all off-street car parks in Angus, subject to the car parking conditions. For example, permit holders must comply with the two-hour parking restriction in short-stay car parks and with the 72 hour restriction in long-stay car parks.

2 Direct Debit

2.1 Direct Debit payments require a back office system to be developed. The council has developing the back office system for a number of services. This requires to be adapted to fit the particular service, and in this case, the parking permits through the third party permit system. This includes dealing with default on payments through Direct Debits. Work is continuing as services develop Direct Debit options, and will be applied to parking permits in due course.

2.2 It is considered that monthly and quarterly Direct Debits would be most appropriate options to consider.

Recommendation: It is recommended that monthly and quarterly permits be developed in the first instance at a cost of approximately £500. The timescale for introduction of monthly and quarterly permits could be commencing 1 March 2019. The Head of Infrastructure with the Head of Finance and Legal are delegated to develop and introduce a Direct Debit scheme as soon as is practicable.

3 72 Hour stay limitation

3.1 The 72 hour time limit in our long-stay off-street car parks pre-dates the introduction of charges, and has been in place since Tayside Regional Council times. The limitation is part of the current 2017 Order, introducing Decriminalised Parking Enforcement.

- 3.2 The limit prevents vehicles being left indefinitely, and allows the authority to ticket inappropriate parking. In practice the powers are only used to manage inappropriate long term parking.
- 3.3 As the 72 hour time limit is regulated within the 2017 Order, the Order would need to be amended to formally change the limit. This would require a consultation as per the process to introduce charges as reported in Report No 294/18, and the outcome of the consultation would be reported back to Committee in due course, with potentially the April cycle being the earliest timescale subject to staff resources.
- 3.4 The 72 hour time limit is noted on the signage within the car parks. The estimated cost to revise the signage across all the car parks covered by the Order is £6,750, along with staff costs to undertake the consultation. A review of contact with the ACCESSLine and ACCESS Online show that there have been less than 5 queries regarding this issue since 1 November commencement of off-street car parking charges.
- 3.5 Whilst the 72 hour limitation has been raised by a small number of individuals, given the operational approach to only use the limit to resolve specific issues, it is not considered appropriate to change the Order noting the process and costs of physical signage changes.

Recommendation: Propose no change

4 Alternative Payment Options

- 4.1 Angus Council has previously reviewed and noted the cost and business process required to handle cash payment. The Council has also committed to being a smaller more sustainable and digital Council by 2020. At the introduction of parking charges, the cashless approach gave efficiencies to the service in reducing costs by eliminating cash collection, processing costs and supported a digital first approach with customers having the option of payment at the parking meters or the convenience of the use of a mobile application.
- 4.2 Feedback is that there is desire to see additional options provided, particularly for elderly service users and those who may not have bank accounts. The actual scale of this issue is unknown. For comparison, the number of payments for the green bin service that required to be invoiced rather than made by card transaction was 23 out of 19,741 subscriptions in 2018/19. That scheme which has been running for some years has overcome introductory resistance to a non-cash based system with subscription remaining strong year on year.
- 4.3 There are two main options that are utilised in other Councils these are:
- Scratch Card systems
 - Coin payment systems
- 4.4 The Member Officer Group (MoG) proposed would review the options, costs and implementation and sustainability issues of both systems with a view to making recommendations to the next available communities committee. These recommendations will be set against the Council's desire to be a smaller more sustainable and digital Council by 2020. The MoG will also take account of the budget challenges faced by the Council and the need to operate as an efficient and effective council. The MoG will cover the opportunities and risks of any proposed recommendations. The MoG will be Chaired by the Convenor of Communities, and have 6 members, 3 from the administration (including the Convenor), 2 SNP members and one non-aligned member.