

PETITION AGAINST THE INCREASE IN PARKING CHARGES FOR NON-HILLINGDONFIRST CARD HOLDERS IN NORTHWOOD

Cabinet Member	Councillor Keith Burrows
Cabinet Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Planning, Transportation and Recycling
Report Author	Roy Clark, Planning, Environment, Education and Community Services
Papers with report	None

HEADLINE INFORMATION

Summary	To inform the Cabinet Member that a petition has been received from the Northwood Residents' Association from representatives of businesses in Northwood opposing the recent increase in parking charges for non-HillingdonFirst cardholders.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	The request can be considered in relation to the Council's strategy for on and off-street parking controls.
Financial Cost	There are no financial costs associated with the recommendation of this report.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents' and Environmental Services
Ward(s) affected	Northwood

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet Member:

1. meets with the petitioners to discuss in greater detail their concerns regarding the recent increase in parking charges for non-HillingdonFirst card holders in Northwood; and
2. subject to the outcome of recommendation 1 above, either:
 - (a) reaffirms that the current differential parking rates should remain unchanged; or
 - (b) instruct officers to consider alternative tariffs for Northwood and submit recommendations to Cabinet for consideration.

Reasons for recommendations

Representatives of the Northwood Residents' Association have requested that their petition be considered.

Alternative options considered

None.

Policy Overview Committee Comments

None at this stage.

INFORMATION

Supporting Information

A petition with 41 signatures has been received from Northwood Residents' Association signed by representatives of businesses in Northwood opposed to the increase in parking charges for non-HillingdonFirst card holders. The petitioners are concerned that those residents who live in Three Rivers will be subject to the increase, and this could have a detrimental effect on Northwood's businesses. The desired outcome of the petition is stated as follows:

“To make Northwood an exception to the increase in parking charges as half of Northwood residents live in Three Rivers and are subject to the increase. Many of them use the local doctors' surgeries and the parking charge is in effect a tax on such visits. The increase in charges, the third in three years, could cause Three Rivers residents to take their custom to Rickmansworth where parking is free for two hours, thus bringing irreparable damage to Northwood's businesses. The latest Core Strategy Plan states that it is the council's aim to have thriving businesses in areas such as Northwood. This increase in parking charges has the opposite effect.”

The report highlighting the change in charges was approved by Cabinet on 20 January 2011 and the changes were implemented on 31 January 2011. This was in advance of the receipt of the petition from Northwood Residents' Association, which was received on 1 February 2011.

Fees and charges throughout the Council are reviewed on an annual basis. This includes all parking charges. In January 2011, it was agreed that on-street and car park charges in the Borough should rise to reflect increasing costs and inflation. However, it was decided that, in an effort to reduce the effects of these increases on Borough residents, and in line with the Council's policy of putting our residents first, no increase would be made to Hillingdon residents who use their HillingdonFirst card.

Under the Council's Constitution, changes to any fees and charges can only be approved at a meeting of the Cabinet.

The parking charges for both residents and non-residents for the two Northwood car parks in Green Lane and Oaklands Gate as well as on-street, both before and after the changes were implemented on 31 January 2011, are set out in the table below. However, it is important to note that both on-street and the car parks retain the free half hour period for all users, including non-residents.

	PRE 31/1/11 CHARGES	PRE 31/1/11 CHARGES	POST 31/1/11 CHARGES	POST 31/1/11 CHARGES
	RESIDENTS	NON- RESIDENTS	RESIDENTS	NON-- RESIDENTS
GREEN LANE CAR PARK				
Up to 30 minutes	Free	Free	Free	Free
Up to 1 hour	0.20	0.50	0.20	0.70
Up to 90 minutes	0.40	1.00	0.40	1.40
Up to 2 hours	0.60	1.50	0.60	2.10
Up to 3 hours	1.00	2.30	1.00	3.00
Up to 4 hours	2.00	4.50	2.00	5.20
Up to 9 hours	3.70	8.00	3.70	8.70
Over 9 hours	6.20	11.00	6.20	12.00
OAKLANDS GATE CAR PARK				
Up to 30 minutes	Free	Free	Free	Free
Up to 1 hour	0.20	0.80	0.20	1.00
Up to 90 minutes	0.40	1.00	0.40	1.30
Up to 2 hours	0.60	1.30	0.60	1.70
Up to 3 hours	1.00	2.20	1.00	2.50
Up to 4 hours (maximum stay)	1.80	3.80	1.80	4.40
ON-STREET PARKING				
Up to 30 minutes, then	Free	Free	Free	Free
Each 30 minutes up to 2 hours	0.20	0.50	0.20	0.70

There have been no further increases since these changes were implemented on 31 January 2011. It is intended that no further increases will be applied when the next review is due in January 2012.

It is accepted that any increase in parking charges could potentially reduce incidences of car parking both on-street and in car parks, and hence reduce shopping visits and trade in the area. However, records show that, since the changes were introduced at the end of January 2011, there has been no significant reduction in parking in the Northwood area.

A review of the pay and display tickets issued both on-street and in the Northwood car parks has been carried out for the period 31 January to 17 October 2011. This has been compared with the same period for 2010. These dates were chosen as 31 January 2011 is the date on which the changes were made and 17 October 2011 is the latest date for which information is currently available. For 2010, the number of tickets issued in Northwood was 295,961; whilst the corresponding figure for the same period in 2011 was 296,370. This shows that there was in fact a small increase in pay and display tickets issued in Northwood for this period since last year.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation of this report.

EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendation?

To allow the Cabinet Member to discuss in detail with the petitioners their concerns with the parking charges.

Consultation Carried Out

None at this stage.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Legal

The Council's powers relating to pay and display parking are contained in Part IV of the Road Traffic Regulation act 1984.

There are no special legal implications for the proposal, which amounts to an informal consultation. A meeting with the petitioners is perfectly legitimate as part of a listening exercise, especially where consideration of the policy and factual issues are still at a formative stage. Fairness and natural justice requires that there must be no predetermination of a decision in advance of any wider non-statutory consultation.

In considering any informal consultation responses, decision makers must ensure there is a full consideration of all representations arising, including those which do not accord with the officer recommendation. The decision maker must be satisfied that responses from the public are conscientiously taken into account.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Petition received from the Northwood Residents' Association on 1 February 2011.