

PETITION REQUESTING A REVIEW OF THE INCREASED PARKING CHARGES IN HIGH STREETS AND COUNCIL CAR PARKS

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Eddie Lavery
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Residents' Services
Officer Contact(s)	Roy Clark, Place Directorate
Papers with report	None

HEADLINES

Summary	To inform the Cabinet Member that a petition has been submitted requesting a review of the parking charges on High Streets and Council Car Parks.
Putting our Residents First Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026	This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: An efficient, well-run, digital-enabled council working with partners to deliver services to improve the lives of all our residents. This report supports our commitments to residents of: A Green and Sustainable Borough.
Financial Cost	There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations to this report.
Relevant Select Committee	Residents' Services Select Committee
Relevant Ward(s)	All wards

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet Member for Residents' Services:

- 1. Meets with petitioners and listens to their request to review the increased parking charges on High Streets and Council Car Parks;**
- 2. Notes that the suggestion requires a vehicle registration number to be added when purchasing a ticket from a pay and display machine and asks officers to complete their investigations into the full operational and financial implications of how a similar scheme could work in conjunction with the HillingdonFirst scheme and to brief the Cabinet Member on the outcome of the review;**
- 3. Notes that the decision to amend the parking fees and charges was approved by Full Council on 24 February 2022; and,**

4. **Subject to the outcome of the above, instructs officers to add the request to review the parking charges on High Streets and in Council Car Parks to Cabinet for further consideration.**

Reasons for recommendations

The Petition Hearing will provide a valuable opportunity to hear directly from the petitioners of their concerns and suggestions.

Alternative options considered / risk management

None at this stage.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. A petition with 137 signatures has been submitted to the Council which includes signatures from residents from various locations across the borough signed under the following heading:

"Increased Parking Charges in High Street and Council Car Parks – preventing customers from reaching local businesses.

To match Harrow Council's initiative to boost high street trade and support local businesses – Free 1hr parking with a displayed ticket, whether you're a resident or not."
2. The Council regularly reviews the fees and charges it levies for providing services and at its meeting on 16 December 2021, Cabinet considered a report in relation to the Council's Budget – Medium Term Financial Forecast 2022/23 – 2026/27. The report detailed proposed amendments to the fees and charges levied by the Council, including changes to the parking charges across the Borough. The proposed amendments to the parking charges included the removal of the 30 minutes free parking period for non-HillingdonFirst cardholders.
3. Whilst the proposed amendments included the removal of the 30 minutes parking for non-HillingdonFirst cardholders, no changes were proposed to the free 30 minutes parking period for residents that used their HillingdonFirst card when parking in Council on-street and off-street parking bays. This scheme remains in place.
4. The proposed amendments were approved by Cabinet and the draft budget proposals were released for consultation to Select Committees and other stakeholders.
5. Following the consultation period, the proposed Fees and Charges were approved by Full Council at its meeting on 24 February 2022.
6. Arrangements were then made to amend the software on the parking payment machines, and to undertake the legal process to vary the parking charges, and the new parking charges were introduced on 20 June 2022.

7. The petitioners' desired outcome is for the Council to match Harrow Council's initiative and provide free parking for one hour, regardless of whether the person is a resident or not.
8. According to the Harrow Council's website, its initiative increased the period of free parking provided at on-street parking bays in Harrow from 20 minutes to one hour for the first parking visit on each day. Motorists can avail themselves of this option by entering their Vehicle Registration Number (VRN) when paying for parking and then displaying their ticket.
9. At the present time, the Council provides 30 minutes free parking for Hillingdon residents that use their HillingdonFirst card when obtaining a ticket from the pay & display machines in the Borough, at the majority of Council on-street and off-street parking bays. If residents purchase a paid-for parking ticket (for stays longer than 30 minutes, etc.) they also receive cheaper parking rates by using their HillingdonFirst card. The software on the machines recognises the HillingdonFirst card automatically and amends the parking rates charged to the resident.
10. The Council's pay & display machines do not currently have an option for a motorist to input their Vehicle Registration Number (VRN) when purchasing a pay & display ticket. The Council's Parking Enforcement Team have advised that the new pay & display machines that were installed in Dec 2020 now have the technology available to include a function to require motorists to key in their VRN details before a ticket can be issued and restrict them from purchasing additional concessionary tickets during a specific period.
11. The inclusion of a VRN system would require residents that use their HillingdonFirst card, to obtain preferential residents parking rates, to undertake a further process when parking, in addition to obtaining authorisation for their HillingdonFirst card. The machine supplier has been asked to detail exactly how a VRN system would operate for HillingdonFirst cardholders, and to provide details of the costs of introducing and operating a VRN system. Once this information is received this option would be reviewed further with the Cabinet Member.
12. The Cabinet Member will be aware that only Cabinet have the power to vary fees and charges levied by the Council and, in view of the suggestion to match the Harrow Council parking initiative, it is recommended that the Cabinet Member discusses with petitioners their request and if appropriate instructs officers to add the request to review the Council's parking charges on High Streets and in Council Car Parks to Cabinet, once the full cost of introducing and operating a similar scheme has been identified and reviewed with the Cabinet Member.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report. However, if the Council was to consider reviewing the current parking charges to match the initiative offered by Harrow Council, officers would need to undertake a detailed assessment of the financial consequences (in relation to both amended fees and charges and the costs of introducing and operating the scheme) and the resulting impact on the 2023/24 MTFF.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

To allow the Cabinet Member to consider the petitioners request.

Consultation carried out or required

None at this stage.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and concurs that there are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Legal

The Borough Solicitor confirms that there are no specific legal implications arising from this report. Further, more detailed legal advice will be given as necessary if the Cabinet Member instructs officers to take further action in connection with this petition.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Petition received.

TITLE OF ANY APPENDICES

NIL.