

Petition from the Holy Family and All Saints, Witham, in respect of the evening car parking tariff at Newlands Drive car park, Witham.	Agenda No: 9a
Corporate Priority: Promoting and improving our town centres; Providing value for money; Protecting our environment. Portfolio Areas: Prosperity, Performance and Place Report presented by: Cllr Wendy Schmitt Report prepared by: Paul Partridge, Head of Operations	
Background Papers: Review of Off-Street Car Parking – Cabinet 3 rd February 2014 & Council 17 th February 2014	Public Report
Options: (1) Retain the start time of the new evening parking tariff at 7pm. (2) Defer the start time of the new evening tariff until 8pm.	Key Decision: No
<p>1. The Council has received a petition from The Holy Family and All Saints, Witham, in respect of the new evening tariff to be introduced from 1 July 2014. This seeks a deferral of the start time of the tariff, on the basis that it affects those members of their congregation who park at Newlands Drive car park, Witham, when attending Saturday evening Mass. The petition contains 133 signatures of which 120 are deemed valid and the lead petitioner is Father David Prior. The petition reads:</p> <div data-bbox="229 1361 1430 1682" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p><i>“Braintree District Council have proposed increasing their parking charges to 50p overnight commencing at 7.00pm each evening. This will mean that it will cost Catholics attending Mass 60p for the one hour they are parking. (10p from 3pm and then 50p from 6.59pm). The Mass is from 6pm until 7.30pm so for 10 minutes it will cost you an extra 50p.</i></p> <p><i>Please sign below if you would like BDC to re-consider changing the time when the overnight charge commences to at least 8pm.”</i></p> </div> <p>2. The new evening tariff was proposed following a review of off-street car parking within the Braintree District and was approved by Cabinet on 3 February 2014 and by Council on 17 February 2014.</p> <p>3. Traditionally, the Council has not charged for parking after 6pm (except at George Yard MSCP which closes at 7.30pm), but the review highlighted demand for evening and overnight parking. The overnight tariff covers the period from 7pm until 6.59am the next day in all public car parks and will come into effect on 1 July 2014. From that date,</p>	

the **10p after 3** concession will end at 6.59pm daily to facilitate the overnight charge.

4. Members will be aware that the charging regime for all of the Council's car parks will also change from 1 July 2014 to cover **ALL hours** and **ALL days**, excluding public and bank holidays (currently all days from 7am to 6pm).
5. At the present time, customers enjoy the benefit of the **10p after 3** concession and free parking after 6pm, so members of the Catholic Church who attend Saturday evening Mass (from 6pm to 7.30pm) currently pay 10p to park. Prior to the **10p after 3** concession being introduced (November 2011), they would have had to pay for an hour's parking at 70p in order to be at Mass for 6pm.
6. If at any time Members decide to withdraw the concession, normal tariff rates would apply and users entering the car park at 6pm would have to pay for an hour's parking @ 90p (new rate) and then a further 50p if they wish to stay beyond 7pm. The ticket machines will be programmed so that users can buy a single ticket that will overlap tariff bands e.g. if purchased at 5.45pm the ticket will be valid until 7am the next morning.
7. The public car parks are accessible to all and it is simply not practical to set the tariff around the requirements of a specific group of users, nor would it be appropriate to do so. There will be many other residents/groups who attend events or socialise in the early evening and deferring the start time of the evening tariff to 8pm could therefore have significant financial implications – potentially a reduction in income of circa £15k p.a.
8. Moreover, the Council has a responsibility to all taxpayers to make best use of its assets and this includes generating income to help fund operating and maintenance costs. It is considered only right and proper that all service users should pay for parking, regardless of what time they use the facilities. This principle accords with government guidance on supporting communities, businesses and road users in a fair and proportionate way.
9. It is therefore **RECOMMENDED** that the Cabinet's original decision stands.

Decision:

To retain the start time of the new evening parking tariff at 7pm.

Purpose of Decisions:

To ensure equity in terms of the charges applied to customers of the Council's Pay & Display car parks.

Any Corporate implications relating to the following should be explained in detail	
Financial:	<p>It is difficult to quantify the impact of deferring the start time of the evening tariff. Whilst the concession is in force, the impact will be minimal. However, if the decision is taken to withdraw the concession, the impact would be quite significant on the basis that the normal tariff would otherwise apply between 6pm and 8pm i.e. 90p for up to 1hr and 50p thereafter.</p> <p>Even if the income were half that received pre concession (2010/11) in the last two hours of the normal tariff (4-6pm), this is likely to result in a loss of income of approximately £15k.</p>
Legal:	Compliant with legislation.
Safeguarding:	No safeguarding implications.
Equalities/Diversity	Treating this group of users any differently from other users of the car park could not be justified on the grounds of equality. Therefore, any change in the start time of the evening tariff would have to apply to all car parks and not just this one.
Customer Impact:	Any change will impact upon all users of the Council's car parks once the evening tariff is introduced.
Environment and Climate Change:	N/A
Consultation/Community Engagement:	The review of off-street parking included a public consultation exercise. In addition, the process of amending the Off-Street Parking Places Order requires a period of statutory consultation in advance of implementing the new tariff.
Risks:	Amending the tariff to accommodate a specific group of users would set a precedent that other groups may want to follow.
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