

Report to	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	21st January 2021
Lead Member / Officer	Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment / Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside
Report author	Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager
Title	Car Park Tariff System and Residents' Parking Schemes

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 The report examines the Council's existing car park tariff system and also its policy for residential parking schemes.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1 To consider whether the existing car park tariff system and Residents' Parking Scheme Policy are flexible enough to meet the needs of all areas of the County.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee:

- 3.1 considers and provides observations on the contents of the report;
- 3.2 considers, and if appropriate, recommends the provision of a pilot project in Llangollen where car park tariffs are varied in the various car parks within the town on the basis that, where possible, there should be no net loss in car park income from all the car parks in Llangollen town centre. Please see paragraphs 4.3.4 and 4.3.5 for further details; and

- 3.3 confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix C) as part of its consideration.

4. Report details

4.1 Existing car park tariffs

- 4.1.1 The tariffs in Council pay and display car parks were previously increased in April 2016. At the time, the setting of car park tariffs was delegated to the Head of Highways and Environmental Services. This responsibility is now delegated to the Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services.
- 4.1.2 The decision to increase tariffs in 2016 was taken following previous discussions at Communities Scrutiny Committee meetings in January and July of 2015. One of the principles discussed at those meetings was whether different tariffs should apply in different towns, to reflect differing supply and demand, and to meet town-specific traffic and parking management objectives. However, on the basis of the discussions that took place, the decision was taken to retain a uniform tariff system across the County. This tariff system comprises of three standard tariffs, one for short stay car parks, one for long stay car parks and one for beach car parks. So for example, the same tariffs apply in all long stay car parks across the County. The existing car park tariffs by car park type are shown in Appendix A.
- 4.1.3 It was also agreed that tariffs could be altered locally if, for example, a town council wished to subsidise parking charges for a particular car park or group of car parks. This has been the case for two Prestatyn car parks for several years.

4.2 Existing Residents' Parking Scheme Policy

- 4.2.1 The Council's Residents' Parking Scheme Policy sets out certain criteria for the establishment of residents' parking schemes. This includes criteria for the minimum numbers of households required for a scheme to be financially viable and the proportion of a street's residents that need to be in favour for a scheme to be considered. A copy of the existing policy is included in Appendix B.
- 4.2.2 Residents' parking schemes allow residents of a street to purchase an annually-renewable permit for an annual payment of £25.54. These permits allow residents to park in any available parking bay on that street. Except for a couple of examples where two streets have been combined into one scheme, the majority of

our schemes apply to one street only. In other words, a resident permit holder cannot use their permit to park in any another street where a residents' parking scheme exists. In most cases this doesn't present an issue because residents generally want to park as close to their home as possible.

4.2.3 Residents' parking schemes are considered in locations where residents do not have off-street parking available and where there is high demand to park in their street. A typical example of this situation is where terraced housing is located near a town centre.

4.3 The case for changing our car park tariff system

4.3.1 Each of our town centres is unique in terms of their retail offer, attractions and the numbers and location of parking spaces. This means that a "one size fits all" approach to car park tariffs will not necessarily suit everywhere.

4.3.2 The Council is currently developing a major scheme in Llangollen which will involve some significant changes to traffic and parking management in the town centre. In the case of this project, it would be beneficial to use non-standard tariffs to make a centrally-located car park more expensive than it currently is, whilst making a car park on the outskirts of the town centre cheaper than it is presently. Doing this could have numerous benefits, such as reducing traffic congestion in the town centre whilst increasing the availability of spaces for centrally-located short stay parking.

4.3.3 Car park income is important because not only does it pay for the car parks to be maintained, but it also helps fund other related functions such as road safety schemes, school crossing patrol staff and traffic light maintenance and operation. It is therefore suggested that if the policy was changed to allow some local variation, this would have to be based on the overall car park income for each town being maintained. For example, in the case of Llangollen, the higher tariffs in one car park would cross-subsidise the other car park where tariffs would be reduced. It is recommended that a strategic "whole-town" approach would need to be taken to the setting of charges and therefore viewed in the wider traffic and parking management context for that town.

4.3.4 To examine how this works in practice before changing the whole policy, it is recommended that a pilot project is undertaken in Llangollen to examine the

impact of varying car park tariffs car parks across a single town. This would be on the basis that overall car park income for Llangollen would be maintained as far as possible.

- 4.3.5 The start date for the pilot project is likely to be late in financial year 2021-22 to coincide with the introduction of the wider traffic and parking project that is currently being developed for Castle Street and surrounding streets. It is recommended that the impact of the changes is monitored for a period of 12 months following implementation and then reported back to a future meeting of Communities Scrutiny Committee at a date to be confirmed.

4.4 The case for changing the Residents' Parking Policy

- 4.4.1 The existing Residents' Parking policy does not preclude the creation of larger residents' parking zones which encompass several streets. It is more the case that normal practice has been to create schemes in a single street simply because requests for residents' parking schemes typically come from a small number of individuals within a certain street, leading to a wider-survey of all residents of that street to ascertain the demand for a residents' parking scheme.
- 4.4.2 It is therefore suggested that there is no need to amend the existing Residents' Parking scheme policy given that the current policy allows the creation of larger multi-street schemes, providing that there is support from residents, local members and North Wales Police, together with the technical justification.

5. How does the decision contribute to Corporate Priorities?

- 5.1 It contributes to the Connected Communities priority and could also potentially benefit the local economy if it increases the availability of short-stay town centre spaces.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

- 6.1 The proposed local variation of existing car park tariffs for the proposed pilot project in Llangollen would be contained within the existing service budget.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

- 7.1 The findings of the Well-being Impact Assessment can be viewed in Appendix C.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1 The existing system of setting uniform car park tariffs was last discussed at Communities Scrutiny Committee in January and July of 2015.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1 The proposal to allow more flexibility with parking charges within towns to help with overcrowding and traffic flow seems sensible. It is important that the net financial effect of any revised charges is not detrimental to the service's overall budget. This will need to be monitored carefully.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1 Any changes to car park tariffs within a town centre would need to be self-funding within that town centre. In other words, if charges were reduced in one car park then charges would need to be increased in another similarly-sized car park so the overall impact is as close to cost-neutral as possible. Any unavoidable losses in overall income would be absorbed by the service's budget, as is presently the case.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

11.2 Section 7.4.1 of the Council's Constitution outlines Scrutiny's powers with respect of policy review and development.

11.3 Paragraph 8.50 of Appendix 3 (Scheme of Delegation for Officers) in Section 13 of the Council's Constitution states that the responsibility for the setting of parking charges is delegated to the Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services.