

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Cabinet
Date of Committee 6th October, 2005
Report Title Review of Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement in Stratford-on-Avon District

Summary At its meeting on the 27th July, the Stratford on Avon Area Committee considered a report by the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy relating to a review of the decriminalisation of parking enforcement in the District.

The Committee recommend that in pay and display streets, the free waiting period should be 30 minutes and that on-street charges on Sunday should be abolished before 12 noon.

The Committee agreed all of the other recommendations acting under delegated powers.

For further information please contact: k Roger Bennett,
Strategic Traffic Projects
Tel: 01926 412648
rogerbennett@warwickshire.gov.uk

Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? No.

Background papers Report to Stratford on Avon Area Committee on 27th July 2005
Consultation letter to Stratford on Avon District Council.

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

- Other Committees Report from the Stratford on Avon Area Committee
- Local Member(s) Members of the Area Committee
- Other Elected Members
- Cabinet Member Councillor Martin Heatley

- Chief Executive
- Legal Sarah Duxbury.....
- Finance Charles Holden.....
- Other Chief Officers John Deegan –see views in paragraph 4

- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION YES

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet

- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee

- Further Consultation

Cabinet - 6th October, 2005.

Review of Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement in Stratford-on-Avon District

Report of the Chair of Stratford on Avon Area Committee, Acting Chief Executive and the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy.

Recommendation

That the Cabinet agrees EITHER:

1. That in those streets in Stratford-upon-Avon with pay and display the 50 pence charge for 40 minutes and the free 20 minute period be abolished and replaced with a 30 minute period free of charge and that on-street charges on a Sunday in Stratford-upon-Avon be abolished before 12 noon.

OR

2. That in those streets in Stratford-upon-Avon with pay and display the 50 pence charge for 40 minutes and the free 20 minute period be abolished and replaced with a 30 minute period charged at 20 pence and that on-street charges on a Sunday in Stratford-upon-Avon be abolished before 12 noon.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on the 27th July, 2005, the Stratford on Avon Area Committee considered a report from the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy relating to the new parking management scheme in Stratford-upon-Avon involving decriminalised parking enforcement arrangements (DPE), which were introduced in October 2004. The report set out the results of a review of the arrangements now that they had been in place for six months.
- 1.2 A copy of the report is attached at **Appendix A** for Cabinet members only. [The documents and plans can be viewed on the Committee Administration System and on the Warwickshire Web].

2. Area Committee's Views

- 2.1 The Area Committee was advised that the general consensus of responses to the review was that the scheme was a success and had brought benefits to the Stratford on Avon District. This was confirmed at the stakeholder workshop held in February when there was a clear message that these benefits should

not be lost in any changes introduced. There had been three significant areas considered in the review as follows –

- Simplification of the charging arrangements. The proposal for this was the creation of a one-hour maximum parking zone in the town centre. This included Bridge Street, High Street and Union Street although it was accepted that there was a further option for these streets to be a maximum of 30 minutes.
- The free parking period. The proposal was for the 50p charge for 40 minutes and the free 20-minute period to be abolished in favour of a 30-minute period charged at 20p.
- The impact of abolishing charges on a Sunday. There was a concern that abolishing charges on a Sunday would result in traffic management problems arising but the impact of this would be less if the charges were abolished up to 12 noon.

2.3 During discussion the Area Committee made the following points: –

- The report was extremely comprehensive but lacked sufficient financial information for Members to make better judgements on charges and free periods;
- The results of the six months post implementation review had been delayed for three months because of the election;
- Residents' main concerns related to the improved circulation of traffic in Stratford.
- The 20 minutes free time was not sufficient and should be extended to 30 minutes. Some Members expressed the view that this should remain free of charge whilst other Members supported a 20 p charge to avoid confusion. A suggestion was put forward that income received from this source should be ring fenced for Stratford;
- That if there was support for the 30 minute free period that assurances could be given that this could be accommodated within budget;
- The maximum waiting time in Bridge Street, High Street and Union Street should be 30 minutes rather than the 1 hour proposed but that the 1 hour parking proposal for Chapel Lane should remain.
- That it might be appropriate to defer a decision to enable further financial information to be provided.
- That none of the other authorities consulted operated a free parking period during the week (Appendix C of the Area Committee report).

2.4 In reply to concerns about financial information Members were advised that the financial predictions had been based on actual income rather than the business models. On this basis the predicted operating surplus in the first year would be about £220k. This income would be needed to provide revenue funding for the Stratford Park and Ride Scheme and to fund the borrowing requirements to extend the scheme elsewhere in the county.

Allowing a free 30 minutes period would mean a loss of income of about £43,000. Abolishing on-street charges on a Sunday would result in a loss of income of about £50k. Any further reduction in the operating surplus would seriously affect the financial viability of the scheme. The introduction of a nominal charge of 20p for 30 minutes would compensate for the losses.

- 2.5 The further views of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy relating to the implications of the Area Committee's recommendations are contained in paragraph 4 below.
- 2.6 The Chair said he understood Members' concerns regarding the financial position but suggested that they should not defer the report and to make a decision based on the information before them.

3. Area Committee's Recommendations

- 3.1 With regard to the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy's recommendations relating to the free 20 minute parking period and parking on Sundays the Area Committee resolved by six votes to five:-

(1) that Cabinet be recommended to approve that, in those streets in Stratford-upon-Avon with pay and display, the 50 pence for 40 minutes charge and the free 20 minute period be abolished and replaced with a free 30 minute period, and that on-street charges on a Sunday in Stratford-upon-Avon be abolished before 12 noon.

- 3.2 The Area Committee took decisions on all of the Director's other recommendations (2 to 12 in the attached report) acting under delegated powers. In light of the Area Committee's recommendation at paragraph 3.1, an amendment was needed to recommendation 6 of the report to Area Committee. In relation to this recommendation, Area Committee resolved ;

That the Stratford on Avon District Council be formally requested to consider the removal of the free 20 minute period and introduce a 30 minute free period in off-street car parks and the removal of charges on a Sunday before 12 noon.

- 3.3 The District Council have been consulted on the options and its views, which are expected prior to the Cabinet meeting, will be reported to Members.
- 3.4 The Cabinet is being asked to consider this matter because of the financial implications of that recommendation.

4 Views of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy - relating to the Financial Implications of the Area Committee's Decisions.

- 4.1. The County Council's policy, agreed by Cabinet in November 2001, includes a presumption that a robust business case for DPE will include charging for on-street parking as a means of ensuring the viability of the scheme. As a result

a pay and display arrangement operates daily from 8.00am to 6.00pm in some streets in Stratford Upon Avon town centre. The time allowed for parking in these streets is either 1 hour (with no return for 2 hours) or 2 hours (with no return for 4 hours). The charges are 50 pence up to 40 minutes, £1 for 1 hour and £1.50 for 2 hours. The first 20 minute period in these streets is free and this is reciprocated in the off-street car parks. Free parking for a maximum of 20 minutes with no return for 2 hours is allowed daily from 8.00am to 6.00pm in Bridge Street, High Street and Union Street. The on-street charges are higher than those in the off-street car parks to encourage the use of off-street car parks as a first choice. Blue badge holders are exempt from any on-street charges or time restrictions.

- 4.2. Apart from generating an income stream to support the viability of DPE, on-street charging discourages the circulation of traffic looking for free on-street parking places and encourages the use of off-street car parks. This is a problem which significantly adds to traffic flows in many town centre areas and contributes to pollution and road safety issues.
- 4.3. Free parking for 20 minutes in Bridge Street, High Street and Union Street was introduced to provide an opportunity for people to make short visits to the town centre. This does not entirely meet with the County Council's local transport strategy of discouraging short journeys by car and encouraging a shift to more sustainable transport modes. However, in some respects, it does support the economic viability of the town centre and meets the local demand. There have been enforcement difficulties in these streets and there have been a number of cases where the free ticket button has been pressed but the ticket has been left in the machine causing it to malfunction.
- 4.4. There have been concerns raised that the 20 minute period is not long enough and it has been suggested that this should be extended to 30 minutes. The indications are that this would result in a loss of income from on-street charges of £43,000. As this would seriously affect the financial viability of the scheme the recommendation to Stratford on Avon Area Committee was for an alternative option i.e. that the 50 pence charge for 40 minutes and the free 20 minute period be replaced with a 30 minute period with a nominal charge of 20p. The introduction of a 20p charge is expected to result in a projected annual surplus of £362,000 as opposed to the existing situation where the projected surplus is £220,000 (ie an increase of £142,000).
- 4.5. There were strong representations received during the review from the Stratford-upon-Avon Society, the Stratford Town Management Partnership and others for parking charges on a Sunday to be abolished. However, the removal of charges for the whole of Sunday would have the following effects:-
 - (i) There would be less incentive to use off-street car parks (unless these were also free) and the effectiveness of the park and ride services would be reduced.
 - (ii) There would be more traffic circulating in the town centre seeking on-street parking. This would be to the disbenefit of residents and pedestrians and the levels of pollution and would make the town less attractive as a visitor destination.

- (iii) There would be less turnover of parking opportunities on-street and more parking in residential areas.
- (iv) There may be a need for possibly double the number of parking attendants to ensure effective enforcement. This is because, on an operational level, enforcement of pay and display areas needs less resources i.e. it is relatively simple to check if a vehicle is displaying a valid ticket rather than having to check vehicle registration numbers every one or two hours.
- (v) All parking restriction signs would need to be changed making them bigger, more obtrusive and possibly more confusing. The cost of changing the signs is estimated to be £2,500 to £3,000.
- (vi) A potential loss of income of at least £50,000 per annum.

4.6 An alternative option of abolishing charges on a Sunday before noon was considered. This could still present some of the difficulties mentioned above but would have less of an impact than abolishing charges altogether. The potential loss of income if charges are abolished before noon on a Sunday equates to about £20,000 per annum. In isolation this would have an adverse affect on the financial viability of the scheme but, this would not be the case if the proposed charge of 20p for a 30 minute period as recommended by the Director of Planning Transport and Economic Strategy had been agreed by the Area Committee.

4.7 Stratford Park and Ride

4.7.1. The Stratford-upon-Avon Park and Ride (P & R), off Bishopton Lane, will provide 725 spaces for cars, small vans and small campervans and include provision for disabled users and cyclists. The P & R site is presently under construction with a first stage opening planned for late November 2005. The full facilities with the Customer Services Building will be available in March 2006, subject to receipt of satisfactory tenders. A report seeking approval of the letting of a single contract for the operation of the park and ride site and the bus services is on the agenda at this meeting (See Agenda Item [11])

4.7.2 At the meeting in January 2005 Cabinet approved that any revenue shortfall in the early years of operation be met from surplus revenue from on street parking fines and charges in Stratford. At the time of this report the DPE surpluses were calculated to be sufficient to cover the shortfalls of P & R and the DPE borrowing requirements referred to in 4.8 below. The recommended tender for operating P & R, which was received on 8 September, has a higher cost than predicted in the original business case for the project. The effect of this is that the required subsidy to support P & R has increased by to £203,000 in the first year.

4.8 Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy's Conclusion

4.8.1 The consequences of following Stratford Area Committee's recommendations i.e. the introduction of a free 30 minute period and the abolition of charges on a Sunday morning is expected to result in a loss of income of £63,000. This would reduce the operating surplus to about £157,000. This will be insufficient

to provide even the necessary revenue funding for Stratford P & R. As a result, there will also be additional financial pressure on transport budgets, which will need to be addressed as part of the Council's budget process. It is therefore recommended that in those streets in Stratford-upon-Avon with pay and display the 50 pence charge for 40 minutes and the free 20 minute period be abolished and replaced with a 30 minute period charged at 20 pence. This is supported by the Stratford Town Management Partnership. In addition to helping to ensure that sufficient surpluses will be generated this will also remove the current confusion about the need to display a ticket.

COUNCILLOR GEORGE
ATKINSON,
Chair of Area Committee.

ERIC WOOD,
Acting Chief Executive.

JOHN DEEGAN,
Director of Planning,
Transport and Economic
Strategy.

Shire Hall
Warwick

September, 2005

Cabinet Member
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member)

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Chief Executive

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Legal

Comments incorporated

Finance

.....

Other Chief Officers

.....

District Councils

Consultation with Officers at Stratford on Avon District Council

Health Authority

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Police

.....

Other Bodies/Individuals

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FINAL DECISION

YES/NO (If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps)

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :

Details to be specified

Further consideration by this Committee

Any objections received.

To Council

.....

To Cabinet

For approval

To an O & S Committee

.....

To an Area Committee

.....

Further Consultation

Extensive consultation underway or proposed on possible changes.

Stratford on Avon Area Committee – 27th July 2005

**Review of Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement in
Stratford on Avon District**

**Report of the Director of Planning, Transport and
Economic Strategy**

Recommendation

1. That, Cabinet be recommended to approve that, in those streets in Stratford-upon-Avon with pay and display, the 50 pence for 40 minutes charge and the free 20 minute period be abolished and replaced with a 30 minute period charged at 20 pence, and that on-street charges on a Sunday in Stratford-upon-Avon be abolished before 12 noon.
2. That proposals for waiting limited to one hour, no return for two hours, 8.00am to 6.00pm, daily in Bridge Street, High Street, Chapel Lane and Union Street, Stratford-upon-Avon be advertised.
3. That proposals for waiting limited to one hour, no return for two hours, 8.00am to 10.00pm, daily, except for permit holders in Great William Street, John Street, Mansell Street, Mulberry Street, Payton Street, Scholars Lane, Shakespeare Street, and Tyler Street, Stratford-upon-Avon be advertised.
4. That proposals for waiting limited to one hour, no return for two hours, 8.00am to 10.00pm Monday to Saturday, except for permit holders in Albany Road, Brewery Street, Maidenhead Road, Mayfield Avenue, Mayfield Court and Wellesbourne Grove, Stratford-upon-Avon be advertised.
5. That a variation to the Consolidation Order be advertised allowing the imposition of charges for loss of revenue associated with the suspension of parking bays in pay and display areas.
6. That Stratford on Avon District Council be formally requested to consider the removal of the free 20 minute period in off-street car parks and the removal of charges on a Sunday before 12 noon.
7. That proposals for changes to the Residents Parking Scheme (RPS) in Stratford-upon-Avon be advertised to provide for the creation of 4 Zones as described in the report with the hours of operation (except in those streets mentioned in 3 above, which are daily) being 8.00am to 10.00pm, Monday to Saturday and for guest house permits to be valid in any zone.
8. That further consideration be given to the system for the issue of visitors permits.
9. That proposals be advertised for the introduction of a 50% reduction in the cost of either the first residents parking permit or visitors permit issued to persons of pensionable age in receipt of housing or council tax benefits in Stratford on Avon District.
10. That the proposals for changes to the County Council's Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places Consolidation Order for Stratford on Avon District listed in **Appendix B** be advertised.

[Clerk's note: The plans and other appendices can be viewed on the Committee Administration System/Warwickshire Web].

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A new parking management scheme involving decriminalised parking enforcement arrangements (DPE) was introduced in the District of Stratford on Avon in October 2004. This involved the creation of a Special Parking Area/Permitted Parking Area, approved by the Secretary of State for Transport, in which the enforcement of violations of on-street parking regulations transferred from the Police to the Traffic Authority, i.e. Warwickshire County Council. The enforcement duties are carried out on behalf of the County Council by a team of parking attendants employed by Stratford on Avon District Council (SDC) under a partnership agreement. The attendants also provide supervision and enforcement in the off-street car parks in the District.
- 1.2 The main advantages of DPE are that:-
- (i) Local authorities are able to ensure that parking policies are implemented effectively, with consequent benefits through improved traffic flow, better management of overall traffic levels, fewer accidents, a fairer distribution of available parking places and a more pleasant environment.
 - (ii) The integration of enforcement and parking policy responsibilities gives the opportunity for better monitoring of the effectiveness and value of parking controls, so that parking provision becomes more responsive to the public's needs.
 - (iii) The revenue received from penalty charges and on-street parking charges funds the enforcement activities.
 - (iv) Any surplus revenue can be used for certain transport related purposes.
- 1.3 At the meeting of this Committee in January 2005 Members considered some proposals for short term changes to the operation of the scheme in Stratford-upon-Avon, i.e. the introduction of guest house visitors permits, exemptions for home carers and the creation of a new residents parking zone in Birmingham Road. It was agreed that these should be advertised. Proposals for a comprehensive review of the scheme after it had been in operation for six months were also discussed. Members requested that the review be brought forward and that a workshop involving stakeholders be arranged to consider this with particular reference to issues in Stratford-upon-Avon.
- 1.4 A review has now been carried out. This report sets out the results and makes recommendations on further possible changes.
- 1.5 Plans showing details of the existing on-street pay and display parking arrangements and Residents Parking Scheme (RPS) in Stratford-upon-Avon together with proposed changes are included in **Appendix A**.

[Clerk's note: The plans and other appendices can be viewed on the Committee Administration System/Warwickshire Web].

2. Issues Considered in the Review

2.1 There are a number of issues which have been considered in the review. These have been raised in feedback from members of the public, elected members and other organisations. In addition to those listed below there have been a large number of requests for changes to the County Council's Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places Consolidation Order for Stratford on Avon District. Details of these, including the action taken, and any recommendations are shown in **Appendix B**.

2.2 The workshop referred to in paragraph 1.3. was held on 28th February at Stratford Town Hall with representatives of stakeholder organisations in the town. From the outset there was broad agreement that DPE had been beneficial to the town and nobody expressed any views against the principle of the scheme. It was agreed by all that this improvement should not be lost through changes as a result of the review. The most significant matters which the meeting agreed should be considered as part of the review were:-

- (i) Increasing the free period in streets with parking charges from 20 minutes to 30 minutes.
- (ii) Simplification of the on-street charging areas in the town centre.
- (iii) The possible abolition of on-street parking charges on Sundays.
- (iv) Parking near Holy Trinity Church.

2.3 The proposed changes to the scheme mentioned in paragraph 1.3 were advertised in February/March 2005. The responses were considered by this Committee at its meeting in March. The changes were agreed and have now been implemented. During the discussion members requested that all issues raised since the introduction of DPE should be addressed in the review including:-

- (i) The disparity between guest houses and the impact of guest house parking on the availability of parking for residents living near the guest houses, the capacity for additional guest house passes and the inclusion of Windsor Street and Arden Street Car Parks in the scheme.
- (ii) The possibility of creating additional parking spaces by rationalising existing layout and zones in the residents parking areas and the need for any RPS in any other part of the District to be informed by the lessons learnt from Stratford-upon-Avon.
- (iii) The need for adequate publicity.

2.4 The issues outlined above have been reviewed and are discussed below under generic headings.

3. On-Street Parking Charges

3.1 County Council policy, agreed by Cabinet in November 2001, includes a presumption that a robust business case for DPE will include charging for on-street parking as a means of ensuring the viability of the scheme. As a result a pay and display arrangement operates daily from 8.00am to 6.00pm in some streets in Stratford-upon-Avon town centre. The time allowed for parking in these streets is either 1 hour (with no return for 2 hours) or 2 hours (with no return for 4 hours). The charges are 50 pence up to 40 minutes, £1 for 1 hour and £1.50 for 2 hours. The first 20 minute period in these streets is free and this is reciprocated in the off-street car parks. Free parking for a maximum of 20 minutes with no return for 2 hours is allowed daily from 8.00am to 6.00pm in Bridge Street, High Street and Union Street. The on-street charges are higher than those in the off-street car parks to encourage the use of off-street car parks as a first choice. Blue badge holders are exempt from any on-street charges or time restrictions.

3.2 Apart from generating an income stream to support the viability of DPE, on-street charging discourages the circulation of traffic looking for free on-street parking places and encourages the use of off-street car parks. This is a problem which significantly adds to traffic flows in many town centre areas and contributes to pollution and road safety issues.

3.3 The business model for the scheme has been revised to take into account actual figures from the first six months of operation.

3.4 The review of on-street charging in Stratford-upon-Avon has focussed on consideration of the following:-

- (i) The free parking period.
- (ii) Simplification of the charging arrangements.
- (iii) The impact of abolishing charges on Sundays.

3.5 Free parking for 20 minutes in Bridge Street, High Street and Union Street was introduced to provide an opportunity for people to make short visits to the town centre. This does not entirely meet with the County Council's local transport strategy of discouraging short journeys by car and encouraging a shift to more sustainable transport modes. However, in some respects, it does support the economic viability of the town centre and meets the local demand. There have been enforcement difficulties in these streets and some drivers have failed to appreciate that a ticket needs to be displayed. In addition there have been a number of cases where the free ticket button has been pressed but the ticket has been left in the machine causing it to malfunction.

3.6 There have been concerns raised that the 20 minute period is not long enough and it has been suggested that this should be extended to 30 minutes. The

indications are that this would result in a loss of revenue from on-street charges of £43,000. This would seriously affect the financial viability of the scheme. An alternative option is that the free 20 minute period be replaced with a 30 minute period with a nominal charge of 20 pence. Assuming that there are no other changes to the charging regime, the introduction of a 20p charge is expected to result in a projected surplus in the first 12 months of £362,000 as opposed to the existing situation where the projected surplus is £220,000 (+£142,000).

3.7 In an attempt to simplify the on-street parking regime consideration has been given to the introduction of a 1 hour limited waiting restriction in all streets in the area bounded by Chapel Lane, Scholars Lane, Albany Road, Arden Street, and the residential streets between Guild Street and the Grand Union Canal. There may be some merit in having a shorter period in Bridge Street, High Street and Union Street but on balance a one hour zone would have the following benefits:-

- (i) Simplification of the arrangements by having a uniform restriction in the immediate town centre.
- (ii) It would help to discourage parking by non-residents in residential streets which would give more opportunity for residents to park near their homes.
- (iii) It addresses a specific issue raised by Albany Road, Wellesbourne Grove and Maidenhead Road residents about the level of non-resident parking in these streets.
- (iv) There should be increased turnover which should result in less traffic circulating looking for spaces.
- (v) Enforcement would be made easier and more effective.

3.8 There is a recommendation in paragraph 5.7 below for the hours of operation of the Residents Parking Scheme (RPS) to be extended until 10.00pm. If this is agreed then there would be advantages (for the reasons given in paragraph 3.2) in extending the hours of operation for pay and display arrangements in those residential streets which have this facility. These are Great William Street, John Street, Mansell Street, Mulberry Street, Payton Street, Scholars Lane, Shakespeare Street and Tyler Street.

3.9 Consideration has been given to the introduction of further pay and display areas. These would help to encourage more use of the off-street car parks. However, at this stage, the preferred option to achieve this objective is to reduce the time period allowed for parking. The introduction of further pay and display machines could be reviewed in the future if necessary.

3.10 At the meeting of this Committee on 19th January it was resolved that Cabinet be recommended to abolish on-street charging on Sundays before 10.00am after an appraisal of the financial implications has been carried out. This matter has not yet been reported to Cabinet. The question of abolishing charges completely on a Sunday was raised at the meeting by representatives from the Stratford-upon-Avon Society and Stratford Town Management Partnership (STMP). It was also raised at the subsequent stakeholder workshop. One

suggestion was that all Sunday charges be abolished and consideration be given to keeping the 2-hour maximum on-street parking restriction but make it free and complement it with a 2-hour free period in all off-street car parks (i.e. drivers would have to pay for stays of over 2 hours in all off-street car parks). The argument was that Sunday charging is anti-competitive and places Stratford at a disadvantage in relation to its regional competitors. In addition members were advised that a petition with 523 signatures had been submitted by the Rev. Martin Gorrick of Holy Trinity Church calling for the abolition of charges on a Sunday to “keep Sunday special”. Information has been obtained from a number of other towns and cities about Sunday charging and this is included in **Appendix C**.

- 3.11 The issues raised in respect of Holy Trinity Church include the fact that many parishioners are elderly and need to park close to the church. There were also concerns that on occasions services and other activities go on for longer than the 2 hours waiting period allowed. However, there has been a 2-hour waiting limit, daily, in this location for many years. Pay and Display on this length of Old Town was introduced to improve the environment and safety near to the church by reducing the incidence of circulating vehicles seeking free parking whilst still allowing Blue Badge Holders unlimited parking. Free parking for up to 4 hours on Sundays in the vicinity of the church has been suggested but there would be no guarantee that the parking spaces would be available for parishioners. There are currently no parking restrictions on Sundays in the residential areas of Old Town.
- 3.12 The potential loss of income if charges are abolished before 10.00am on a Sunday equates to about £2,500 per annum. The potential loss of income by abolishing on-street charges altogether on a Sunday is estimated to be at least £50,000 per annum. In isolation this would have an adverse effect on the financial viability of the scheme but, this would not be the case if the proposed charge in paragraph 3.6 is agreed. However, there are significant traffic management and other reasons which need to be considered. The removal of charges on a Sunday would have the following effects:-
- (i) The effectiveness of the park and ride services would be reduced.
 - (ii) There would be less incentive to use off-street car parks (unless these were also free).
 - (iii) There would be more traffic circulating in the town centre seeking on-street parking. This would be to the detriment of residents, pedestrians and levels of pollution and would make the town less attractive as a visitor destination.
 - (iv) There would be less turnover of parking opportunities on-street and more parking in residential areas.
 - (v) There may be a need for possibly double the number of parking attendants to ensure effective enforcement. This is because, on an operational level, enforcement of pay and display areas needs less resources i.e. it is relatively simple to check if a vehicle is displaying a

valid ticket rather than having to check vehicle registration numbers every one or two hours.

- (vi) All parking restriction signs would need to be changed making them bigger, more obtrusive and possibly more confusing. The cost of changing the signs is estimated to be £2,500 to £3,500.

3.13 Members may wish to reconsider the previous resolution that Cabinet be recommended to abolish on-street charging on Sundays before 10.00am. It is difficult to assess what real benefits would accrue from this relatively limited concession. Another option would be to adopt the approach taken in York (and being considered by other authorities) of charges not starting on a Sunday until midday. This could still present some of the difficulties mentioned above but would have less of an impact than abolishing charges altogether because general traffic levels are lower on a Sunday morning. The potential loss of income as a result of implementing this option is estimated to be about £20,000. Further discussions have been held with Rev Gorrick and he is in support of this option. SDC would need to consider a similar arrangement operating off-street.

3.14 A petition was submitted to Stratford on Avon District Council in December 2004 with approximately 220 signatures of people mostly from the retail business community in Stratford. The main body of the petition carried the wording "Signatures against new parking restrictions and meters in Stratford-upon-Avon". There was a perception at the time that the new arrangements were having an adverse affect on the trading conditions in the town. A survey has recently been carried out by the STMP. The results of the survey are summarised in **Appendix D**. It is felt that the changes proposed in this report in relation to the time limited and free waiting periods will help to address the concerns raised.

3.15 A recommendation for an amendment to the County Council's Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places Consolidation Order in relation to the arrangements for waivers of the regulations and suspensions is discussed in **Appendix E**.

3.16 **Recommendations:-**

- (i) Cabinet be recommended to approve that in those streets in Stratford-upon-Avon with pay and display, the 50 pence for 40 minutes charge and the free 20 minute period be abolished and replaced with a 30 minute period charged at 20 pence. The charge for a one hour period would remain at £1.
- (ii) Proposals for waiting limited to one hour, no return for two hours, 8.00am to 6.00pm, daily, in Bridge Street, Chapel Lane, High Street and Union Street be advertised.
- (iii) Proposals for waiting limited to one hour, no return for two hours, 8.00am to 10.00pm, daily, except for permit holders in Great William Street, John Street, Mansell Street, Mulberry Street, Payton Street, Scholars Lane, Shakespeare Street and Tyler Street be advertised.

- (iv) Proposals for waiting limited to one hour, no return for two hours, 8.00am to 10.00pm, Monday to Saturday, except for permit holders in Albany Road, Brewery Street, Maidenhead Road, Mayfield Avenue, Mayfield Court and Wellesbourne Grove be advertised.
- (v) Cabinet be recommended to approve the abolition of on-street charges on a Sunday before 12 noon.
- (vi) That a variation to the Consolidation Order be advertised allowing the imposition of charges for loss of revenue associated with the suspension of parking bays in pay and display areas.

4. Off-Street Parking Charges

- 4.1. There have been calls for the charges in off-street car parks to be cheaper and free on Sundays to encourage their use. SDC is responsible for the off-street car parks in the District. The level of charges is normally reviewed every two years. SDC has accepted the general principle that charges off-street will be less than those on-street. This policy encourages the use of off-street car parks. Under the partnership agreement there is a need for SDC to consider any changes to arrangements for on-street charges to reflect the current differential.

Recommendation:-

- 4.2 That SDC be formally requested to consider the removal of the free 20 minute period in off-street car parks and the removal of charges on a Sunday before 12 noon.

5. Residents Parking Scheme

- 5.1 A residents parking scheme (RPS) based on 13 zones is in operation in Stratford upon-Avon (See Plan 3 in **Appendix A**). The scheme operates by allowing permit holders exemption from time limited parking which applies from 8.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Saturday. Residents can apply for up to 3 permits per household together with 1 Visitors Permit. Permits cost £25 per year. Eligibility for permits is restricted to residents of certain streets and home carers employed by or on behalf of the County Council's Social Services Department. A further permit arrangement is in place for temporary residents at registered guest houses in Stratford-upon-Avon. Blue Badge Holders are exempt from the parking restrictions.
- 5.2 There have been a number of requests for changes to the RPS. These include suggestions for the creation of a single zone or the merger of some zones, extension of the hours of operation, and a review of the permit arrangements. Further details of the individual requests are shown in the tables in **Appendix B**. There have also been requests for the introduction of RPS in Alcester; Old Road, Shipston; Studley and Knights Lane, Tiddington. It is proposed to develop these as stand alone projects in consultation with the Local Members and Town/Parish Councils outside the scope of this review. Any proposals for these will be developed along similar lines to any changes agreed to the RPS in Stratford-upon-Avon. In addition concerns have been raised about possible displacement of vehicles into residential areas and the need to maximise the

number of on-street spaces available for residents to use. The existing road markings in residential areas are being reviewed to address this.

- 5.3 A single zone in which residents permits (two per household) are valid in any street displaying signs indicating “except for permit holders” was introduced in Warwick in 1999. This appears to work reasonably well although the area covered is much less than in Stratford-upon-Avon. The eligibility for permits in Warwick extends to all residents within the zone boundary and there are some pressures on available spaces at times. Consideration has been given to a similar arrangement in Stratford-upon-Avon but there are concerns that it would not operate so effectively. As an alternative there may be some support for the merger of Zones S2, S3, S4, S5, S11 and S 13 (New Zone S1); Zones S1, S6 and S7 (New Zone S2); Zones S8, S9, and S10 (New Zone S3) and Zone S12 (New Zone S4). The advantages of the new, larger, zones are:-
- (i) Residents living closer to the present zone boundaries would have greater flexibility in finding a parking space.
 - (ii) They would help to relieve any extra pressure on parking spaces following the introduction of guest house permits.
 - (iii) Administration of the RPS should be easier.
- 5.4 However, there may be some difficulties to overcome with the proposed new arrangement. For example, Arden Street and Windsor Street residents, who are currently eligible to apply for permits to park in Zones S2 and S3, have requested to be allowed to use Zone S6 (Mansell Street). This may not be totally unreasonable. However, a consultation has been carried out with Mansell Street residents with the following result. We received 23 replies from 46 properties. Of these 2 were in favour of extending the permit scheme, 3 expressed no preference and 18 were not in favour. A wider consultation is needed to establish overall views.
- 5.5 Up to 15th June 2005, 989 residents permits had been issued and 689 visitors permits. There have been suggestions from members of the public that the number of permits per household should be reduced from 3 to 2 and that there should be a sliding scale of charges with the 2nd or 3rd permit costing significantly more than £25. We have not carried out a comprehensive survey of on-street parking occupation in residential areas but occasional monitoring has shown that, with the possible exception of Albany Road/Wellesbourne Grove and Maidenhead Road, there are usually spaces available during the times that the RPS is in operation. There does not therefore appear to be a need to reduce the number of permits per household at this time. However, this may need to be reviewed in the future together with the charges imposed. There have been complaints from members of the public about abuse of visitors permits and there is some evidence of this. It is recommended that consideration be given to replacing the existing arrangement with, possibly, a scratch card system. Further work is needed to identify an appropriate system.
- 5.6 The permits for temporary residents of registered guest houses came into use in late June. The new arrangement will be monitored in the next few months to determine their impact. Owners of the premises can buy permits in advance for issue to incoming guests on arrival. The permits are in the form of scratchcards

and guests are required to scratch off the number of the zone in which they choose to park. The Order specifies that the permits are valid for zones S2, S3, S4 or S8. This should be amended to include all zones. The permits are also valid in the Recreation Ground and Arden Street off-street car parks. SDC has considered requests for this to be extended to include both Windsor Street and Swans Nest car parks. In the case of Windsor Street car park SDC's view is that there are sufficient parking spaces available on side streets to meet the demand. The Swans Nest car park is popular with disabled drivers and pensioner permit holders and there is concern that its use by guest house residents could adversely affect the ability of these groups to park there.

- 5.7 There have been calls for the hours of operation for the RPS to be extended to reduce the pressure on the on-street parking situation in the evenings. This was always resisted in the past because the police were unable to guarantee adequate enforcement. However, as Parking Attendants work until at least 10.00pm at night it is now possible for this to be considered. A restriction until 10.00pm would discourage longer term parking by non-residents in residential streets in the evenings and overnight especially those where pay and display arrangements are in place. The town's evening economy should not be affected by this because there is capacity in the off-street car parks during the evenings with a flat rate charge of £1. There does not appear to be any significant demand for the scheme to operate on a Sunday.
- 5.8 A motion was carried at Full Council on 14th December 2004 calling for "the granting of a 50% discount to all pensioners for residents parking permits in Stratford on Avon District". This matter is discussed in more detail in the report in **Appendix F**.

Recommendations:-

- 5.9 It is recommended that proposals for changes to the RPS be advertised to provide for:-
- (i) The creation of 4 Zones as described in the report with the hours of operation being 8.00am to 10.00pm, Monday to Saturday;
 - (ii) Guest house permits to be valid in any zone.
 - (iii) The introduction of a 50% reduction in the cost of either the first residents parking permit or visitors permit issued to persons of pensionable age in receipt of housing or council tax benefits in Stratford on Avon District.
 - (iv) Further consideration be given to the system for the issue of visitors permits.

6. Enforcement Issues

- 6.1. Enforcement, both on and off-street, is carried out on behalf of the County Council by a team of 20 Parking Attendants (PA's) employed by Stratford District Council. The PA's work daily shifts providing, on occasions, 24 hours cover. They work alone, except during the hours of darkness or when receiving training or supervision, and undergo extensive formal and on-the-job training. The need for training regarding the use of International Disabled Persons Parking Badges was raised in the review and this has been addressed.

- 6.2 There have been some comments made that the enforcement regime is “too heavy handed”. On the other hand there have been comments that there has been a lack of enforcement in some residential areas. When the scheme was introduced there was a two week period of high profile education and publicity before enforcement commenced. The new regime has to be compared with the situation previously i.e. there was very little enforcement by Traffic Wardens or the Police. Although PA’s do use their discretion on occasions, their job is to issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCN’s) for violations of parking regulations. Any extenuating circumstances can be considered as part of the appeals process. In response to any concerns about lack of enforcement PA’s have been specifically deployed to these areas on request.
- 6.3 The lack of appropriate signing to support the parking regulations has been raised. There is regular liaison between Traffic Projects Group and Stratford on Avon District Council to ensure that any inconsistencies are dealt with as soon as possible.

7. Timescale for the Review Post Area Committee

- 7.1 Subject to the outcome of this Committee the next stage will be for the relevant issues to be considered by the County Council’s Cabinet at its meeting on 8th September. In the meantime it may be possible for a number of the proposals including those for changes to various waiting restrictions in **Appendix B** to be advertised for public comment. We anticipate that the earliest time for implementation of any of these changes will be November/December. The earliest time for the implementation of any changes which affect the financial aspects of the scheme is likely to be early in 2006.
- 7.2 Informal consultations have been carried out with a number of stakeholders on the issues considered in the review, including the workshop mentioned in paragraph 2.2. It is intended that there will be extensive formal consultations on the proposed changes to the waiting restrictions detailed in **Appendix B**. Any adverse comments or objections will need to be considered by this Committee. The Town Management Partnership, SDC and the County Council are working on the production of a guide to parking in Stratford-upon-Avon. This will need to be informed by any changes which are agreed to the existing arrangements.
- 7.3 There have been comments made that there was a lack of consultation prior to the introduction of DPE and a lack of information about the new arrangements. This has resulted in adverse publicity in the local press. The criticisms are not entirely justified but every effort will be made to ensure improved communication of the issues in the future.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 Although it is accepted that some changes are needed there is broad agreement that DPE has been beneficial to the town. There is now regular and effective enforcement of traffic regulations and this has improved the turnover of on-street parking spaces. The proposals in this report should help to improve the operation of the scheme and support commercial activities in the District.

JOHN DEEGAN
Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy
Shire Hall
Warwick

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