

<b>9 December 2015</b>		<b>ITEM: 19</b> <b>01104337</b>
<b>Cabinet</b>		
<b>Car Parking Services</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Key	
<b>Report of:</b> Councillor Jane Potheary, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Public Protection		
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> Ann Osola, Head of Transportation and Highways		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> David Bull, Director of Planning and Transportation		
<b>This report is public</b>		

## **Executive Summary**

Car parking services in the Borough have insufficient income to break even to support the provision of essential parking infrastructure or maintenance and future expansion of parking places. More parking is required, in some areas, to keep up with the growth and commuting in the Borough. Car parking charges will be reviewed every year and the services improved. The Council's parking charges in Thurrock are currently well below those set by some neighbouring authorities and the private sector (see appendix 1). This report recommends a number of investments and changes which will improve parking provision and increase income to fund the improvements (see appendix 2).

### **1. Recommendations**

**That Cabinet:**

- 1.1 Approves new car parks (subject to planning permission), with approximately 87 spaces, for commuters at Purfleet railway station and in Tamarisk Road, Ockendon, that are opened before the end of the financial year with charges shown in appendix 2.**
- 1.2 Approves an extension to Grays Beach car park (subject to planning permission), with approximately 80 additional spaces, to support commuters and visitors to the area and is opened before the end of the financial year with charges shown in appendix 2.**

- 1.3 Confirms free shopper parking at Council owned car parks and on-street parking bays, for all Saturdays in December 2015 and approves delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Transportation, in consultation with relevant Portfolio Holder, to carry out this arrangement on an annual basis.**
- 1.4 Confirms that 'on street' parking charges are frozen for another year but approves the implementation of the revised Thurrock Council 'off street' parking fees and other charges, included at appendix 2 of this report.**
- 1.5 Approves the implementation of operational changes set out in paragraphs 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5. which confirms that residents parking will remain free.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 There has been insufficient investment in car parking infrastructure for many years, and many of the car parking areas controlled by the Council are now in need of maintenance, such as resurfacing, ticket machine replacement, and signage improvements etc.
- 2.2 In addition to existing parking provision further investment is required to be implementing alongside the growth and regenerations schemes across the Borough. In particular, there appears to be an under provision in the vicinity of Purfleet railway station and in Tamarisk Road, Ockendon, and the extension to Grays Beach car park is required due to increased demand.
- 2.3 The Highways and Transportation Services team carried out a benchmarking study into the fees and charges of the neighbouring authorities and even with the suggested increase of about 5% (or to the nearest 10p) to off-street car parking charges Thurrock's prices appear reasonable. This is shown in appendix 1. These revisions when fully implemented will raise approximately £150,000 per financial year.
- 2.4 The on-street car parking charges in this review are not proposed to be raised. Currently, residents' parking is free. This free parking will be retained with the first strip of 20 visitor permits. The introduction of Sunday parking charges to the off-street car parking is also proposed.

## **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 3.1 Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 contains the financial provisions relating to income and expenditure from parking places. It requires that any income from charges and fines is spent on running parking services, and if income is greater than expenditure, the surplus may only be used for transport-related issues like the operation of public passenger transport

services, highway or traffic improvement projects, and certain types of environmental improvement.

- 3.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 16 September 2015 has discussed Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 in regards to the use of any surplus income from Civil Enforcement which is restricted to transport related issues like the operation of public passenger transport services. It was recommended that the Civil Parking Enforcement surplus income and monies from other departments who spent money on travel costs in rural areas be utilised by the Transportation & Highways Service to assist the rural bus provision.
- 3.3 The Council will not generate additional revenue from penalty charges, as these are fixed nationally, and it is unlikely that the charging structure for parking permits will be changed in the immediate future. Any non-resident parking permits, including NHS permits, will be raised with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. Additional visitor permits (first 20 free) will also see an increase from £6.00 to £10.00 per strip of 20 which still equates to reasonable daily parking cost of £0.50.
- 3.4 In addition to 5% increase to off-street parking, Sunday charges and non-resident parking permits fees mentioned in paragraphs 2.3, 2.4 and 3.3 respectively, it is proposed that the suspension of any on-street parking places per space will increase from £20.00 to £50.00 per week.
- 3.5 In April 2015, Department for Transport increased the Civil Enforcement observation time from 5 minutes to 10 minutes as a statutory provision. Therefore it is advised that Thurrock Council's discretionary 15 minutes observation period be changed to become consistent with the statutory provision.
- 3.6 It is envisaged that all of the alterations would provide the necessary funding to provide the essential parking infrastructure maintenance work with no further demand on Council tax payers' money.
- 3.7 There is no evidence to suggest that the proposals would detract from the shopping offer in Grays. The Council has retained parking incentives in Grays, such as providing free parking in the evenings. It is predicted that this provision alongside the extension to the Grays Beach car park would boost trade and keep the town centre vibrant.
- 3.8 Last year the Cabinet agreed not to charge for parking for Christmas shoppers in its pay-and-display car parks on Saturdays during December, and it is proposed to continue with this arrangement annually subject to delegated approval.

#### **4. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1 The reason for the recommendation is to generate additional revenue to provide a programme of planned maintenance for car parking infrastructure (new and existing) operated by the Council and or to support transport related issues like the operation of public passenger transport services.

#### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 5.1 The Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered transport related issues at its meeting on 16 September 2015 and commended that the Civil Parking Enforcement surplus income and monies from other departments who spent money on travel costs in rural areas be utilised by the Transport Department to assist the rural bus provision.
- 5.2 In addition, there is a prescribed consultation procedure for variations to charges made at off-street parking places under Sections 35C and 46A respectively of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. This procedure will be undertaken.

#### **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

- 6.1 The proposals set out in this report support the Thurrock Council Strategic Priority to improve health and well-being and encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity

#### **7. Implications**

##### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Michael Jones**  
**Group Accountant**

The department has identified fund of £66k within 2015/16 Capital allocation which will be used to deliver new parking infrastructure which will, in turn, generate additional income. Any surplus income generated through car parking charges once maintenance and management costs have been applied must be used for transport-related issues specified in Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

##### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Vivien Williams**  
**Planning & Regeneration Solicitor**

Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 contains the financial provisions relating to income and expenditure from parking places.

Variations may be made at off-street parking places under Sections 35C and 46A respectively of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

### 7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**  
**Community Development and Equality  
Manager**

The Council will ensure that the consultations required under the Road Traffic Regulations Act shall be made available widely across the community. This will inform an equality impact assessment and changes to the scheme will be considered as identified.

### 7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

- None

### 8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None

### 9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – Parking charges of neighbouring authorities
- Appendix 2 – Current off-street parking charges and amendments to the administration fees in Thurrock

### **Report Author:**

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Transportation and Highways