MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR REGULATORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Report prepared by J Kitson.
Date Issued: 20 November 2008

1. MANAGING ON AND OFF STREET PARKING DEMAND

1.1 Issue for Decision

To consider options for managing parking demand resulting from changes in driver behaviour.

1.2 Recommendation of the Assistant Director for Regulatory and Environmental Services.

1.2.1 To introduce permit administration charges for all resident permits issued. First and second permit charged at £25, Third permit charged at £50.

1.2.2 Agree changes to the permitted parking periods for non-permit holders in residential zones as identified within the report.

1.2.3 To agree the principle to introduce visitor parking charges within the resident zones for non permit holders. 35p for 30 minutes and 70p for one hour.

1.2.4 To cease the current arrangements that allow residents to migrate across the North zone areas and only allow parking within the specific residential zones identified on the resident permit.

1.2.5 To agree to an increase in the level of enforcement patrols within the resident zones to maximize the available parking space for local residents.

1.2.6 To agree to an increase of 20p to the Pay & Display tariff for up to three hours to £1.80.

1.2.7 To introduce Sunday charging by extending the current Pay & Display tariff to apply all days.

1.2.8 To agree to create a further 20 on-street Pay & Display parking bays in areas close to the town centre shopping facilities.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

Background

1.3.1 Maidstone Borough Council administers 15 resident parking zone areas, 12 of which are located on the outskirts of the town centre of Maidstone. These locations are identified in Appendix B.
Pay & Display Car parks are also provided to contribute to the overall parking provision within the town in addition to on-street car parking and park and ride.

The Council's current policy on town centre parking has evolved over the past twenty years and in essence, the Council provides a choice of town centre parking and park and ride. The residents parking scheme is provided to prevent commuters and to some extent shoppers from overwhelming local roads near to the town centre. These are currently under more and more pressure.

However, the current policy does not consider parking demand in specific terms; it merely refers to the need to provide sufficient spaces to meet demand.

1.3.2 Parking for visitors to Maidstone is available by way of Park & Ride facilities, off-street car parks, on street Pay & Display bays and when restrictions are not in force on single yellow lines. Parking within Maidstone is very competitive with alternative facilities to the Councils car parks at Fremlin Walk, The Mall and Sainsbury's.

The Council must therefore be mindful of these competitors when setting parking charges. It must also be aware of charges elsewhere and the free parking available at Bluewater to ensure Maidstone charges remain competitive.

1.3.3 This year the number of vehicles parking within the Councils Pay & Display car parks has significantly reduced with significantly more spaces available than recorded in previous years. This is a worsening situation when compared to parking trends identified within the off street car parks strategic review in 2007.

1.3.4 Overall parking demand has reduced due primarily to the effects of the economic downturn in respect to;

- Park & Ride usage down by 3.01%
- Off-street Pay & Display income budget down by 14.6%
- On-street Pay & Display down by 17.48%
- Season Ticket sales usage down by 30.20%

This has had a significant financial impact which needs to be addressed. This is covered within the revised budget for the current financial year and in the proposals for next year.

1.3.5 The original Pay & Display income budget for 2008/9 is £956,760 with a year end forecast estimated at £890,141 identifying a projected deficit of £66,619. A rent income for King Street Multi Storey car park has assisted in reducing a deficit previously estimated to be in the region of £137,000. The income forecast for Pay & Display after taking into account the proposed changes within this report is estimated at £915,111 reducing the projected deficit to £41,649.

1.3.6 The original 2008/9 budget for decimalised parking identifies a cost of around £13,000. The year end estimate identifies a cost of £70,000 before the proposed changes detailed within this report. The forecast cost after the proposed changes is reduced to £30,430.

1.3.7 Parking patterns have altered due to the change in driver behaviour. Resident spaces allow free parking for up to a maximum of 2 hours and are regularly used by visitors to the town. This has had a negative impact on residents, reducing opportunities to park particularly in areas close to the town centre. This could worsen and the effects of the current economic down turn continue to be felt.

1.3.8 Off street car park usage has dropped and vehicles continue to park in residential zones.

1.3.9 The parking demand in these areas needs to be reviewed to enable residents a reasonable opportunity to park close to their homes, achieved by reducing levels of non-residents parking. Changes are therefore required to manage parking demand to improve management of overall traffic levels and provide a fairer distribution of available parking places.

1.3.10This report considers changes to residents parking to improve parking opportunity and also considers changes to on and off street parking to maintain competitiveness and meet budget requirements.

Resident Parking Scheme

1.3.11 An increasing number of residents are concerned that casual parking within the resident zones is reducing the level of parking availability for local residents. Many zones currently offer a maximum unrestricted period of parking for up to two hours. Extensive surveys have been carried out which conclude that the average return walking time to the town centre in the outermost roads within the scheme is less than one hour. Current restrictions therefore allow shoppers to park within the residential areas with ample time to walk into the town centre and return, thus reducing the spaces available to local residents for parking and allowing free parking and reduced use in off-street car parks.

1.3.12 It is therefore proposed to extend the number of roads which allow a maximum parking period of up to 30 minutes. This will reduce parking problems in roads within a short walking distance from the town centre. (Appendix A – area A)

1.3.13 It is proposed to also reduce the maximum period of parking from two hours to one hour in outer resident parking areas situated in the North, South and West Zones. This will reduce parking problems in roads situated within a reasonable walking distance from the town centre. (Appendix A – area B)

1.3.14 Residents and visitors displaying a valid permit will continue to have no time limit on parking within the resident parking bays.

1.3.15 To balance existing parking demand in each of the resident zones, charges should be introduced for vehicles parking without displaying a resident or visitor permit.

1.3.16 Charges should be based on 35p for 30 minutes and 70p for 1 hour. This will provide a reasonable charge to local visitor's without a permit, whist facilitating a migration of vehicles currently parked for free, into the town centre facilities away from the residential areas of Maidstone.

1.3.17 This will 'free up' the number of parking spaces available during peak periods and enable local residents a good opportunity to park within a reasonable distance from their home.

1.3.18 A number of payment options are being investigated at present which include scratch cards, pay & display units and cashless payments via mobile phone using VISA, Mastercard, Switch, Delta, or Maestro. This method of payment is used widely for on-street parking in a number of local authorities where vehicle management is required without the need for capital expenditure for Pay & Display units or ongoing maintenance cost.

1.3.19 Once a suitable system has been identified, a payment system for casual visitor parking can be introduced in April 2009 after changes to the designated parking places order and after public consultation.

<u>Resident Parking Permits</u>

1.3.20 Several options for changes to charges are proposed for consideration. These impact to varying degrees on the income required to support enforcement of the residents parking scheme, and the implementation of revised restricted hours within each town centre zone. It is not anticipated that a change in existing permit allocation levels will be required.

Estimates have projected a potential 25% reduction in permit applications as alternative parking arrangements may be made by some residents. This will increase on-street parking space for residents who do not have access to garage parking or parking within their own property boundary.

1.3.21 Resident Parking Permit option A

All permits charged at £20

	Permits issued	Income	Est increase	Less 25%	Potential
Current	8743	£74,150	n/a	n/a	n/a
At £20		£174,860	£100,710	£25,178	£75,532

1.3.22 Resident Parking Permit option B

All permits charged at £25

	Permits issued	Income	Est increase	Less 25%	Potential
Current	8743	£74,150	n/a	n/a	n/a
At £25		£218,575	£144,425	£36,107	£108,318

1.3.23 Resident Parking Permit option C

First permit £10 / second permit £35 / third permit £50

First permit	5,777	£10	£57,770
Second permit	2000	£35	£70,000
Third permit	966	£50	£48,300
		Total	£176,070
		Less 25% migration	£132,052
		Less current income	£74,150
		Potential	£57,902

1.3.24 Resident Parking Permit option D

First permit £20 / second permit £30 / third permit £50

First permit	5,777	£20	£115,540
Second permit	2000	£30	£60,000
Third permit	966	£50	£48,300
		Total	£223,840
		Less 25% migration	£167,880
		Less current income	£74,150
		Potential	£93,730

1.3.25 Resident Parking Permit option E

First permit £25 / second permit £25 / third permit £50

First permit	5,777	£25	£144,425
Second permit	2000	£25	£50,000
Third permit	966	£50	£48,300
		Total	£242,725
		Less 25% migration	£182,043
		Less current income	£74,150
		Potential	£107,893

1.3.26 The environmental impact on the number of cars parked on the highway is reflected in options C, D and E where the third permit charge has been increased by a further £25 where applicable.

1.3.27 It is considered that allocation levels for parking permits within each of the parking zones (as identified in Appendix B) are adequate and therefore require no change at present.

1.3.28 Any permit administration charges should also be applied to North 5 (Vinters) and rural locations to cover the costs of administration, enforcement and permit production.

1.3.29 Proposed changes will need to be introduced in sequence with the current renewal schedule for each of the allocated zones in the South, West, North and rural areas;

South 1	January
South 2	February
South 3 & 4	March
West 1	April
West 2	May
West 3 & Bearsted	June
North 1 & Lenham	July
North 2	August
North 3	September
North 4 & Staplehurst	October
North 5	November

1.3.30 Resident permits holders within the North zone have previously been given a concession to park within any of the North zones.

1.3.31 Experience has shown that vehicle migration to nearby streets is minimal. However a larger number of resident vehicles are identified as moving from the north of the town into the lower end of the north zone close to the town centre during normal business hours.

1.3.32 These vehicles have placed an increased burden on the parking spaces available in areas close to Maidstone Prison and County Road resulting in the local residents having limited parking availability during the controlled parking period.

1.3.33 It is therefore proposed to reinstate the North zone to allow only resident permit holders to park within their allocated number zone in line with both the South and West resident parking arrangements. This will provide a fairer system and balance the spaces available to residents who live in high density areas close to the town centre.

1.3.34 Permit charges for residents and visitors are common across Kent to meet the cost in permit administration maintenance and regular enforcement. Resident schemes vary in size and are dependent on a number of factors, however many local authorities have adopted either a sliding scale of charges or based permit charges on zone location. Examples of other Kent authority charges are detailed in Appendix C.

1.3.35 It is recommended to adopt the charges identified within option E with the First and second permit charged at £25, and the Third permit charged at £50. This has the potential of raising income by £107,893 and will allow improved parking availability for local residents and their visitors.

1.3.36 It is also recommended to increase the level of enforcement patrols within the resident zones. This will ensure that parking spaces are managed appropriately to maximise the space available for local residents.

Pay & Display tariff

1.3.37 The national downturn in the economy has had a significant impact on Pay & Display income performance. It is estimated that if current conditions continue a 14% budget deficit is likely which will impact on our ability to maintain the car parks to a good standard and may influence customer retention levels in the longer term.

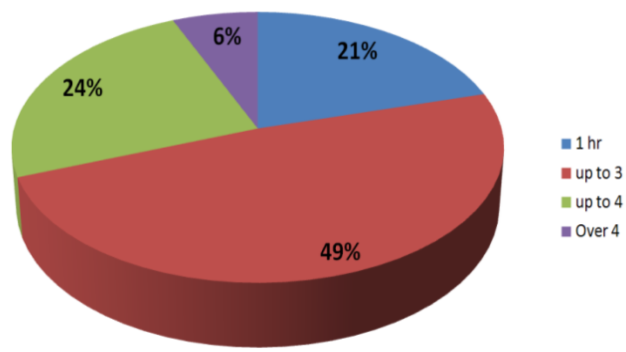
1.3.38 Customer usage and transaction levels have been studied in each of the council's car park tariff bands and balanced against private car park operators within the town.

1.3.39 Many Council off-street car parks are situated in prime locations close to the town centre with competitive charges applied for up to three hours when compared to other local car park operators.

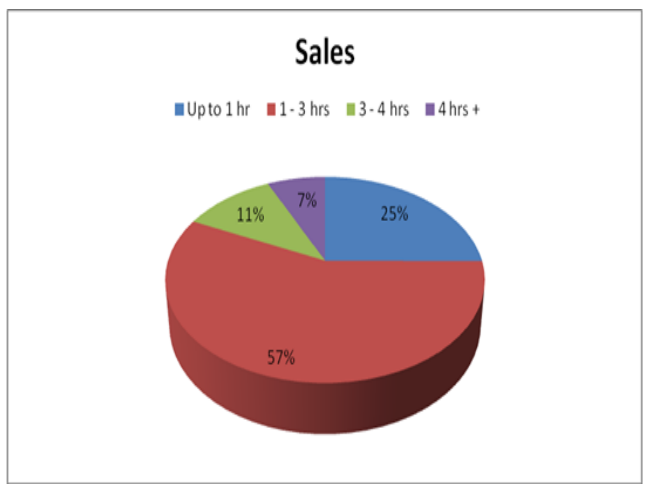
	Up to 3 hours
Current MBC	£1.60
Mall	£1.60
Fremlin	£1.80
Sainsbury	£2.50 (£1.50 returned with shopping)

1.3.40 Data collated from the ASLAN parking system has confirmed that the tariff for up to three hours is popular with customers, as almost half park for a period of up to 3 hours. It considered that the Councils town centre car parks can remain competitive if the charges within this band were increased by 20p to £1.80. Tariffs of up to 1 hour and over 4 hours have also been reviewed, however it is recommended not to change the existing tariff in these areas as financial impact in these bands is comparatively low in comparison and may influence customer retention levels.

1.3.41 The breakdown in relation to customer tariff band use during the last financial year identifies that only 6% of customer's park for over 4 hours with 24% purchasing a ticket for up to a maximum period of 4 hours. 49% purchase a ticket for up to 3 hours with 21% parking for up to 1 hour.



1.3.42 Data collated for the first and second quarter of 2008/9 identifies that customers wishing to park for a period of over 4 hours has remained consistent. However a reduction of 13% has been noted within the within the 3 to 4 hour tariff band. Usage data confirms that customers purchasing parking time are limiting their period of stay as the percentage parking up to 3 hours has increased by 12%.



1.3.43 In order to retain competitiveness and support the changes to parking patterns maintaining a low first hour headline charge is considered important as this will help to ensure off street parking remain competitive.

1.3.44 Based on data from the last financial year, the impact of a 20p increase in the up to 3 hour tariff has been estimated to increase income by approx £34,942 per annum. It should be considered that a percentage of customers may migrate to competitor parking facilities and so the estimated figure has been reduced by 20% to reflect potential customer behavior.

Car park types	Income	Increase to £1.80	Estimated increase
Short stay	£182,256	£205,038	£22,782
Long stay	£97,280	£109,440	£12,160
		Total	£34,942
	Less possible	Migration / 20%	£27,953

Sunday Charging

1.3.45 Sunday charges have been introduced in Maidstone by some local car park operators as it is an established method of raising revenue to cover the cost of providing parking facilities within the town centre.

1.3.46 Local charging levels do vary and are dependent on car park location and access to the town centre shopping and commercial facilities.

Fremlin

Up to 1 hour	80p
1 to 2 hours	£1.30
2 to 3 hours	£1.80
3 to 4 hours	£2.30
4 to 5 hours	£3.60
Over 5 hours	£8.50

The Mall

Up to 4 hours	50p
Over 4 hours	£2.00

1.3.47 Due to the current economic climate and the impact this has had on Pay & Display income levels, Sunday charging is a consideration for raising revenue to enable Maidstone Borough Council to continue its investment in maintaining car park standards and investing surplus revenues to support Council priorities.

1.3.48 Many local authorities in Kent have also introduced Sunday charging successfully to support the cost in providing services. Charges are normally based on the weekly tariff rates applied in each local area.

Sunday charges applied;
Ashford
Canterbury
Medway
Dover (3 car parks only)
Shepway
Thanet
Tunbridge Wells

Free parking on Sunday;
Dartford
Gravesham
Sevenoaks
Swale
Tonbridge & Malling

1.3.49 Based on survey work in other Kent towns where Sunday charges apply, it is anticipated that car park occupancy levels on a Sunday can be estimated at between 5% and 8% of the recorded car park occupancy Monday to Friday.

1.3.50 Sunday charging may potentially generate £88,000 per annum. This is based on average occupancy levels observed on Sundays in other car parks. However, usage and turnover could be subject to variation as market demands in the current economic climate are difficult to predict.

On-street Pay & Display parking bays.

1.3.51 It is recognised that many short stay visitors to the town do wish to park within close proximity to the shops and businesses within the town centre. Although car parks do offer good facilities, statistics show that consistent levels of occupancy are achieved within the on-street Pay & Display parking bays.

1.3.52 Areas have been identified where improved parking facilities on-street can be offered within a short walk from the central shopping region of Maidstone town centre.

1.3.53 It is anticipated that additional on-street parking will deter drivers from parking within residential areas particularly around the North zone as walking time to the core shopping areas will be drastically reduced.

1.3.54 Around 20 additional parking bays can be generated to meet the change in demand in;

- Union Street
- Lower Brewer Street
- Romney Place / Albion Place
- And Mill Street

Each proposal will require a change to the designated parking places order and agreement with Kent County Council following public consultation and survey.

1.3.55 Data available for similar on-street Pay & Display bays identify that each bay generates on average £1,048 per annum. An installation of a further 20 bays can potentially generate in the region of £20,000 per annum. If this was to be achieved, it is anticipated that the 2008/9 original budget estimate for on-street Pay & Display will be met. However, usage and turnover could be subject to variation as market demands in the current economic climate are difficult to predict.

Impact on users

1.3.56 Consideration will need to be given to concerns raised by the retail sector, religious groups and residents, resulting from the impact of these proposals. Public consultation will enable a formal review of objector's comments prior to implementation.

Financial summary 2009/10

1.3.57 The estimated Pay & Display budget for 2009/10 is £1,000,300. The full year income projection from the proposals within this report is estimated at £115,953. Inflation will impact on car park income performance with a projected year end deficit of £30,000.

1.3.58 The 2009/10 year end decriminalised parking forecast identifies a potential surplus of £92,793. Although a number of variables may influence actual income, these estimates are within the agreed sum identified with the agency agreement with KCC.

Timescales / Installation

1.3.59 Changes to the off-street parking places order and the designated parking places order will be required if each of the proposals were to be agreed.

Therefore a two stage implementation will be necessary with separate public consultation required for each order variation.

1.3.60 The variation to the off-street parking order may be concluded by the end of December 2008, dependant on public consultation, to enable installation to take place during January 2009.

1.3.61 The variation to the designated parking places order may be concluded by the end of February 2009, dependant on public consultation and consideration of any objections, to enable installation during March 2009.

1.3.62 Once a suitable process has been identified to enable a charge to be applied for casual visitor parking, a system can be introduced in April 2009 after further changes to the designated parking places order and after public consultation.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 To not increase parking charges within the 3 hour tariff band would result in a budget deficit.

1.4.2 To increase the tariff within the 3 hour tariff band above the proposed level of 20p may decrease the competitiveness of the Councils car parks at this time.

1.4.3 To change the tariff band charges for 1 hour or over 4 hours will have limited financial impact in comparison to the mid-range tariff. It is likely that any changes to these tariff bands will adversely impact on customer retention levels and turnover.

1.4.4 To not introduce Sunday charging would result in a budget deficit and not allow continued investment in maintaining car park standards.

1.4.5 To introduce a flat rate Sunday charge may complicate the tariff structure if introduced alongside the evening overnight tariff. This may deter customers, influencing occupancy levels and income.

1.5 <u>Impact on Corporate Objectives</u>

1.5.1 Corporate objectives to improve access across the borough through better roads, public transport and services, directly relate to parking Services and the provision of off-street parking facilities.

1.6 <u>Risk Management</u>

1.6.1 There is a risk that customers may migrate to other car park facilities as a result of an increase to the Pay & Display tariff. However it should be considered that the Councils car parks are located centrally to the town centre and offer good value for money.

1.6.2 The introduction of a Sunday charge must be balanced against the risk of adversely impacting on the levels of on-street parking and the competitiveness of the town. Surveys will be required to closely monitor any localised impact.

1.6.3 There is a risk that the take up of permits is different to current expectations leading to a deficit in projected income.

1.6.4 There is a risk that driver behaviour is different to current predictions leading to a deficit in projected income.

1.6.5 There is a reputational risk to the Council if the proposals were to receive adverse public reaction.

1.6.6 There is a risk that residents may not immediately see the benefits in changes to the residents parking scheme, however it should be considered that casual parking will be reduced in many areas creating more available parking for residents within the scheme.

1.7 <u>Other Implications</u>

1.	Financial	x
2.	Staffing	
3.	Legal	x
4.	Equality Impact Needs Assessment	
5.	Environmental/Sustainable Development	
6.	Community Safety	
7.	Human Rights Act	
8.	Procurement	

1.7.1 Financial

Several options are proposed within this report for consideration. These figures have been based on existing usage and turnover and could be subject to variation as market demands are difficult to predict in the current economic climate.

	Estimated income pa
On-Street *(proposals)*	
On-street P&D increase the number of available bays	£20,000
Resident parking permit charges (for all permits)	£107,893
Visitor parking charges (non permit)	£18,252
	£146,145
Off-Street *(proposals)*	
Mid range P&D tariff increase by 20p to £1.80	£27,953
Sunday P&D tariff	£88,000
	£115,953

Pay & Display	**2008/9**
Original budget	£956,760
Income forecast	£890,141
Projected deficit	£66,619
Forecast deficit with proposals	£41,649

	2009/10
Estimated budget	£1,000,300
Income forecast	£970,300
Projected deficit	£30,000

Decriminalised parking	**2008/9**
Original budget (cost)	£13,000
Forecast (cost)	£70,000
Forecast (cost) with proposals	£30,430

	2009/10
Forecast income with proposals	£92,793
Extra costs*	£10,000
Net forecast income	£82,793

Extra costs*
It should be anticipated that an increase in customer enquiries will arise within the reception, contact centre and the parking services teams as a result of these proposals. Therefore consideration should be given to set aside £10,000 for additional resources over the first year to meet demand within the overall budget.

1.7.2 Legal
Changes to the parking places orders for both on-street and off-street will be required with public consultation and formal notification as specified within The Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

1.8 Background Documents
Off-Street Car Parks and Park & Ride Strategic Review 2007

NO REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS BOX BEING COMPLETED

Is this a Key Decision? Yes ☑ No ☐

If yes, when did it appear in the Forward Plan? __November 2008_____

Is this an Urgent Key Decision? Yes ☐ No ☑

Reason for Urgency

How to Comment

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

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