

## Report for Resolution

**Report to** Executive  
24 June 2009

**Item**

**7**

**Report of** Head of Asset and City Management

**Subject** Blue badge charges at off-street surface car parks

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### Purpose

To consider the introduction of charges for blue badge holders at the City Council's off-street surface car parks.

### Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1. support the introduction of the revised blue badge fees and charges for City Council surface car parks as set out in **Appendix A** of the report and to send to Norwich Highways Agency Committee for a decision;
2. support the phased introduction of the revised blue badge charges initially for Chantry, Chapelfield East, Magdalen Street, Pottergate and Rouen Road car parks and then through delegated authority to the Head of Asset and City Management to introduce the revised blue badge charges for Barn Road, Colegate, Exeter Street, St Crispins, Westwick Street, Rose Lane, St Helens Wharf, Monastery Court and Queens Road, car parks when sufficient capital funds are available and works are carried out to install DDA compliant payment machines.

### Financial Consequences

The current off-street car parks income estimate for 2009/10 is £4.5m.

The recommended increase in blue badge fees and charges for the car parks listed in 2 above, if implemented on 17 August 2009, would generate an additional estimated income of £24,000 during the remainder of 2009/2010 (estimated full year effect £39,000).

If the council makes all surface car park payment machines compliant the additional capital cost would be an estimated £55,000, and this would release an additional £11,000 based on a full year effect.

There will be estimated costs of £2,000 for the preparation of notices, advertising and changes to signage.

### Risk Assessment

The risks of not charging for blue badge use of car parks are:

- There could be insufficient funds for re-investment, maintenance and repair of council public car parks

- Lower income from free provision of blue badge parking reduces capitalised values of car park land, possibly resulting in early disposal with lower capital receipt
- There will not be a consistent policy across all council car parks, which leaves the council open to challenge.

### **Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities**

The report helps to meet the strategic priority “Strong and prosperous city – working to improve quality of life for residents, visitors and those who work in the city now and in the future” and the service plan priority to deliver sustainable parking provision which meets the needs of diverse groups.

### **Contact Officers**

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### **Background Documents**

Diversity impact assessment - Charging for Blue Badge parking April 2009

Report to CMT – Off-street disabled parking charges 10 June 2009

# Report

## Background

1. The City Council needs to ensure that best use is made of its car park facilities and that they remain available to diverse groups of people. The council also needs to ensure that it maximises income from its car parks in order to sufficiently re-invest and maintain them
2. Norwich City Council is the only operator within the city centre boundaries to offer any free parking at its car parks for blue badge holders.
3. Current policy is to charge blue badge holders for parking at the city council's 2 multi-storey car parks but not at its 14 surface car parks and this proposal seeks to introduce a consistent policy across all of its sites which is both sustainable and to the benefit of all car park users including the disabled.
4. Free blue badge parking has the effect of reducing income by an estimated £50,000 pa from off-street car parks and given the council's current financial situation has a significant impact on the council's ability to sufficiently fund budgets for re-investment in and maintenance of facilities to a standard suitable for the disabled.
5. This reduced income has the effect of lowering the capitalised value of car park land and may speed up the disposal and loss of these valued parking sites. This might especially be the case where development land value exceeds existing use value as a car park. Whilst development may ultimately be inevitable - and desirable as part of wider local plans and master plans - early loss of a parking facility which is valued by disabled users is not desirable.

## Consultations

6. Members will be aware that under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 all public bodies (including this authority) must in carrying out their functions have due regard to:
  - (a) the need to eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under this Act;
  - (b) the need to eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities;
  - (c) the need to promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
  - (d) the need to take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons;
  - (e) the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons; and
  - (f) the need to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.

The following paragraphs set out how the council has addressed these duties in the context of the blue badge scheme.

7. Whilst carrying out a Diversity Impact Assessment to assess the impact of this

proposed policy change on the disabled, officers consulted with both the Norwich Access Group and the Norfolk Coalition of Disabled People to seek their views. These consultations were conducted during April and May 2009 and responses were co-ordinated through each organisations contact representative.

8. The following summarised responses were received:

Norwich Access Group

As a group we don't have a problem with your proposals to introduce charges for blue badge holders. We believe that disabled people should be treated equally. There are some conditions that must be in place however:

- Bays must be adequate in number, marked, uncluttered and policed
- Ticket machines must be accessible in terms of height and ease of use
- Charging may cause a migration to double yellow on road parking
- We need clarity as to where on road parking causes obstruction

Norfolk Coalition of Disabled People

The NCODP is fully supporting the position already put forward by the Norwich Access Group and that disabled people should be treated equally and that sufficient number of parking bays for blue badge holders should be provided designed according to DDA standards re width etc. to take account of wheelchair users and people using mobility aids.

We would like to stress however that:

- Ticketing machines must be fully accessible for disabled motorists from a wheel chair height and charges must be clearly displayed
- Lifts, doors, toilets in car parks etc must be fully accessible and clearly sign posted
- Abuse should be policed and adequately fined as well as clamping procedures put in place
- Measures should be put in place to make people aware of the consequences of abuse.

9. Earlier consultations with the Norwich Access Group on the potential disposal of Chantry car park identified that blue badge users greatly value the provision of off-street surface car parks which are centrally located and afford level access to the city centre.

## **DDA Compliance**

10. Currently 5 out of the city councils off-street surface car parks have DDA compliant payment machines (Chantry, Chapelfield East, Magdalen Street, Pottergate and Rouen Road car parks) and it is proposed that the implementation of charges for the disabled is introduced initially at only these car parks.

11. Members are asked to support the introduction of charges for all surface car parks and for NHAC to delegate authority to the Head of Asset and City Management to implement the charges initially for those with DDA compliant machines and to introduce charges for the remaining car parks (Barn Road, Colegate, Exeter Street, St Crispins, Westwick Street, Rose Lane, St Helens Wharf, Monastery Court and Queens Road) as and when capital funds are available and compliant machines are installed.

### **Level of fees and charges**

12. The level of fees and charges proposed is laid out in **Appendix A** and matches the fees and charges payable by the general public.

## APPENDIX A – Summary of proposed revisions to blue badge parking charges

Current and proposed blue badge parking charges for Council car parks				Mon to Sun & Bank Hols 0500 to 1830						Mon to Sun & Bank Hols
Car Park	Total spaces	Tariff type ***		1 hr	2 hr	3 hr	4 hr	5 hr	5hr +	1830 to 0500
St Andrews MSCP	1084	S/M	Existing	1.20	2.40	3.60	4.80	5.00	5.00	1.60
			Proposed	No change						No change
St Giles MSCP	330	S	Existing	1.40	2.40	4.20	5.60	8.00	15.00	1.60
			Proposed	No change						No change
Barn Road	147	M	Existing	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC
			Proposed	£1.10 per hour or part of an hour						1.60
Chantry	78	S	Existing	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC
			Proposed	1.40	2.40	4.20	5.60	8.00	15.00	1.60
Chapelfield East	17	S	Existing	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC
			Proposed	1.40	2.40	4.20	5.60	8.00	15.00	1.60
Colegate	94	M	Existing	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC
			Proposed	£1.10 per hour or part of an hour						1.60
Exeter Street	46	L	Existing	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC
			Proposed	0.80	1.60	2.40	3.00	3.00	3.00	1.60
Magdalen Street	206	M/L	Existing	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC
			Proposed	0.90	1.80	2.70	3.60	4.00	4.00	1.60
Monastery Court	55	S	Existing	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC
			Proposed	1.40	2.40	4.20	5.60	8.00	15.00	1.60
Pottergate	26	S	Existing	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC
			Proposed	1.40	2.40	4.20	5.60	8.00	15.00	1.60
Queens Road	61	M	Existing	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC
			Proposed	£1.10 per hour or part of an hour						1.60
Rose Lane	204	M	Existing	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC
			Proposed	1.20	2.40	3.60	4.50	4.50	4.50	1.60
Rouen Road	187	M	Existing	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC
			Proposed	1.10	2.20	3.30	4.40	5.00	5.00	1.60
St Crispins	74	L	Existing	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC
			Proposed	0.80	1.60	2.40	3.00	3.00	3.00	1.60
St Helens Wharf **	117	S/M	Existing	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC
* £15 for 10hr +			Proposed	1.40	2.80	4.20	5.60	7.00	7.00*	1.60
Westwick Street	107	M/L	Existing	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC	FOC
			Proposed	1.30	2.60	3.90	4.00	4.00	4.00	1.60

\*\* In process of disposal \*\*\* Tarrif type S = Short M = Medium L = Long