

Report for Resolution

Report to Norwich Highways Agency Committee
24 November 2011

Item
12

Report of Head of city development services

Subject On-street parking permit price review

Purpose

This report proposes price increases for on street parking permits and a future review of all aspects of the price and terms and nature of on-street parking permits.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- (1) ask the head of city development services to make the necessary arrangements to increase permit prices from January 2012 as detailed in Appendix 1;
- (2) ask the head of city development services to carry out a comprehensive review of the types of permits issued within controlled parking zones, their price, conditions of use and terms of issue, and report the findings to a future meeting.

Financial Consequences

The nominal costs of introducing the parking price increase would be funded from the parking services account. Future work would need to be funded through the same mechanism, but this work would ensure that the full costs of operating the permit parking scheme are covered by income.

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 implement the policies of the Local Transport Plan and Norwich Area Transportation Strategy.

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Background Documents

Review of On Street Parking Fees and Charges Sept 2010
Review of Resident Parking Permit Charges Nov 2006

Report

Introduction

1. This report reviews the level of charge for all types of on street parking permit currently offered in Norwich. It also explains the rationale towards other proposed changes that seek to promote the sustainable funding of the permit parking scheme and commit to a more in-depth future review.

Background

2. The city council operates an extensive system of controlled parking zones which require use of parking permits for use in on-street parking bays. This system has supported the policy objectives of the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy which seek to deter commuter parking in the inner urban areas, to promote use of Park & Ride services and associated benefit of reducing parking and traffic pressures for local residents and businesses in Norwich.

Proposed increases in permit prices

3. Price increases in line with inflation were introduced in January 2011, with the price of 'small vehicle' permits frozen at that time, the price of medium permits increasing in line with inflation, and the price of large permits at twice that rate. The rationale behind this years recommended increases is that the price of all permits is increased, with small vehicle permits increasing approximately in line with inflation, twice the rate for medium permits, and three times the rate for large which continues the principle of increasing the differential between the cost of permits for larger vehicles in areas that are subject to considerable parking pressures. This results in approximate increases in 'small vehicle' permits of £1 per year; £2 for 'medium vehicle' permits and £3 for the 'large vehicle' permits. Individual permit prices have been rounded to the nearest whole pound. All other permits have been increased in line with Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation.
4. However, the operation of the permit scheme has not been properly reviewed since its inception in the mid 1990s, and since then a number of amendments have been made to it, including the addition of various permit types, and most recently a review of the 'dispensations' scheme. As a consequence there are a number of issues with the current arrangements that should be resolved. The recommended price increases will help to cover the costs of operating the scheme in the short term, but a full review is necessary to ensure the long-term viability of the scheme. It has always been an aim to ensure that the permit parking scheme was cost neutral, but if there were any future surplus this would be used to implement transport schemes in the Norwich area.

Full review of permit parking scheme and pricing policy.

5. A future review of the permit scheme would enable the operation of the permit scheme to be evaluated in depth; this will enable an understanding of the correct terms of use of permits, a review of the suitability of all permit types and their prices and current exemptions offered. It is suggested that the review

should cover the following areas

- The nature of the permits offered. There are currently many different types of permits, and some do not meet the appropriate needs of the communities that they are supposed to serve
- The operational criteria for the various permit types, and where necessary, amendment to the relevant Traffic Regulation Orders to ensure that enforcement is both practical and consistent
- Entitlement to free permits. There are substantial numbers of permits issued free of charge, but the current practice does not reflect actual need, and is not consistent with national practice. Current practice with respect of free permits to 'green' vehicles is also in need of review.
- Pricing policy, the relationship of costs of permits to the benefit derived, and the cost of administration - The current pricing policy is not transparent, and the costs of short duration permits in particular does not reflect the costs in issuing them
- Internal administration – the costs and practicalities of implementing changes without substantial alteration to current IT systems
- Exemptions and exceptions – clarification of the criteria for issuing permits on compassionate grounds, and for particular issues relating to anomalies in the issuing of permits to 'new build' properties (for example the conversion back from flats to a single dwelling)
- Operating Costs – ensuring that the cost of operating the permit parking scheme is covered by the income that the Council receives.

Conclusion

6. The annual review of the price of parking permits is due, and as a short term measure for 2012, it is recommended that all permits are increased in line with the CPI. Even with the increase, the proposed price of resident's permits would equate to between 5p – 10p per day (depending on size of vehicle) and the charge for business permits would equate to 30 pence per day; this represents extremely good value for money compared to alternative parking options.
7. The review of the current permit parking system should enable it to respond better to the genuine needs of the communities that it serves, whilst making the charging regime more transparent, and the scheme financially self sustaining.

Proposed permit price increases for 2012

Permit	Duration (months)	Current prices (from January 2011)	Proposed price from January 2012
Short (Resident)	6	£11.00	£12.00
	12	£16.00	£17.00
	18	£20.00	£21.00
Medium (Resident)	6	£15.20	£17.00
	12	£23.90	£26.00
	18	£32.50	£35.00
Long (Resident)	6	£21.00	£24.00
	12	£35.00	£38.00
	18	£46.70	£50.00
Visitor (Resident)	6	£15.20	£17.00
	12	£23.90	£26.00
	18	£32.50	£35.00
Business (includes Landlords and Hotels)	6	£57.50	£60.00
	12	£108.40	£114.00
Statutory (Statutory Q)	6	£57.50	£60.00
	12	£108.40	£114.00
Community Carer (Carer Q)	6	£15.20	£17.00
	12	£23.90	£26.00
Alternative Fuel vehicles	12	Free	Free Alternative Fuel permit type offered to existing permit holders only

Explanation of changes:

- Residential permits are proposed to increase by £1, £2 and £3 for Short, Medium, Long vehicles respectively for all permit durations.
- The Visitor permit continues to be banded at the medium rate.
- Business permits increased at the annual rate of CPI (Sept 2011; 5.2%) <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/cpi/consumer-price-indices/september-2011/index.html> .
- All price increases are round up or down to the nearest pound for administrative reasons.