

Report to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Report submitted by: Director of Community Services
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Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:
All

Proposed Preston Bus Station and On-Street Parking Charges

(Appendix 'A' refers)

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Executive Summary

A review of the Preston bus station car park pay and display charges and permit charges, Preston on-street pay and display charges and Lancaster on-street pay and display charges has taken place and the following recommendations are made.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order No. 25 have been complied with.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is asked to approve:

- (i) that negotiations to introduce a pay by phone option for both on-street parking and the Preston bus station car park are progressed and that district councils be encouraged to join this scheme to implement a single county wide system,
- (ii) that the recommended changes to the bus station car park permits and permit charges set out in this report are approved and that the relevant consultation and legal process is followed,
- (iii) that the bus station pay and display charges and bandings are amended in line with this report following the required legal process,

- (iv) that the proposals for blue badge parking on the bus station set out in this report are approved and that the relevant consultation and legal process is followed,
- (v) that the on-street pay and display parking charges in Lancaster are increased as set out in this report and the relevant legal process is followed in order to introduce these changes, and
- (vi) that the management of the on-street pay and display machines in Lancaster is brought back in-house.

Background and Advice

Lancashire County Council became responsible for the Preston bus station car park on 1 April 2014; the car park was previously owned and managed by Preston City Council. Situated at the eastern end of the city centre on Tithebarn Street, the multi-storey car park, which is above the bus station, has nine levels and approximately 1170 spaces. Based on capacity, it is the largest car park in Preston city centre; the next largest car parks are at the railway station (939 spaces) and Fishergate shopping centre (730 spaces).

The car park primarily attracts people who are working in the city centre and park all day; this is reflected in the Pay & Display (P&D) ticket purchase data. All day parking is encouraged by the availability of reduced-rate permits for those using the car park on a regular basis, although the take up of these permits is relatively low by individual applicants. A significant number of discounted permits are sold to employees of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC) and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

Current use

The top three levels (7, 8 and 9) of the car park have been leased to the Guildhall which equates to approximately 400 spaces. These levels are available for LCC staff parking Monday to Friday 7am to 7pm, as well as those authorised to park by the Guildhall. The number of available spaces on Levels 1 - 6 is 770. It is estimated the current occupancy of levels 1 - 6 is around 60%.

On a typical day there are between 200 - 250 motorists using the P&D option with a typical ticket value of £3.20 which indicates that the majority of motorists are parking for four hours or longer. In addition there are approximately 200 - 250 permit holders using the car park on a daily basis. Making the average number of users between 400 – 500 vehicles excluding staff parking.

Payment method options

Given their age and condition, the existing pay and display machines need to be replaced as soon as is practicable. This would provide an opportunity to consider alternative methods and options.

Although a pay on foot/exit solution would provide a number of benefits to customers such as being charged only for time used with no risk of being issued with a Penalty Charge Notice for overstaying. This option also reduces the requirement for enforcement by Civil Enforcement Officers, but it does however have additional costs in that the car park needs to be staffed 24 hours in order to deal with any machine or barrier failure that may prevent motorist from exiting the car park. In order to alleviate such problems the majority of sites using this option would have at least two exit barriers side by side at all exit points. The layout of the existing internal and external access ramps limit the availability of space to provide such a set up. Therefore this option is unsuitable for the bus station car park.

Consideration is currently being given to introduce a pay by phone option which could be introduced at no cost to the council. Discussions are currently taking place to see if district councils would also join the scheme in order to provide a county wide option that would simplify parking payments for residents throughout the county.

The introduction of such a scheme would allow for the number of pay and display machines per level to be reduced on the basis that a significant number of users would use the pay by phone option. As well as pay by phone this option also provides a web app and webpage where payments can also be paid.

A proactive introduction of the pay by phone option along with a promotion of the availability of permits would increase the usage to these options and support the reduction in the number of pay and display machines required.

On this basis it is recommended that the preferred payment options is for the use of pay and display machines in conjunction with a pay by phone option and the continued use of permits. Given the alternative option of pay by phone and permits it is considered that only one pay and display machine would be required on each level.

Pay by phone option

This payment method can be introduced as one of the service improvements offered in the NSL parking enforcement contract which started in September 2014. The contractor will implement the system and also provide sufficient signs to promote the scheme and also advise users how to operate the scheme. The customer would pay the normal P&D charge and an additional fee of 20p per transaction, plus a 10p charge if a confirmation text is required and an additional 10p charge if a text reminder of impending expiry is required.

The enforcement officers will be able to make live enquiries on parked vehicles via the existing hand held equipment resulting in efficient and effective enforcement activity.

Current available permits

There are currently 178 quarterly permit holders, of which 150 are purchased by the DWP. This equates to 135 daily users when allowing for annual leave and

weekends. The remainder of these permits are purchased by individual members of the public.

Staff working at DWP, CPS and HMRC can also purchase multi-use permits which allow parking on ten separate dates. These were introduced by the city council in order to accommodate part-time workers at these companies. There are approximately 300 registered users but the permit sales indicate that around 100 people are parking daily using a multi-use card.

Table 1 – Summary of existing permit types and charges

Permit Type	Eligible users	Number of users	Annual number sold	Cost	Total income	Net (Excluding VAT)	VAT Element	Cost per daily parking session
10 Strip multi use cards	HMRC, DWP, CPS staff only	150	2800	£25.00	£70,000	£58,334	£11,666	£2.50
Quarterly Permits	General user	7	28	£180.00	£5,040	£4,200	£840	£3.10 *
	DWP	150	600	£153.19	£91,914	£76,595	£15,319	£2.64 *
Pay & Display	All	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£4.00

*These figures are for comparison purposes only and assumes annual parking sessions of 232 days allowing for weekends and leave
All prices include VAT

It is evident from Table 1 that the quarterly permits are not very popular other than with the DWP who pay a discounted rate based on the volume of permits they purchase. The 10 strip multi use card is more popular and the reason for this would be that the daily cost for parking equates to £2.50 whereas the quarterly permit is £3.10. The frequent renewal of multi-use cards should not be a cheaper option than the quarterly permits given the additional administration work these permits create for the county council.

There are a number of private, non-committal car parks set up on private land where the all-day parking charge is £2.00. Although each individual site is relatively small these alternative parking sites do impact on the main car parks within the centre. As these car parks are already full it is not considered that they would impact on the bus station car park any further.

Proposed Permit Charges

Table 2 below sets out recommended changes to the permits eligibility and charges. The main changes are to the cost of the multi-use card and opening this facility up to all motorists rather than just those employed by the HMRC, DWP and the CPS. Increasing the charge to £35 may result in a drop in existing users and the proposal to allow anyone to buy these permits will reduce the council's income from P&D but the benefit is that it should encourage more regular users. On this basis, no additional income is being accounted for at this time due to the uncertainty around the level of usage. The multi-use card does cause a number of issues with users

completing the card incorrectly and it is also a large administrative process that should be reduced. It is therefore proposed that these permits will only be available as part of the pay by phone system where users purchase 10 sessions at a time, to secure the multi-use discount, but they will still need to register on each day that they park to ensure they do not get issued with a penalty charge notice.

The other main change proposed is the introduction of an annual permit at £670. It is proposed that these permits and the existing quarterly permits will be processed through the pay by phone system only.

It is recommended that these permit changes and increase in charges are introduced on 1 April 2016 or as soon as is practicable after this date.

Table 2 – Summary of proposed changes to permit types and charges

Permit Type	Eligible users	Number of users	Annual number sold	Cost	Total income	Net (Excluding VAT)	VAT	Cost per daily parking session
10 Strip multi use cards	All	150	2800	£33.00 Permit	£92,400	£77,000	£15,400	£3.30 Permit
				£2.00 fee	£5,600	£4667	£933	20p fee
Quarterly Permits	All	7	28	£180.00	£5,040	£4,200	£840	£3.10 *
Annual Permits	All	0	0	£670.00	£0			£2.89 *
Annual Permits	DWP	150	600	£155.00	£93,000	£77,500	£15,500	£2.64 *
Pay & Display	All	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£4.00

*These figure are for comparison purposes only and assumes annual parking sessions of 232 days allowing for weekends and leave
All prices include VAT

Pay and display charges

The P&D income for 2014-15 was £256k (excluding VAT). The projected income for 2015-16 is £260k (excluding VAT) based on April to October income.

Table 3 sets out the current charges at the bus station car park and provides a comparison to the other main car parks in the city centre.

Table 3 – Summary of existing bus station and other main car park charges

	LCC	Private sector		Preston City	
	Bus station	Fishergate centre	St Georges Centre	Avenham Multi Storey	Market Multi Storey
< 1hr	£1.20	£1.30	£1.30	£1.30	£1.20
< 2hr	£2.00	£2.00	£2.00	£2.00	£2.00
< 3hr	£2.70	£2.50	£2.50	£2.70	£2.50
< 4hr	£3.50	£3.50	£3.50	£3.50	£3.00
< 5hr	n/a	£4.50	£4.50	n/a	n/a
< 12 hr	£4.00	£7.50	£8.00	£4.00	£4.00
24 hr	£6.00	n/a	n/a	£6.00	£6.00

The current charges at the car park are in line with the city council's charges and slightly lower than the private sector charges. In order to simplify the tariff and encourage leisure and shopper parking to the city centre it is recommended that the number of charging bands is reduced. Table 4 sets out the proposed banding widths and associated charges. Although this does slightly increase the charge for those who previously paid for 1 or 3 hours it would encourage them to stay longer whilst reducing the cost for those who previously paid for 2 or 4 hour parking. There is no change for the 12 or 24 hour parking charges. It is not anticipated that these changes will have any overall effect on the car park income. Given the age of the existing machines it is recommended that these charges can only be introduced if new machines are purchased. This would allow for the machines to be in place in time to introduce the new charges from 1 April 2016 or as soon as is practicable after this date. The estimated cost of these machines including fixing and commissioning is £35k which will be funded from existing budgets.

Table 4 – Proposed bus station car park charges

Bus Station Car Park	
up to 2hrs	£1.60
2 - 4hrs	£3.20
up to 12hrs	£4.00
24 hours	£6.00

Blue badge parking

Blue badge parking is currently provided free of charge in any bay in the bus station car park. Subject to county council consent, the city council will introduce a time restriction on their car parks for blue badge holders. Such consent is capable of being granted in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation and it is understood that the report is currently being prepared. The city council's proposal is that Blue badge holders will only be able to park in city council designated disabled bays and these will be time limited to 3 hours with a no return period of 8 hours. Blue badge holders

parking in any other bays will be expected to pay the normal charge. In view of the city councils proposed changes it is recommended that the county council make similar arrangements at the bus station to those that the city council is introducing on their car parks.

An Equality Analysis assessment (Appendix A) of these changes has been made and is attached to this report. If the recommendation is approved then further consultation and assessment of these changes will take place as part of the Traffic Regulation Order making process.

The current number of disabled bays in the car park is 16. This will be increased to 25 as part of the car park improvement works. This will bring the number of disabled bays in line with the recommended provision as set out by Disabled Motoring UK (a campaigning charity for disabled drivers, passengers and blue badge holders who influence change through lobbying)

On-street pay and display charges

On-street charges

The current and proposed on-street charges in Preston and Lancaster are set out in Table 5 with a comparison to the off-street charges.

Table 5 – Summary of existing and proposed on-street parking charges

	Current Lancaster on-street	Lancaster off-street	Proposed Lancaster on-street	Current Preston on-street	LCC proposed off-street	Preston off-street	Proposed Preston on-street
1/2 hour	70p	n/a	80p	70p	n/a	n/a	70p
1 hour	£1.40	£1.30	£1.50	£1.40	n/a	£1.20	£1.40
2 hour	£2.30	£2.40	£2.60	n/a	£1.60	£2.00	n/a

The recommendation is that there is no change to the on-street charges in Preston as there is already a sufficient differential between the on- and off-street charges to meet our traffic management objectives of encouraging vehicles to park in the off-street car park provision rather than parking on-street.

For these traffic management objectives it is proposed to increase the on-street charges in Lancaster given the small differential in the 1 hour charge and that the 2 hour charge is currently less than the off-street charge, and that these charges should be implemented in April 2016.

The proposed on-street charge increase has been discussed with officers at Lancaster City Council who support these changes as they are in line with their initial off-street proposals and maintain the differential in on- and off-street charges.

There is a long standing arrangement with Lancaster City Council that they manage the on-street pay and display machines in Lancaster and also handle all requests for

on-street parking dispensation on behalf of the county council. The net cost of this was £8.7K to the county council last year. The county council's parking services team could accommodate this work within existing resources which would produce a saving of £5k. Therefore it is recommended that the current working arrangement with Lancaster City Council is terminated in April 2016.

Consultations

Both Lancaster City Council and Preston City Council have been consulted on these proposals and they have indicated support for them.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Financial

1. The costs associated with the introduction of a pay by phone option for both on-street parking and the Preston bus station car park are built into the current NSL contract.
2. The recommended changes to the bus station car park permits and permit charges set out in this report would generate a potential additional income of £24K based on current demand levels but no additional income is being accounted for at this time due to the uncertainty around the level of usage.
3. The bus station pay and display charges increases are marginal and would therefore not have a significant impact on the income level currently generated.
4. The proposals for blue badge parking on the bus station would not have a significant impact on the bus station parking income or running costs.
5. The on-street pay and display parking charges increase in Lancaster could generate a potential £18K additional income based on current demand levels.
6. Bringing the management of the on-street pay and display machines in Lancaster back in-house could provide a saving of £5K.

Risk management

An Equality Analysis has been completed in relation to the proposal to introduce charges at the bus station car park for blue badge holders parking for longer than three hours. Further consultation on this matter will be completed as part of the traffic order making process.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
None		

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A