

Review of Parking Charges – Response to Consultation

Consultation has been undertaken on the proposals relating to Parking Charges as discussed at Cabinet in November. A number of stakeholders were contacted and feedback was requested on the proposals, along with advertisements being placed in local press and in all affected car parks.

Consultation closed on 14th December and the results were as follows:

There were five responses to the consultation.

Of the five responses received, one respondent expressed no concerns about the proposals. Of the other four respondents, three expressed concern relating to increasing by the rate of inflation; one stated concern about increases for the city only and felt that the rural areas should have the free period of parking removed; one mentioned specific concerns relating to the evening charges and two raised issues relating to the proposals for the removal of the free Sunday parking in rural areas. Comments received are as detailed below.

Please Note: All comments have not been redacted or amended in any way except to remove personal data.

1. Member of the Public:

I used to regular come into Chichester and park, enjoying at least 2 hours of shopping and having a coffee, also using the bank and post facilities but now with the cost of parking going up I only come into Chichester when I really have too and then only parking for an hour to do all the jobs I need to do and get out again. In fact I use the coffee and food outlets in the Portfield Area as I can park for free and can relax with my shopping, and not watch the clock. I have had several people making comments when I do come into Chichester about the cost of parking , one saying 'I have just bought the Car Park, another lady saying she was disgusted with the cost and only comes in when she has to and again only for an hour. I now find when I come in and park, with the except of the Christmas period, that he Baffins Lane Car Park which used to be full is over half empty at anytime of day. So if the councillor's decide to put up the cost again, you will be kill the centre of Chichester forever.

2. Member of the Public:

I am writing to object to yet another increase in car parking charges in Chichester City. My reasons for objecting are:

Chichester has become a really poor shopping centre, with multiple closed shops, many closed for a long time. The City needs all the help it can get to restore its former vitality and constant increases in parking charges are a real deterrent to this. The proposal to extend charges to the evening will not only adversely impact pubs and restaurants in the City, but also penalise grossly unfairly visitors to residents in the City centre. Why should such visitors have to pay to meet their family and friends in the evening? Midhurst and Petworth continue to enjoy free short-term parking. This was introduced to assist the commercial success of these towns. In fact, it can well be argued that these towns are now thriving to a greater extent than Chichester. If you need to increase revenue, then start to charge in those towns for the first hour. The experience of making higher charges has been shown to be counter-productive. If you look at the car park off East Pallant (behind Barclays Bank), where a minimum charge of £2 for a minimum of an hour was introduced, it is now often virtually empty even at peak times.

3. Sussex Police:

Just to confirm that I have read the attached and there are no objections from a Sussex police perspective.

4. MP for the North of the District:

On behalf of many local residents, I write to raise my concerns over the plans by you and your colleague, Cllr Desai, to increase parking charges in Midhurst and Petworth by almost 10% - double the current rate of inflation – and the first-time imposition of charges for Sunday parking at rural car parks such as Petworth and Midhurst.

Your proposed changes will damage local shops, pubs, cafes and restaurants in Petworth and Midhurst, harming the local economy at a time when traders are just starting to get over the impact of the fire in the Angel Inn in March this year. Visitors to the South Downs on a Sunday who would previously have stopped to browse and buy in our charming high streets may simply drive on through rather than fumble with change or cards at a parking machine.

The changes also amount to a 'tax on prayer'. With fewer Sunday services in village churches these days, many rural dwellers drive into town to attend Christian Sunday services. This means they could face a huge parking fine if they happen to stay longer than 60 minutes.

I am not aware of any impact assessment by CDC having been conducted but if you have, please publish it. If the incremental revenue from your proposals is required to balance the Council's budget, I propose that rather than hike charges on rural motorists who generally have no choice but to use their vehicle, you freeze or cut the allowances for Councillors which for the leading councillor alone now amount to £20,700 a year.

Finally, I would like to note my concerns surrounding the lack of public consultation on these changes, with only the lowest level of publicity to the

consultation being given and no ability (to date) for the public to respond online via the Chichester District Council website.

I conclude by noting just how different in direction your proposals are versus the help provided for our high streets and small businesses in the Government's recent Autumn Statement:

- Freezing the business rates multiplier for small businesses for a fourth consecutive year, saving an average shop £1,650;*
- Extending the Retail, Hospital and Leisure (RHL) relief meaning 230,000 properties will benefit from almost £2.4 billion in support, protecting small businesses in our high streets and town centres;*
- Scrapping Class 2 National Insurance Contributions for the self-employed and cutting the rate of Class 4 contributions from 9% to 8%.*
- Freezing alcohol duty until August 2024, alleviating pressure on the hospitality sector.*

I note the changes are, as of today, proposals. I urge you to listen to my representations and see fit NOT to proceed with these wrong charges at the wrong time.

5. West Sussex County Council:

1. *I do have concerns that the changes will lead to vehicle displacement, particular in unrestricted rural areas, into on-street locations. It is likely that some users will simply not wish to pay and therefore search for free space elsewhere. This looking for space, often at low speed, increases congestion and pollution.*

2. *I am particularly concerned about the potential impact upon enforcement resources of these changes – either more existing CEO resource will need to be put into off-street car parks, particularly rural ones, or additional CEOs will be required, both of which will impact upon WSCC which funds the service. I would ideally like to see a business case from CDC before these changes are approved that sets out the full enforcement implications and how CDC intends to manage this. As WSCC parking manager, I would not support the current on/off-street enforcement split being adversely affected (unless CDC proposed to lessen the cost of the service) or for WSCC to be asked to fund additional CEO resource. I would be interested to hear how CDC intends for this to be cost neutral in terms of enforcement in advance of decisions being made rather than afterwards (where WSCC can effectively not do anything about it).*