

PETITION ON 2017 PARKING CHARGES

Overview & Scrutiny Panel **23 May 2017**

Report Author **Trevor Kennett, Interim Head of Operational Services**

Portfolio Holder **Councillor Brimm, Cabinet Member for Operational Services**

Status **For decision**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Key Decision **No**

Ward: **Thanet Wide**

Executive Summary:

A petition containing 829 valid signatures has been received by the Council.

The Overview & Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider the petition and the officer responses in to the petition detailed in the report including the officer recommendations in the section below.

Recommendation(s):

1. To review and suggest any appropriate options around parking changes, free hours of parking and any other considered measures.
2. Forward a report on the petition to Full Council.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money	If any changes are made to the current parking charges then there will be a reduction in income, also there will be a cost to change the tariff software which is carried out by the machine supplier and our pay by phone provider.
Legal	This matter is dealt with under the Council's scheme for dealing with petitions from the public which is contained within the constitution. If the current charges are changed then the parking orders will need amending.
Corporate	In accordance with the Council's petition scheme if a petition has 650 but not more than 1,000 signatories, it will be referred to the Overview & Scrutiny Panel and thereafter to the next available ordinary Full Council meetings.
Equalities Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty	Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

	Protected characteristics: age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.	
	Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.	
	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,	
	Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it	
	Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.	
There are no specific equity and equalities issues arising from this report.		
However it is important to be aware of the Council's responsibility under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and show evidence that due consideration had been given to the equalities impact that may be brought upon communities by the decisions made by Council.		

CORPORATE PRIORITIES (tick those relevant)✓	
A clean and welcoming Environment	
Promoting inward investment and job creation	
Supporting neighbourhoods	✓

CORPORATE VALUES (tick those relevant)✓	
Delivering value for money	
Supporting the Workforce	
Promoting open communications	✓

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Under the terms of the Council's petitions scheme, petitions with more than 650 but less than 1,000 signatories need to be referred directly to the Overview & Scrutiny Panel for consideration. The petition organiser is permitted, in accordance with the Council's petition scheme to present the petition at an ordinary meeting of the Panel.
- 1.2 A council officer will be in attendance to respond to questions relating to this issue from the petitioner and Members of the Panel. Once a decision has been made a report will be forwarded to the next available ordinary Full Council meeting.

2.0 The Current Situation

- 2.1 A petition organised by Mr Roy Irving has been validly signed by 829 persons. The petition prayer reads:

<p>"We the undersigned petition the council to We want Thanet District Council to reconsider their increase in parking charges for 2017. Especially in relation to the increase in off street car park charges. Thanet relies on tourism and visitors and the excessive price increases will have a detrimental effect on visitor numbers. The increase for the first hour of parking from £1.60 to £4.00 is not justified and as well as deterring visitors it may also stop people shopping locally where the car parks are in town centers. Thanet needs to encourage tourism and these new charges can only have a negative effect."</p>
--

2.2 Mr Irving further provided the following justification for the petition that:

“Thanet depends on tourism and visitors, to increase car parking charges at main car parks throughout Thanet to the level proposed for 2017 will deter visitors and have a bad effect on number of visitors and income for Thanet. Businesses will also suffer from reduced visitor numbers. High St businesses will also lose local trade as people will not pay £4 to park and shop, but drive to Westwood Cross where they can park for free. I see no justification for a first hour parking fee of £4.”

2.3 Of the 829 signatories, 651 signatories provided local resident addresses, 51 had non-resident addresses and 127 did not provide their addresses (and therefore Council could not determine whether they were Thanet residents or non-residents). It should be noted however that the Council e-petition scheme does not require petitioners to provide residential addresses.

2.4 Mr Irving has taken up the opportunity as petition organiser to present the petition to the Panel and will have five minutes to make his presentation.

3.0 Officer Responses

3.1 The council review the parking charges every year. Prior to April 2016 the last significant increase in charges was in 2009, which means that the charges have not been increased although the cost of running the service has been increasing year on year.

3.2 We do benchmark our charges with our neighbouring authorities and with a number of other councils across the country prior to submitting a number of proposals for Cabinet to review before a final decision are made on which to take forward or adjust.

3.3 We have kept the increase in parking charges at a number of car parks across the district as low as possible to enable residents to park while going about their business. Car parks that are seasonal and close to attractions and the beaches across the district have been increased by a higher amount as they mainly affect the visitors to the area but still keeping the daily charge at a reasonable capped price.

3.4 Although the charges have increased there is still one car park in each town that is free to park in all day Saturdays. We have also extended the opening times of Leopold Street and Mill Lane multi-story car parks to 11.30pm throughout the summer.

3.5 The final decision on all the fees and charges (including parking) was made at full council as part of the budget setting meetings on the 1st December 2016.

3.6 If any changes are made to the current parking charges then our income will be affected, there will be a cost to change the tariff software which is carried out by the machine supplier and our pay by phone provider. Our parking order will also need amending.

4.0 Options

4.1 Do nothing and leave the parking charges as they currently stand.

4.2 To review and suggest any appropriate options around parking changes, free hours of parking and any other considered measures.

5.0 Decision Making Process

- 5.1 Once the Overview & Scrutiny Panel has taken a view on the matter, a report is then brought before the next available scheduled Full Council meeting advising Members about the petition and outcome from the Panel meeting.

Contact Officer:	Trevor Kennett, Interim Head of Operational Services, Ext 7015
Reporting to:	Gavin Waite, Director of Operational Services, Ext 7742

Annex List

None	N/A
------	-----

Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access copy
None	N/A

Corporate Consultation

Finance	Matt Sanham, Corporate Finance Manager
Legal	Ciara Feeney, Head of Legal Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer