

**TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER OBJECTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH  
PARKING CHARGES REVIEW – HUNTINGDONSHIRE**

*To:* **Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **23<sup>rd</sup> September 2014**

*From:* **Executive Director: Economy, Transport &  
Environment**

*Electoral  
division(s):* **St Neots, St Ives and Huntingdon**

*Forward Plan ref:* **N/A** *Key decision:* **No**

*Purpose:* **To determine objections received to the Traffic  
Regulation Order (TRO) associated with Parking  
Charges review – Huntingdonshire**

*Recommendation:* **a) Approve and make the Order as advertised  
b) Inform the objectors accordingly**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** It is essential that on-street car parking is used to support the Council's objectives of promoting the local economy and helping to ensure that traffic can keep moving.
- 1.2** Recognising that the current on-street parking charges and usage data had not been reviewed for a number of years, Cabinet agreed at its meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> October 2013 to review current charges, length of stay and operational hours for on-street parking in Huntingdonshire.
- 1.3** Following an extensive informal consultation exercise, Cabinet agreed at its meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014, to proceed to statutory consultation.
- 1.4** The proposals for Huntingdonshire (St Neots, St Ives and Huntingdon) are to:
- increase parking charges from 30p per hour (set in 1998) to 80p per hour.
  - introduce a tariff of 20p per 15 minutes to increase flexibility of duration options.
  - continue with all on-street parking in Huntingdonshire having a maximum stay of 1 hour.
  - keep the current hours of enforcement, Monday to Saturday 8am to 6pm.
- 1.5** The outcome of the statutory consultation was reported to the Highways & Community Infrastructure committee at its meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> July 2014. Following discussion by members it was agreed to;
- “defer the proposals for Huntingdonshire and return to the Committee following further discussions with St Neots Town Council, Huntingdonshire District Councillors and local County Councillors;”*
- 1.6** Subsequent discussions have now taken place with Huntingdonshire District Council and a formal letter has been received outlining their view on the proposals as advertised. (See 3.1)
- 1.7** Local County Council Members for Huntingdonshire were invited to provide further comment regarding the proposals by 22<sup>nd</sup> August.
- 1.8** St Neots Town Council, Huntingdon Town Council and St Ives Town Council were given an opportunity to provide comments by 22<sup>nd</sup> August.

## **2. TRO PROCESS**

- 2.1** The TRO procedure is a statutory consultation process that requires the Highway Authority to advertise, in the local press and on-street, a public notice stating the proposal and the reasons for it. The advert

invites the public to formally support or object to the proposals in writing within a twenty one day notice period.

**2.2** The TRO covering St Neots, St Ives and Huntingdon was advertised in the Huntingdon / St Ives & St Neots News & Crier on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2014. The statutory consultation period ran from 16<sup>th</sup> April – 14<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

**2.3** The statutory consultation resulted in:

- 15 objections to the proposals in St Neots
- 1 objection to the proposals in St Ives
- no objections to the proposals in Huntingdon

**2.4** The responses received and officer comments are detailed in **Appendices 1 and 2**. On the basis of this analysis, it is recommended that the Orders are made to:

- ensure maximum availability of parking spaces through encouraging turnover of spaces for shoppers or visitors to a local area.
- bring charges in line with off-street charges within Huntingdonshire.

### **3. OUTCOME OF FURTHER DISCUSSION**

**3.1** Huntingdonshire District Council have confirmed that this matter has now been fully debated at their Executive Strategy Leaders Group, held on 29 July 2014 and understand that ultimately a final decision rests entirely with Cambridgeshire County Council. In discussing the issues regarding the level of charge proposed, Huntingdonshire also fully understood that the County policy relating to on-street charging is that any levy applied will be the same, or greater, than the off-street rate.

**3.2** St Neots Town Council responded during the statutory consultation period on 8 May 2014, following discussion with their Operations Committee. The Town Council objected to any increase in parking charges. In response to the invitation to make further comment, St Neots Town Council responded on 19 August 2014 reiterating that their original comments, objecting to the increase, still stand.

**3.3** Huntingdon Town Council chose not to make any comment, either during the original statutory consultation stage or the follow up consultation.

**3.4** St Ives Town Council responded during the statutory consultation period and this response is included in **Appendix 2**. A further response was received on 19 August 2014, reiterating their original comments, objecting to the proposals but acknowledging the need for short term parking.

**3.5** Responses have been received from 7 Huntingdonshire Local County Council Members (**Appendix 3**), comprising of 2 in support and 4

objecting. The seventh response states objection to the overall increased charge, but supporting the other three proposals.

#### **4. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

##### **4.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

The effective management of parking improves accessibility to businesses which supports commercial viability. The review is aimed at ensuring the spaces are being used appropriately by a number of visitors using local businesses or community facilities.

##### **4.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

##### **4.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

Blue badge holders are exempt from on-street parking charges and time limits.

#### **5. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

##### **5.1 Resource Implications**

The proposed on-street parking charges are expected to cover the operational cost of the scheme. Any surplus generated is re-invested in environmental, highway and transport improvement projects in accordance with current legislation.

##### **5.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications**

The statutory process for this TRO has been followed. Should the objections not be determined by this Committee, it may be necessary to hold a public inquiry.

##### **5.3 Equality and Diversity Implications**

A Community Impact Assessment has been completed for this proposal and there are no significant implications identified in relation to Equality and Diversity.

##### **5.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications**

The informal consultation process consisted of an extensive engagement exercise. The consultation was circulated to key contacts in each area including the District and City Council, Town Councils and County Councillors. The consultation was promoted on Shape Your Place and the Council's website.

The statutory consultees have been consulted – County Councillors, the Police and the Emergency Services.

Notices were placed in the local press and were also displayed in the roads affected by the TRO. The proposal was also available to view at the District and County Council offices. In addition, notices are also available on the County Council's website.

Following the completion of the statutory consultation period and the recommendation by the Highways & Community Infrastructure committee, further consultation has taken place with Huntingdonshire District Council, St Neots Town Council, Huntingdon Town Council, St Ives Town Council and local County Council Members for Huntingdonshire.

### 5.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

The local members were consulted during the informal and statutory consultations and were included in the discussions following deferral of the original recommendation.

### 5.6 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

Source Documents	Location
Consultation responses Draft Traffic Regulation Order Letters of objection Huntingdonshire District Council Letter – 04/08/14	Room:209 Shire Hall Castle Hill Cambridge CB3 0AP
Cabinet Agendas and Minutes – 29/10/13	<a href="http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CMSWebsite/Apps/Committees/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=765">http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CMSWebsite/Apps/Committees/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=765</a>
Cabinet Agendas and Minutes – 04/03/14	<a href="http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/Committees/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=730">http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/Committees/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=730</a>
Highways & Community Infrastructure Agenda and minutes – 15/07/14	<a href="http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/Committees/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=889">http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/Committees/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=889</a>

## **Appendix 1 - RESPONSES TO ST NEOTS PARKING CHARGES INCREASE**

<b>SUMMARY OF RESPONSES RECEIVED (15 in total)</b>	<b>OFFICER RESPONSE</b>
<p>Objections on the grounds of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- parking should be provided for all purposes;</li> <li>- proposal is just to increase revenue;</li> <li>- no justification for this scheme which is supposed to benefit St Neots.</li> <li>- increase in charges will kill off the town completely.</li> <li>- current charges are suitable for my needs;</li> <li>- increase in charges will not encourage people to come to St Neots;</li> <li>- there are not enough short stay spaces in St Neots.</li> <li>- keep current price.</li> <li>- if necessary increase to 50p.</li> <li>- most people will only need one hour, if they need longer they will use alternative car parks.</li> <li>- Operations Committee of St Neots Town Council felt that the increase in parking charges is not justified;</li> <li>- evidence and analysis of the proposed rise must be carried out to show that there will be no negative effects to the town or the local economy.</li> <li>- all the free parking has disappeared,</li> <li>- charges only ever seem to increase;</li> <li>- people will not visit the town centre should the price increase.</li> <li>- should be lowering prices to encourage footfall.</li> <li>- public transport here is weak, we need to support local business and drive footfall in the town;</li> <li>- need to publish a full report on the benefits of increasing the car parking charges for St Neots.</li> <li>- is a 266% increase in price.</li> <li>- there has been no consultation</li> </ul>	<p>An informal consultation was undertaken in Huntingdonshire to gather views about on-street parking needs. From the consultation 65% of respondents were supportive of an on-street charge that was equal to or higher than off street parking charges. This is currently 80p for the first hour in all inner and mid-term off-street car parks in Huntingdonshire. As the main aim of the on-street parking area in St Neots is to allow short duration stays, it is proposed that a tariff of 20p per 15 minutes is introduced to increase flexibility of duration options.</p> <p>The issues that impact on the health of a town centre are various, multi-faceted, overlapping and ultimately complex. The size of the centre, the public transport alternatives, consumer demographics, the composition and quality of the leisure offer, the proximity of competing destinations and many more issues, all play their part in the decision-making process for the consumer.</p>

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<b>SUMMARY OF RESPONSES RECEIVED (15 in total)</b>	<b>OFFICER RESPONSE</b>
<p>with the local community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- purpose of the market square charges is to provide a minimum charge to enable a short-stay car park operation;</li><li>- St Neots Market Square is understood to be owned by St Neots Town Council who have not agreed to proposed increase in charges;</li><li>- increase in charge is contrary to the strategy contained in St Neots Neighbourhood Plan;</li><li>- other market towns in the County have free parking and these should be charged first if the County wish to cover the costs of providing car parking;</li><li>- Market Square should not be regarded as on-street parking – previous court challenges under similar circumstances have shown this not to be the case;</li><li>- the Charter Rights to the Market Square are owned by the Rowley family.</li><li>- A High Court ruling was made in 2013 (in Berkshire) preventing on-street parking charges being used to raise revenue for use other than to maintain the car park;</li><li>- on-line consultation is not available to complete and therefore the consultation process is flawed.</li><li>- increases are totally unjustifiable.</li><li>- machines will not give change.</li><li>- increase on car parking charges would have detrimental effect on pensioners who visit the Market Square.</li><li>- free parking should be introduced similar to East Northants District Council.</li><li>- an increase in price to 80p is unacceptable and will deter me</li></ul>	<p>The issue of ownership of the Market Square and The Charter Rights are being dealt with as a separate issue not related to the increase in charges.</p>

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<b>SUMMARY OF RESPONSES RECEIVED (15 in total)</b>	<b>OFFICER RESPONSE</b>
<p>from visiting the town centre;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- council tax payers should get free passes to use St Neots car parks;</li><li>- the notice was unclear;</li><li>- objects to any increase in parking charges.</li></ul>	



**Appendix 2 - RESPONSES TO ST IVES PARKING CHARGES INCREASE**

<b>No.</b>	<b>RESPONSE RECEIVED</b>	<b>OFFICER RESPONSE</b>
1	St Ives Town Council Members considered that the proposal was not a suitable solution. The Town Council asks that the parking spaces on Market Hill should be for no more than half an hour, at an appropriate rate.	<p>An informal consultation was undertaken in Huntingdonshire to gather views about on-street parking needs. The majority of comments for St Ives favoured the hour limitation whereas in St Neots and Huntingdon, some respondents suggested extending the length of stay up to 3 hours. As visitors to all these areas have access to longer term off-street parking facilities, it is recommended that all on-street parking in Huntingdonshire continue to have a maximum stay of 1 hour. This would continue to enable visitors a suitable option for short visits to the town centres.</p> <p>As the main aim of the on-street parking area in St Ives has been to allow short duration stays in the key central area, it is proposed that a tariff of 20p per 15 minutes be introduced to increase flexibility of duration options.</p>

### **Appendix 3 - HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS**

	Support / Object	Comments
1	Support	It is clear that we should introduce these charges asap as I see no reason for a delay.
2	Support	Charges are to be applied consistently and fairly across the county, i.e. not one town paying more than another.
3	Object	Objects to any increase in Parking Charges.
4	Object	Objects strongly.
5	Object	Objects to any increases in parking charges.
6	Object	Strongly objects to increasing parking charges from 30p an hour to 80p as this will discourage people from using our wonderful market towns and push them to use free parking at out of town shopping facilities.
7	Objects to proposal 1  Supports proposals 2-4	Does not think putting up car parking charges by over 100% is a way to encourage people to shop and support local business in our towns. Yes we could argue it hasn't gone up since 1998 but to ask people to stump up over 100% is a bit much for those who are struggling financially. Thus I would be against this idea.  In relation to the remaining bullet points I agree in principle. A short Tariff will help people who just want to nip into town and I see no reason why we cannot continue the current on street parking and same restriction times.