



Cabinet
15 December 2014

**Report from the Strategic Director,
Environment and Neighbourhoods**

For Action

Wards Affected:
Barnhill; Dudden Hill; Northwick Park; Preston;
Stonebridge; Wembley Central

Changes to Council-Owned Car Parks

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report proposes changes to several of the Council's car parks. The report recommends:
- Changing the operational use of some car parks, including their charge tariffs
 - Introducing charges and operational controls to Northwick Park Car Park and Disraeli Road Car Park
 - Formalising changes which have already occurred, such as the closure of the Town Hall Car Park
- 1.2. This report is intended to address pressing issues affecting some specific car parks. Officers will review the impact of implemented proposals, and a further report will be brought to Members in 2015 which will include a strategic pricing review of all Council-owned car parks, linked to the Council's Transport Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Cabinet agrees to the removal of the Town Hall, Church End Road, and Cecil Road Car Parks from Schedule 1 and 2 of the Council's Off-Street Traffic Order, as detailed in paragraph 3.1.
- 2.2. That Cabinet agrees to include Disraeli Road and Northwick Park Car Parks in the Schedules to the Council's Off-Street Traffic Order, including the proposed operational hours and parking tariffs set out in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.8; subject to any amendments arising following statutory consultation.

- 2.3. That Cabinet agrees to revise the cost of season ticket parking for Preston Road Car Park (Preston) to the prices set out in paragraph 3.9 to 3.18; subject to amendments arising following statutory consultation.
- 2.4. That Cabinet agrees to introduce season ticket parking for Elm Road Car Park (Wembley Central), to the proposed prices as set out in paragraphs 3.19 to 3.25.
- 2.5. That Cabinet considers whether to amend the Car Park tariffs in the Wembley Event zone; extend parking controls; and permit long stay parking at market rates (details in paragraphs 3.26 to 3.30).
- 2.6. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Operational Director (Environment & Protection) to implement any minor alterations following statutory consultation, in consultation with the Cabinet Member (Environment).

3. PROPOSALS

Removing Car Parks from the Off-Street Traffic Order

- 3.1. There is a need to formally remove several car parks from the off-street traffic order following charges which have been agreed over the past two years.
 - Town Hall Car Park (Barnhill). The Council is no longer the operator of the Town Hall Car Park, following the sale of the building. This car park needs to be removed from the schedules of the off-street traffic order.
 - Church End Car Park (Dudden Hill). This car park is to be closed in order to facilitate development on the land (planning application 13/1098).
 - Cecil Road Car Park (Wembley Central) was leased to the Council. In 2013, the freeholder of the land decided to break from the lease agreement. The Council are therefore no longer operating this car park.
- 3.2. These car parks now need to be removed from the schedules of the off-street traffic orders.

Disraeli Road Car Park (Park Royal)

3.3. Background.

3.3.1. Disraeli Road Car Park, NW10, is a small car park in Stonebridge Ward, with capacity for 74 vehicles. The car park is surrounded by several industrial units and the Grand Union Canal is to its north. Harlesden Station is approximately 10 minutes walk, to the north of the car park.

3.3.2. The car park is not currently contained within the Council's Traffic Order, and is therefore not regulated in any way. This has created some problems for the Council, with demand for parking at the facility outstripping capacity.

3.3.3. In 2013, the condition of Disraeli Road car park attracted a number of complaints from local businesses regarding fly tipping on the site, and unlicensed vehicles left parked. In response the car park was cleaned and new height barriers installed to prevent large vehicles (capable of large scale fly tipping) from accessing the site. There are several factors which may have contributed to the fly tipping issues at the site: the lighting is poor; the trees are overgrown and hide the car park from the public highway; and local footfall is low in the evenings as the site is within an industrial area. Officers are addressing issues with tree foliage and lighting levels; however, bringing the car park into the off-street traffic order will mean that the site will also have regular patrols, thereby limiting opportunist crime.

3.3.4. Repairs are being made to the trees on the site which had become overgrown and unsafe, and made several parts of the car park inaccessible. Maintenance is also being carried out on the four lighting columns which have fallen into a state of disrepair.

3.3.5. The site currently does not provide any income for the Council, although the Council spends £8,700 p.a. on business rates for the land. In effect, the users of the car park are being subsidised from the Council's general revenue income

3.4. Survey and findings

3.4.1. In October 2014 a survey of the car park was undertaken to establish occupancy levels and determine who the core users of the site are. Details of this survey can be found in Appendix B.

3.4.2. The site is mainly used by businesses operating in the local area. The car park is fully occupied at the start of the working day, and remains so until business hours close.

3.4.3. On normal midweek days, the parking bays were on average 85% occupied. However, for some parts of the day bays were 97% occupied, and the car park would have reached saturation had all bays been accessible. Including vehicles parked outside of marked bays, the car park exceeded its safe capacity reaching 108% at its peak. Many of the vehicles in the car park are parked before 10am and remain there until at least 5pm.

3.4.4. Demand for the car park eases at the weekend, with occupancy reducing to 53% of its capacity on Saturdays and 43% on Sundays.

3.5. Proposals

3.5.1. Officers recommend that the car park be added to the Council's off-street traffic order. This will enable the Council to regulate the car park using standard terms and conditions to prevent the facility from being misused. Officers propose that parking controls are in place between the hours of 8am and 8pm from Monday to Sunday; during these hours the car park will be subject to parking enforcement.

3.5.2. Officers also propose that users of the car park should be charged a market rate for its use. This would cover the cost of providing the facility and its enforcement, but without preventing legitimate users from continuing to have access. On this basis, it is proposed to introduce a low-cost all-day tariff of £3 per day Monday to Friday. Officers

propose that payment would only be permitted by cashless means (via mobile telephone) thereby minimising the operating costs of the car park and the risk of cash theft. The London Borough of Ealing operates a similar all-day tariff for cashless car park users.

3.5.3. Statutory consultation would be required. The Strategic Director (Environment and Neighbourhoods) will consider any objections, in consultation with the Cabinet Member (Environment), before making the formal Traffic Order.

3.5.4. Officers will monitor uptake of the parking tariff over the course of the 2015/2016 fiscal year, and will recommend further changes to Cabinet should there be an operational requirement.

Northwick Park Car Park

3.6. Background

3.6.1. Northwick Park car park (Northwick Park) is a small car park within the boundary of Northwick Park, with vehicle access from The Fairway. The car park has capacity for 96 vehicles, including three parking bays set aside for disabled users.

3.6.2. Neighbours of the park include Northwick Park Hospital, the University of Westminster, and Northwick Park London Underground station.

3.6.3. The car park, adjacent to the park's pavilion, is primarily intended to facilitate parking for those using the Council's sports fields. However users have reported that they are often unable to find available parking, prompting further investigation.

3.7. Survey and findings

3.7.1. The car park was surveyed over a week in October 2014. The number of vehicles was counted, and the vehicle registration marks recorded on each visit.

3.7.2. The car park is heavily used on weekdays, reaching 95% of its capacity between the hours of 9am and 4pm, with very little vehicular turnover. At times occupancy rises to 97% of the car park's capacity, with additional vehicles parked outside of bay markings.

3.7.3. Occupancy recorded over the weekend was much lower, reaching 43% of the car park's capacity on Saturday, and 34% on Sunday.

3.7.4. A number of regular users are staff working in Northwick Park Hospital. The hospital's own staff car park is at full capacity on most weekdays; a monthly charge is made for staff parking permits.

3.8. Proposals

3.8.1. It is recommended that the car park is added to the Council's off-street traffic order. This will enable the Council to regulate the car park using standard terms and conditions to prevent the facility from being misused. Officers propose that parking

controls are in place between the hours of 8am and 6pm from Monday to Friday; during these hours the car park will be subject to parking enforcement.

- 3.8.2. In order to control demand, officers are proposing to implement a parking tariff designed to deter commuters from using the car park for a full day, without discouraging those wishing to make use of the Council's sporting facilities.
- 3.8.3. To permit enforcement it is proposed to implement a cashless parking tariff for this facility. In order to avoid disadvantaging park visitors, this would be free for the first three hours of parking provided that users register their vehicle and time of arrival at the car park. Three hours is sufficient time for genuine users of the sports facilities to complete their activities. Those wishing to park beyond three hours – principally commuters - would be charged a flat fee of £7.50 (Monday to Friday). Note that £7.50 is the cost of all-day cashless parking charges levied at the Council's other public car parks; in this case, the charge would cover the cost of processing free tariff transactions for all users of the car park, including those parking during the initial free period. The lower levels of occupancy at weekends suggest that operational controls would be unnecessary on weekends. This will be kept under review.
- 3.8.4. The car park is currently closed at dusk in line with the opening hours of the park. The hours of car park operation are therefore currently limited by the hours of daylight. In the winter the car park may close as early as 4pm. The car park gates are closed at dusk by Veolia staff acting for Sports and Parks. It is proposed that opening and closing responsibilities for this car park are transferred to the Parking and Lighting Service, which has staff from its operational contractor available later in the evening; this will facilitate a fixed closure time of 6 pm (Mon-Fri) for the car park throughout the year.
- 3.8.5. Statutory consultation would be required. The Strategic Director (Environment and Neighbourhoods) will consider any objections, in consultation with the Cabinet Member (Environment), before making the formal Traffic Order.
- 3.8.6. Officers will monitor uptake of the parking tariff over the course of the 2015/2016 fiscal year (including the ratio between paying customers and those using the free tariff), and will recommend further changes to Cabinet should there be an operational requirement. The Council will also monitor the effects of displaced parking on local on-street free parking. On-street parking levels are generally high in the local area during the hospital's main hours of operation. Other car parks in the local area, owned by the hospital, charge a fee for use.

Season Ticket Parking

3.9. Background

3.10. The off-street traffic order currently makes provision for customers to buy season tickets at Preston Road Car Park; however, to date there has been no interest from members of the public.

3.11. Officers believe that the main cause of this is cost, with season ticket prices set too high to attract interest. Current season ticket costs are:

- £806 for a half day season ticket for six months
- £1,000 for a full day season ticket for six months
- £1,606 for a half day season ticket for twelve months
- £2,000 for a full day season ticket for twelve months

3.12. Some car parks are significantly underused as short-stay pay and display facilities; in fact some car parks operate at a loss, requiring subsidy from the Council's general revenue funding and making it difficult to justify the offer of these facilities to residents and businesses.

3.13. In order to improve levels of car park use at some of the least used sites, officers are now proposing the changes set out below.

Preston Road Car Park

3.14. Preston Road car park (Preston) is one of the Council's larger car parks, with capacity for 164 vehicles.

3.15. Pay and display charges apply between 8am and 6.30pm, and the car park is open from 7am to 8pm. Part of the car park, the top level, is open 24 hours a day. The charges applied at Preston Road car park vary from other car parks; parking is free for the first hour of parking in order to encourage use of this facility instead of on-street parking.

3.16. Outside of the free parking period, there is little use of the car park. From April 2014 to September 2014, Preston Road car park accounted for 31% of the Council's off-street parking capacity, but only 3% of revenue. This suggests that there is ample spare capacity to encourage season ticket parking at this facility without impacting on short-stay users.

3.17. Over a full year it is estimated that Preston Road car park will provide the Council with an income of just over £13k. The car park's business rates for 2014/2015 are £11.5k. Taking account of maintenance and enforcement costs, this indicates that Preston Road car park is currently operating at a significant loss.

3.18. In order to safeguard the future of the car park, and optimise its use, officers propose to significantly reduce the price of season tickets dedicated to this car park. It is proposed that annual season tickets are offered at a much reduced price of £400 per annum, and that season tickets be made available to Council staff on a salary surrender basis.

3.19. Occupancy surveys will be carried out over the course of the year to monitor the effect of these proposals on parking capacity.

Elm Road Car Park

- 3.20. Elm Road car park (Wembley Central) is located north of High Road, Wembley. The car park is operated by the Council on a lease from Octavia Housing and Care until 31st December 2017. It is subject to a car park management plan limiting how the car park may be used. It has a capacity of 100 vehicles.
- 3.21. The car park management plan, linked to the terms of the lease, stipulates that the car park must be closed overnight, and there is a requirement for the car park to be staffed.
- 3.22. The constraints of the lease add significant costs to the Council, with staffing alone costing £48k p.a. The car park is underground, and therefore requires a significant budget for artificial lighting. Business rates for the car park (2014/2015) are more than £14k p.a.
- 3.23. The car park under-performs financially. About £60k of income is projected for 2014/2015, based on extrapolated receipts for the period April-September 2014. Customer demand for short-stay pay and display parking is weak, and does not cover the cost of running the facility. The car park accounts for 19% of the Council's off-street parking stock but only 12% of income generated from car parks.
- 3.24. Action is therefore required in order to address these failings, and ensure that the site at least covers its costs to prevent closure being considered.
- 3.25. The effect on parking demand of the move to the new Civic Centre site has not yet been fully realised. Whilst LB Brent staff no longer work in Brent House, many of those who commute to work by car continue to use the Brent House car park. Once this site has fully closed, additional pressures will be placed on free parking sites in the roads surrounding the Civic Centre.
- 3.26. It is therefore recommended that season tickets are made available to the public for Elm Road, and that a Council staff parking season permit is offered through a salary surrender scheme. In the first year of operation, it is recommended that the issue of season tickets is capped at 75% of the total parking capacity of the site, and sold on a first come first served basis. The proposed annual charge for season tickets in the first year of operation is £400.

Event Day Tariffs

- 3.27. The Council has a long-standing arrangement to limit off-street parking to a maximum of two hours on Wembley Event days; this is to discourage visitors from driving to visit the Stadium on event days, and encourage instead the use of more sustainable modes of transport to reach the venue.
- 3.28. However, private parking operators in the vicinity of the stadium have taken a different approach. Visitors to the stadium are encouraged to park close to the venue. Private operators raise their tariffs in order to manage demand; tariffs range from £25 to £30 per vehicle on event days. The Council is therefore missing the opportunity to generate an income stream by providing secure and convenient parking to motorists who would in any case drive to the venue.
- 3.29. It is therefore recommended that the Council offers parking spaces to event day visitors at the market rate. In order to dissuade opportunist parking which may create unnecessary traffic, and manage demand, officers propose to offer parking on a pre-booked basis only via cashless parking.

- 3.30. It is recommended that an Event Day cashless tariff of £20 per vehicle is introduced. This would be monitored for uptake and impact over the 2015/2016 financial year.
- 3.31. It is recommended that the off-street traffic order is amended in order to include this provision at the following car parks: Elm Road Car Park; Lonsdale Avenue Car Park; and Preston Road Car Park. In light of the popularity of St Johns Road Car Park with shoppers, the proposal for this facility is to restrict event day parking just to evening events at the stadium; i.e. it will only be available to customers who arrive after 6pm. Limiting Event Day parking by releasing it as a pre-booked service will also mean that the Council will be able to restrict the number of spaces sold.

Statutory Consultation

- 3.32. Should Cabinet approve the above recommendations, officers will follow a standard process to implement the necessary changes to the off-street traffic order. The process will take a maximum of 15 weeks to complete.
- 3.33. Part of the process will include a statutory consultation (6-10 weeks), inviting comments on the proposals and an opportunity to raise objections.
- 3.34. It is proposed that these objections are considered by the Strategic Director for Environment and Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, and that delegated authority is granted for making minor amendments to the proposed order in response to consultation feedback.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. There are no adverse financial implications contained within this report.
- 4.2. Budgeted income from the Council's car parks (excluding the Civic Centre Car Park) for the 2014/2015 financial year is £480k. Recent forecasts suggest that the Council will generate an actual income of £495k for the full year.
- 4.3. It is anticipated that, by implementing new tariffs and services where capacity allows, additional income would be achieved. Estimates, from 2015/1016, are set out in the tables below.
- 4.4. Implementing tariffs at Disraeli Road and Northwick Park Car Parks would generate significant income. The below table sets out income expectations based on a 50% uptake:

	Capacity	Tariff A (£)	Tariff B (£)	Occupancy	Weekly Revenue (£)
Northwick Park Car Park	93	0	7.5	50%	1,744
Disraeli Road Car Park	74	3	0	50%	555
Total	167				2,299
Annual Revenue					119,535

4.5. The implementation of season tickets is anticipated to generate additional income as set out in the table below:

Car park	Vehicle Capacity	Season Ticket Price (£)	Season Ticket Cap	Assumed Uptake	Gross annual Revenue (£)
Elm Road (Wembley)	100	400	75	70%	21,000
Preston Road (Preston)	164	400	120	60%	28,800
Annual Revenue					49,800

4.6. Should the Cabinet approve the recommendation to implement an event day tariff in Wembley car parks, the Council could anticipate additional income, as set out below.

Car park	Bays in total	Event Day Tariff (£)	Occupancy	Gross Revenue per event (£)
Elm Road (Wembley)	100	20	60%	1,200
Lonsdale Avenue (Wembley)	33	20	60%	396
Preston Road (Preston)	164	20	40%	1,312
St Johns Road (Wembley)	78	20	60%	936

Revenue per Event	£ 3,844.00
Per annum (Gross)	£ 76,880.00

4.7. It should be noted that the above estimates are based upon projected customer demand. It is anticipated that additional income of approximately £250k could be achieved from these car park proposals from the 2015/2016 year onwards, and this has been incorporated into the proposed savings proposals that are currently being developed.

4.8. Additional expenditure will be incurred in implementing these proposals. Costs are generally limited to the costs of advertising and consulting on the order, erecting new signage, and configuring relevant databases. The full cost of implementation will be under £10k, and can be absorbed within the operational running costs of the Parking and Lighting service.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Traffic Orders are made under the provisions of Schedule 9 to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984(a) as amended. The proposed amendments shall be made to the Brent (Off-Street Parking Places) (No.1) Order 2013 (attached as Appendix A).

5.2. Regulation (enforcement) of the order is carried out under the provisions of the Traffic Management Act 2004.

6. DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Implementing controls at Northwick Park car park and Disraeli Road car park may improve access to these areas for disabled members of the community. The dedicated three disabled bays at Northwick Park car park will be enforced, ensuring that they are made available exclusively for holders of Blue Badges. Blue Badge holders are also permitted to park free of charge and without time constraint in pay and display bays in any of the Council's car parks. It is recognised, however, that a person may be considered 'disabled' for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, whilst still being ineligible for a Blue Badge.

6.2. Officers have also had due regard to the fact that a number of the current Northwick Park car park users are likely to be patients of the nearby hospital. A significant portion of those patients are likely to possess the protected characteristic of 'disability' or 'pregnancy and maternity' under the Equality Act 2010. Whilst such individuals may have to pay to use the Northwick Park car park (and thus be potentially disadvantaged by these proposals), the countervailing factor is that the car park is intended for users of the sports fields, not the hospital. In particular, parking for disabled people wishing to use the sports facility would be protected. The Council would want to encourage the use of the sports facilities for policy reasons. Furthermore, the hospital does have its own car park intended for hospital users.

7. STAFFING / ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS

7.1. None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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List of Appendices

- A. The current off-street traffic order and schedules
- B. Survey Results