

Executive 11 March 2013

Report from the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services

Wards Affected: ALL

On Street Parking Charges

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report proposes the reduction of on-street parking charges across Brent through the adoption of a new tariff priced at a constant rate of £2.00 per hour.
- 1.2 It also proposes the introduction of a flat rate, low cost charge of 20p for a stay not exceeding 15 minutes to support the turnover of parking place occupation and facilitate short shopping visits.

2 Recommendations

That the Executive agree:

- 2.1 that on-street parking charges be reduced through the adoption of a linear charging tariff set at £2.00 per hour as described in paragraph 3.6.3 and 3.6.4.
- 2.2 that for stays of up to 15 minutes the linear charging tariff should not apply and that a fixed charge of 20p should instead be made as described in paragraph 3.6.9
- 2.3 that the 20p charge for a stay of no more than 15 minutes should not be subject to the 50p supplement for cash payments already agreed.
- 2.4 that the impact of these reductions should be monitored and that a report on the impact should be brought to the Executive within a year of implementation.
- 2.5 to delegate authority to the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services to undertake appropriate consultation and advertising of Traffic Orders associated with these proposals
- 2.6 to delegate authority to the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services after having considered all representations received and making any appropriate modifications, to make the proposed Traffic Orders to introduce the proposed regime and charges

2.7 to fund these changes as described in paragraph 4.8-4.12.

3 Detail

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 At the Council meeting on 25 February 2013 the Administration signalled its intention to bring about significant changes to the present on-street parking tariffs in Brent with a view to:
 - bringing about significant reductions in the level of on-street parking charges to assist residents and traders in the present period of economic difficulty
 - modernising the existing tariffs in line with the other widespread changes which are taking place in the borough's parking regime through the One Council Parking project
- 3.1.2 This report sets out the present position in relation to on-street parking charges and presents proposals for achieving these objectives.

3.2 Present parking charges

- 3.2.1 The present tariff of on-street parking charges was set in March 2011 when on-street charges were subject to a 50% increase following a wide ranging review of fees and charges by external consultants. More recently, the September 2012 Executive agreed to a range of changes to support a move to cashless parking. This includes a 50p per transaction supplement for coin payments. The impact of this is shown as 'forthcoming' in the tariff table below. Formal consultation on the Traffic Management Orders (TMOs) needed to implement this change is planned to begin shortly following the rationalisation and modularisation of existing TMOs.
- 3.2.2 The present and forthcoming charges for on street parking before the further changes proposed in this report are agreed would be as follows:

CURRENT		FORTHCOMING	
Stay time(h:mm)	Charge	Cashless charge	Coin charge
0:20	£0.60	£0.60	£1.10
0:40	£1.50	£1.50	£2.00
1.00	£2.40	£2.40	£2.90
2.00	£6.00	£6.00	£6.50
4.00	£9.00	£9.00	£9.50

- 3.2.3 Generally motorists are charged for short stay street parking Monday to Saturday from 8.30am until 6.30pm. No charge is made for Sundays. In parts of Brent short stay street parking charges apply on Bank Holidays
- 3.2.4 The policy principles and framework within which parking tariffs and charges are set is described in Appendix 1.

3.2.5 The existing tariffs have no clear rationale. This can be illustrated by converting each tariff into a '20 minute rate':

Tariff	Cost per min	Cost per 20 mins
20 minutes	3.00p	60p
40 minutes	3.75p	75p
1 hour	4.00p	80p
2 hours	5.00p	100p
4 hours	3.75p	75p

- 3.2.6 It can be seen that the cost per minute increases progressively for stays of up to two hours. This encourages shorter stays and discourages longer stays which is consistent with policy, to encourage turnover of parking bays and ensure availability of bays for shoppers and other short stays. However, the principle is then reversed for the following two hours, with the second two hour period costing half the cost of the first two hour period. This is inconsistent with the policy principles intended to drive parking charges.
- 3.2.7 The existing tariff also imposes large additional costs for stays slightly over the preceding tariff. For example a stay of 61 minutes costs £6, whereas a stay of 59 minutes is £2.40. There is no clear policy basis for this step.

3.3 Cashless parking

- 3.3.1 The Executive decided in September 2012 to adopt the principle that we should seek to move towards higher levels of cashless parking, and to that end adopted the additional 50p transaction supplement discussed in paragraph 3.2.1 to encourage take up of cashless payments. This decision reflected the very substantial additional costs incurred by the Council in collecting and handling cash, and the increased security risks presented by cash both in terms of losses and the risks to staff collecting cash.
- 3.3.2 The transition to cashless parking is not well served by the non-linear tariffs discussed above. When customers are able to extend parking sessions or initiate fresh parking sessions whilst away from their vehicles, the ability to avoid those parts of the tariff where the pence per minute rate is higher becomes much more practicable. To avoid perverse incentives of this sort, a move to a linear tariff, where the same pence per minute rate applies across the range of potential stays is desirable. Where councils adopt cashless parking, many move towards linear tariffs as part of that transition where they are not already in place.

3.4 Charges in neighbouring boroughs

3.4.1 Appendix 2 provides an illustration of neighbouring boroughs' charges. It can be seen that Brent's tariffs are more in line with neighbouring Inner London boroughs than with neighbouring Outer London boroughs. For stays of just over one hour, Brent's charges are just below £3.00 for 30 minutes because of the step involved in the non linear tariff and the requirement to purchase a further full hour at a time.

3.5 Existing patterns of revenue

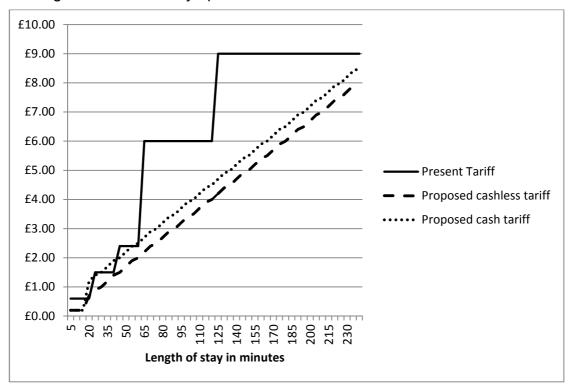
- 3.5.1 Appendix 3 summarises data about our existing patterns of revenue. In 2011/12 on-street parking revenues totalled £3.56 million. Revenues for 2012/13 compared with the same period last year are broadly similar.
- 3.5.2 Limited data which is available from our networked pay and display machines shows that 75% of on street parking income comes from stays less than one hour, and 50 % from stays of less than 40 minutes.
- 3.5.3 The best evidence we have as to how demand for on street parking changes with price comes from the period after March 2011 when all charges were subject to a 50% increase following a wide ranging review of fees and charges by external consultants. Prior to the increases total on-street parking income was £3.1 million. Had demand been insensitive to price, income could have been expected to rise to £4.7 million.
- 3.5.4 In the event income in 2011-12, the first full year, rose by only £430k, half what had been budgeted and around a quarter of what would have been expected if demand were not sensitive to price so parking demand is clearly sensitive to price change. A 50% price increase in charges led to only a 14% increase in income. This implies a 24% drop in volume overall.
- 3.5.5 If external factors had not changed in a way which alters the price sensitivity of demand for on-street parking in Brent, a reduction back to the charges before the 50% increase should only lead to a reduction back to the 2009-10 and 2010-11 levels. This would imply a loss of income of £434k. A reduction to a price point somewhere between the original level and the present level ought, on that basis, to lead to a loss of between £0 and £434k.
- 3.5.6 It is of course recognised that external factors have changed. The economy is in sustained recession. New shopping facilities have opened. Other parking charges may have been changed in ways that make our charges more or less attractive. People may have developed different patterns of working, shopping or leisure which have reduced their need to park on-street or off street in Brent. But what evidence we have shows a single, immediate and sustained drop in the level of demand and hence income.

3.6 Proposals for change

- 3.6.1 A number of factors are relevant to the Administration's declared intention to reduce on-street parking tariffs and charges:
 - The 2010 Labour Manifesto included a commitment to consider a first hour free parking in Council car parks to support local traders
 - Some traders have expressed concern about the impact of parking charges on levels of trade in Brent's town centres
 - There is evidence that the 2011 increase of 50% in on-street parking charges has left Brent out of line with neighbouring boroughs
- 3.6.2 This report identifies two proposals for reducing parking charges which can be considered independently of each other or together. These are

- A proposal for reducing tariffs overall whilst introducing a constant price per minute or per hour across the range of permitted stays ("linear charging"). This would make tariffs more readily understandable, with significant reductions at the most problematic price points, and would support the recently adopted policy goal of moving to cashless parking.
- The introduction of a low cost period of parking for very short stays. This would echo the manifesto commitment but, applied to on-street parking would benefit a much wider range of customers than if it were introduced for car parks.
- 3.6.3 A 'linear charging' tariff is proposed by which we mean a tariff that has the same charge per minute, regardless of the length of stay. The advent of cashless parking is resulting in most boroughs moving to a linear approach to tariff pricing and to removing the prohibition on extending stays (meter feeding). Linear charges can avoid the issue of big jumps in parking fees if customers stay slightly longer than the lower tariff and better fit the model of cashless parking, in which customers can flexibly and remotely extend their parking session, rather than trying to determine the length of their stay at the outset.
- 3.6.4 The tariff proposed is £2.00 per hour (equivalent to 3.333p per minute). This compares with the present tariff which charges £2.40 for a one hour stay and therefore offers a 20% reduction at this point. For a two hour stay the comparison is £4.00 compared to £6.00, a 33% reduction which reduces this price point to where it was before the 50% increase in 2011. Because customers will be able to pay in 20p increments for additional time, between one and two hours the percentage reductions are larger still. The graph in paragraph 3.6.11 shows the scale of the reduction for different stays.
- 3.6.5 As a proportion of payment will continue to be by coin for some time, time blocks need to reflect the lowest denomination coin universally accepted by our machines. Currently this is 20p. The £2.00 per hour rate is easy to communicate to drivers as it allows 6 minutes of parking for 20p, or 12 minutes for 40p and 15 minutes for 50p etc.
- 3.6.6 The on-going cost of introducing this change is estimated at £330k for a full year. This estimate cannot be certain because of the uncertainties around customers' response to price reductions discussed earlier. The estimate is discussed in more detail in Section 4, Financial Implications.
- 3.6.7 In 2010 the Labour manifesto made reference to the reduction of car parking charges and gave a commitment to "introduce free parking for the first hour in council car parks to encourage use of local shopping facilities". After the election the administration prioritised the implementation of other transport related commitments (chiefly the introduction of emission based resident parking permits).

- 3.6.8 The introduction of lower parking charges has not progressed aside from a pilot "first hour free" scheme in the Preston Road car park in January 2012. Although no formal appraisal of the pilot has been undertaken, the response has been very poor and the car park remains seriously under used despite being a short walk from the Preston Road shops.
- 3.6.9 In parallel with the change to a linear tariff it is proposed to implement a reduced charge of 20p for a stay not exceeding 15 minutes. It is not the intention that the first 15 minutes of any stay will be charged at 20p. Stays of 16 minutes and upwards will be charged at the linear tariff rate for the whole stay. The reduced charge is only available for those who wish to park for a period of up to 15 minutes and then move on. It is not proposed that the 20p charge would be subject to the 50p supplement for payment with cash already agreed. The cost of this change is estimated at £418k for a full year. Details are set out in the Financial Implications later in this report.
- 3.6.10 Officers recommend that this short stay period should be low cost rather than free for practical and enforcement reasons which are also discussed in Appendix 3.
- 3.6.11 The chart below graphically compares the new proposed cash and cashless tariffs (incorporating the agreed 50p supplementary charge for cash) with the existing tariff for each stay up to the maximum allowed four hours.



3.7 Implementation

- 3.7.1 Implementing these changes will require:
 - ◆ Traffic Order or Traffic Notice amendments; and
 - Street & machine signage changes.

- 3.7.2 The timescales for the above processes dictate the minimum implementation timescales. The minimum period for consultation over and implementation of TMOs is around 16 weeks. If the response to the consultation is complex or large in volume this timescale may need to be extended.
- 3.7.3 Reprogramming of Pay and Display machines and changes to signage will require a period of around eight weeks. Taking these two elements together, a minimum period of five to six months will be needed for implementation. If the changes proposed in this report are agreed the earliest they could be implemented will be in September 2013. If the changes are agreed, officers would include the present changes and the 50p premium for cash payments in the same TMOs to minimise consultation and implementation costs.
- 3.7.3 The overall costs of implementing traffic orders and reconfiguring machines are estimated at £200k.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 A health warning is needed here. The uncertainties around the sensitivity of demand for parking to the price charged, the limitations of the data, and the complexities of the range of different price changes and consequent behaviours mean that forecasts of what will happen to income under different scenarios cannot be made with great confidence. The estimates which follow are the best we have been able to make, and are generally prudent. So we are more likely to have overestimated loss of income from price reductions than to have underestimated it. But either outcome remains possible.
- 4.2 The likely loss of income from adopting a linear tariff of £2.00 per hour has first been calculated on the basis that there is no recovery of volumes as a behavioural response to the reduction in costs. On that basis the £2 per hour tariff would cost around £493k to implement.
- 4.3 These losses are likely to be mitigated to some extent by the expected volume increases. A prudent assumption might be that this effect would reduce the anticipated revenue impact by a third to £330k which would be broadly consistent with the idea discussed in paragraph 3.5.5 that the 2009-10 income levels represent a floor below which income would be unlikely to fall. However, Members should be aware that these figures are informed estimates, and that the actual impact could mean a substantially different revenue outcome.
- 4.4 The impact of the low cost short stay period is more complex to estimate. Most on-street parking revenue comes from busy town centres. Appendix 3 shows that around £583k of pay bay parking revenue arises through short stays of up to 20 minutes. Thus any change focussed on short stays will inevitably have a very substantial impact on revenue and be expensive.
- 4.5 Additionally the introduction of a low cost short stay arrangement is likely to result in an increase in behaviour changes in the first period which would likely decrease revenue further. This is very difficult to predict. However, it seems probable that some people presently paying for a 16-40 minute stay would constrain their stay to 15 minutes, or relocate their vehicle to get a further low cost period, or return to their vehicle and pay for a further low cost period ticket without moving it.

- 4.6 We have modelled the assumption that a 20 pence short stay tariff would increase the proportion of short stays from 37.6% to 45%. We have also modelled a further loss from repeat use of free period parking of 5% for a 15 minute period. These estimates come with the same health warning as before.
- 4.7 Taken together, the loss of direct income from the 0-15 minute period and the other modelled effects imply a potential loss of £417k in a full year. Together with the loss of income estimated in paragraph 4.3 the total cost of these changes in a full year is estimated to be £747k.
- 4.8 The impact in 2013/14 will be a half year impact assuming that the changes can be implemented at the end of September 2013, which would amount to £374k plus £200k of set up costs, with a further full year impact of £374k in 2014/15. The net funding required is, therefore, growth of £574k in 2013-/14 and a further £174k in 2014/15.
- 4.9 Increased income in the parking account not currently included in departmental budgets is expected from two sources which can offset these costs:
 - ◆ Charges approved by the Executive in September 2012 in relation to the renewal of permits within the Wembley Protective Parking Zone are now anticipated to generate income estimated at £150k in 2013/14
 - ◆ The RPI increases in the cost of Residents Parking Permits also agreed by the Executive in September 2012 are now also anticipated to generate further income of £150k in 2013/14.
- 4.10 Members are considering changes to the Ward Working allocations. A reduction in the budget allocated to each ward of £10,000 would deliver £210k of savings in 2013/14 and would bring the total funding available to £510k against the £574k requirement.
- 4.11 The balance of £64k for 2013/14 can be found from reduced requirements for central levies.
- 4.12 The further funding of £174k for 2014/15 will be considered as part of the budget setting process for that year and decisions at that point will be informed by the actual changes in parking account income as a result of these changes.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 Any changes approved for implementation will require the amending of the existing traffic regulation orders under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken in respect of the changes to permits and pricing, and the move to cashless parking agreed by the Executive in September 2012. The further changes proposed here will reduce prices across the board from those already agreed and are not therefore considered to have any potential adverse impact on any group with a common protected characteristic.
- 6.2 A further EIA has not, therefore, been undertaken.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

7.1 None.

Background Papers

None

Contact Officers

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1 PARKING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 1.0 The Council's charging policy for on street parking is directed by its parking policy. The current parking policy was set in 2006 and is contained in chapter 7 of the Council's 2007-2011 Parking and Enforcement Plan¹ and sets out a priority hierarchy for on-street parking as follows:
 - Local disabled resident parking need *
 - Non-local disabled parking need *
 - Local resident parking need*
 - Essential worker in the delivery of public service
 - Local business operational parking/servicing need
 - Short-stay shopper/visitor parking need
 - Long-stay shopper/visitor parking need
 - Long-stay commuter parking need
 - * Includes residents' additional parking requirements for visitors and tradespeople (e.g. builders) who may require operational parking all day.

1.1 Principle 5 of the Parking and Enforcement Plan sets criteria for parking charges as follows:

The Council will progressively develop a parking and CPZ permit charge structure that reflects a balanced transport policies and overarching environmental aims and objectives. On this basis, and subject to local conditions, parking and permit charges will be higher in areas where the combination of motor traffic and parking impose the greatest external costs on the community and the environment, and also in locations that are highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. In addition, maximum stay parking periods will be set to discourage commuting.

The broad criteria for setting charges are as follows, although each case will be considered on more detailed merits:

Highest charge	Locations that are highly accessible by public transport, walking and
1	cycling and therefore have the greatest potential for mode shift, and
	which suffer high levels of congestion and parking stress;
	Locations where the environmental impact of high motor traffic volumes
	is greatest, including congestion, costs to the economy, air pollution,
	noise, danger and community severance. The most acutely affected areas
	are generally within parts of the borough designated as Air Quality
	Management Areas;
	Locations where enhancement and maintenance of the built environment
	is most needed and where parking and motor traffic volumes are judged
\downarrow	to significantly undermine the quality of the built environment and
•	discourage walking and cycling;
Lower charges	Areas where local strategies for transport are directed towards restraining
	the use of private cars;

¹ http://www.brent.gov.uk/transportation.nsf/Files/LBBA-10/\$FILE/7_Parking_Enforcement_Plan_AP_Oct_06.pdf

Higher charges	Secondary shopping locations on the edges of town centres and including
	smaller district centres with good public transport, cycling and walking
	accessibility, where nevertheless the car plays a significant role in
▼	maintaining a viable local economy;
Lowest charge	Areas that have poor public transport accessibility and low density
or free (in	catchment areas, where the car is acknowledged as an essential tool to
exceptional	meet daily needs. In local shopping areas, the Council will consider the
circumstances	merits of providing free short stay parking (max half an hour) in order to
only)	facilitate 'stop and shop';
Exceptions to	Charges for specified users, low emission vehicles and city car club
the general	vehicles will be varied according to their adjudged contribution to
rules	reducing the negative externalities of car use. Cycle parking will be
	provided free of charge except where there is good reason to make a
	charge (for example to cover the reasonable costs of maintenance and
	(re)provision of long stay facilities). Motorcycle parking will also be free of
	charge, but only until such time as the Council identifies a robust
	mechanism for registering that a motorcyclist has paid for parking.

1.2 Chapter 3 of the Parking and Enforcement Plan specifies that:

Parking charges will be reviewed regularly to ensure that:

- they are consistent with charges made in other boroughs;
- they meet the environmental principles set out as Principle 5 above; and
- local businesses are not unduly affected by high levels of charges in terms of loss of trade to other shopping areas.
- 1.3 The hierarchy set out in the Parking and Enforcement Plan is reflected in the way the council has declared CPZs in areas of high parking demand, and made available residents', visitors', essential user and business parking permits to facilitate the use of the limited parking space.
- 1.4 The intention of the Parking and Enforcement Plan to progressively develop a charge structure reflecting transport policy objectives has not yet been implemented. The development of zonal or time of day tariffs could be an important contributor to meeting these policy objectives, but the work required to develop comprehensive, fair and balanced proposals for such a substantial change will not be possible until after the completion of the present One Council parking project and the successful implementation of the new parking contract. It is unlikely without a substantial change in priorities that proposals could be developed before 2014.

Appendix 2

On-street parking charges in neighbouring boroughs

The table below illustrates parking charges for on-street parking in neighbouring boroughs. To enable comparison, these have been illustrated in 30 minute blocks, although boroughs charge parking in different time blocks. Some neighbours have zonal charging – different tariffs in separate parts of the borough, based on varying demand. Where this is the case, charges are shown as a range.

Borough	Charge (30 mins)
Brent	£1.50
Barnet	£1.00
Ealing	£0.60-£1.00
Harrow	£0.20 - £1.50
Hammersmith & Fulham	£1.10 - £1.40
Hillingdon	Free - £1.60
Hounslow	£0.50
Westminster	£4.80 - £9.60
Kensington & Chelsea	£2 - £8; £1 off peak

Appendix 3

Revenue and charging

1. In 2011/12 on-street parking revenues totalled £3.56 million. Revenues for 2012/13 compared with the same period last year are broadly similar. The table below shows on-street parking income for the last five years.

Year	On-Street Parking Income £000
2008-09	2,960
2009-10	3,125
2010-11	3,126
2011-12	3,560
2012-13 (forecast)	3,629

2. Precise data about stay times is available from 138 on-street machines (18.8% of the total number). All transactions from these machines during May 2012 have been analysed and this shows that 75% of on street parking income comes from stays less than one hour.

Tariff	Transactions (%)	Value (%)	Estimated whole borough revenue (£m)
0 - 20 minutes	37.6	16.2	0.58
21 - 40 minutes	37.2	33.2	1.19
41 mins - 1 hour	16.4	26.2	0.94
1 - 2 hour	8.3	21.3	0.77
2 - 4 hours	0.5	3.2	0.14

- 3. Little is understood about the price sensitivity of demand for parking spaces. Prices were last substantially changed in March 2011 when all charges were subject to a 50% increase following a wide ranging review of fees and charges by external consultants. Prior to the increases total on-street parking income was £3.1 million. Had demand been insensitive to price, income could have been expected to rise to £4.7 million. Considerable consumer resistance to the price increase was anticipated and the income budget was increased by only £800k, half the amount expected if there were no price sensitivity.
- 4. In the event, as the table in paragraph 3.4.1 shows income in 2010-11 which included only one month of the new charges did not increase at all and income in 2011-12, the first full year, rose by only £430k, half what had been budgeted and around a quarter of what would have been expected if demand were not sensitive to price.
- Parking demand is clearly sensitive to price change. A 50% price increase in charges led to only a 14% increase in income. This implies a 24% drop in volume overall. Unfortunately, no detailed information is available about the

- impact of the price rise at particular price points. Intuitively, the increase from £4.00 to £6.00 for a stay of between 1 and 2 hours may have led to particular resistance, particularly as returning to the machine to pay for a second hour offers a saving, if not detected, of £1.20. But this can not be certain.
- 6. If external factors have not changed in a way which alters the price sensitivity of demand for on-street parking in Brent, a reduction back to the charges before the 50% increase should only lead to a reduction back to the 2009-10 and 2010-11 levels. This would imply a loss of income of £434k. A reduction to a price point somewhere between the original level and the present level ought, on that basis, to lead to a loss of between £0 and £434k.
- 7. It is of course recognised that external factors have changed. The economy is in sustained recession. New shopping facilities have opened. Other parking charges may have been changed in ways that make our charges more or less attractive. People may have developed different patterns of working, shopping or leisure which have reduced their need to park on-street or off street in Brent. But the evidence of the month by month receipts shows little sign of a trend; more a single, immediate and sustained drop in the level of demand and hence income.

Low cost versus free short stays

- Brent has over 700 payment machines. Of these only a third are networked, and none have a keyboard, which is the only way of associating a payment ticket to a specific vehicle. Without such an association, anyone taking a ticket from a machine for a free period of parking could return to the machine for a further ticket and further free period. Although this would be an offence, detection and enforcement against the offence would be extremely difficult and revenue losses could be significant.
- The alternative approach of networking each machine so that we can require the entry of a vehicle registration mark (VRM) could prevent reissue of further free tickets to park that day, at that or other machines. The initial estimate is a capital cost of between £0.7m and £1.75m depending on whether the existing machines are capable of upgrade or need replacement. An additional £125k p.a. running costs would need to be added for data transmission and hosting charges
- This investment could not be recouped given the forecast reduction in revenues, and the Council's recently agreed policy of removing payment machines as drivers switch to a cashless payment method, and so this investment has been rejected and low charge rather than free short stay parking is recommended.
- The practicalities involved with cashless parking are more straightforward. Cashless parking can cap free or very low cost short stay parking to once per day for each vehicle. However, each cashless transaction incurs a 20p transaction fee. Thus the cost to the Council of each free initial period administered through the cashless parking would need to be met through longer stay receipts. The proposed charge of 20p for an initial cashless administered period of parking would eliminate this loss.