

Brighton & Hove City Council

Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

Agenda Item 28

Subject: Parking Fees & Charges Update Report

Date of meeting: 20th September 2022

Report of: Executive Director – Environment, Economy & Culture

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1 This report outlines reviews and recommendations for various requests made by Councillors at this Committee over the last year. It includes a review of variable emission charging for paid parking, motorcycle parking charging and a request for free parking on Preston Drove and Ditchling Road,

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Committee agrees that in relation to variable emissions charging further data should be collated to facilitate the development of proposals which should be reported to Committee in November 2023.

2.2 That Committee agrees that officers should report back to this Committee in November 2023 on the way forward for motorcycle charging.

2.3 That Committee notes the report in relation to free parking and that any changes to any area must be considered as part of the annual fees & charges process.

3. Context and background information

Variable emission charging

3.1 A request was made at this Committee on the 18th January 2022 for officers to provide a report on the possibility of variable emission based charging for paid parking throughout the city.

3.2 The proposed introduction of variable emission charging would allow the Council to alter the pricing for a Paid Parking session depending on a vehicle's fuel type and CO2 emission rating. Whether through a digital provider or at a physical machine, a lookup to DVLA records would take place at the point of transaction, using the vehicles license plate, and would

return fuel type and CO2 emissions rating. We would have control over the specific pricing and the thresholds for what pricing band a vehicle would pay, and the intent is it should make a nominal difference to the user journey in both complexity and time taken to create a parking session.

- 3.3 Significant work has been carried out over the last few months and the clearest outcome of this work is that we do not currently have Brighton & Hove specific data that would enable us to make a clear and informed decision. We are projecting the impact of any new scheme on generic, country-wide emissions data which may not be reflective of our road-users. As such, before we propose or commit to an area to introduce a new charging scheme, we propose to implement the necessary systems via PayByPhone, with the respective costs incurred, but *do not alter pricing* at this time. Instead we would collate the data and build more robust proposals and forecasts on the very real impact it would have on our road users.
- 3.4 This would effectively happen silently in the background, and would allow officers to collate and analyse actual user data for Brighton & Hove, to better evaluate the impact that any future introduction would have. This would also allow us to test the system, and the respective reporting behind it, in a safer manner that would not cause disruption to the normal service.
- 3.5 This would also allow us time for officers to consider a number of factors which include;
- The inclusion, or exclusion, of physical machines in this scheme, and the implications of both.
 - The nature of the pricing – is this a punitive measure only, or will low emission vehicles see discounts to their parking.
 - Ringfencing of surplus – if a surplus is generated through this scheme, is the intent to specifically re-invest in air quality and/or Electric Vehicle infrastructure as we move towards a Carbon Neutral City by 2030.
 - The scale of the scheme – how widespread should this new charging model be, is there a desire for a roll out over several years to the whole city, or should it be focused on those most congested areas e.g Central Brighton and Hove.
 - The agreed metrics of success – what is the underlying aim of bringing in this scheme, and how is success to be measured
- 3.6 The cost implication for a 6 month trial would be £18,000 to introduce solely through PayByPhone. This would capture, broadly, 75% of all transactions in any single area and we believe would provide a reasonable cross section of road users in the city.
- 3.7 Due to the digital nature of all things PayByPhone (PBP), the implementation is both efficient and requires no changes to any on-street signage or lining. The upfront costs simply upgrade our server access on PBP's side, with the ongoing costs reflecting the costs of a DVLA lookup for each transaction.

- 3.8 It would be sensible to propose introducing this in the areas that we are most likely to roll out an actual scheme in the near future. As such we are proposing to collate data from Areas Y & Z (Central Brighton zones) and along Madeira Drive initially. Our only consideration is to keep the total monthly transactions under 100,000 as this has a cost implication during the data collection phase.
- 3.9 Assuming this proposal is acceptable, we would seek to run this a trial for a fixed period of time, no less than 3 months, no more than 6 months. At that time, we would then propose a tariff table and the area to initially implement this charging scheme.
- 3.10 The timeframe for rolling this scheme out properly is variable as it is dependent on both the scale of the scheme and whether we eventually include physical machines in the actual proposal. However, the following is the current timetable proposed;
- Prepare and implement scheme and introduce the changes to the background app on 1st December 2022
 - Collate and analyse captured emissions data from PBP users - December 2022-September 2023.
 - Present findings and proposal paper to this Committee in November 2023 which will be ahead of and linked to the fees and charges process for 24/25.
 - Undertake necessary upgrades and modifications to physical machines and / or the PayByPhone system, where appropriate - November 2023-February 2024.
 - Introduce initial variable emission charging in agreed area with new, robust tariffs in April 2024.

Motorcycle Charging

- 3.11 Following a request for a report to consider motorcycle charging at this Committee on 18th January 2022 this has been reviewed within parking Services over the last few months. This has involved discussions across teams and updates at both the regular parking fees & charges meetings as well as the Parking Modernisation Board.
- 3.12 It has become very apparent that are significant issues with taking this forward and this proposal will need to be considered more carefully with options for consideration coming back to this Committee next year. This would include an Equalities Impact Assessment
- 3.13 The main issue is around whether we charge motorcycles visiting an area and / or for local residents who use a motorcycle. A dual system would have added complications and lead to inconsistencies while the latter would have particular issues on how motorcycles display a permit. Another consideration is if the charging is within current motorcycle bays or we allow motorcycles to use all paid parking bays and / or resident bays as a number of residents are using the current motorcycle bays.

- 3.14 If we allowed motorcycles to purchase a resident permit and to share the same bay as vehicles there are issues with the possibility of them being damaged by vehicle movement as there is no protection when they park between cars. There is no secure way to display the permit either.
- 3.15 Allowing motorcycles to park within permit parking bays could reduce the capacity of overall residents parking. Cars generally park close to each other, and a motorcycle could reduce the ability for other vehicles to fit within the bays therefore reducing the amount of spaces to park.
- 3.16 Currently motorcycles have dedicated bays so we could restrict it to those types of bays. However, there is no secure way of affixing a permit to a motorcycle and the motorcyclist could be at risk of receiving a PCN should the permit be removed or become obscured.
- 3.17 If we allow motorcycles to park in paid bays then the only option is to use pay by phone not a machine due to the security of displaying the ticket.
- 3.18 Another consideration is how this proposal would link to secure motorcycle bays in certain locations. Would the cost be more for this type of bay or would there be an expectation that all motorcyclists would have this facility if paying? If so how do we incorporate this into the proposal i.e would all motorcycle bays require secure parking. There is a danger this could lead to the proposal being a ongoing cost to the Council due to the infrastructure required.
- 3.19 It also needs to be considered whether the cost for a permit is the same as a vehicle and should there be variable charges for higher emissions when and if that proposal is introduced (see above).
- 3.20 Officers also need to consider how motorcycle charging links to some of the system work we are currently undertaking which are necessary steps on our way to achieving our vision for the future. This includes further automation of the permit system to improve ease of use for the customer and parking staff, virtual permits and direct debit payment options. It may be that Motorcycle charging requires some of these changes before we can move forward.
- 3.21 Due to all these issues outlined it is proposed that we report back to this Committee in November 2023 alongside the update on Variable Emission Charging to discuss and agree the way forward. This would allow us to consider the issues in more detail and also link it to the updates on Variable Emission Charging and permit system modernization which may be key to taking this forward.

Free parking request for Preston Drove and Ditchling Road

- 3.22 A petition was presented to this Committee on 21st September 2021 signed by 130 people. This requested to change the paid parking introduced as part of the annual fees & charges process back to free parking for visitors in Preston Drove and Ditchling Road near Fiveways.
- 3.23 It was outlined that 1 hour free parking for customers will encourage shoppers to continue to support local shops, already suffering after a year of Covid 19 related closures and that the introduction of paid parking has had a significant & detrimental impact on trade for all businesses in the area.
- 3.24 However, there is no evidence to suggest that introducing paid parking has been a factor in any reduction in trade for businesses in the area and whether this has been the case. There is no available data within the Council to compare the situation before the paid parking was introduced with the current situation to properly analyse these claims.
- 3.25 The changes in free parking to paid parking were agreed following initial discussions at the Policy & Resources (P&R) Committee on 3rd December 2020 (as well as subsequent P&R committees on 21st Jan 2021 and 11th Feb 21). This was approved by the members of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 19th January 2021 and ultimately at Full Budget Council on 25th February 2021. This was all part of the Council's budget saving proposals for the financial year 21/22 and from a parking perspective involved over 200 different charging proposals which involved changes needed to all machines throughout the City and the IT system for PaybyPhone.
- 3.26 Following this approval the changes came into force on Monday 10th May 2021 alongside the changes to machines, signs and arrangements with the PayByPhone Contract. The increase to any charges were advertised through the legal process of a Traffic Regulation order (TRO) consultation.
- 3.27 Officers do appreciate that any increase in parking charges can be challenging for all concerned. However, as a Council and particularly as an Environment, Economy & Culture directorate we had to make significant savings for the 21/22 financial year as well as in 22/23. Within Parking Services alone this included over £2m of savings in 21/22 and over £2m again in 22/23 which has helped support other services.
- 3.28 The transition of some free parking bays across the city to paid parking supported the Council aims to reduce congestion, improve air quality and promote alternative, sustainable forms of transport by managing the high demand for parking spaces.
- 3.29 To take forward any changes from paid parking to free parking this would need to be considered as part of the annual fees & charges process. Any proposals that would lead to a cost to the Council would require the budget to be found from other savings or increased costs to mitigate this. In respect to this area it is estimated this would be in the region of £10k.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 The main alternative options are doing nothing which would mean that the various proposals would not be taken forward / reported back to Committee or officers press ahead with proposals without proper consideration into the impacts which could lead to significant financial, IT and operational issues.
- 4.2 It is, however, recommended by officers to proceed with the recommendations for the reasons that are outlined within the report.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 In terms of the variable emission charging and charging for motorcycle parking we would be aiming to bring back the results of the trial next year which will allow members of this Committee to determine the way forward.
- 5.2 In terms of free parking more evidence is required from businesses on the effects of paid parking for this to be considered as part of any annual fees & charges review.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 In terms of the way forward for variable emission charging we are proposing to upgrade our PBP server access with the costs outlined and then introduce the lookup and data collation of vehicle emissions without impacting either the end user experience nor what they pay. The results can then be reported to this Committee in November 2023 to discuss and agree the way forward.
- 6.2 Due to all the issues outlined in this report as well as links to other projects and proposals officers need to report back to this Committee in November 2023 on the way forward for Motorcycle charging.
- 6.3 In terms of the free parking request notes any changes to any area that involve a cost implication need to be considered as part of the annual fees & charges process. To take this particular request forward for free parking in the Fiveways area would require more evidence and also identification of how to mitigate the cost as part of this process.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 In respect of upgrading the PBP server to track vehicle emissions, the cost can be met from existing budgets.
- 7.2 Further investigation is required into the introduction of motorcycle charging, which will be covered by existing budgets.
- 7.3 Further investigation is required into the request to remove parking charges in the Fiveways area. As pointed out in the report, should these charges be removed as part of a future Fees and Charges Review, alternative compensatory savings of approximately £10,000 would be required

Name of finance officer consulted: Jill Scarfield Date consulted (23/08/22):

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from these recommendations which set out the next steps which will need to be taken to progress a number of proposals.

Name of lawyer consulted: Alice Rowland Date consulted: 19/8/22

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 At this time, there is no equalities or accessibility impact for the introduction of vehicle emission charging in terms of this proposal. This should not have any impact on the end user, nor would it require any considerations about taking away options for the end user.
- 9.2 At this stage there are no equalities implications on the way forward for charging for motorcycling parking and this will be evaluated more closely when taking any proposal forward.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 The recommendations of this report will provide for a better understanding of the emissions standards of vehicles parking locally. This will allow for informed decision making on the setting of variable emission charges to incentivise the use of low emission vehicles.

Supporting Documentation

1. None

