

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Cabinet

## Agenda Item 65

**Subject:** Parking Review update

**Date of meeting:** 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024

**Report of:** Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking and Public Realm

**Contact Officer:** Name: Corporate Director for City Services

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**Ward(s) affected:** (All Wards);

**Key Decision:** Yes

**Reason(s) Key:** Is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions (wards).

### For General Release

#### 1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 The Council is seeking to deliver a new approach in Parking Policy to stabilise in the short term and then re-set the budget situation in the longer term. In November 2023 the Council commissioned external consultants to help review and assess how these changes could be made to secure a more sustainable service and budget model.
- 1.2 The review determines how the City's future Parking Policy is also aligned with the Council Plan. The Parking Review has considered the current baseline data for parking in Brighton & Hove and based on the results of this exercise, has formulated a series of objectives and actions to improve parking in the City for its residents, visitors and local businesses.
- 1.3 This policy shift in the approach to parking is consistent with the direction outlined in the Council Plan 2023 – 2027 in relation to the following:
  - Outcome 1: A city to be proud of.
    4. Make it easier for people to move around the city.
  - Outcome 4: A responsive council with well-run services.
    1. Meeting the needs of our residents and other customers
    3. Good governance and financial resilience

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet agrees to taking forward the new Parking Policy aims and objectives as detailed in paragraph 3.9 below and in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Cabinet agrees to the Parking Services 24/25 Action Plan as summarised in Table 1 to ensure actions are included as part of the Council's Medium Term

Financial Plan. This aims to reduce the current under-achievement of the £45.5m parking income budget this financial year.

- 2.3 Cabinet agrees the medium to long term action plan and financial appraisal to deliver the new Parking Policy contained in Appendix 3.

### **3. Context and background information**

- 3.1 Parking can be a controversial policy area with significant impact on the daily lives of residents, businesses and the 11 million visitors who visit the City each year. Whilst visitor numbers are growing again, parking revenues are not matching this increase.
- 3.2 It is recognised that over the past five years parking tariffs in Brighton & Hove have increased to the extent they have become more of a deterrent than an incentive and prohibitively expensive for some visitors. This has led to fewer cars coming into the City centre to park.
- 3.3 The number and extent of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) have also increased over time as greater pressure on neighbouring areas have led to new CPZs being requested by residents. This has led to a knock-on effect where further parking pressures have rippled out from the centre, affecting outlying parts of the City.
- 3.4 Over several decades, at least 200 different tariffs have been established, which include high, medium, and low emission tariffs for resident permits and visitor on-street parking. As a result, there is now a complex array of parking tariffs that are likely deterring visitors and residents alike.
- 3.5 In late June 2023 and in response to further parking fee increases approved in the February 2023 Budget Council, a review of all planned changes to parking fees and charges was announced. Commercial and marketing roles within Parking Services were recently established to strengthen the business approach to achieving financial sustainability.
- 3.6 Following the announcement, in July 2023 the Council sought to procure external consultants to develop an initial review by Autumn 2023. However, due to limited interest from the commercial market the Council undertook an initial review in-house. This set the scene for a larger piece of work to be procured externally and to layout initial findings for the Autumn of 2023. Returns were submitted by two suppliers on 27th October 2023.
- 3.7 Following analysis and scoring of the tenders, the Contract was awarded to Mott MacDonald consultants who provided the most economically advantageous tender submission based on the Project Team, Project Plan Model, and costs.

#### **Parking Review Objectives**

- 3.8 In terms of the methodology, an initial series of actions were generated, based on the following:
- Findings from the data baselining analysis.

- Research into parking measures and initiatives introduced in UK, European, and North American cities.
- Best practice examples from other parking studies and strategies undertaken by Mott MacDonald.

3.9 Actions were categorised based on the five main objectives and sub objectives outlined in Appendix 1 as follows:

- **Objective 1: Parking in the City is fair and simplified.** Reviewing the type of permits and payment options available to customers and how they access them.
- **Objective 2: Optimise Parking resources to support making the City a place where people want to live, work and visit.** How parking schemes are operated in terms of their size, type, and duration. This includes reporting capabilities and improvements to enforcement. There would also be a focus on short-term pricing changes and more paid parking to ensure parking meets the needs of the city and optimises usage.
- **Objective 3: Efficiently manage movement on the transport network to promote a safer, healthier, and more accessible City.** How vehicle parking is operated, how to improve usage and how we should strategically price tariffs and rates of off-street car parks. There would also be a focus on the relationship between on and off-street parking to ensure they are closely aligned as well as the use of bays.
- **Objective 4: Use our assets to support an inclusive economy with robust financial management.** Marketing and commercialism, looking at promotion and awareness of our existing assets and raise awareness for new schemes and programmes through communications. This is also focused on monitoring the effectiveness of the current Red Route rollout and other new initiatives.
- **Objective 5: Ensure good governance and well-run services.** Ensuring we make the best use of our on-street and off-street assets in terms of safety, maintenance, and cost effectiveness.

### **Parking Review Actions**

3.10 Ultimately the parking review conducted by the external consultants produced a number of recommended actions to improve parking in the City for residents, visitors and local businesses. Actions were then categorised as being deliverable in the short term (by 2025) or medium term to long term (by or after 2030). Short term actions are identified in Table 1 below and medium to long term actions are included in Appendix 3.

**Table 1 – Short term action plan**

Recommendation	Level of Upfront Investment	Likely Revenue Return	Timeline											
			Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25			
Review the Resident Permit options	Low (up to £10k)	Further study												
Review signage to promote PayPoint	Medium (£10k to £100K)	Low												
Trialling reduced fees for underutilised parking	Low (up to £10k)	Medium												
Implement paid parking in underutilised light touch	Low (up to £10k)	Medium												
Consider merging evening and overnight car park rates	Low (up to £10k)	Further study												
Introduce early bird/commuter rates	Low (up to £10k)	Further study												
Offer weekend parking tickets (Friday to Sunday)	Low (up to £10k)	Low												
Ensure City Parks tariffs/restrictions align with nearby parking zones	Low (up to £10k)	Low												
Ongoing review of Contract value for money	Low (up to £10k)	Further study												
Continuing the financial recovery plan for 24/25	Low (up to £10k)	High												

3.11 An initial high-level analysis of each action was undertaken, which included potential benefits, drawbacks, risks, timeframe of implementation, level of upfront investment, likely revenue return and feasibility.

3.12 Each action contains a high-level audit including a potential timeframe for implementation, level of upfront investment required, likely revenue return, and feasibility. The actions included detailed financial modelling and as part of the high-level audit of all actions, timelines were produced for each action under their respective objective and theme. Actions were then categorised as being deliverable in the short term (by 2025) or medium term to long term (by or after 2030) earlier in the report.

### Scope of the Parking Review

3.13 The primary purpose of the parking review was to establish a series of objectives and recommendations to bring about a simpler, more equitable, accessible and an inclusive parking service for the City. The review provides a set of recommendations and anticipated outcomes, timeframes, indicative investment, likely feasibility and, where applicable, financial forecasting. The review supports the efficient and sustainable operation of Brighton & Hove’s parking assets.

3.14 The study covered 26 CPZs within Brighton & Hove, BHCC operated off-street car parks (barrier and surface car parks), and other paid on-street parking areas that fall outside the 26 parking zones, such as the Seafront.

3.15 As an initial stage, an extensive data baselining exercise was undertaken to understand all parking metrics in Brighton & Hove. The review then identified key challenges and opportunities that informed the objectives and recommendations. This is outlined in more detail from paragraph 5.1.

3.16 The data baselining exercise was supplemented by a Future Needs Assessment, which considered local policy related to parking and future developments in Brighton & Hove.

- 3.17 The Future Needs Assessment looked at the local planning policy relevant to the Parking Review such as the Brighton & Hove City Plan parts 1 & 2 and the Brighton & Hove Local Transport Plan 4 as well as other relevant Brighton & Hove policies such as the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), the Public Realm Strategy and the Safer Road Strategy. These policies were all considered alongside the direction of the overarching Council Plan.
- 3.18 The review looked at which future developments would affect transport and parking in the City. Several private and public developments were identified including the rejuvenation of Black Rock development area, Madeira Terrace, King Alfred Centre, the Corn Exchange, and Valley Gardens. Several of the committed developments are council led. Additionally, there are significant private committed developments in Brighton and Hove.
- 3.19 Following the data baselining exercise, policy review and Future Needs Assessment, five main objectives and sub-objectives were developed (see Appendix 1) in conjunction with Councillors and officers in Brighton & Hove Parking Services.

#### **4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

- 4.1 The actions within this report are recommended to be taken forward to meet the objectives set out in paragraph 3.9.
- 4.2 During the parking review several different options were considered. Developing or use of an application (app) to identify parking availability across the City is being investigated. Re-introducing pay and display machines is now being taken forward separately as part of a trial.
- 4.3 Improving pedestrian access with signage to outer car parks will need liaison with other council teams separate to the recommendations outlined within this report.
- 4.4 The adoption of a larger parking zone system was considered. This was discounted because it would bring internal commuting and congestion risks through vehicles moving within a single zone. It was considered more effective to review boundaries and merge parking zones rather than changing the zone system entirely.
- 4.5 QR codes were removed from the recommendations due to concerns over the widespread fraudulent use of these nationally.

#### **5. Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 The parking review utilised extensive data provided by the BHCC Parking Services team on customer behaviours, combined with desk-based research. This exercise covered the 26 parking zones, parking permit costs and uptake, on-street and off-street parking tariffs, and on-street and off-street parking utilisation. Where applicable, a comparison of permit costs and parking tariffs between Brighton & Hove and seven other comparable

locations was also included. This identified key findings as outlined in Appendix 2.

- 5.2 An overview with the actions to take forward was brought forward as part of a Parking Strategy Review Workshop for discussion with BHCC councillors, senior officers, and the Parking Services Team. The feedback received during this workshop was taken into account when considering the actions to take forward. Where a recommendation generated considerable interest and discussion, further detail was provided.
- 5.3 Many of the actions outlined will require further engagement and consultation with the public to take forward. This could involve initial and detailed consultation and / or a formal consultation through the advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders. Some actions may be undertaken as trials to review the effectiveness of short-term changes with public feedback used to shape the way forward.

## **6. Financial implications**

- 6.1 Parking services is forecasting a £1.156m under achievement for 2024/25 as at Month 2 due to income demand loss. The parking review has outlined objectives and actions to reflect the Council Plan outcomes, but specifically to address the parking deficits in both the short term and long term.
- 6.2 Table 1 summarises the action plans for the short term with most items relating to increasing demand for Council paid parking through reduced or discounted tariffs of underutilised parking areas, as well as a review of Contracts value for money and identifying new income opportunities, rather than increasing tariffs to meet income targets. The action plan also includes the financial recovery plan for 24/25 which aims to address the deficit by the end of the financial year through various options including reviewing existing resource and expenditure commitments, reviewing the PCN bad debt provision requirements and promoting car parks through BHCC social media channels.
- 6.3 Recommendations within Table 1 that are trialling reduced or discounted tariffs do have a risk because if parking demand does not increase, income may reduce from the lower tariffs introduced. However it is anticipated that these measures would stimulate demand and generate increased paid parking income. The revenue return for the current 2024/25 financial year will have a part-year affect based on when the recommendation is actioned, and after accounting for the additional investment is anticipated to reduce parking deficits. The costs associated with the recommendations of this report including expenditure related with advertising Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) for changes will be contained within existing Parking Services budgets and/or funded from additional parking income generated through the increased demand.
- 6.4 Appendix 3 summarises the action plans for the medium to long term. Further financial appraisals would be required as highlighted in paragraph 6.3 before any action is implemented.

- 6.5 Use of surplus income from parking charges and penalty charges is governed by section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Once the direct costs of traffic management have been met, the use of surpluses is legally ringfenced to the provision of public transport services, highway maintenance, highway improvements, road safety, air quality and environmental improvements.

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack    Date consulted (22/08/24)

## **7. Legal implications**

- 7.1 The Council has a duty under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to exercise its powers to secure the safe and convenient movement of traffic and the provision of adequate on and off-street parking facilities. It has powers under this Act to make orders to regulate traffic and designate parking places. Regulations prescribe the procedure for making new orders, including the requirement for the public to be consulted.
- 7.2 The Council must also consider any implications the orders would have for access to premises, local amenity, air quality, public transport provision and any other relevant matters. When undertaking consultation, the Council is under a general duty of fairness and must take into account any human rights implications and equality impacts that may arise as a result of the proposals. Parking and traffic restrictions have the potential to affect the right to respect for family and private life and the right to protection of property. These are qualified rights and may be restricted where this is for a legitimate aim and is necessary and proportionate.
- 7.3 Further appraisal of legal implications will need taken before individual plans or orders are implemented.

Name of lawyer consulted: Katie Kam    Date consulted (28/08/24)

## **8. Equalities implications**

- 8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be taken forward alongside the proposals if they are taken forward. This will be discussed further with the Communities, Equalities and Third Sector team to ensure any equalities impact is fully considered.

## **9. Conclusion**

- 9.1 The recommendations in section 2 of the report if agreed would be taken forward with progress reported to the Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking and Public Realm.
- 9.2 If agreed, the 24/25 action plan would be taken forward as summarised in Table 1 within the report. Some of this has already been proceeding as part of the Parking Services Financial Recovery Plan for 24/25 and will ensure the council takes a pro-active approach to the current budget situation.

- 9.3 The medium term and longer-term actions summarised in Appendix 3 would be taken forward if agreed. Further work will involve scoping out the priorities, consultation and detailed timelines alongside more detailed financial appraisals.

## **Supporting Documentation**

### **Appendices**

1. Appendix 1 – Parking Review Objectives & Sub Objectives
2. Appendix 2 – Key findings
3. Appendix 3 – Medium to long term action plan