

Subject:	Preston Park Parking Review		
Date of Meeting:	6th February 2013		
Report of:	Strategic Director of Place		
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Ward(s) affected:	Preston Park		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Before July 2012 car parking in Preston Park was uncontrolled which resulted in the park being used for long term parking by non-park users. Judges for the Green Flag Award Scheme raised the need to address the parking and a petition, signed by 2200 people, concerning the uncontrolled parking was received. As a result a cross party working group was established to look into the issues and potential solutions.
- 1.2 In May 2012 following public consultation the decision was made at the Environment Transport and Sustainability Cabinet to implement parking controls. At the time it was agreed that the scheme would be reviewed after six months. This report sets out the findings of that review.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Committee notes the outcome of the review.
- 2.2 That Committee approves the proposal to reduce the times parking charges apply from the current position of 9am – 6pm Monday to Sunday, to 9am – 4pm Monday to Friday and 2pm – 6pm Saturday and Sunday. The change would be subject to the statutory consultation process for Traffic Regulation Orders.
- 2.3 That Committee instructs officers to advertise the associated Traffic Regulation Orders. Any unresolved objections will be brought back to the Council's Transport Committee.
- 2.4 That the revised scheme is reviewed again formally 12 months after implementation with a report brought back to committee to assess the performance of the scheme and the improvements made to the park with the surplus funds.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 Before July 2012 parking in Preston Park was uncontrolled resulting in it being used by non park users (commuters, residents, visitors) for long term parking. The high number of cars resulted in complaints that:
- parking caused problems for pedestrians and cyclists entering and using the park
 - cars parked on the park's internal roads were a visual intrusion and impact on the overall tranquillity of the park
 - cars driving through the park made it unsafe, particularly for children
 - the level of parking created congestion for park visitors and restricted emergency access, particularly in the area known as the Ride
- 3.2 Preston Park is a Green Flag park and judges had expressed concern about the lack of control over parking in the park. In 2010 a petition was presented to the council, signed by 2201 individuals urging it to address the problems.
- 3.3 In January 2011 a cross party working group of ward councillors asked officers to explore options to control parking with the objectives of:
- Limiting parking to the areas known as The Gallop and The Ride (and excluding parking from the internal roads and along the London Road side of the park)
 - Preventing parking by non-park users
 - Ensuring that genuine park users are still able to park in the park
 - Ensuring the park remains fully accessible to disabled visitors
 - Extending the maximum length of stay along parts of Preston Park Avenue from 4 hours to 11 hours to give commuters, residents and visitors alternative parking options.
- 3.4 The working group determined that any scheme should not be funded from the maintenance budget for the park, but that instead it should be self funding.
- 3.5 Proposals to control parking were developed and consulted on and in May 2012 the Environment Transport and Sustainability Cabinet Member agreed the implementation of the controls. It was also agreed that the scheme would be formally reviewed six months after implementation to allow its effectiveness and the charging mechanism to be evaluated.

4. OUTLINE OF PARKING CONTROLS

- 4.1 As part of the controls parking was restricted to two areas known as *The Gallop* and *The Ride*, and due to the narrowness of *The Ride* parking was only permitted on one side, not on both sides as was previously the case. With the exception of blue badge holders parking is no longer permitted on the path that runs parallel to London Road or along *Lime Tree Walk* which runs in to the centre of the park.
- 4.2 The maximum length of stay was limited to six hours and charges were introduced to cover the cost of the scheme. It was agreed that any surplus income would be ring fenced to the park. The charges were kept significantly lower than on street parking as set out below:

Period	Preston Park	Preston Park Avenue (On Street)
Up to 1 hour	£0.50	£1.00
Up to 2 hours	£1.00	£2.00
Up to 4 hours	£2.00	£3.00
Up to 6 hours	£3.00	
Up to 11 hours		£5.00

- 4.3 A maximum 6 hour stay was introduced to prevent long-term parking. The charges apply from 9am to 6pm seven days a week. The cost of implementing the scheme was £22,000. The annual revenue cost of the scheme is £2,100

5. IMPACT OF PARKING CONTROLS

- 5.1 The parking controls have significantly reduced the number of cars in the park and have successfully addressed the issue of long-term parking by non-park users. The visual impact associated with the cars, particularly on Lime Tree Walk has largely been addressed and this area is safer for park users. The area known as The Ride (around the back of the Rotunda Café) is much less congested now parking has been restricted to one side of this path. Despite restricting the areas where parking is permitted there is sufficient parking space for park users.
- 5.2 There have been no complaints about the principle objective of the scheme, namely to prevent long-term parking by non-park users. A number of sports groups have raised concerns about the charges and a petition was presented to the November meeting of this Committee. The petition was signed by 627 people seeking that the scheme be amended to allow up to two or three hours free parking. Additional comments and requests which have been received include:
- Charging until 3pm on weekdays (rather than 6pm) and not apply any charges at the weekends
 - Give sports clubs and their members free permits to park
 - The football club have requested a pass to allow the coaches who carry equipment in their cars to park nearer the pitches
- 5.3 These comments have been considered in the evaluation of different options for the park.
- 5.4 Data has been gathered and analysed on the amount of income raised by the scheme. The income has been higher than anticipated with an average of £3,700 per month or £44,400 per year. The income is significantly higher than anticipated indicating that the charges are not a significant barrier to people coming to the park by car. The capital cost of the scheme, £23,000, has been already been repaid by the income generated. Any further surplus is additional funding ring fenced to the park. For the current financial year this is expected to be £15,000. It is proposed that the surplus is rolled over into the 2013/14 financial year when it will be invested in line with the management plan following consultation with the Friends of Preston Park Group.

6. PROPOSED CHANGES

6.1 Currently charges apply Monday – Sunday 9am – 6pm. It is possible to reduce the times during which charges apply. However during the week the hours during which charges apply have to be longer than the maximum length of stay (6 hours) to prevent commuters taking advantage of the lower parking charges compared to on street. A viable option would be to reduce the charges as follows:

- Monday to Friday 9am – 4pm (rather than 9am to 6pm)
- Saturday and Sunday 2pm – 6pm (rather than 9am to 6pm)

6.5 During these hours the charges would remain as they are now:

Monday – Friday 9am – 4pm and Saturday/ Sunday 2pm to 6pm	Charge
Up to 1 hr	£0.50
Up to 2 hours	£1
Up to 4 hours	£2
Up to 6 hours	£3

6.6 This charging mechanism would enable free parking in the afternoons during week days and at peak times in the weekend. To prevent long-term parking over the weekend it would not be possible to roll any payment over in to the following day (eg it would not be possible to park on Friday night and pay £2 to cover the period 2pm-6pm on Saturday, which would then allow parking until 2pm on Sunday).

6.7 Visitors wishing to stay beyond the free period on a Saturday or Sunday would pay £0.50 until 3pm, £1 until 4pm or £2 until 6pm. The charge on a Saturday or Sunday would be £2 rather than the current charge of £3.

6.9 Reducing the times charges apply will mean that many park users will be able to park free of charge or at a reduced charge, including many of the sports clubs who have fixtures at the weekends or weekday afternoons and evenings. This includes the cycle club, two tennis clubs, the Preston Park Soccer School and the junior league football club and the cricket club. This option is expected to generate a surplus of approximately £27,000 which would be additional funding ring fenced to the park.

Use of Surplus Funding

6.10 It is anticipated that the surplus funding ring fenced to the park in the current financial year will be approximately £15,000, after covering the initial set up costs of the scheme. If the recommendations are implemented the future surplus is expected to be £27,000 per annum.

6.11 Under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 the Council may only set parking charges for traffic and parking management purposes and is not permitted to have regard to the purposes on which any excess income could be spent when determining charges. However the legislation does recognise that the exercise of these powers may lead to a surplus.

6.12 The funds would be used to carry out works identified in the Green Flag Management Plan developed with the Friends of Preston Park Group against which the park is judged annually. The scope of works identified (set out in the table below) has been limited to date as there has been no significant funding over and above day to day maintenance funding. The annual maintenance budget for the park does not allow for any of these projects to be completed and relies on other sources of funding.

Work/ Project
Improving access to lower area of Rookery Rock Garden
Restoration of the North and South Pylons
Access path to play area from the Rural Ride is eroded and requires more permanent solution
Re-landscape Lovers Walk. In the original design of the park this area was open and had vistas across the valley. It would be restored and replanted in line with the original design.

6.13 Additional areas of the park which could benefit from investment are summarised below.

- Improvements to the area around the cycle track
- Improvements to the cycle track itself which is the only cycling facility in the city
- Improvements to sports facilities including changing facilities
- Restoration of the Well House and Donkey Wheel

6.14 While all the works still need to be costed in detail, the cost will still far exceed the additional surplus income. Officers would work with stakeholders, including Friends of Preston Park, the cycling club and sports clubs, to prioritise the list and opportunities for grant funding explored to use the parking income as match funding.

6.15 Photographs in Appendix 1 show some of the areas that could benefit from investment.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

7.1 The original proposals were subject to consultation. If the recommendations in this report are approved the changes would be subject to the statutory process for Traffic Regulation Orders.

8. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

8.1 It is anticipated that there will be surplus income of around £15,000 in 2012-13, having taken into account the one off set up costs. This will be transferred to an earmarked reserve specifically to fund future works in Preston Park. The

proposed tariff amendments are expected to result in an annual surplus of £27,000 which can then be added to this reserve.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Karen Brookshaw Date: 31/12/12

Legal Implications:

- 8.2 The Council regulates traffic, designates parking places and sets parking charges by means of orders made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Procedural regulations require public notice of orders to be given and any person may object to the making of an order. Any unresolved objections to an order must be considered by the Transport Committee before it can be made.
- 8.3 The Council is under a duty to exercise its powers under the Act to secure the safe and convenient movement of traffic and the provision of adequate on and off-street parking facilities. It must also take into account any implications that orders would have for access to premises, local amenity, air quality, public transport provision and any other relevant matters. When considering whether to designate parking places, the Council must consider both the interests of traffic and the interests of owners and occupiers of adjoining property.
- 8.4 In carrying out consultation the Council is under a general duty to ensure that any consultation is fair. This means that consultation must be carried out when proposals are being formulated, that adequate time and information about proposals must be given to consultees to ensure that they can provide a proper response, and that any consultation responses must be properly considered in reaching the decision.
- 8.5 Under section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended the Council must keep an account of all parking income and expenditure in designated (i.e. on-street) parking spaces which are in a Civil Enforcement Area, and of their income and expenditure related to their functions as an enforcement authority. Regulations and guidance confirm that in respect of off-street parking places, the term "income and expenditure as enforcement authorities" includes that related to the issue of PCNs. It does not, for example, include pay and display or permit/season ticket income or the direct expenditure relating to collecting that income.

Lawyer Consulted: Carl Hearsom

Date:31/12/12

Equalities Implications:

- 8.6 The proposed changes to the scheme have no equality implications. The scheme has resulted in safer and improved access to the park by car for disabled people.

Sustainability Implications:

- 8.7 None

Crime & Disorder Implications:

8.8 None

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

8.9 None

Public Health Implications:

8.10 Preston Park is used by many people for recreation purposes. The proposed changes to the scheme will ensure many people using the park are able to park free of charge. At times where charges apply they have been kept significantly lower than on street charges.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

8.11 None

9. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

9.1 A number of options to reduce charges for park users have been modelled taking in to account levels of surplus generated and feedback received on the scheme

Free parking at weekends

9.2 Removing all parking charges at the weekend is not considered to be a viable option as it is likely to result in long-term parking by residents and visitors to the city who would be able to park from 6pm on Friday until 9am on Monday at no cost. This would defeat the objective of the scheme, which is to prevent, as far as possible, long-term parking by non- park users.

First 2 hours free Monday - Sunday

9.3 Enforcement of parking controls requires vehicles to display a ticket showing either the time of arrival (if there is a limited free parking period) or the time up until which payment has been made. The pay and display machines require the insertion of a coin in order to issue a ticket and therefore a free period is not a viable option.

Nominal charge first two hours Mon – Fri 4 hours Sat & Sun

9.4 As set out above, providing a free period is not practically possible, but a nominal charge would enable the scheme to be monitored while minimising the cost to park users.

9.5 The benefit of this option is that anyone parking in the park benefits from an initial period of low cost parking – two hours during the week and four hours at the weekend. This option would significantly reduce the level of surplus income ring-fenced to the park to approximately £5,000. This option is viable but would generate less surplus ring fenced to the park.

Monday – Friday 9am – 3pm	Charge
Up to 2 hours	£0.10
Up to 4 hours	£2
Up to 6 hours	£3
Saturday and Sunday	Charge
Up to 4 hours	£0.20
Up to 6 hours	£3

10. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The parking scheme in Preston Park has addressed the main concern of it being used as a long-term car park by non park users. The review has identified that the scheme is generating more surplus than anticipated and the proposed changes reduce the costs for park users. The recommended option allows free parking during peak times for park users and generates a surplus which will be ring fenced to the park.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Photographs of areas of the park that would benefit from investment from parking income surplus.