

**Item 5(e) –Annual Review Of Parking Charges and Christmas Parking
2011
The Cabinet’s Recommendation to Council**

At its meeting on 3 November 2011 the Cabinet considered the matter as follows:

“The Portfolio Holder for the Cleaner and Greener Environment presented the Annual Review of Parking Charges and outlined options for increases in respect of car park and on-street parking charges to meet the budget plan for 2012/13. The budget plan increase for parking for 2012/13 had been set at 2.5% and the options included in the report would enable this to be achieved or a higher rate of increase applied if Members so wished. The options were outlined in the report and attention was drawn to the historic information relating to car parking charges and to the charges applied by neighbouring authorities. Members were reminded that the Council’s car parks were subject to business rates of over £215,000 pa and that the business rate liability was already £13,000 over budget for the current financial year and in looking at options for charges the increased cost to the Council of providing car parking should be taken into account. In formulating the options for consideration by the Cabinet care had been taken to balance the need to raise revenue to cover the costs of providing car parking with the need to encourage people to shop in Sevenoaks. For this reason no increases were proposed for short stay car parking. The Cabinet was reminded of the need to maintain the charging differential between the Blighs car park and the other short stay car parks in the town centre and that it was not proposed to increase evening car park charges or to introduce charges for using the car parks on Sundays.

The options for increases to charges for On-Street parking were contained in Appendix D to the report but in view of the standardisation of charging structures introduced in 2011/12 the only changes proposed related to the long stay charges and to permit costs with the exception of a suggested amendment to the Swanley tariff structure which had not been standardised. It was proposed that the revised charges for Swanley should also be applied for the parking scheme at Knockholt station and that a new 4 hour tariff should be introduced in the pay and display areas around Sevenoaks station on the same cost rate as Swanley and Knockholt station. The Cabinet was reminded that any changes to car parking charges would require changes to the relevant parking places and traffic regulation orders and that these would be subject to statutory public consultation. Members were also asked to consider repeating the free Saturday parking concession on the two Saturdays before Christmas and that as Christmas Eve fell on a Saturday this year to consider whether to allow free parking on the two preceding Saturdays.

The Cabinet had regard to the recommendations of the Environment Select Committee which had considered this matter on 25 October 2011. The Cabinet noted the need to adopt a fair approach to parking charges to cover the costs to Council tax payers of providing parking with the needs of shoppers and other users. It was also felt that the requirements set out in the

Council's four year savings budget should be respected. The Cabinet felt that the increases under consideration, on average, were below the current rate of inflation and that there had also been service improvements such as the introduction of the facility to pay for parking by telephone. Members also highlighted the availability of Business Parking Permits which offered parking at a discounted rate. In considering the options for Swanley the Cabinet also felt that it was important for charges to be standardised across the District as far as possible and that the proposals for increases in charges for use of the Council's car parks and for on-street parking were in alignment. Members supported the proposal to introduce a new 4 hour tariff for Sevenoaks commuters but the Cabinet did not feel that the tariff for on-street parking in the area around Knockholt station should be changed as a new parking scheme had only been implemented at the beginning of October 2011 and was due for review in six months time.

The Cabinet supported the proposals to provide free car parking on two Saturday's before Christmas and hoped that this would encourage people to shop in Sevenoaks. The Cabinet also noted that free car parking would also be available on the evening of 25 November 2011 when the Christmas lights would be turned on.

Resolved: That

(1) car parking charges for 2012/13 as identified in the table in Appendix C to the report be increased as follows:

the following items by Option 1: 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, and 1.7

the following items by Option 2: 1.4, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 3.5, 4.5, and 5.5

the following items by Option 3: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4

and that in addition residents permits be increased in line with on-street residents permits; all subject to consultation as noted in the report.

(2) on-street parking charges for 2012/13 as identified in the table in Appendix D to the report be increased as follows:

the following items by Option 1: 10.1, 10.3, 10.4, 12.1, 13.1, 14.1 and 14.2

the following items by Option 2: 7.4 and 12.3

the following items by Option 3: 8.4, 10.5, 12.2, 12.4, 13.2 and 13.3

subject to consultation as noted in the report.

(3) the proposed changes to the on-street tariff structure in respect to Swanley and the Sevenoaks rail commuter areas be approved, subject to consultation; and

(4) free parking be provided for Christmas 2011 in all car parks and on-street parking areas throughout the district on Saturdays 10th and 17th December and that the Council be recommended to fund the cost identified in the report from Supplementary Estimates".

Note: Text in bold type represents a recommendation to the Council.