



**TITLE OF CONSULTATION: SUSPENSION OF CAR PARKING CHARGES
ACROSS THE DISTRICT**

**OFFICER REQUESTING: PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS AND PARTNERSHIPS –
PHILLIP SPURR**

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider suspending car parking charging across all RDC car parks for the duration of the Covid-19 public health emergency.
- 1.2 Scarborough Borough Council who provide a parking enforcement service and cover all RDC car parks, has provided the following key information:
- 1.3 Following an announcement by Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Robert Jenrick, local councils in England are to provide free car parking for NHS staff and social care workers during the coronavirus outbreak.
- 1.4 On 26 March 2020 SBC informed all Local Authorities they provide a parking enforcement service to, they would cease car parking charges for NHS key workers in line with Government guidance. These NHS key workers will be encouraged to display appropriate credentials in their windscreen.
- 1.5 A formal request to suspend car parking charges for three months has also been made by the National Probation Service in the North East to allow key workers within the organisation to reduce public transport use and be able to access parking where required, thus reducing the risk of exposure to the virus.
- 1.6 Further to the suspension of car parking charges for NHS and social care workers, additional Government guidance is expected in the coming days regarding the suspension of all car parking charges as the virus is thought to be able to survive for up to 72 hours on the plastic and metal of the payment machines.
- 1.7 Car parking charges have also been suspended by Hambleton District Council and Scarborough Borough Council across all of their respective car parks.
- 1.8 It should be noted that whilst charges would be suspended, the car parks will remain open for use. For the majority of car parks we have no way of closing them. This is also not proposed as it would be to the detriment of key workers who may still need to use them. Any use which does not conform to government guidance to stay at home unless absolutely necessary, or social distancing / social isolation requirements, will be a matter for police action.
- 1.9 The available Enforcement Officer for Ryedale will continue to patrol the area to identify any significant issues and ensuring there are no instances of dangerous or obstructive

parking in both on-street and off-street locations.

- 1.10 Hambleton District Council and Scarborough Borough Council have already suspended all car parking charges across the district, and York City Council are offering free car parking across the city for NHS and social care workers, as well as those who work in supermarkets and food outlets.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 It is recommended that:

- (i) All car parking charges be suspended until further notice for the safety of members of the public, RDC contractors, and in order to provide essential parking facilities for key workers and volunteers.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 The suspension of all car parking charges is likely to come into force in the coming days. As things currently stand, the majority of people are not permitted to travel for leisure or recreation purposes, and the car parks are therefore expected to see very little use. A much reduced level of income is therefore expected during this period.
- 3.2 An offer has currently been made from SBC for the Enforcement Officer currently covering Ryedale to cover the machines and add a notice to them stating parking charges have been suspended. This would mean an ask would not need to be made of the Streetscene team or any other RDC department at a later date, adding additional pressure and demand. As RDC does not have covers for its machines like SBC, the team at SBC have recommended heavy duty refuse sacks to cover them with an official RDC notice attached to each stating the machine is not currently in use.
- 3.3 Enforcement capacity is currently significantly down on normal levels (currently only one officer covering Ryedale). This means activity has been scaled back to only cover instances of dangerous parking. Given this situation and the expected lower levels of income expected during this period, the need for collection services will also be reduced.
- 3.5 These actions will result in a reduction in income generated to RDC based on previous years income and ticket sales figures, although given the current government guideline to stay at home and not under-take non-essential travel, this is considered to be minimal given the current situation.
- 3.6 There will likely be a number of volunteers out doing work for us in the community and free use of the car parks will be essential for them. A total suspension of car parking charges would remove additional work for us to produce car parking passes.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

4.1 The following risks have been identified:

- Additional pressure on limited RDC resources and capacity if the covering of car parking machines is postponed and then required at a later date.
- Currently cash collection from the machine is still scheduled to take place – this presents a health and safety risk to *[redacted]*, the company contracted to provide this service to us.
- Asking members of the public to interact with a machine which may put them

at greater risk of catching the virus through contact with the plastics and metal of the machine is a public health risk which cannot be overlooked.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The following implications have been identified:

a) Financial

No additional budget is required to implement the proposed action. The Finance team have provided figures which suggest that there is projected to be a general downturn in income generated from car parking fees of around £70-80k per month. It should be noted that even without suspending car parking charges, due to the lockdown situation and social distancing / isolation, revenue generated will be significantly decreased.

- RDC currently pay a management fee of approx. £27,000 per annum to SBC to deliver an Enforcement service in Ryedale. Across the course of the year the income generated through Parking Charge Notice's (PCN) generally offsets this charge making the service cost neutral. SBC have confirmed that no changes to the management fee are proposed as charges are determined at the year end and are dependent on the percentage of visits made between on and off street locations.

b) Legal

Government guidance is that where caravan sites are not places of primary residence, these are to be closed; and that Local Authorities must provide free car parking to NHS and social care key workers. RDC must comply with this guidance.

- c) Other (Equalities, Staffing, Planning, Health & Safety, Environmental and Climate Change, Crime & Disorder)
None identified

6.0 MONITORING OFFICER ADVICE

Requires consultation with the Leader as it is varying fees and charges agreed by Members. The Chair of Council has been informed but there is no need for consultation as this is a matter of substance and not of process.

7.0 CONSULTATION RECORD

According to the Constitution, under urgency powers, decisions usually taken by the Council and its committees are taken by the CEO following consultation with the appropriate elected members.

The appropriate elected members are:

- The Leader of the Council
- The Chair of the appropriate committee, for matters relating to that specific committee¹
- Relevant Ward member(s), if any, for matters of particular relevance to that ward²

Name of consultee	Cllr Duncan – Leader
This is urgently required in order to protect public health. But the suspension of charging should not be indefinite, it should be reviewed when the government relaxes any or all of its restrictions. Enforcement of dangerous parking situations should continue.	
Date consultation completed	02-04-20

8.0 DECISION

Decision of the CEO based on consultation	The recommendation is agreed.
Date	03-04-20

¹ “Chairman of the appropriate Committee” refers to committee specific matters and does not mean that all Committee Chairs will be consulted on everything

² “Relevant Ward Member(s), if any” refers to ward specific matters and does not mean that all Members will be consulted on everything