

CAR PARK CHARGES

PORTFOLIO HOLDER CLLR ALISON SMITH MBE

Previous recommendation to Cabinet

Car Park charges have remained unchanged since 2007. It is proposed to increase tariffs for 1hour/2hours and All Day parking. The 3 hour tariff will remain unchanged.

Consultation responses from Members of the Public

- Need to increase usage/investment needs within Coalville TC before looking to raise car park charges. Raising car parking charges will just drive more people away from the town. Increasing car parking charges will destroy the town. Any increase in parking fees will only cause people to go elsewhere such as Ashby, Leicester or Loughborough or cause more people to park on residential streets causing misery for local residents. Rather than raising parking something major needs to be done about Coalville itself.
- Ref car park charges, worst decision ever taken by NWLDC to introduce them.
- Remove the free parking spaces and charge 50p per hour for all parking.
- We do not agree that the benchmarking information indicates that NWL charges compare favourably locally. Are aware that neighbouring South Derbyshire makes no charges for parking and that this is a bone of contention for local traders, who believe they are losing footfall because of this. Furthermore, the comparison table is clear that other Leicestershire Districts differentiate their charges by length of stay or location, indicating that they have a strategy to encourage parking uptake by purpose.
- Car park charges proposal lacks an economic impact assessment. For instance, there is no reference to the availability of or charges for public transport, which is critical to a rural economy like NWL. However, in the context of high levels of personal insolvency and disadvantage in the District, together with the paucity of Equality Impact Assessment, it is apparent that the sustainability of these proposals is questionable.
- With regards to any changes which are made to the car parking. Further consultations are required in accordance with the lease obligations of the car park adjoining Coalville Shopping centre
- Find it hard to understand how the Council clearly aspire to be 'supporting businesses to set up and grow within the town centre', yet they then plan on increasing car parking charges when we all clearly know that parking charges are damaging the high street.

Consultation responses from Working Groups, Unions etc

- None on this issue

Consultation responses from the Executive Consultation Meeting

- Mike Brown (UNISON Regional Representative) stated that he supported the proposed increases to car parking charges.

Consultation responses from the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party

- None on this issue

Consultation responses from the Policy Development Group

- In response to a comment regarding the correct legislation for setting car parking charges for maintaining car parks and not for Council income, the Head of Finance confirmed that there was legislation for accounting in relation to car park charges but in this case the levels were relatively low and he was confident that the Council was operating its car parks within the law.

Consultation responses from Coalville Town Team (CTT)

Whilst we understand, and sympathise with the Councils' current budget situation, the CTT find it hard to understand how the Council clearly aspire to be 'supporting businesses to set up and grow within the town centre', yet they then plan on increasing car parking charges when we all clearly know that parking charges are damaging the high street. You only have to look at current Government proposals and the Grimsey Review to see this is a widely accepted principle.

We welcome the news of investment on the town market but points 1.2 & 1.4 (your own minutes from the Cabinet on September 24th) clearly contradict each other about how current trading conditions are in the town. We believe this confusion and stagnation of trade may well be the reason for no private investment, as they see no potential investment return. The proposed blanket increases in car parking charges can only be a retrograde step to your hard work and investment.

As you know the CTT is currently working with the NWLDC on a more sustainable strategy in terms of car parking arrangements that will be beneficial to council, trader and most importantly the shoppers of the town.

CTT recognise that the advent of car parking charges have been detrimental to the footfall within the town centre since 2007, and we know of large high street retailers that will not invest in our town with our current car parking charging structure. After a recent meeting between ourselves and the Belvoir Centre, they also support our thinking.

Our proposals answer these retailers concerns but fully respect the councils need for income. We look forward to the opportunity to work alongside the NWLDC as we have the same aspirations to see business growth, investment and job creation.

Officer Comments

- The Council is pro-actively working with local businesses through the Coalville Town Team to encourage use of the town. The Council's Head of Regeneration and Planning is also actively seeking development and the Council is working to improve Coalville. Charges have not risen since 2007.
- Thanked for their comments and increases to car park charges is one of a number of proposals to meet the budget shortfall. Comments noted and will form part of the consultation report to Cabinet.

Recommendations

In considering all the consultation responses the following recommendation are now proposed to Cabinet:

1. To implement car park fees and charges from 01/04/14 as follows - 1 hr tariff from 50p to 60p, 2 hr tariff from 80p to £1.00, 3 hr tariff unchanged, all day tariff from £2.00 to £2.20
2. To continue working with the Coalville Town Team and the Belvoir Centre owners on future car parking proposals for Coalville
3. To assess the viability of introducing new methods of payment including pay on exit and use of new technology such as number plate recognition and smartphones for all car parks.