

CONSULTATION RESPONSE - INTRODUCTION OF CAR PARKING CHARGES.

Date: 1st July 2019

Circulation:

All staff and Members

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PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO READ THIS DOCUMENT AS IT IS A COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION WHICH WAS OPEN FROM 8TH MAY 2019 TO 24TH JUNE 2019.

Thank you to all who contributed to the consultation process and to those who submitted written and email responses to the inbox. We are also grateful to the Employee Engagement Forum, who initially helped to provide questions prior to the consultation launch so that we could address these in the consultation document.

There have been a number of comments raised as part of the formal consultation. The consultation related to proposals to introduce car parking charges which affected all employees and members who choose to travel by car to the town centre. This impacted employees who are currently based at St Martin's Place (SMP), Landmark Place (LMP), The Curve and any other Town Centre facility. The charges will take effect from 1st October 2019.

The council values its staff very highly. This is exactly why we have spent a great deal of time and money putting together proposals for heavily subsidised staff parking and improvements to Hatfield car park. The only other option was to let staff who work in the town centre to source their own parking arrangements; not something we thought

was acceptable. The Herschel Car Park is already used by other employers and we accrue significant income from those arrangements.

This consultation document response also highlights a further review of car parking at hubs and all other Council buildings which will take place next year (2020).

All the responses were captured and logged and considered. There were some key themes that emerged as part of the consultation that are reported within the text of this response.

CONSULTATION OUTCOME

Following consideration of the feedback received this has resulted in the following changes to the proposals outlined in the consultation document dated 8th May 2019:-

- Staff on pay Levels 1 – 4 will pay £1 per day - capped at £3 per week
- Staff on pay Levels 5 and 6 have been moved into the lower level of charging i.e. £1 per day – capped at £3 per week.
- CMT parking charge will receive no subsidy or cap and they will pay the market rate for parking, currently £5 per day.

Please note that the following:

- Staff on pay Levels 7 – 10 will pay £2 per day capped at £6 per week
- SML will pay £3 per day – no cap

These car park charges will take affect from 1st October 2019. There are no other changes.

DETAILED RESPONSE

There were questions provided to the council from the Employee Engagement Forum, prior to the launch of the consultation. These were published as frequently asked questions at the time of the launch on SBCinsite.

The consultation was launched through Briefing sessions led by CMT representatives and a total of 11 briefings were delivered in different sites.

As part of the launch of the consultation an email inbox was set up which received a good response with a broad range of questions and statements. Having analysed the responses we were able to theme these into common topics details of which are below.

CAR PARK CHARGES

There were a number of suggestions in relation to the charging proposals. These have all been considered and revised charges will be implemented as set out above.

PARKING AT HERSCHEL

There were a number of comments and suggestions about moving cars before 5pm to Herschel Car Park. This was not possible as Herschel Car Park will be occupied.

SAFETY CONCERNS AND CAR PARK ACCESS

A number of people responded to the consultation with concerns about safety, particularly in relation to the use of Hatfield car park. In relation to our car parks, all are accredited with the Park Mark Award. The proposals had already taken into account the historical issues with Hatfield Car Park, and a refurbishment programme and security improvements will be part of the office move. See below for details under Car Park Maintenance.

There are 42 CCTV cameras in Hatfield Car Park. The high street is now well lit. Within Hatfield, the lighting system is automatically controlled and lights will come on across the whole car park floor once a car approaches that floor. We will be increasing security, and there is a programme of works to continue to make improvements at both car parks.

The council is also working with the Police service and other partners on how we manage safety in the area and the car parks. We have shutters in the car parks, which will be used. The car parks will be locked down overnight. Hatfield Car Park will close at 9pm and reopen at 7am. Any vehicle parked within the car park, except on the ground level will be locked down overnight.

DISABILITY AND TEMPORAY ACCESS TO HERSCHEL CAR PARK

There were comments related to staff that had medical conditions that would impact them due to the walk from Hatfield Car Park to Windsor Road.

There are a number of disabled and electrical vehicle (EV) bays on site and in Herschel car park. Hatfield Car Park will be the main car park for staff. The current parking policy remains unchanged where anyone with a disability and a blue badge will be able to park in the disabled parking bays either on site or at Herschel Car Park. If staff suffer from mobility issues, the current policy and process in place at SMP will continue to be used, to request temporary parking at Herschel car park. Blue badge holders are the only group to receive free parking.

FACILITIES FOR CYCLISTS AND OTHERS

A number of comments were received in relation to what facilities would be made available to staff that may wish to cycle to work. Each employee will have an allocated locker, which will be fit for purpose, and there will be shower facilities on site. Safe cycle storage will also be available.

CAR PARK MAINTENANCE

Staff raised concerns regarding the conditions of Hatfield Car Park. The Car Park is to undergo a significant programme of works which will be carried out over the next six months which are detailed below.

External:

- Removal of some of the materials on the outside envelope of the building, treatment and re-decoration
- Drainage improvement works
- Re-decoration of metal work
- New Car Park Entry Signage

Internal

- Concrete repairs and treatment of ramps and ceilings
- Repairs to damaged surface areas
- Resurfacing and line painting
- Paint Internal Pillars and Re-decorate internal metal work
- Provide additional directional signage
- Refurbishment /replacement of internal windows

Stairwells

- Painting of all stairwell and hall areas as well as painting/treatment/replacement of the stairwell floors
- Replacement of signage
- Replacement of the handrails
- Replacement of Fire Doors and Frames

Electrical Works

- Upgrade general and emergency lighting on all car parking levels and stairwells
- Rewire lighting installation throughout including new wiring containment systems
- Repairs/refurbishment to the lift.

CAR PARK ADDRESSES

Staff requested details of the address of the Car Parks. Please see below.

- Hatfield Car Park - Hatfield Road, Slough, SL1 1NB
- Herschel Car Park - 58 Herschel Street, Slough, SL1 1PG

PARKING SPACES

Staff have raised how many car spaces will be available.

There will be approximately 500 spaces at Hatfield Car Park for staff use. Given our current occupancy rates and parking requirements at our existing sites we believe that this will be adequate to deal with demand. This will be monitored on a regular basis.

Staff have asked about the availability of the TVU car park.

This car park is a temporary car park and has already been fully let out during the day, it will therefore not be available to staff.

MEMBER PARKING

Staff were interested in knowing what arrangements were being made for Members.

Members will pay the same rate as staff on pay Level 6 and below.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

A number of questions were raised about the financial aspects of the introduction of the car park charged.

The car park charges are set to only recover the estimated additional running costs for operating the car park at near full capacity (which includes maintenance and security). The charges will be reviewed but not until 2020/21, when we have a clearer assessment of actual usage and agile/smarter working has been embedded.

The Council raises significant income from the current parking arrangements. Each space that is let in Herschel is charged out at £1200 per bay per year (plus VAT); in Hatfield it is £1100 per bay per year (plus VAT). We are significantly subsidising parking to reflect the additional costs that the council will incur for allocating parking to staff.

ACCESS TO THE CAR PARKS

A number of staff queried how the process of accessing the car parks was going to work.

Each member of staff will have an access pass; these will be pre-programmed with payment rates. Payments can be made daily or on account at the pay machine. The existing system will have Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), which can log multiple cars. This system will be linked to the appropriate parking charge. Payments can be made daily or on account at the pay machine.

AGENCY WORKERS AND CONSULTANTS

Some questions were raised about the use of agency workers and contractors.

We acknowledge that due to national and local skills shortages we do have to use agency workers and consultants in some parts of our business. Apart from the high profile national skills shortages, we also need to bring in technical experts in a range of fields for project work. Agency workers who are covering true vacancies will be charged at the rate appropriate for the role that they are covering.

WORKING TIME

A number of staff queried whether the time travelling from the car park can be counted as part of their working day.

These proposals do not alter any contractual working hours, which will remain unchanged. Any additional travel time will need to be absorbed within employees own time. We encourage all employees to speak to line managers if they have any difficulties.

There will be opportunities to work at hubs or remotely, where limited parking remains free for the time being. The Council is promoting smart and agile working, and encouraging all managers and teams to think how they can deliver their services

EXPENSES FOR PARKING ELSEWHERE

A few employees asked if they had to pay to park elsewhere in the Town, could they re-claim their expenses for this cost. This is not possible and will be a permanent position.

PARKING FOR ALL VISITORS TO 25 WINDSOR ROAD

All visitors to Slough Borough Council will need to make their own arrangements in relation to parking. There will be no visitor parking provided. The main car park for staff will be Hatfield Car Park, as we have contracts in place already for the use of Herschel Car Park (as well as some in Hatfield Car Park).

PICK UP AND DROP OFF POINTS

A number of responses asked for clarity about heavy equipment.

There will be drop off and pick up points at Herschel Car Park or in front of 25 Windsor Road. Anyone who already knows they will have storage requirements in the new building must advise their manager. This is to enable these elements to be included in the project plan for the move.

TRANSPORT MATTERS

A number of queries related to use and access to pool cars.

Electric Pool vehicles are very important in meeting our aspirations to reduce carbon emissions in Slough, and improve air quality. We have an ambitious plan to significantly reduce our business mileage emissions and costs. EV pool vehicles will be made available to staff that require a vehicle to undertake their work, but we cannot guarantee that there will always be a pool vehicle available for your staff. This is because we have approximately 500 casual business users with 166 claiming lump sum payments for triggering the 1000 business miles on an annual basis. Staff will need to continue to use their own vehicles if a pool EV is not available, but only after they have followed the 'travel hierarchy'.

We are investing significantly to increase our current pool fleet within the next few months and then to further expand the pool fleet in subsequent years both at the HQ and hubs. We are recruiting a Fleet Manager to implement a more streamline booking process and to update the legal procedures and processes for pool car use, including charging of vehicles. This is with an emphasis to ensure the most efficient and effective use of our pool fleet.

We are very keen that staff, use the pool vehicles appropriately for business journeys and preferably multiple journeys inside and outside the Borough and use the 'business travel hierarchy'.

We also believe that over time teams will need to change the way they operate using smarter systems and processes including how they use vehicles in particular where vehicles are required on a planned basis (planned visits) to ensure we are operating efficiently. We need to move away from vehicles being used for convenience.

We do have plans to procure new EVs with longer range, but we would point out our 2017 Renault Zoes when driven in ECO mode can easily perform 120 miles on a full charge, and our leased 2018 Nissan Leafs can easily cover 140 miles on a full charge, again when driven in ECO mode.

Tusker, the largest supplier of company car salary sacrifice vehicles in the UK. They have an extensive range of vehicles. However, the Slough Tusker scheme has been deliberately restricted by the fact that we have insisted they only supply ULEVs (Ultra Low Emission Vehicles). This range of ULEVs started with about 9 vehicles and has increased four fold (in 3 years) since we launched the scheme in May 2016 and will continue to expand as the Government policy and Industry are shift changing towards ULEVs.

MODAL SHIFT (getting people out of their cars)

Employees expressed an interest in Council initiatives that support different modal shifts in relation to transport and parking.

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The Council is keen for employees to share cars where possible to reduce cars on the road in Slough. The Faxi Scheme is being introduced which is an application for creating private carpooling communities. Using smartphones or a computer, users

can securely select their car sharing partner(s) directly through the platform - which also verifies at the destination how many users have shared a vehicle. Further information is available on SBCinsite.

The Council is looking at a range of travel options around the borough, including discussions with train and bus companies to offer discounted travel offers. There are some discounts already available for Slough Borough Council staff, details can be found <http://insite/people/pay-and-benefits/benefits-and-special-offers>

There are already discounts in place for bus routes 71, 72,701 and 702.

PERSONAL EV – CHARGING

Staff asked if they could charge their own personal cars at work.

At the moment, there will not be enough charging points for all individual employees to access those charging facilities at the car park(s), however there will be a small number of free parking spaces for plug in vehicles to charge on a first come first served basis.

MOTOR CYCLES, BIKES AND CYCLE PATHS AND PARKING FOR BIKES

A number of questions related to the use of motor bikes and cycles were raised.

Currently there are a number of free public spaces for motorcycles, given free parking in our town centre public car parks; there will not be any changes to this arrangement.

The car park at Herschel will have space for the main storage and charging of pool cars and bikes, plus bike parking. This will be a very secure area.

HOMELESS CONSIDERATIONS

A number of comments were made regarding the homeless community that were sleeping / using the car parks.

The Council is aware of its responsibilities to those that are homeless. Comments will be passed onto the relevant team to ensure those in need are supported as appropriate.

UPDATED EIA

The initial EIA was included on the intranet with the consultation paper. The final EIA has been amended and will be uploaded onto the intranet.

Joe Carter
Director of Regeneration