

# Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	<b>Policy Development &amp; Scrutiny Panel</b>	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	<b>21 March 2024</b>	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		<b>N/A</b>
TITLE:	<b>Parking Charge review 2024/25</b>	
WARD:	All	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> Appendix 1 - Outline of Proposed Parking Charges Appendix 2 – Draft Equalities Impact Assessments		

## 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the Panel on proposals to review parking charges and extend emissions-based parking charges to all paid for parking locations, as agreed by Council on 20 February 2024.
- 1.2 In line with our corporate strategy, these proposals have been developed aimed to improve air quality through a major shift to mass transport, walking and cycling and incentives to reduce the use of more polluting vehicles to secure the safer movement of pedestrian traffic on the highway by reducing the public health risks posed to them by air pollution. These proposals are also aimed to facilitate the achievement of strategic outcomes of local transport policy by reducing congestion and vehicle intrusion into neighbourhoods, and particularly residential neighbourhoods and align with the Council policy on Liveable Neighbourhoods and the climate and nature and emergency.
- 1.3 Parking charges remain an effective mechanism to encourage behaviour change and delivery strategic transport objectives.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

**The Panel is asked to;**

- 2.1 Note the proposals presented as a review of parking charges across council car parks and on street paid for parking locations, to be taken to public consultation.**

**2.2 Note the extension of the method of delivering emission-based car parking charges in Bath to all council operated paid for parking locations across Bath & North East Somerset, to be taken to public consultation.**

### **3 THE REPORT**

3.1 This report sets out proposals which will affect everyone living within, or visiting, Bath and North East Somerset, and therefore its aims are aligned to the Corporate Strategy as set out below.

**One:** We have one overriding purpose – to improve people’s lives.

**Two:** We have two core policies – tackling the climate and ecological emergency and giving people a bigger say. These will shape everything we do.

**Three:** To translate our purpose into commitments, we have identified three principles. We want to prepare for the future, deliver for local residents and focus on prevention. Our four values - bold, empowered, transparent and supportive - continue to underpin all of our work.

Our three principles – preparing for the future, delivering for local residents and focusing on prevention, with the following commitments added to amplify them.

- preparing for the future.
- delivering for local residents.
- focusing on prevention.

Within this framework, the following priorities align strongly with those set out in the Corporate Strategy:

- Healthy lives and places – working with health and other partners to tackle inequalities, promote healthy places, and support people to live healthier lives.
- Clean, safe and vibrant neighbourhoods - working with local communities to promote civic pride and preventative approaches.
- More travel choices – making it easier for people to walk, wheel and use public transport to reduce transport emissions.
- Cultural life - valuing and developing its contribution to Bath and North East Somerset.

3.2 Air quality impacts on pedestrian safety; managing traffic flows; and availability of parking are all significant issues in our region. Whilst the proposals detailed in this report are a separate standalone scheme, they are complimentary to other projects aimed at addressing these issues, including but not limited to the following:

- (1) Promoting a major shift to mass transport, walking and cycling, with incentives to reduce the use of more polluting vehicles, in accordance with the UK government National Air Quality Strategy

- (2) Improving the safety of cyclists and pedestrians through active travel schemes which rebalance priorities on our roads and build on social distancing needs.
- (3) A Clean Air Zone in central Bath, to encourage less polluting ways of travelling around the city
- (4) Liveable Neighbourhoods policy and work concerning reducing the effect of motor vehicles on neighbourhoods, particularly residential neighbourhoods.

### **Climate Emergency Context**

3.3 As noted in the National Air Quality Strategy, measures designed to address air quality issues will often have a positive effect on climate change. Whilst this report does not attempt to justify the proposals on climate change grounds, it is anticipated that the measures set out in this report and which are designed to (1) improve air quality in order to secure the safer movement of pedestrian traffic on the highway, and (2) meet traffic management purposes, will also reduce the level of emissions that drive climate change, as a result, for example, of encouraging a switch to low emission vehicles or more sustainable modes of transport.

### **Further Context**

3.4 In order to develop a fair and balanced package of proposals to meet traffic management and pedestrian safety purposes, regard has been given (to an extent permissible with the requirements under s.122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 discussed in section 4) to a range of issues which appear to the Council to be relevant, including potential impacts on residents; commerce; tourism; carbon footprint and air quality; and transportation.

### **Air pollution**

3.5 The primary threat to clean safe air is now posed by traffic emissions. Vehicles with petrol and diesel based internal combustion engines emit a wide variety of pollutants, principally carbon monoxide (CO), oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>), which have an increasing impact on urban air quality.

3.6 Pollutants from these sources may not only prove a problem in the immediate vicinity of these sources but can be transported long distances.

3.7 Additionally, ozone (as a secondary pollutant) often impacts rural areas far from the original emission site because of long-range transport. Photochemical reactions resulting from the action of sunlight on nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and VOCs, typically emitted from road vehicles, lead to the formation of ozone.

3.8 Air pollution can cause or contribute to a variety of health conditions, particularly amongst the young and elderly.

3.9 The health problems resulting from exposure to air pollution have a high cost to people who suffer from illness and premature death, to our health services and to business. In the UK, these costs add up to more than £20 billion every year (Source: Royal College of Physicians). Any reduction in emissions within the city centre will have a beneficial impact on those living and visiting the city centre.

- 3.10 Whilst national targets and legal limits exist for air pollution and air quality there is no safe limit. Any measures that aim to reduce the impact of vehicle emissions will have a beneficial impact on human health and the environment.

### **Background to emission-based charges in Bath & North East Somerset.**

- 3.11 The council implemented emission-based charges for on street resident parking permits across all resident parking zones in January 2022 following extensive engagement and consultation during 2021.
- 3.12 In September 2023 emission-based car parking charges were implemented across all Council managed car parks in Bath across all payment channels, including cash payments at the pay and display machine. The council also deployed card reader terminals where practically possible to increase the payment options available, noting that many individuals in vulnerable groups do not have access to a smartphone.
- 3.13 Emission-based charges are linked to the CO2 emissions of the vehicle, or engine capacity where emission data is not available. Vehicles are classified in line with the DVLA Vehicle Excise Duty Bands (as of 1st April 2017). The higher the engine's emissions, the higher the charge for the permit. Therefore, the higher charges aim to reduce the use of more polluting vehicles to secure the safer movement of pedestrian traffic on the highway by reducing the public health risks posed to pedestrians by air pollution.
- 3.14 Vehicles that emit between 0-130g/km of CO2 (including electric vehicles) pay a baseline charge. More polluting vehicles emitting more than 131g/km of CO2 will pay progressively more for their parking. The charges for diesel fuelled vehicles is further increased (compared to a similar sized and CO2 level emitting engines of other fuel types) due to the higher levels of other pollutants emitted from the tail pipe following the combustion of this fuel type.
- 3.15 Emission-based charges aims to improve the safety of vulnerable people within the community by improving air quality and reducing congestion so those with more polluting vehicles pay more and are encouraged to change behaviours to make other travel choices where alternatives exist. This is achieved by incentivising the use of less polluting vehicles where options exist or a switch to more sustainable journey types, and to encourage motorists to consider a vehicle's emissions when making future purchase or lease/hire decisions.
- 3.16 All customers can check their vehicle's emissions rating or engine capacity, free of charge, online at <https://www.gov.uk/get-vehicle-information-from-dvla>

### **Extension emission-based charges.**

- 3.17 The extension of emission-based charging to all council managed paid for parking locations replicates the structure and rationale for emission-based charges introduced across all resident parking schemes and paid for parking areas as described in paragraphs 3.9 to 3.15.
- 3.18 Emission-based parking charges are proposed to be implemented at the following locations:

- (1) Bath on street pay and display, all locations.

- (2) Keynsham, all council car parks.
- (3) South View Road and Excelsior Terrace car parks, Midsomer Norton.
- (4) Church Rd and Waterloo Road car parks, Radstock.
- (5) The Shallows, Saltford

- 3.19 Emission-based charges are not proposed at Bath’s three Park and Ride (P&R) sites at this time for those using the site but not the bus service.
- 3.20 Based on the current customer base, its calculated that 40% of customers using Keynsham car parks will pay no increase because of the introduction of an emission-based charge, notwithstanding the impact of changes to the underlying charges as a result of a separate price review.
- 3.21 No customer data is available for car parks in Midsomer Norton, Radstock, or Saltford.
- 3.22 A draft outline of proposed emission-based charges is included within Appendix 1. This is subject to the outcomes of a public consultation.

**Review of Parking Charges – Motorbikes.**

- 3.23 Whilst it’s recognised that motorbikes may be less impactful on congestion, they continue to utilise road space and emit pollutants.
- 3.24 Motorbike users have historically benefited from free parking across on street locations and council car parks within Bath and North East Somerset.
- 3.25 It’s proposed that motorbike users will require an emission-based resident parking permit in order to park in a permit holder spaces, or to pay the appropriate emission-based parking charge in on-street and off-street locations.
- 3.26 To acknowledge the disparity in engine size between motorbikes and other vehicles, the banding used for vehicles where no CO2 emission data is held by the DVLA is proposed as follows:

<b>Current bands for four wheeled vehicles</b>	<b>Equivalent bands for motorbikes</b>
0-1550 cc	Under 151 cc
1551-1950cc	151 - 400 cc
1951-2950cc	401 - 600 cc
over 2951cc	Over 600 cc

- 3.27 A draft outline of proposed emission-based charges that would also apply to motorbikes is included within Appendix 1. This is subject to the outcomes of a public consultation.

**Review of Parking Charges – Bath.**

- 3.28 The baseline hourly charge for Bath car parks is proposed to rise by £0.10 per hour in October 2024 and October 2025, equivalent to a 6% increase. The emission-based charge will be uplifted from this new baseline using the existing

uplift mechanism, which is 2.5% uplift for each more polluting band, or 5% for each capacity band.

- 3.29 The evening charge available at Charlotte Street car park is proposed to increase by £1 against the baseline charge in October 2024. In October 2025 the baseline evening charge will be increased to align to the equivalent per hour rate in Bath car parks, maintaining a 2-hour evening only charge in this central location at the same charge as other car parks where 2 hours are available.
- 3.30 The overnight charge at all Bath car parks is proposed to increase by £1 in October 2024 and October 2025.
- 3.31 On-street paid for parking in Bath city centre is proposed to increase by £0.10 per hour against the baseline charge in January 2025 and January 2026.
- 3.32 Parking charges are proposed to increase for customers parking at Bath's three P&R locations and not using the P&R service, with both available tariffs (up to 3 hours and up to 23.59) increasing by £0.50 in October 2024, and October 2025. This modest price increase supports the longer-term viability of the P&R service which may be impacted by users that park at these sites but who do not use the bus service.
- 3.33 A draft outline of proposed charges, including emission-based charges, is included within Appendix 1. This is subject to the outcomes of a public consultation.

### **Review of Parking Charges – Keynsham, Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Saltford.**

- 3.34 The Sustainable Transport Plan for Keynsham town centre includes the provision of improved public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure, with the aim to encourage people to use sustainable modes of transport to get to Keynsham town centre. This aims to lead to a reduction in the need for car parking spaces in the centre of the town, over the 20-year Plan period.
- 3.35 The 30 minutes free parking in dedicated bays will remain in Keynsham where bays are marked.
- 3.36 The baseline hourly charge for Keynsham car parks is proposed to be increased by £0.10 per hour on the current charge. A draft outline of proposed charges, including emission-based charges, is included within Appendix 1. This is subject to the outcomes of a public consultation.
- 3.37 Charges for season tickets in Keynsham are to be available at all long stay locations and will also be linked to a vehicle's emissions.
- 3.38 The council is delivering a High Street Regeneration Programme in Midsomer Norton totalling a combined investment of £3.6M which is designed to increase footfall to the local area and support local businesses.
- 3.39 This includes a high-quality multi-use civic space; improvements to shopfronts; restoration of the Town Hall and transfer to community ownership; and market town brand for Midsomer Norton focusing on important aspects of local culture.

- 3.40 Additional short stay parking is available in Midsomer Norton within private car parking (i.e. that not managed by the council) at Sainsbury's provided for customers.
- 3.41 The council was successful in obtaining funding from the West of England Combined Authority's (WECA) Housing and Regeneration Enabling Fund, to create regeneration plans and masterplans for four town centres in Bath and North East Somerset.
- 3.42 Working with key stakeholders, including Radstock Town Council, businesses and the community, a draft Regeneration Action Plan has been developed which identifies priority projects. The plan will also be used to support future funding bids and inform investment plans and future strategies for the town. The plan is available to view at <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Radstock%20regeneration%20Action%20Plan.pdf>
- 3.43 The introduction of charges at car parks in Midsomer Norton and Radstock helps to support the ongoing costs for operating these car parks, including energy costs, maintenance, and other improvements to the asset to support improvements delivered through the regeneration schemes, and additional officer resource to ensure that turnover of the available spaces is maintained.
- 3.44 Parking charges are proposed to be introduced in council managed car parks in Midsomer Norton and Radstock to align to the same baseline charge as Keynsham and to also apply from 8am to 6pm Monday to Saturday inclusive.
- 3.45 The council will consult on options for the inclusion of dedicated free to use short stay bays in car parks within Midsomer Norton and Radstock.
- 3.46 The charge structure in Midsomer Norton, which currently has unrestricted free parking, is proposed to match that for long stay parking in Keynsham. A draft outline of proposed charges is included within Appendix 1. This is subject to the outcomes of a public consultation.
- 3.47 The existing time periods and maximum stay times in Radstock car parks are proposed to be maintained to ensure frequent turnover of the limited spaces available to support local businesses. A draft outline of proposed charges is included within Appendix 1. This is subject to the outcomes of a public consultation.
- 3.48 Charges for season tickets within Midsomer Norton to be available at all long stay locations and will also be linked to a vehicle's emissions.
- 3.49 Season tickets are not proposed to be available within Radstock car parks as these locations do not provide all day parking as described in 3.45.

### **Hotel Permits**

- 3.50 In January 2022 the council linked its hotel permits to its 24-hour car park charges. Permits for hotels located in the central zone, zone 1 and zone 6 were valid only in long stay council car parks due to their proximity to the city centre. Permits for hotels in all other zones provided parking for guests in on street permit holder bays as they were located away from the city centre.

3.51 As hotel permits provided a mix of on-street and off-street parking for guests the charges remained at the baseline charge and was not linked to a vehicles emissions in September 2023.

3.52 It's proposed that with the implementation of on-street emission-based charges in January 2025 that the charges for hotel guests through a hotel permit are linked to their vehicles emissions in order to discourage visitors to the city from bringing their more polluting vehicles into urban areas. This will also prevent a hotel permit being used to avoid the emissions-based charges for more polluting vehicles.

#### **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

4.1 Changes to parking charges are subject to the processes set out in the RTRA 1984, which include, in some circumstances, a requirement to consult bodies and consider public comments. The council is also able to carry out public engagement in addition to that required by the Act.

4.2 Under section 122 of the RTRA 1984, it is the duty of the local highway authority exercising its functions under that Act (such as setting parking charges) to seek "to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway". It must seek to secure those purposes so far as is practicable having regard to the following matters:

- (1) the desirability of securing and maintaining reasonable access to premises;*
- (2) the effect on the amenities of any locality affected and (without prejudice to the generality of this paragraph) the importance of regulating and restricting the use of roads by heavy commercial vehicles, so as to preserve or improve the amenities of the areas through which the roads run;*
- (3) the strategy prepared under section 80 of the Environment Act 1995 (national air quality strategy);*
- (4) the importance of facilitating the passage of public service vehicles and of securing the safety and convenience of persons using or desiring to use such vehicles; and*
- (5) any other matters appearing to the strategic highways company or the local authority to be relevant.*

4.3 The proposals set out in this report are designed to achieve the purposes set out at 1.2 and 3.2 above, taking account of and in accordance with the section 122 duty.

4.4 The information on climate change is included solely because it is deemed to be of wider interest to the Panel following the declaration of the Climate Emergency in March 2019.

4.5 There have been a number of high-profile legal challenges regarding the interpretation and application of this legislation and having considered those challenges the Council considers that the proposals outlined in this report are in accordance with the requirements of the RTRA 1984. In particular the Council considers that the introduction of an emissions and fuel-based pricing policy, as outlined in section 3 of this report, is not contrary to the RTRA 1984 as the proposals are not intended to raise revenue to fund projects to address air

pollution risks to pedestrian safety but instead are themselves the measures to address such risks.

## **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

5.1 A review of parking charges and the introduction of emission-based pay and display charges to all council managed car parks were included in proposals for the council's budget for 2024/25, as agreed on 20 February 2024, as part of a package of £760k of savings (£206k in 2024/25, £374k in 2025/26, £180k in 2026/27).

## **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

## **7 EQUALITIES**

7.1 Equalities impact assessments have been developed as part of these proposals and are included with Appendix 2.

7.2 These draft assessments will be reviewed as appropriate following the consideration of feedback received from Council, this Panel and the statutory consultation.

## **8 CLIMATE CHANGE**

8.1 The objective is to improve the safety of road users (particularly vulnerable people) by improving air quality.

8.2 A reduction in vehicle emissions more generally will also see a reduction in the tail pipe emissions (including carbon) linked to climate change, helping to address the climate and ecological emergency; however, this is not the core objective.

## **9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

9.1 None. This proposal continues the process and rationale introduced for emission-based charges for on street residents parking permits and Bath car parks.

## **10 CONSULTATION**

10.1 Significant engagement and consultation work was undertaken to introduce the concept of emission-based charging for On-Street permits in 2021 and agreed by the council's Cabinet in July 2021, with further consultation work undertaken in the Summer of 2023 for emission-based car parking charges in Bath. The consultation documentation and outcome reports are available online at:

- (1) Spring 2021 engagement (including cabinet report) for emission-based permits charges – <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/parking-permits-consultation-april-2021>
- (2) Autumn 2021 TRO consultation for emission-based permit charges – <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/parking-TRO-consultation-autumn-2021>

- (3) Summer 2023 TRO consultation for emission-based car parking charges in Bath - <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/emission-based-car-parking-charges-bath-car-parks>

10.2 The proposals have been developed in cooperation with Parking Services, the Director of Place Management and Cabinet members, and proposed for 2024/25 as part of the Council's budget setting process, as approved by full Council in February 2024.

10.3 All proposals that vary car parking charges will require a change to the Traffic Regulation Order, which requires a statutory consultation over a period of 21 days to allow all interested stakeholders the opportunity to comment. This public consultation is due to launch later in May 2024.

10.4 As these proposals impact visitors our market towns and city, the customers who comprise the 77% of transactions paid for via MiPermit will receive direct communication (where appropriate details are held) alerting them to the proposals and the consultation so they can feed in their views.

10.5 Additional signage, over and above that required in the regulations, will be installed across all impacted locations to raise awareness of the proposals and signpost customers to the consultation material.

10.6 The outcome and recommendations from the public consultation are anticipated to be published in August 2025, with the Traffic Regulation Order containing accepted proposals to be sealed in August 2025. Adopted change are expected to be line in October 2024 and October 2025 (car parks) and January 2025 and January 2026 (on street).

<b>Contact person</b>	Cllr Manda Rigby, Cabinet Member for Highways
<b>Background papers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single Member Decision E3252 <i>Addressing air quality and traffic management issues through the management of parking behaviour on the highway</i>, February 2021. <a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=31781&amp;PlanId=771&amp;RPID=35906096">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=31781&amp;PlanId=771&amp;RPID=35906096</a></li> <li>• Cabinet report E3281 <i>On street parking permits and charges</i>, July 2021. <a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=27560#mgDocuments">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=27560#mgDocuments</a></li> <li>• Budget and Council Tax 2023/24 and Financial Outlook Council, 21 February 2023 (item 78) <a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=31047#mgDocuments">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=31047#mgDocuments</a></li> <li>• Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel, 6 July 2023. <i>Emission-based car park charges for Bath</i> (item 9) <a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=636&amp;MIId=6397">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=636&amp;MIId=6397</a></li> </ul>

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Budget and Council Tax 2024/25 and Financial Outlook. Council, 20 February 2024 (item 8)<br/><a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=32565#mgDocuments">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=32565#mgDocuments</a></li></ul> |
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