

## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2020
<b>Report Subject</b>	Suspension of Town Centre Car Parking Charges
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The County Council took the decision to suspend all Pay and Display car parking charges across the County from 25th March 2020. This decision was made to limit personal contact and reduce the risk of surface transmission of the COVID-19 virus via the pay and display machines and to assist key workers with essential shopping during the emergency. This aligned with national guidance issued by the British Parking Association.

Following the Welsh Government announcement to allow non-essential shops to reopen from the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020, the decision was made to continue the suspension of car parking charges until the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020.

This report provides information on the proposal to further extend the suspension of car parking charges until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 and provides details of the financial impact of such a decision. The extension will assist with the wider project of town centre recovery and regeneration post lockdown, particularly in the run up to the Christmas shopping period.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1	That Cabinet approves the suspension of car parking charges in Flintshire's town centre car parks until 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020.
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## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	<b>EXPLAINING THE PROPOSAL OF SUSPENDING CAR PARKING CHARGES</b>																					
1.01	The County Council took the decision to suspend all Pay and Display car parking charges across the County from 25th March 2020. This decision was made both to reduce personal contact and the risk of surface transmission of the COVID 19 virus from machines and to assist key workers and essential shopping at this challenging time. This aligned with national guidance issued by the British Parking Association <b>Appendix 1</b> . At this time the Civil Parking enforcement team were stood down from routine duties and deployed to assist with other work across the Council.																					
1.02	Following Welsh Governments announcement to allow non-essential shops to reopen from the 22nd June 2020, the decision was made to continue the suspension of charges until the 31st August 2020. This decision was made to support with town centre recovery post lockdown. At this time, the enforcement team were reinstated into their substantive role to ensure that all parking restrictions are being complied with.																					
1.03	To ensure the turnover of available spaces close to the town centre, there remained a requirement for a person parking in short stay car parks to obtain a ticket from the machine and display it in their vehicle. This ensures that valuable spaces were not taken up by those coming to the town centre to park all day. At those machines where a ticket is required, temporary floor markings have been placed to assist with social distancing and sanitisation stations have been placed at each machine. Whilst parking in car parks, all other rules apply such as parking within a marked bay and displaying a valid blue badge when parked in a designated disabled bay.																					
1.04	<p>To date the financial impact of the suspension of car parking charges is as follows:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: left;"><b>Current Car Parking Income Loss Forecast 2020-21</b></th> <th style="text-align: right;"><b>£m</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">Annual Budget</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">1.022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Less Agreed Pressure 2020-21</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">(0.178)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Residual Income Budget Target</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;">0.844</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Income Loss (Apr-Aug)</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">0.352</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Welsh Government Grant Support (Already Received for Q1)</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">(0.202)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Residual Income Loss (Apr-Aug)</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">£0.150</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<b>Current Car Parking Income Loss Forecast 2020-21</b>		<b>£m</b>	Annual Budget		1.022	Less Agreed Pressure 2020-21		(0.178)	Residual Income Budget Target		0.844	Income Loss (Apr-Aug)		0.352	Welsh Government Grant Support (Already Received for Q1)		(0.202)	Residual Income Loss (Apr-Aug)		£0.150
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1.05	A review has been undertaken of neighbouring Council's approach to car parking charges ( <b>Appendix 2</b> ). This has shown there has been a varied																					

	<p>approach to the issue. The majority of Council's took a similar decision to Flintshire and suspended all charges, with only a small number choosing to retain them as a way of discouraging people to travel during lockdown. For those who have suspended their charges, most are planning to reintroduce them in September/October 2020.</p> <p>Where charges had remained, income levels during the period of the pandemic have been as low as 10% - 20% of the expected level.</p>										
1.06	<p>It is proposed that the suspension of car parking charges in Flintshire is extended to 31st December 2020. This proposal is intended to support the cross Council work to reopen the town centres and encourage shoppers and visitors to return to our town centres. This approach will also allow for free parking in the run up to the Christmas period which will also support an upturn in shopper footfall.</p> <p>It is recommended that short stay parking continue to be controlled by way of displaying a valid Pay and Display ticket in the window of the vehicle to ensure the turnover of vehicles in spaces closest to the town centre and all other restrictions, such as displaying a blue badge in a disabled space, will still apply.</p>										
1.07	<p>Alternative options on charging structures, such as free parking after 3:00pm or the first two hours parking for free have been considered however, the benefit in income levels would be minimal and the investment to amend the legal orders and site signage for such a short period of time would be uneconomical.</p>										
1.08	<p>The financial impact of suspending parking charges until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 will be:</p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: right;"><b>£m</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Expected income 2020/21</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£0.844</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Loss of income (Apr-Dec)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£0.633</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Welsh Government Grant Support (Already Received for Q1)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(£0.202)</td> </tr> <tr> <td> Residual Income Loss (Apr-Aug)</td> <td style="text-align: right;"> <u>£0.431*</u></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*There will also be an additional loss of income of approximately £0.0541M for the reduction in issuing Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) due to service users not being required to purchase Pay and Display tickets.</p> <p>The loss of income will have a significant impact on the Streetscene and Transportation budget however, as experienced in other Council's, if charges were to be re-introduced, the expected budgeted income would still not be achieved, due to the reduced footfall.</p>		<b>£m</b>	Expected income 2020/21	£0.844	Loss of income (Apr-Dec)	£0.633	Welsh Government Grant Support (Already Received for Q1)	(£0.202)	 Residual Income Loss (Apr-Aug)	 <u>£0.431*</u>
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1.09	The loss of income will continue to be included in the COVID claim to Welsh Government, for which £0.202M was awarded for the first quarter.
1.10	If approved, a communications plan will be developed to inform service users and a review of onsite signage will undertake. A further review will be necessary in December to assess the situation and plan for the reintroduction of the charging scheme from January 1 <sup>st</sup> 2021.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
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2.01	<p>The financial impact of suspending car parking charges from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 will be £0.431M. There will be an additional loss of income of approximately £0.054M for the reduction in issuing Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) due to service users not being required to purchase Pay and Display tickets.</p> <p>There will be an approximate saving of £0.025M paid for the management of cash collections and purchase of P&amp;D Tickets</p> <p>A claim to Welsh Government for the loss on income for Quarter 1 has been successful with £0.202M awarded to date. Claims for quarter 2 and 3 will be made, however the outcome cannot be confirmed.</p>
2.02	There will be no impact on staff resources due to this proposal. The seven enforcement officers employed will still be required to patrol town centre car parks for compliance with set rules. They are also required to undertake on street parking enforcement and environmental crime (fly tip, dog control, littering) patrols and investigations.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
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3.01	<p><b>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td>Positive – Suspending car parking charges in the short term will support a longer term objective of regenerating the local high streets of Flintshire into recovery following the lockdown phase. Assisting with free parking will encourage more residents to shop local, supporting smaller independent businesses to allow for sustainability in to the future.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> <td>Positive – The suspension of parking charges will assist with town centre recovery and prevent further deterioration of the town centre high streets and local independent businesses.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration</td> <td>Neutral – No impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Collaboration</td> <td>Positive – Collaborative working across portfolios and with Town/Community</td> </tr> </table>	Long-term	Positive – Suspending car parking charges in the short term will support a longer term objective of regenerating the local high streets of Flintshire into recovery following the lockdown phase. Assisting with free parking will encourage more residents to shop local, supporting smaller independent businesses to allow for sustainability in to the future.	Prevention	Positive – The suspension of parking charges will assist with town centre recovery and prevent further deterioration of the town centre high streets and local independent businesses.	Integration	Neutral – No impact	Collaboration	Positive – Collaborative working across portfolios and with Town/Community
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		Councils and local businesses to work on an integrated approach to town centre recovery
Involvement		Neutral – No impact
<b>Well-being Goals Impact</b>		
Prosperous Wales		Positive This approach will assist the recovery of local, Welsh, town centre businesses post lockdown to assist with their sustainability in to the future.
Resilient Wales		Positive This approach will assist the recovery of town centre businesses post lockdown to assist with their sustainability in to the future.
Healthier Wales		Neutral – No Impact
More equal Wales		Neutral – No impact
Cohesive Wales		Neutral – No impact
Vibrant Wales		Positive Ensuring the sustainability of local independent Welsh businesses is important to the future of these high streets. Short term loss on income will assist with longer term recovery of businesses to improve the vibrancy of town centres.
Globally responsible Wales		Neutral – No impact

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside.
4.02	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education and Youth.
4.03	Chief Officer Team.
4.04	Neighbouring Authorities (information purpose only).

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 - National guidance on approach to parking enforcement Appendix 2 - Review of other Local Authorities approach to parking charges

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	N/A

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Stephen O Jones  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704700  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:Stephen.o.jones@flintshire.gov.uk">Stephen.o.jones@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Short Stay Parking</b> – Time restricted parking (usually 2-3 hours) to allow the effective turnover of vehicles for shoppers to access parking spaces close to the town centres</p> <p><b>Penalty Charge Notice</b> – A financial penalty for not complying with the rules and regulation of a legal parking order</p> <p><b>Parking order</b> – A legal document detailing the rules and regulation of the car park.</p> <p><b>Pay by phone</b> – a contactless method of payment of car parking charges.</p>