

CAR PARKING IN NEW MILLS

Report of Bob Hall: Head of Environmental Services

Executive Member: Councillor A Wells

Key Decision: No

Call-in: Yes

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 For the Executive to approve the proposals relating to the policy for the management of Council car parks in New Mills.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That a car park ticket machine be installed at New Mills Town Hall.
- 2.2 That the free period for parking be reduced from 2 hours to 1 hour.
- 2.3 That subject to the statutory consultation and the amendment to the Off-Street Car Parking Order the following charges be introduced at the New Mills Car parks:

Up to 1 hour	Free (a ticket must however be obtained and displayed)
Up to 2 hours	50p
Up to 4 hours	£1.50
Over 4 hours	£2.00

- 2.4 That the cost of a season ticket be increased to £75 per quarter.
- 2.5 That the enforcement continues to be carried out by the Borough Council but that this be reviewed after 6 months of the new charges being introduced.
- 2.6 That charges be introduced for parking all day on Saturday (currently only up to 1.00 pm) but that parking continues to be free on Sunday.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Regeneration Select Committee considered an initial report on car parking in New Mills at its meeting on 3 October 2006. It was resolved that the following be recommended for inclusion in the report to the Executive.
1. New Mills Town Hall car park to have a new ticket machine installed.
 2. Further consideration be given to reducing the free period down to 1 hour. (Councillors Ashton and Atkins abstained from voting on this matter).
 3. Robust negotiations take place with Network Rail about the lease for Torr Top car park and a possible 12 month rolling contract.

4. Review/increase charges and look at a scale of charges.
 5. Increase season ticket charges.
 6. More strict off-street enforcement and monitoring, possible involving New Mills Town Council.
 7. Consider charging for Saturdays and Sunday.
- 3.2 The need to retain the existing public car park provision in New Mills is seen as of fundamental importance to the economic viability of the town itself. This was reflected by the views of both the New Mills Town Council and the members of the Regeneration Select Committee. Therefore the option of the Council not renewing the lease on Torr Top Car Park from SPACIA was not considered realistic and the expectation is that this will be re negotiated upon its termination in March 2007.
- 3.3 However the provision of public car parking in New Mills currently operates at a deficit of around £11,000. A primary aim of any new policy will be to ensure this deficit is reduced and that the car park will 'break even'.
- 3.4 This report was considered by the Regeneration Select Committee at its meeting held on 16 January 2007 who supported the recommendation in paragraph 2 above.

4. ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

- 4.1 Taking the list of issues recommended by the Committee and as set out in 3.1 above the following actions are proposed.

4.1.1 Ticket machine at New Mills Town Hall

A car park ticket machine at New Mills Town Hall will enable better management and control of the car park to be had. This will primarily benefit the Town Council and visitors to the Town Hall but also it is likely that some direct income could be generated from parking fees. The cost of installing a machine will be around £4,000 and whilst it may be many years before a 'return' is shown on the investment the indirect benefits around consistency of management and enforcement of public car parks in the town make its provision a valid expenditure.

4.1.2 Consideration to reducing the free period down to 1 hour

The ability to park free for a limited period is acknowledged as a beneficial convenience for users of local shops. Reducing the period to 1 hour and introducing a scale of charges thereafter will retain the convenience for short stay users but potentially increase income from those users parking for longer see 4.1.4

4.1.3 Negotiate with SPACIA regarding Torr Top Car Park

The lease of Torr Top car park will be renewed from April 2007 and we will seek to negotiate the best rental possible.

4.1.4 Review/increase charges and look at a scale of charges

Because there is no detailed knowledge of the time that drivers stay in the car parks (it is either up to 2 hours or over 2 hours), developing a scale of new charges and then calculating the financial impact carries an element of risk.

We do know how many tickets have been issued in the last 12 months (65,000 up to 2 hours and 5,900 over 2 hours). However we have recently done some work in Buxton as part of developing a Parking Strategy and some of the information obtained here on average duration of stay can be adapted and applied to New Mills.

Review of any new charges will be made annually in the normal way to ensure both usage and income are maximised. Amending or adding to the tariff bands will need to be addressed once ticket issue trends are known.

Details of the new pay and display charges are given in Appendix 1. In summary the proposal is:-

Up to 1 hour - Free (a ticket must however be obtained and displayed)
Up to 2 hours – 50p (it would however be possible for drivers to return to their vehicle after 1 hour and put on another Free ticket)
Up to 4 hours – £1.50
Over 4 hours - £2.00

The likely financial impact of this is to increase income from around £7,500 in 2006/07 to £15,940 in 2007/08.

4.1.5 Increase season ticket charges

At present only around 10 season ticket holders use New Mills car parks. The cost of a season ticket, which allows all day parking, is £50 per quarter (£200 per annum). They offer good value, for example if used 5 days per week the cost per day is just 77p. In conjunction with adopting the scale of charges set out in 4.1.4 it is recommended that season ticket prices be increased to £75 per quarter. There is potential for season ticket sales to improve as increased pay and display fees make them more attractive. With 5 day per week use it would still cost only £1.15 per day.

4.1.6 Improve enforcement and monitoring

Improved enforcement can, for a short time, increase income from the issue of excess charge notices (ecn's). Although this is a necessary tool in the management of car parks it can be seen as being rather negative. Successful enforcement is more about ensuring users are complying with the car park regulations ie purchasing and/or displaying the correct ticket, not overstaying prescribed times etc. The longer term impact of this should be more income from fees but less income from the issue of ecn's

New Mills Town Council have indicated that they may be able to assist in enforcement so long as they do not incur any costs. In the first instance it is proposed that enforcement continue to be done wholly by the Borough Council but that this be reviewed after 6 months of the new charges being introduced. At that time the offer from the Town Council can be re assessed.

4.1.7 Consider charging for Saturday and Sunday

Currently there are no charges after 1pm on Saturdays or all day Sundays. However ticket machine records show that visitors do pay at these times. There is therefore a potential to raise some additional income from charging at these times. To be consistent with the charging regime in Glossop (but not Buxton and the Hope Valley where charges are all 7 days), it is proposed to

charge all day on Saturday but leave it free on Sunday. It is difficult to assess the additional income likely and a modest figure of £500 has been included in the projection.

- 4.2 New Mills Town Council have been consulted on the proposals set out and whilst they are broadly in favour of the proposals they have asked that the Council reconsider reducing the free period from 2 hours to one.

5. IMPLICATIONS

a) Resources

An additional initial resource of £4,000 to install a pay and display machine at New Mills Town Hall is required and this will be funded from the capital fund.

Additional income of around £11,440 per annum is estimated if the proposals are introduced.

This should therefore wipe out the current deficit of £11,000 per annum and lead to operation of car parks in New Mills to be virtually 'break even'.

b) Legal

The parking order will need to be amended to take account of the changes. This will be subject to consultation in the normal way.

c) Equalities and Human Rights Act

There are no relevant issues.

d) Environmental Issues

Provision of car parking in town centres can impact on the environment in the vicinity. Ensuring accessibility is maximised can help to reduce indiscriminate parking elsewhere in the town.

e) Community Safety

Provision of reasonably safe and secure car parks and minimising indiscriminate parking in inappropriate areas can improve community safety.

f) Risk Management

There are risks involved in the introduction of new charging regimes. These include failure to meet the financial targets set, the potential to displace car park users to other areas in the town and the potential to dissuade visitors from visiting the town.

g) Consultation

The proposals have been discussed with New Mills Town Council. An opportunity for wider consultation will be had when the parking order is revised.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Car park files at Chinley offices

7. LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Income calculations sheet.