

<b>Council Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	7 October 2020
<b>Report Title</b>	Economic Recovery – Extension of Parking Concession
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Roger Truelove, Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Cllr Monique Bonney, Cabinet Member for Economy and Property
<b>SMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration
<b>Head of Service</b>	Martyn Cassell, Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Martyn Cassell, Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. To agree a further car parking concession as part of the Council’s response to Covid 19, specifically a free additional 30 minutes on all parking tickets purchased from 1 October 2020 to 10 January 2021.

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the Cabinet meeting on 8 July, a report was received on the Council’s overall approach to recovery. Full Council agreed a recommendation on 15 July 2020 to implement a short term car parking concession. This report sets out plans to extend the concession for a further short period to continue with support for the High streets.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 The Recovery Plan identified three time periods; immediate (June-September), medium term (October-March 2021) and longer term (March 2021 and beyond). This proposal relates to a medium action.
- 2.2 At the meeting of Council on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020, it was proposed and agreed that between 18 July and 30 September 2020, all car park tickets purchased in Council run car parks would have an additional free 30 minutes added to it manually by enforcement officers.
- 2.3 As this is done manually, there is no formal data to suggest how many residents are taking up the offer, however anecdotal feedback from enforcement officers is that people are using the 30 min grace period.

- 2.4 The administration has continued to monitor the return of residents to town centres. With social distancing still in place there are more queues and it does take longer for individuals to undertake their business and car parking charges can be a disincentive in this environment. It would also be good to encourage individuals to linger longer and in-particular make use of food & beverage outlets which are so important in our town centres. There is no doubt that for many residents there is a confidence issue for residents to get back out using the town centre.
- 2.3 Car parking charges are a major source of income for the Council with budgeted income of £1.9m in 2020/21. Our financial model assumed no car parking income in April – June and a 50% reduction in July. Actual income for the first quarter has been 8% in April, 14% in May and 28% in June. This made a combined total of 17%.
- 2.4 There has been a continual increase in transactions during quarter two (July, August, September) with August achieving around 70% of estimated transactions. It is now clear that with changing societal behaviours, office workers are continuing to work from home and thus commuter car parking income remains low.
- 2.5 At the LGA conference at the beginning of July the Secretary of State announced that there would be support for Councils which have lost fees and charges type income. The first tranche of this will be calculated for the April-July period based upon actuals compared with budgeted income. This will continue through the year and there will be a reconciliation at year end. The Chief Financial Officer has to make the first submission to MHCLG on 30 September. Any loss of income resulting from the actions of the Council cannot be included in the claim so that applies to the impact of the recommendation in this report.
- 2.6 Members debated the scale of any car parking concession at the July meeting. There needs to be a balance between maintaining this income stream for the Council, whilst recognising the benefits for recovery.
- 2.7 Formal changes to tariffs (e.g. the first 30 minutes free) will require amending the Off-Street Parking orders which take time to implement and also require complicated changes to machines and software. Therefore, the only viable solution is for Enforcement officers to manually add 30 minutes to each ticket expiry observed.
- 2.8 Given the timing of this October Council meeting, a bridging decision has been required to cover the period between 1 October and 11 October. In the event that the proposal to extend until 10<sup>th</sup> January is not supported, the notional cost of this bridging arrangement for the period 1 to 11 October would be accommodated within the agreed budgetary framework managed by the Executive.

### 3 Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed to extend the parking concession from 1 October 2020 until 10 January 2021, whereby all car park tickets purchased will have an additional free 30 minutes added to it if required.

### 4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not to give a concession - the concession does not have to be granted.

### 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 No formal consultation has been undertaken although feedback to the Council's 'Back to business' email address is monitored and discussed by Members of the administration.

### 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Proposals will support the objectives in the emerging corporate plan.
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>There will be a financial impact of the proposals.</p> <p>The impact of the first concession is hard to calculate. We estimated that it would be in the region of £96,000 for pay and display income based on comparisons to last year's transaction numbers and approximately £13,000 for Penalty Charge Notices not issued. As stated in the main report, usage levels are lower than last year and this assumed everybody utilises the additional time. PCN levels have not been affected as predicted during the concession period.</p> <p>Looking at figures in July and August whilst the concession was in operation (September figures not available at time of finalising report), we saw 70,385 and 86,715 transactions which, if everybody used the additional 30 minutes, would have a value of £78,536. Similar usage figures in September would therefore likely exceed the predicted £96,000.</p> <p>Taking an average of above (78,550 transactions), the predicted cost of extending the concession for Oct-Dec would be in the region of £118,000.</p> <p>The loss of income will increase the size of the total deficit as reported to Cabinet on 23 September.</p>

Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Legal, statutory and procurement requirements will be met. The continuation of enforcement enables us to meet our responsibilities under section 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004.
Crime and Disorder	No direct implications.
Environment and Sustainability	In the long term, the administration does not want to encourage residents to use their car and wants to see greater access through walking, cycling and use of public transport. Granting this concession is a short term action generated by the impact of Covid 19 to support the high streets.
Health and Wellbeing	No direct implications.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	No direct implications.
Equality and Diversity	Given social distancing requirements it is harder for residents with physical disabilities to move around the high streets. This action will take make it slightly easier for everyone to move around and will provide extended times for those with mobility issues to move between the car parks and high streets.
Privacy and Data Protection	No direct implications.

## 7 Appendices

None

## 8 Background Papers

The Cabinet Delegated Decision on the Extension of the Parking Concession is available here:

<https://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=157&MId=2402&Ver=4>