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**REVIEW OF CHARGE LEVEL AT CHESNUT STREET CAR PARK**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio**

**Responsible Directors - Richard Alty, Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)  
and Paul Wildsmith, Director of Corporate Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider the charge level at Chesnut Street Car Park.

**Summary**

2. Charges for motorists parking on a long stay basis were introduced at Chesnut Street car park in July 2008. Since then usage of the car park has been very poor. The report proposes a 50% reduction in charges as an incentive to encourage greater use of the car park.

**Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that the charges for Chestnut Street Car Park be reduced as outlined in the report.

**Reasons**

4. The recommendations are supported to encourage greater use of the Chesnut Street car park and to provide the option to encourage greater use of Garden Street car park.

**Richard Alty, Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)  
Paul Wildsmith, Director of Corporate Services**

## Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Bill Westland : Extension 2552  
Jeremy Smith : Extension 2652  
BAH

S17 Crime and Disorder	Encouraging people to use a car park provided with CCTV coverage should help to reduce vehicle related crime
Health and Well Being	No impacts
Sustainability	No impacts
Diversity	No impacts
Wards Affected	The car park is in Central Ward and the proposal should contribute to reducing on-street parking in the vicinity of the car park
Groups Affected	Residents of Central Ward and car park users
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not affect the budget or policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	More attractively priced and better used car parking will support a vibrant town centre

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

5. The Council operates a network of car parks, some of which provide short stay parking and some long stay. Car park charges are reviewed annually and set by Council.
6. Until July this year, Chesnut Street car park was free for motorists but chargeable for heavy goods vehicles staying overnight. The car park was well used. Sensors at the car park entrance and exit recorded that the car park previously accommodated as many as 90 cars parking free on weekdays.
7. In February 2008, Council agreed to make Chesnut Street a long stay car park and introduce a charge of £4 per day or £15 per week. At the time it was anticipated that The Oval development was expected to progress quickly and would increase demand for long stay car parking in this area, due to the closure of Kendrew Street car park. Works were carried out to bring the car park to the required standard and in July 2008 the charges were introduced.
8. The anticipated development of The Oval has not yet commenced and this, together with the current economic climate, may account for the very poor patronage of this car park, which is illustrated in the following table.

	<b>July</b>	<b>August</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>Estimate Annually</b>
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>£544</b>	<b>£417</b>	<b>£404.10</b>	<b>£5,460</b>

9. This revenue level equates to less than 115 users per month in a car park that has 109 car park spaces.
10. Chesnut Street car park has the potential to be a heavily used long stay car park. It is close enough to Darlington College and the Northern end of the town centre to attract people based in or visiting both areas. The level of charge appears to be a deterrent to greater use.
11. The car park has CCTV coverage and so should have the potential to be attractive to car drivers if the charge level is attractive.
12. Officers would suggest reducing the existing charge in Chesnut Street by 50%, that is to £2 a day or £7.50 per week and promoting this to attract higher use. The Traffic Regulation Orders under which car parks operate will necessitate any change in charge level being advertised for 21 days prior to being implemented.
13. A promotional campaign will be carried out which will involve liaising with local businesses and Darlington College to ensure that employees, students and staff are aware of the new charges and the location of the car park.

14. Garden Street car park is also a poorly performing car park when it operates on a long stay basis during the week (it is a short stay car park on Saturdays). It has 72 spaces (plus two disabled spaces) and brings in revenue of around £14,000 per year. By comparison Archer Street long stay car park, which has only seven more spaces, brings in £36,000 annually. If the pilot in Chesnut Street is a success it is proposed that consideration be given to extending the pilot to Garden Street.

### **Financial Implications**

15. Chesnut Street is forecast to generate revenue of around £5,500 per year at current levels of use. If the proposal to halve the fees is accepted patronage will have to double to maintain existing revenue income. The car park has the capacity to operate at much higher levels and there is potential to increase revenue through this proposal. There will be costs of around £1,500 to implement the changes including advertising and these can be met from car park receipts.
16. Future usage and receipts will be monitored on a monthly basis to assess progress. A survey of users after 6 months and 12 months could be carried out with car park users to establish the final destination of car drivers eg College, local businesses, town centre. This will help to inform future decision making.

### **Outcome of Consultation**

17. Whilst consultation has not been carried, out this report is in response to several complaints about the existing level of charge and a visible lack of patronage of the car park.