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**TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKING**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member -**  
**Councillor Nick Wallis, Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio**  
**Councillor Chris McEwan, Economy and Regeneration Portfolio**

**Paul Wildsmith, Managing Director**  
**Responsible Director - Ian Williams,**  
**Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To review car parking charges in the town centre in response to feedback and views from the public and traders.

**Summary**

2. To assist town centre trading, an offer of two hours free car parking is being proposed in town centre car parks on the outside of the ring road namely:
  - (a) Park Place East/West
  - (b) St Hilda's
  - (c) Chesnut Street
  - (d) Kendrew Street East/West
  - (e) Garden Street
  - (f) Archer Street
  - (g) Hird Street
3. In addition East Street car park within the ring road will have an offer all day parking for £2. This offer is intended to increase usage of the underutilised car park and free up spaces in the other long stay car parks for the two free hours offer.
4. On street car parking will not be changed and remains at 50p for 30 minutes up to a maximum of £2 for two hours with the exception of Grange Road and Northumberland Street which is £3 for a maximum of three hours.
5. The potential cost of the offer is £120,000 but this depends on usage and other factors. The financial position will be kept under review. The cost will be funded by the Town Centre Futures Fund.

## **Recommendation**

6. It is recommended that the charges for car parking as set out in paragraph 15 of this report be approved.

## **Reasons**

7. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons :-
  - (a) To approve new charges in response to requests by traders and the public.
  - (b) To enhance the attractiveness of the town centre to visitors and residents.

**Paul Wildsmith**  
**Managing Director**

**Ian Williams**  
**Director of Economic Growth and**  
**Neighbourhood Services**

## **Background Papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

Paul Wildsmith: Extension 5828  
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S17 Crime and Disorder	Whilst anti-social behaviour and crime does on occasions take place in car parks, there is no impact on crime and disorder as a result of this report.
Health and Well Being	No additional impact on health and wellbeing of residents as a result of this report.
Carbon Impact	There may be an impact on carbon emissions as a result of making two hours free car parking in long stay car parks, as it is likely that there will be more car journeys into the town centre.
Diversity	An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on the change in pricing policy and details are included in this report.
Wards Affected	Car parks are located in Park East and Northgate, however residents from across the Borough will utilise them.
Groups Affected	No group is affected any differently to any other.
Budget and Policy Framework	There is no impact on the Budget or Policy Framework.
Key Decision	Not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	Not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The proposals contained in this report have an impact on the Perfectly Placed element of the strategy; encouraging more people to utilise the Town Centre for retail, social and pleasure.
Efficiency	There is no impact on the Council's Efficiency agenda as a result of this report.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

8. The Council has a number of town centre car parks generally split between short stay (within the ring road) and long stay (outside the ring road). Charges are generally £1 per hour in short stay car parks whilst long stay car parks are variable with either hourly charges or the option of £4 for the day. Weekly tickets are also available.
9. The Council receives approximately £2m a year income from off street car parking, this income is used to offset the running costs such as repair and maintenance, business rates and staffing. Although not included as a cost in the budget, there is an apportionment cost of holding the land for the purpose of car parking. The off street car parking delivers a surplus of £1.6m per annum excluding any charges for land utilisation. This net income provides resources to fund other services provided

by the Council and if income is not achieved, it is to the detriment of the Council's overall financial position.

10. Town Centre retail trading across the Country is challenging and Darlington is no exception. Well known High Street retailers are regularly announcing profit warnings and many businesses are contracting or closing. Cabinet recently agreed a Town Centre Strategy to assist businesses by working to increase footfall into the town centre, the strategy included an action to review car parking charges. The Council has recently agreed a Town Centre Futures Fund of £0.5m to assist in implementing the strategy.
11. Car parking charges are often cited by the public and traders as a barrier to town centre footfall, it is not possible to demonstrate cause and effect, however views are very strong that a reduction in charges would help. Neighbouring Local Authority areas have introduced some free parking as have retailers/developers in some other town centres.
12. Car parking charges are used in many ways and, whilst it is a view held by some that they are only levied to raise income for the Council, this is not the case. A pricing structure clearly needs to cover costs and is acknowledged as a town centre issue. Should, for example, all charges be removed and widespread free parking introduced the result would be car parks full of town centre workers and commuters meaning that no space would be available for shoppers, therefore a pricing policy must take this and other factors into account. Given the Council's overall financial position, this must also be a significant factor when considering the pricing structure.
13. To balance all the relevant objectives, it is proposed that :-
  - (a) There will be two hours free car parking in 9 off street car parks currently designated long stay car parks.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Car Park</b>	<b>Spaces</b>
8	Archer Street	62
9	Kendrew Street East	76
10	Kendrew Street West	85
11	Park Place East	95
12	Park Place West	115
13	Garden Street	72
14	Chesnut Street	109
16	Hird Street	14
17	St. Hilda's Tannery Yard Parkgate	15
	<b>Total</b>	<b>643</b>

- (b) East Street car park will be designated a long stay car park at a reduced cost of £2 per day, which has 338 spaces.

14. The logic behind this proposal is to provide 643 parking spaces with two hours free to encourage more visitors to the town centre. The pricing structure proposed for East Street is to encourage people to use the underutilised facility and to free up spaces in the current long stay car parks.
15. The long stay are parks that this proposal effects are located outside the inner ring road, with a short/medium/easily accessible walk into the town centre.
16. The proposed detailed charging schedules are shown in the table below for the car parks included in the report.

**BOLD = proposed changes**

Car Park	Spaces	EXISTING		PROPOSED	
		Mon-Sat 8am to 6pm including bank holidays	Sunday 8am to 6pm	Mon-Sat 8am to 6pm including bank holidays	Sunday 8am to 6pm
Archer Street	62	£1 per hour  £4 per day 2 days - £8 3 days - £12  Weekly ticket (up to 7 days) £16	£1 per day	<b>First 2 hours NO CHARGE</b>  <b>3 hours £1</b> £4 per day  2 days - £8 3 days - £12  Weekly ticket (up to 7 days) £16	<b>First 2 hours NO CHARGE</b>  £1 per day
Kendrew Street East	76	£1 per hour -up to 3 hours  More than 3 hours - £4 per day  2 days - £8 3 days - £12  Weekly ticket (up to 7 days) £16	£1 per day	<b>First 2 hours NO CHARGE</b>  <b>3 hours £1</b> £4 per day  2 days - £8 3 days - £12  Weekly ticket £16 (up to 7 days)	<b>First 2 hours NO CHARGE</b>  £1 per day
Kendrew Street West	85	£1 per hour -up to 3 hours  More than 3 hours - £4 per day  2 days - £8 3 days - £12	£1 per day	<b>First 2 hours NO CHARGE</b>  <b>3 hours £1</b> £4 per day  2 days - £8 3 days - £12	<b>First 2 hours NO CHARGE</b>  £1 per day

Car Park	Spaces	EXISTING		PROPOSED	
		Mon-Sat 8am to 6pm including bank holidays	Sunday 8am to 6pm	Mon-Sat 8am to 6pm including bank holidays	Sunday 8am to 6pm
		Weekly ticket (up to 7 days) £16		Weekly ticket £16 (up to 7 days)	
Park Place East	95	£1 per hour -up to 3 hours  More than 3 hours - £4 per day  2 days - £8 3 days - £12  Weekly ticket (up to 7 days) £16	£1 per day	<u>First 2 hours</u> <b>NO CHARGE</b>  <u>3 hours £1</u>  £4 per day  2 days - £8 3 days - £12  Weekly ticket £16 (up to 7 days)	<u>First 2 hours</u> <b>NO CHARGE</b>  £1 per day
Park Place West	115	£1 per hour -up to 3 hours  More than 3 hours - £4 per day  2 days - £8 3 days - £12  Weekly ticket (up to 7 days) £16	£1 per day	<u>First 2 hours</u> <b>NO CHARGE</b>  <u>3 hours £1</u>  £4 per day  2 days - £8 3 days - £12  Weekly ticket (up to 7 days) £16	<u>First 2 hours</u> <b>NO CHARGE</b>  £1 per day
Garden Street	72	£1 per hour  More than 3 hours - £4 per day  2 days - £8 3 days - £12  Weekly ticket (up to 7 days) £16	£1 per day	<u>First 2 hours</u> <b>NO CHARGE</b>  <u>3 hours £1</u>  £4 per day  2 days - £8 3 days - £12 Weekly ticket (up to 7 days) £16	<u>First 2 hours</u> <b>NO CHARGE</b>  £1 per day

Car Park	Spaces	EXISTING		PROPOSED	
		Mon-Sat 8am to 6pm including bank holidays	Sunday 8am to 6pm	Mon-Sat 8am to 6pm including bank holidays	Sunday 8am to 6pm
Chesnut Street	109	<p>£2 per day</p> <p>HGVs and coaches free</p> <p>Weekly ticket (cars only, up to 7 days) £8 per week</p> <p>HGVs and coaches 6pm-8am every night £4 per night</p>	£1 per day, HGVs and coaches free	<p><b><u>First 2 hours</u></b> <b><u>NO CHARGE</u></b></p> <p><b><u>3 hours £1</u></b></p> <p>£2 per day</p> <p>HGVs and coaches free</p> <p>Weekly ticket (cars only, up to 7 days) £8 per week</p> <p>HGVs and coaches 6pm-8am every night £4 per night</p>	<p><b><u>First 2 hours</u></b> <b><u>NO CHARGE</u></b></p> <p>£1 per day, HGVs and coaches free</p>
Hird Street	14	<p>£1 per hour -up to 3 hours</p> <p>More than 3 hours - £4 per day</p> <p>2 days - £8 3 days - £12</p> <p>Weekly ticket (up to 7 days) £16</p>	£1 per day	<p><b><u>First 2 hours</u></b> <b><u>NO CHARGE</u></b></p> <p><b><u>3 hours £1</u></b></p> <p>£4 per day</p> <p>2 days - £8 3 days - £12</p> <p>Weekly ticket (up to 7 days) £16</p>	<p><b><u>First 2 hours</u></b> <b><u>NO CHARGE</u></b></p> <p>£1 per day</p>
St. Hilda's Tannery Yard Parkgate	15	<p>£1 per hour -up to 3 hours</p> <p>More than 3 hours - £4 per day</p> <p>2 days - £8 3 days - £12</p> <p>Weekly ticket (up to 7 days) £16</p>	£1 per day	<p><b><u>First 2 hours</u></b> <b><u>NO CHARGE</u></b></p> <p><b><u>3 hours £1</u></b></p> <p>£4 per day</p> <p>2 days - £8 3 days - £12</p> <p>Weekly ticket (up to 7 days) £16</p>	<p><b><u>First 2 hours</u></b> <b><u>NO CHARGE</u></b></p> <p>£1 per day</p>

Note: To take advantage of the 2 hours free parking, customers must use the ticket machines as the 2 hours free will not be accepted by phone. However, customers can use their phones

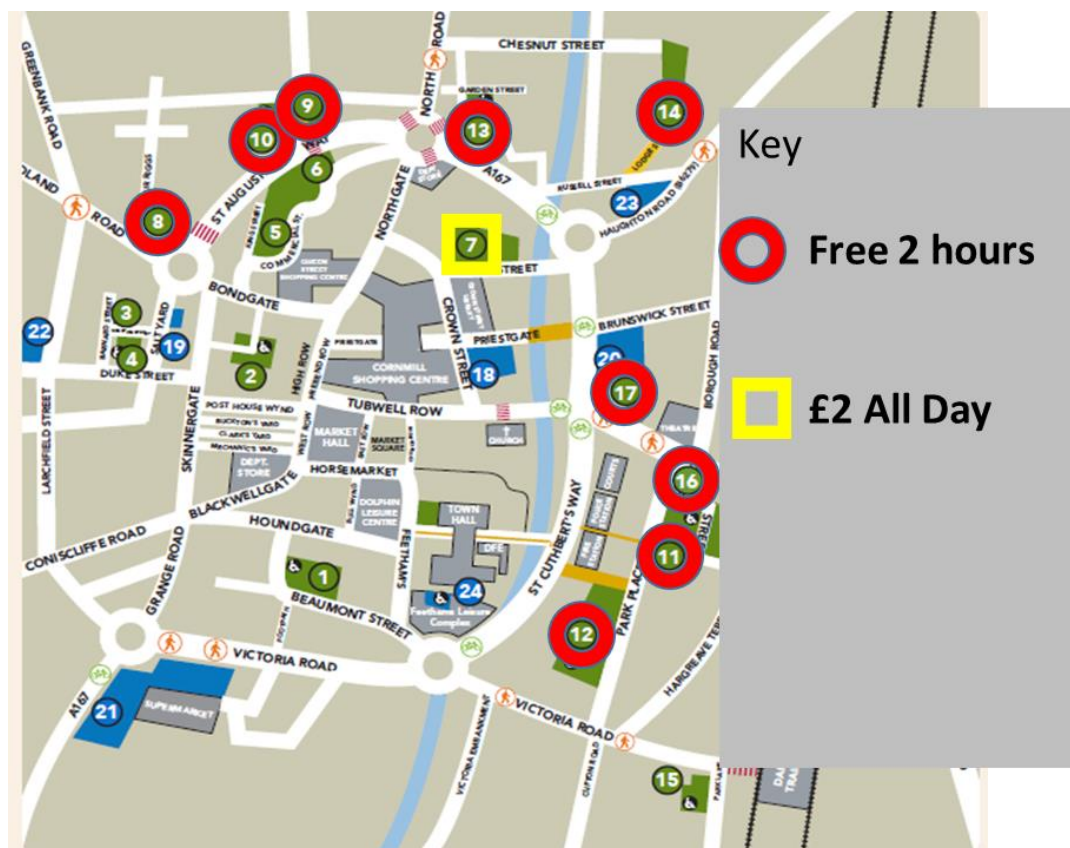
for 3 hours parking for £1 (2 hours free and 3<sup>rd</sup> hour for £1).

### East Street Multi Storey – Revert to £2 per day

**BOLD = proposed changes**

Car Park	Spaces	EXISTING		PROPOSED	
		Mon-Sat 8am to 6pm including bank holidays	Sunday 9.30am to 5pm	Mon-Sat 8am to 6pm including bank holidays	Sunday 9.30am to 5pm
East Street	338	£1 per hour £4 per day	£1 per day	£1 per hour <b>£2 per day</b>	£1 per day

17. A map of the car parks is shown below.



### Financial Implications

18. The estimated cost of the proposal is £120,000 per annum and this will be kept under review. The costs for the first year will be funded from the Town Centre Futures Fund and the position will be reviewed for futures years as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan.



## Legal Implications

19. Subject to Members' approval, notice will be issued with regard to the proposed changes to charges for car parks. In addition, running in parallel, a process to implement a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to take place to consolidate and bolster the no return condition to the free offer to limit users to one free ticket per day.

## Equalities Considerations

20. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out with regard to the proposed changes in the pricing structure for car parking. The main impacts identified are as a result of the 9 long stay car parks being located outside the inner ring road, which means a short/moderate walk into the town centre that some individuals may find more difficult. The particular groups of people with protected characteristics this affects are; Age, Disability, Pregnancy, and Carers. However, as a result of introducing the 2 hours free parking it is likely that the pressure on the short stay parking within the inner ring road will be reduced, freeing up more spaces for individuals who find the walk difficult to access parking. In addition, on street car parking for Blue Badge Holders is not affected and there is also a car park exclusively for Blue Badge Holders at the Town Hall.
21. The table below details the impacts on these groups and the proposed mitigations.

Impact	Mitigation
<p><b>Age</b> Negative impact on less mobile older people who may feel that they cannot take advantage of the free parking offer that will only apply in long stay car parks that are outside the ring road as this will involve a short walk to the town centre.</p>	<p>As a result of the 2 hours free parking in the 9 long stay car parks there should be reduced demand in 'closer to town centre' short stay car parks.</p> <p>East Street car park will be available at a reduced parking fee and is close to the town centre, including lift access.</p> <p>There is excessive demand at times for short stay parking in some car parks and therefore spaces are limited, which results in long stay car parks having to be used. Placing more cars into the 2 hours free long stay parking will have a positive impact by freeing up spaces in the short stay 'closer to the town centre' car parks.</p>
<p><b>Disability</b> Negative impact on less mobile people who may feel that they cannot take advantage of the free parking offer that will only</p>	<p>As a result of the 2 hours free parking in the 9 long stay car parks there should be reduced demand in 'closer to town centre' short stay car parks.</p>

Impact	Mitigation
<p>apply in long stay car parks that are outside the ring road as this will involve a short walk to the town centre.</p>	<p>East Street car park will be available at a reduced parking fee and is close to the town centre, including lift access.</p> <p>There is excessive demand at times for short stay parking in some car parks and therefore spaces are limited, which results in long stay car parks having to be used. Placing more cars into the 2 hours free long stay parking will have a positive impact by freeing up spaces in the short stay 'closer to the town centre' car parks.</p> <p>On street car parking for Blue badge holders is not affected. There is a car park exclusively for Blue Badge holders at the Town Hall.</p>
<p><b>Pregnancy</b> Negative impact on pregnant women who may feel that they cannot take advantage of the free parking offer that will only apply in long stay car parks that are outside the ring road as this will involve a short walk to the town centre.</p>	<p>As a result of the 2 hours free parking in the 9 long stay car parks there should be reduced demand in 'closer to town centre' short stay car parks.</p> <p>East Street car park will be available at a reduced parking fee and is close to the town centre, including lift access.</p>
<p><b>Carers</b> Negative impact on carers who may feel that they cannot take advantage of the free parking offer that will only apply in long stay car parks that are outside the ring road as this will involve a short walk to the town centre.</p>	<p>As a result of the 2 hours free parking in the 9 long stay car parks there should be reduced demand in 'closer to town centre' short stay car parks.</p> <p>East Street car park will be available at a reduced parking fee and is close to the town centre, including lift access.</p> <p>On street car parking for Blue badge holders is not affected. There is a car park exclusively for Blue Badge holders at the Town Hall.</p>

## **Timescale**

22. Subject to Members' approval, notice will advertised from 13 June 2018 for 21 days therefore the intention is to implement from Monday 9 July 2018. This will be in time for the Ingenious Festival and also the summer school holiday period.
23. Again, subject to Members' approval leading up to implementation and post-implementation, publicity will take place in:
  - (a) One Darlington magazine
  - (b) Social media, including #LoveDarlo
  - (c) Leaflets
  - (d) Banner on East Street Car Park
  - (e) Council website
  - (f) Press and media releases

## **Consultation**

24. No specific consultation has been undertaken on this proposal but car parking charges have been subject to responses in various consultations including the MTFP.