

Car Parking Charges in the Context of Other Policies

Business Plan

The Wiltshire Council Business Plan 2011-2015 sets out the considerable challenges the Council faces and the approaches being proposed to tackle those challenges.

Over the next four years, the Council will need to find £289 million in efficiencies and savings to fund services and investments by 2015. This is a decrease in the Council's annual budget by 2014/15 of £99 million.

The majority of the Council's discretionary income comes from its neighbourhood and planning department, with car parks and leisure being the significant income areas. The Business Plan anticipates that the current parking charges would generate an additional £309,000 income in 2011/12 on top of the base budget for 2010/11, with total income rising to £9.292 million. As agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 14 December 2010, any surplus parking revenue will be hypothecated to support sustainable transport measures (e.g. local bus services).

Community Plan

Car parking charges can play an important role in helping to achieve two of the objectives in the Wiltshire Community Plan 2011-2026:

- Significantly reduce domestic, business and transport CO₂ emissions across the country in line with national targets.
- Provide a safer and more integrated transport system that achieves a major shift to sustainable transport, including walking, cycling, and the use of bus and rail networks especially in the larger settlements of Trowbridge, Chippenham and Salisbury, and along the main commuting corridors.

Joint Strategic Assessment

The Joint Strategic Assessment for Wiltshire 2010-2011 sets out the strategic issues and priorities for Wiltshire for the next three years. The identified key issues related to transport include the following:

- Economic growth is being compromised by an increasingly unreliable and congested transport network.
- Emissions by transport of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are having a detrimental effect on climate change.
- A lack of transport to services, facilities and employment results in a degree of inequality for some Wiltshire residents.
- The built and natural environment in some areas is being adversely affected by traffic.

Local Development Framework

The emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy provides the spatial expression of the community plan. There are, however, certain tensions between the objectives of the community plan and the settlement and delivery strategies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy which is seeking to make provision for 175-182 hectares of new employment land and around 37,000 new houses. Demand management measures, such as appropriate parking charges, will be important in helping the Council to reconcile these tensions by providing one of the means to manage traffic and congestion pressures on the highway network.

Local Transport Plan

The Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 seeks to implement the following national transport goals at the local level:

- support economic growth
- reduce transport's emissions of greenhouse gases
- contribute to better safety, security and health
- promote equality of opportunity
- improve quality of life and promote a healthy natural environment.

Demand management measures, primarily centred on car parking supply and charges, can be one of the most useful tools available to the Council in helping achieve these goals.

Energy Change and Opportunity Strategy

The Energy Change and Opportunity Strategy 2011-2020 sets out how Wiltshire as a council and a community can take action on climate change.

The UK Climate Change Act 2008 set an ambitious target of a 34% reduction in CO₂ on 1990 levels by 2020 and a reduction of 80% by 2050. However, while CO₂ emissions went down by 2.1% in the south west between 2005 and 2007, in Wiltshire they actually went up by 3.1%.

It is estimated nationally that 40% of an average UK citizen's contribution to CO₂ comes from transport with almost three quarters attributable to car use. Overall, transport accounts for 28% of Wiltshire's total CO₂ emissions. The Energy, Change and Opportunity Strategy therefore promotes measures which will decrease individual car use.

Air Quality

The 2011 Air Quality Progress Report summarises the current situation relating to air quality in Wiltshire. There are seven Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within Wiltshire which have been declared because of exceedances of the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide. These are in:

- Westbury, centred on Haynes Road and Warminster Road.
- Bradford on Avon, centred on Masons Lane.
- Devizes, at Shanes Castle.
- Marlborough, centred on Herd Street and Barn Street
- Salisbury city centre, within the Churchill Way ring road
- Wilton Road, Salisbury between the Old Manor Hospital site and St Pauls roundabout
- London Road between the allotment railway tunnel and St Marks roundabout.

The AQMA at Bradford on Avon has also been declared in respect of the annual mean objective for fine particulates (PM10).

Road traffic accounts for the main source of atmospheric emissions across Wiltshire, and accounts for all the AQMAs declared. It is therefore likely that parking management measures will need to form part of the Air Quality Action Plans that will need to be reviewed and/or developed to deal with the identified exceedances.