
Report To:	Environment and Regeneration Committee	Date:	14 March 2024
Report By:	Head of Physical Assets	Report No:	ENV016/24/EM
Contact Officer:	Eddie Montgomery	Contact No:	01475 712472
Subject:	Car Parking Charges		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with context in respect of the reduction in car parking revenue income and to make recommendations for solutions for both the short and medium term.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Committee notes the costs associated with the various options available to the Council in respect of Decriminalised Parking Charges and the implications to the Parking income budget.

2.2 The Committee note that there is a significant capital spend to install cashless machines, and officers recommend that this should not be progressed in the short term.

2.3 That the Committee note that increasing the parking charges to £3/day will ultimately reduce the income, and that approval to not implement the previously approved increase was obtained at the Inverclyde Council meeting of 1st February 2024 including the allocation of £254,000 from the Budget pressures allowance to mitigate the shortfall in the budget.

2.4 That the Committee agree with Officers recommendation of Option C i.e. to leave the parking charging and enforcement regime the same for the time being, with the addition of a payment App solution (cost of App included in the £254,000 noted above).

2.5 That the Committee note that, Officers will develop proposals to simplify the various parking regimes across the authority area for consideration by the Committee in the medium term including the progression of the car parks on Lochwinnoch Road, Kilmacolm; Princess Street, Port Glasgow; and Jamaica Street, Greenock.

Eddie Montgomery
Head of Physical Assets

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Charging in Car Parks

- 3.1 Parking charges in off-street car parks were introduced in October 2014. The parking charge set at that time was £1/day. Through the introduction of electric charging bays and disabled bays since 2014 the number of spaces available has decreased slightly.
- 3.2 In July 2018 the parking charges were increased to £2/day with the corresponding income target increased by £100,000. During the pandemic parking charges were waived to maintain activity in the town centres. The £2/day charge was re-introduced in September 2022.
- 3.3 In August 2019 the Committee agreed to the implementation of parking charges in the following car parks;
- Kempock Street East, Gourock;
 - Kempock Street West, Gourock;
 - Shore Street, Port Glasgow;
 - Princes Street, Port Glasgow;
 - Lochwinnoch Road, Kilmacolm.

During the TRO consultation process objections were received against the implementation of charges in the car parks on Lochwinnoch Road and Princes Street. To avoid delaying the other car parks these two were removed as agreed by committee on the 14 January 2021 and still require to be progressed. The recently completed Jamaica Street car park also requires to be progressed.

- 3.4 Various reports have been brought before Committee regarding standardising the car parks, and their charges, across Inverclyde however after a public consultation it was agreed on 27 October 2022 to leave all the charges in the car parks as they were.
- 3.5 Business permits terms and conditions were agreed at the Environment and Regeneration Committee on the 9 March 2023 and the proposed income stream was £25,000. To date this has not been implemented due to prioritisation of other traffic regulation orders. This will be progressed once the Reporter hearing for the 20mph schemes is concluded.
- 3.6 As part of the 2023/24 budget setting process, it was agreed to increase the parking charges to £3/day with an associated income target increase of £80,000, from 1st April 2024. The Members Budget Working Group have agreed that this increase should not take place and this was included in the 2024/26 Budget Update to Inverclyde Council on 1st February 2024 with approval obtained to not implement the previously approved increase in the daily parking charge.

Parking Income Analysis

- 3.7 An analysis of the parking income from 2014 to 2018 when the charges were £1/day was compared to the income between 2018 to 2020 when the charges were increased to £2/day. This data shows that on average across all the car parks in Inverclyde there has been a 35% reduction in the number of paid parking tickets. This is further compounded to a 73% reduction in the most recent survey data.
- 3.8 On top of the reduction in the number of patronages in the car parks, new ways of working with hybrid and other models has also had a significant impact on the number of cars parking all day. As a result of the post-COVID change in working patterns across the country, with working from home becoming normal practice, the off-street car parks are now only 30%-50% full. the table below provides the analysis of the statistics:

Car Park	Average usage 2014-18 £1/day	Average usage 2018-20 £2/day	Average usage 2022-23 £2/day
West Stewart St	104%	83%	54%
Hastie St	111%	60%	39%
Roslin Street	51%	24%	15%
Bullring	130%	79%	43%
Cathcart St East	72%	52%	18%
Station Ave West	98%	54%	36%
Station Ave East	117%	85%	62%
Dalrymple	128%	94%	14%
Station Road North, Gourrock	177%	130%	25%
Station Road South, Gourrock	69%	42%	19%

3.9 The levelling up project in Greenock will see the deletion of car parking provision within the Bull Ring (86 spaces) and if the disposal of the site at Gourrock Pier Head is agreed there will be a further unconfirmed reduction. It should be noted that the financial implications associated with these are not included in this report and will be addressed by future specific report(s) on these projects.

3.10 The above table shows that on average the off-street car parks in 2022/23 were 33% full. This leaves a significant number under-utilised. The options considered below look at removing parking charges altogether; standardising parking across the area, by marking every off-street car park 3hrs free or £2/day; or leaving the charging regime as it is.

A - Remove charging from car parks

3.11 This would remove all charging within the car parks and would have the added benefit of reducing the overall cost by removing the recurring maintenance charge for the machine and also the cash collection charge.

The problem associated with removing charging or time limits from all town centre car parks relates to these car parks filling up with long stayers and this leads to visitors and shopper not being able to find a parking space. This would be detrimental to the town centre. If no space can be found, then patrons would start to look for on street spaces both within the town centre and on residential streets.

It is estimated that this would result in a shortfall of £316,000 inclusive of the £80,000 cost from not implementing the increase to £3/day.

B - Standardise all off-street car parks to 3hrs free or £2/day

3.12 This would standardise every car park across Inverclyde and change every off street car park to 3hrs free or £2/day.

This would have the benefit of creating long stay and short stay in all car parks across Inverclyde thus creating greater flexibility. It would make parking easier to understand. The introduction of cashless payments would be included. It should be noted however that it is likely that this exercise could take a period of two years and will result in costs associated with TROs/appeals/signage etc.

It is estimated that would result in a shortfall of £282,000 inclusive of the £80,000 cost from not implementing the increase to £3/day.

C - Do nothing and keep as is

3.13 This would leave all car parks as they currently are.

Current projections indicate a shortfall of £244,000 inclusive of the £80,000 cost from not implementing the increase to £3/day.

3.14 In recent months it has been highlighted to Officers that the general public may see the lack of availability for remote payments or card payment as an inhibiting factor in the use of our car parks. A brief costing exercise has been carried out and it is estimated that to provide the required functionality at the machines would cost £80,000 plus a £30k pa maintenance charge and for contactless payment or payment through an app there is a 14p charge that is normally added to the customer as a convenience charge. As an alternative to a hardware solution, Officers have investigated an app solution using a product like RINGO, which is available under a framework agreement. The annual charge is £10,000 with set up and signs costing £3,000 each. The cost per ticket is £0.05 and the cost of the text message confirmation is £0.10. Both of these elements are normally charged to the customer.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 It is recommended that Option C i.e. the status quo, be maintained at this time with the only proposed change being the introduction of a telephone App solution as outlined in 3.14 above.

4.2 It is also proposed that Officers consider standardisation of car parking policy across the whole of Inverclyde in the medium term, including revisiting the car parks on Lochwinnoch Road, Kilmacolm and Princes Street Port Glasgow, with a report to be brought back to a future meeting of this Committee.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial	x	
Legal/Risk	x	
Human Resources		x
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	x	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		x
Environmental & Sustainability		x
Data Protection		x

5.2 Finance

A provisional allowance of £300k was allocated in the 2024/26 Budget pressures for this issue. The proposal will cost £254,000 recurring to be met from the Budget Pressures allowance and a one-off cost of £6,000 which the Directorate will contain. The 2024/26 Budget Update to Inverclyde Council on 1st February 2024 provided an updated position on Budget pressures and sought approval for savings/adjustments which included this pressure and noted that a detailed report would be presented to the March Environment & Regeneration Committee.

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
Roads	Parking Income		6		

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Roads	Parking Income	2024/25	164		Parking Budget pressure ex-Permit Parking.
			80		Do not implement £3/day charge.
			10		App annual cost
			254		Funded from the pressures contingency as Inverclyde Council meeting 1/2/24.

5.3 Legal/Risk

Standardising the approach to parking charges across Inverclyde will take considerable time and resources. If the principle is agreed, timescales and costs will be outlined in a future report.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no HR implications arising from this report.

5.5 Strategic

This project accords with the Corporate Plan, by improving on-line access to Council services.

5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant.

(c) Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

5.7 Environmental/Sustainability

Summarise any environmental / climate change impacts which relate to this report.

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
X	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

5.8 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Corporate Management Team support the proposals in this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.