WARDS: Belle Vale, Cradley & Foxcote, Halesowen North, Halesowen South, Hayley Green & Cradley South

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

HALESOWEN AREA COMMITTEE – 2ND FEBRUARY 2005

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

HALESOWEN PAY AND DISPLAY CAR PARKS

1.0   PURPOSE

1.1   To inform Committee of any changes in patronage on pay and display car parks in Halesowen following the introduction of new tariff charges on 4 October 2004.

2.0   BACKGROUND

2.1   As part of the Council's budget strategy for 1993/4, car park charges were introduced in the Borough on the majority of public car parks in major centres and a number of minor centres on 1 October 1993. The charges being levied on a pay and display basis. Three scales of charges were introduced. Scale 1 for short stay spaces in major town centres, Scale 2 for long term spaces in major town centres and Scale 3 for spaces in minor centres. In addition, rates for excess charges and season tickets were also introduced.

2.2   In recognition of the deteriorating condition of a number of the Borough's car parks, particularly multi-storey car parks and a need to improve the overall infrastructure, the meeting of the Executive on 12 July 2002 approved a report: "Review of Off Street Car Parking". The report set out a programme of yearly tariff increases, covering a 4 year period, commencing in October 2002.

2.3   In addition to generating income for improvements to the car park infrastructure, the charges were also required to remove the car park operating deficit identified at the time. It should also be noted that until October 2002, parking charges had not been increased since their introduction in 1993, a period of some 9 years.

2.4   October 2004 saw the third yearly increase in accordance with the requirements of the review. Whilst the programmed tariff increases have not fully removed the operating deficit, they have significantly improved the position. It is also important to note that when compared to other West Midlands metropolitan

authorities, tariff charges in Dudley consistently remain as one of the lowest in the region.

2.5   Halesowen Car Park Infrastructure

2.5.1   Halesowen is serviced by 6 pay and display car parks in the vicinity of the town. Overheads include maintenance of the facilities, business rates, cleaning, security, insurance and staffing.

Car Parks

Pool Road Multi-Storey
Precinct Multi-Storey   (Also known as Central or Cornbow)
High Street   (Two decks)
Maybrook House   (Under office block)
Andrew Road
Birmingham Street

2.5.2   Improvements to infrastructure in 2004/5 include:

High Street	-	Resurfaced top deck of car park	£23,000
Pool Road	-	Repair work to facia panels	£ 5,000
	-	Improved general lighting	£13,000
Maybrook House	-	Improved security (early 2005)	£30,000

2.5.3   Income generated from car park tariff charges supplements funding required to ensure that essential repair and maintenance works are undertaken on all of the car parks in Halesowen and across the Borough.

2.6   In response to information requested at the last meeting of the Halesowen Area Committee, specifically relating to the usage on pay and display car parks in Halesowen, the table below details usage figures for the last 6 month period. The number of users is based on ticket sales and therefore does not include disabled badge holders who are exempt from paying for parking, or holders of pre-paid season tickets. Since charges were increased from 2002, the sale of season tickets has increased significantly.

Month	No. of Paying Users
June	59,191
July	62,782
August	57,946
September	59,690
October *	**59,235**
November	58,471

(* Annual tariff increase implemented, 4 October 2004)

2.7　　　The information above shows a 1% reduction in the number of persons using pay and display car parks in Halesowen during October, when compared to the previous month of September (prior to the introduction of the annual tariff increase). Figures for November also show a reduction (2%) when compared to the September figure. This trend is consistent with information from previous years following the introduction of new tariff charges and reflects an initial resistance to the increase.

2.8　　　Although car park patronage does fluctuate, there is no compelling evidence that links increases in car park charges to customer shopping patterns in Halesowen.

2.9　　　The Committee will be aware that in recognition of the Christmas period and in order to attract local people and visitors to the Borough, car park pay and display charges are suspended for 3 consecutive Saturdays in December. This has proven extremely popular in recent years and in addition to generating increased usage, supports local traders and business.

3.0　　　PROPOSAL

3.1　　　That Committee note the contents of this report.

4.0　　　FINANCE

4.1　　　The net expenditure on car parks is met from the Engineering and Transportation budget. The 2004/5 budget assumes that £1.61m income will be generated from the Borough's pay and display car parks including other associated income from season ticket holders.

5.0　　　LAW

5.1　　　Charges for off street parking places may be imposed under the terms of Section 35 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended.

5.2　　　Further changes in the rate of charges may be undertaken by notice as authorised by the Road Traffic Act 1991 and have been carried out under Section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

5.3　　　Traffic Regulation Orders are made under Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended). The power of Local Authority to provide parking places is contained in Section 32 of the Act.

6.0　　　EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

6.1　　　This report takes account of the Council's equal opportunities policies and assists the mobility of the disabled by exemptions to parking charges.

7.0   RECOMMENDATION

7.1   That the proposal contained in Section 3 of this report be approved.

Bernard Meade

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Background documents used in the preparation of this report:-

Review of Off Street Car Parking – 12 July 2002