LOCAL PARKING CONTROL

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To establish the response to be given to the County Council with regard to their consultation with District Councils on decriminalised parking.

2. Background

2.1 The County Council is currently consulting Local Authorities in the County with regard to their intention to decriminalise parking and place the responsibilities for control of local parking with Local Authorities. They have described a baseline scheme which they would operate and an enhanced scheme they are inviting Districts to adopt and operate.

2.2 On 5 October this Committee received a report on the subject of Local Parking Control. The recommendation of the Committee was withdrawn at Full Council on 25 October to enable the matter to be given further consideration.

2.3 On 2 November the County Council’s timetable was reported to this Committee and a Members’ Briefing Note was subsequently issued containing that information.

2.4 At Full Council on 25 October three petitions were handed in as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Petition</th>
<th>Signatures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“We are opposed to the imposition of car parking charges in Wellingborough Town Centre”</td>
<td>2,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We believe that the introduction of car parking charges is the wrong decision for Wellingborough as it will reduce the economic viability of the Town Centre and drive people to other towns and out of town shopping centres. It will also lead to residential streets close to the Town Centre becoming blocked with those looking for free parking. We call upon the Leader of the Council to publicly announce that she will not introduce car parking charges in Wellingborough”</td>
<td>785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We the undersigned urge the Borough Council of Wellingborough to reconsider their adoption of the ‘enhanced’ parking scheme involving charges for all on and off street parking in favour of prosecuting illegally parked vehicles on yellow lines which currently exist and implementing resident only parking in certain areas as necessary”</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,817</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.5 At Full Council on 22 November a further petition was handed to The Mayor by a representative of the Wellingborough Chamber of Commerce.

“Would you be less inclined to shop or work in Wellingborough if car parking charges were introduced?”

Total all petitions 4,817

All four petitions are signed by both residents and non-residents of the Borough.

2.6 It should be noted that the petitions are worded differently. They are all against charging for car parking but no positive suggestions have been made by the public as to how the Council should seek to resolve the following issues:-

- Control of parking in the Town Centre to maximise use of space by shoppers.
- The cost of parking in the Town Centre to the Council and the tax payer.
- Transport planning objectives and the need to seek to reduce traffic congestion.
- Helping to meet the high cost of regeneration works in the Town Centre.

3. Discussion

3.1 A report was submitted to Scrutiny Committee of the County Council on 29 November. The County Council require a response to the consultation from this Authority as soon as possible so the matter can be put to wider consultation and intend to introduce the new proposals in October 2006.

3.2 The other Districts in the County have indicated their preferences as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corby</td>
<td>Expected to be baseline (TC car parks are in private ownership)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daventry</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Northants</td>
<td>Expected to be baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettering</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton</td>
<td>Already operating enhanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Northants</td>
<td>Baseline with modifications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is understood that South Northants have asked the County to provide some services that could be included in an enhanced scheme in specific places. These include restrictions on waiting periods, residents parking and restrictions to parking on one side of the road. They are asking the County to administer these schemes but there is no obligation or incentive for the County to agree to this proposal.

3.3 The Environment and Scrutiny Committee of the County Council met on 29 November and received a report on a Countywide Parking Strategy. That report and the appendix to it containing the strategy is attached as an Appendix to this report.

The Scrutiny Committee considered the report and supported the following:-

- The introduction of a Parking Committee for Northamptonshire with ‘Member’ representatives from each Council.
- The introduction of baseline level enforcement across the County to enable the County Council to achieve its Local Transport Plan requirements.
Support for local Councils (Boroughs and Districts) deciding their own level of engagement.

3.4 The County are seeking the clearest possible indication as to the intentions of the Districts now and will need to know before the matter is submitted to their Committee on 13 March.

(a) Whether Wellingborough wishes to select a baseline or enhanced scheme.
(b) If it selects an enhanced scheme whether it wishes to charge for either on street only or both on street and off street.

It should be remembered that the County Council has offered to meet the capital cost of the controls which is estimated to be £25,000 for on street and £440,000 for off street if the Borough chooses to introduce schemes involving charging at the time it takes responsibility for parking under an enhanced scheme.

3.5 If the Borough Council were to choose a baseline scheme it would be leaving responsibility for the management of on street parking with the County Council and they would be able to make all decisions with regard to it in future.

3.6 The Countywide Parking Strategy has only been made available to this Authority recently. It refers to the formation of a Parking Committee with a non executive role advising the County Council on which this Authority would be offered representation.

It refers to the level of on street charges and penalty notices being based on advice to the County Council and to the level of off street charges within town centres being within a framework set out by the County Council.

If this Authority were to select the enhanced option thereby taking responsibility for the cost of operating both on and off street parking it would wish to retain the right to determine whether, and at what level, any charges should be including the right not to charge in the off street car parks.

3.7 The Local Transport Plan contains policies for seeking to reduce congestion and encourage the use of public transport and other alternatives such as walking and cycling. The provision of free parking in the Town Centre does not assist in the implementation of these policies.

3.8 New developments in the Town Centre will need to provide adequate parking for the facilities on each site and retain adequate overall provision for the Town Centre as a whole. There is a high cost attached to the provision of new spaces, especially if they are multi-storey or underground, which will threaten the viability of schemes unless part of the cost could be recovered through charging.

4. Legal Powers

4.1 Highways Act 1980.
Road Traffic Act 1991

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The revenue implications of the current service and enhanced scheme options are shown in Appendix 2. No provision has been made in the 2006/07 budget beyond the current service.
5.2 The capital costs of on street parking are £25,000 and off street parking £440,000. The County Council will bear these costs if this Council introduces schemes involving charging at the time it becomes responsible for parking under an enhanced scheme.

6. Risk Analysis and Implications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of risk</th>
<th>Consequences if realised</th>
<th>Likelihood of occurrence</th>
<th>Control measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of an inappropriate scheme, such as the base scheme</td>
<td>Adverse impact on traffic management &amp; economic activity in the borough</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Consultation on scheme proposals and control of parking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variations in expenditure or income</td>
<td>Impact on revenue budget</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Introduction of an appropriate LPC scheme; budgetary monitoring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1 Implications for Staffing:
Terms of employment of existing staff may need to be revised if parking charges are introduced. Extra staff would be required to operate enhanced Local Parking Control. This need could be met through consortium working with other Northamptonshire authorities.

6.2 Implications for Sustainable Development:
Control of on-street parking will reduce congestion, increase turnover in the Central Area and reduce the impact of vehicles on the physical environment.

6.3 Implications for Equal Opportunities:
Local residents will be consulted as proposals progress.

6.4 Implications for Community Safety:
The proposals will provide a safer environment for the Community.

6.5 Implications for Health Improvement:
Effective parking control can lead to a safer environment which reduces the level of accidents.

6.6 Implications for Property:
Local Parking Control could result in more effective use of on street parking spaces and the Council’s car parks by means of a higher turnaround rate.

7. Recommendation:

7.1 The Committee recommends the Council to:-

7.1.1 Support the principle of the Council operating a scheme of Local Parking Control at an enhanced level in the Borough providing the Borough Council retains the right to determine whether to charge and at what level.

7.1.2 In association with Northamptonshire County Council develop an implementation plan for consultation on the extent and nature of such a scheme which shall involve charging for on street parking but not for off street parking when the scheme is introduced.:
8. Authors:

8.1 R H Entwistle, Director of Technical & Leisure Services

9. Consultees

9.1 Northamptonshire County Council

9.2 Rob Wilton – Head of Financial Services

10. Background Papers


10.2 Report of the Technical & Leisure Services Committee: Minute 6, 23.10.00
Report of the Technical & Leisure Services Committee: Minute 17, 14.02.00
Report of the Policy & Resources Committee: Minute 5, 5.02.02