

Executive Report

Delegated Decision – 14 November 2023

ALTERATIONS TO PARKING ARRANGEMENTS IN CENTRAL MILTON KEYNES

Name of Cabinet Member	Councillor Lauren Townsend Portfolio for Public Realm
Report sponsor	Stuart Proffitt Director Environment and Property Graham Cox Assistant Director Highways and Transport
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Exempt / confidential / not for publication	No
Council Plan reference	N/A
Wards affected	All wards, particularly Central Milton Keynes

Executive summary

Three changes to the car parking arrangements within Central Milton Keynes (CMK) are put forward in this delegated decision paper for consideration and approval.

The first change is to extend the minimum length of stay. For Standard Tariff parking this would mean the minimum stay increases from one hour to two hours (which would cost £1 minimum). For Premium Tariff parking the minimum stay would increase from 15 minutes to one hour (which would cost £2 minimum).

The Central Milton Keynes standard tariff remains cheap, as shown later in this report and is competitive against other city centre parking options. This change will encourage more people to spend longer in our city centre, benefiting our important retail and leisure businesses.

The second change is the low emission parking permits. The 100% discount (completely free) Ultra Low Emission Permit will move to a 50% discount. It is then proposed that in January 2025 that both the Ultra Low Emission Permit and Low Emission Permit will no longer be in place and instead motorists will be redirected to the standard employee discount parking scheme. A discount for Ultra Low Emissions has been in place since 2016, and the Low Emissions Permit since 2013.

The third change is to introduce a maximum stay period of four hours for the parking of electric or plug-in hybrid vehicles in charging bays, with a one hour no return. The current free all-day parking offer (whether charging or not) was introduced 10 years ago, to encourage the use of electric vehicles and promote the use of on street charging. Electric, and plug-in hybrid vehicle use has increased significantly and the rationale for providing free parking has fallen away as electric vehicle ownership has increased. It also encourages the turnover of these spaces, instead of all day free parking.

Any surplus generated by these changes is required to be applied in accordance with Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. This includes any funding pressures within the account such as rising management and maintenance costs, as well as supporting local public transport – this may include for example, continuing short term one-off funding to support the post-pandemic recovery of the bus network.

We plan to implement these changes as soon as the required statutory notifications have been implemented and completed following this Delegated Decision, likely February 2024 or soon after. These changes are proposed in advance of any wider parking strategy review.

1. Proposed Decision

1.1 That the Standard Tariff banding, be amended as follows:

- a) the minimum stay be increased to two hours; and
- b) each successive period thereafter be one hour.

1.2 That the Premium Tariff banding, be amended as follows:

- a) the minimum stay be increased to one hour; and
- b) each successive period thereafter be one hour.

1.3 That the discount for the Ultra Low Emissions Parking Permit be reduced from 100% to 50%.

1.4 That it is planned for both the Ultra Low Emissions Parking Permit and Low Emissions Parking Permits to be withdrawn from January 2025.

1.5 That for charging bays for use by electric or plug-in hybrid vehicles, a maximum stay of four hours with one hour no return be introduced.

2. Why is the decision needed?

2.1 By extending the length of stays/banding there is likely to be increased dwell time, which will support local retail and leisure businesses.

2.2 Building on above, as part of our Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Centre:MK, we agreed to work together to “continue the discussion on parking, recognising that consumer requirements are changing in response to Covid19. Both parties recognise the provision of free parking will not resolve the issues currently faced in improving footfall and the reasons to dwell in central Milton Keynes”. In May, Centre:MK increased their multi-storey car park minimum stays to £2.50 for a minimum two hour stay and £1 per hour thereafter.

- 2.4 It has been eight years (2015) since the last review of the parking tariffs. In that time inflation (based on CPI) has increased 30%.
- 2.5 The impact of the pandemic reduced parking income significantly. Post pandemic (2021/22), total parking revenue was 40% lower than pre-pandemic. It has now recovered to a forecast £10.25M in 2023/24, although is still 24% down on pre-pandemic levels.
- 2.6 At a time when local authority budgets are under immense pressure, it is increasingly important that parking services are self-sufficient, whilst ensuring that parking continues to support services for our businesses and communities. The proposed alterations to the tariff bands can help to meet these objectives.
- 2.7 Tariffs also need to be continually reviewed to ensure the Council's car parks support the local economy by optimising their efficient use, whilst also contributing to the Council's local transport objectives.
- 2.9 The minimum stay durations in neighbouring town and city centres range between 30-minutes and 2-hours as shown in the table below:

Local Authority	Minimum stay	Charge
Proposed Standard Tariff	Two hours	£1.00
West Northamptonshire City Council	30 minutes	£0.50
Bedford Borough Council	30 minutes	£0.80
Cambridge City Council	One hour	£2.30-£3.60
Oxfordshire County Council	One hour	£5.50-£6.60
Watford Borough Council	One and two hours	£0.60-£2.00
Leicester City Council	One and two hours	£1.00-£2.00

3. Implications of the decision

Financial	Y	Human rights, equalities, diversity	N
Legal	Y	Policies or Council Plan	Y
Communication	Y	Procurement	N
Energy Efficiency	N	Workforce	N

a) Financial implications:

For these combined changes we estimate a potential increase in surplus of £1M, however it is always very difficult to predict the impact on revenue of parking changes. For budget planning purposes we are taking a prudent approach, factoring in a decline because of changed driver behaviour and we will propose to increase the 2024/25 budget by £500K, with a corresponding pressure for any future agreed support funding as applicable prior to setting the final budget.

The proposed changes will require the Council to produce and serve a section 46 notice, update the current electric vehicle parking places traffic regulation orders, electric vehicle parking signs and the parking systems and payment terminals.

This is estimated to cost c.£30K and will be funded through the Council's Parking Revenue budget.

Charge	Requirements
£2K	Produce and serve the section 46 notice
£2K	Update the current electric vehicle parking places traffic regulation Orders
£20K	Update the electric vehicle parking signs
£4K	Update parking systems
£2K	Update payment terminals

Future inflationary reviews and increases of the tariff charges will be included in the annual review of the Councils fees and charges as part of the budget setting process. Therefore, we will use the corporate income policy to set these fees based on inflation. Any increases would need to be agreed as part of our usual budgetary processes and decision frameworks.

b) Legal implications:

When the Authority intends to vary the parking tariff bands in the current existing traffic regulation orders, there is a requirement to serve statutory notification under Section 46A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and Regulation 25 of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. The aforementioned procedure to vary the parking tariff bands is a notice-based procedure rather than a consultation-based procedure.

When the Council intends to introduce the limited stay duration in the electric vehicle parking places, there is a requirement to amend the current traffic regulation Orders. This will require a statutory consultation-based procedure under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

All consequential amendments would follow the correct procedures as necessary.

c) Other implications: None.

4. Alternatives

- 4.1 The Council does not review the parking tariffs and could instead wait for the next Local Transport Plan to inform wider review of parking charges in Milton Keynes. This is not recommended as it does not deliver the benefits set out within this decision.

5. Timetable for implementation

- 5.1 If agreed, these changes will be implemented as soon as possible after the required statutory notifications have been undertaken and completed, likely in February 2024 or soon after.

List of annexes

None

List of background papers

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Centre:MK

[Milton Keynes City Council and Centre-MK - Memorandum of Understanding Annex.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)