

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Panel**
Date: **6 October 2016**
Title: **PARKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR VEHICLE TAX-EXEMPT MOTORISTS**
Portfolio Area: **Environment Services**
Wards Affected: **All**
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: To be considered by the Executive on 20th October 2016
(*e.g. referral on of recommendation or implementation of substantive decision*)

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RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Overview and Scrutiny Panel RECOMMEND to the Executive that it recommends to Council that the arrangements for disabled vehicle tax-exempt motorists remain unchanged, but that the public consultation in respect of this is repeated.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report requests that Members consider the recommendation to maintain the current parking charge arrangement for disabled motorists who are also vehicle tax-exempt.

2. Background

- 2.1 Members will recall that, following the abolition of vehicle tax discs in October 2014, it was resolved that disabled motorists with tax-exempt vehicles should commence paying for parking in District Council car parks. Parking had previously been free for up to three hours for such motorists, as the enforcement officers were clearly

able to see that the motorists were tax-exempt due to their disability, from the information they could glean from the tax disc and from the blue badge.

- 2.2 The abolition of tax discs made this distinction impossible and it was, therefore, resolved that tax-exempt motorists should be offered the same concession as blue-badge holders, ie that one hour's free parking is given on the expiry time of a Pay & Display ticket, when the ticket is displayed together with the customer's blue badge.
- 2.3 The proposed amendment to the Off-Street Parking Places Order was advertised, along with other amendments, in the local press, in all car parks and on the District Council's website. In addition, consultation was undertaken with Devon County Council and the Police.
- 2.4 Two objections were received to the proposal - not enough to warrant returning to the Executive for re-consideration - and, therefore, the amendment was implemented.
- 2.5 However, early in 2016, one customer complained that consultation had not been undertaken appropriately, and that this should have been done through a disability network organisation.

3. Outcomes/outputs

- 3.1 As a result of the complaint, we made contact with a Disability Access Champion at Living Options Devon. She agreed that our consultation could have been better, but was unable to make any recommendations on how to improve the service we currently offer to tax-exempt motorists.
- 3.2 In addition, contact was made with all other districts in Devon to establish if there is an alternative solution. All operate in the same way as South Hams and West Devon (ie one hour's free parking at the expiry time of a Pay & Display ticket) with the exception of Teignbridge District Council, who offer a concessionary permit to all blue badge holders (whether tax-exempt or not) who live in Teignbridge, for £12 per annum. This allows those motorists to have parking for that annual sum.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

- 4.1 Should we offer a similar permit scheme to residents in South Hams who are eligible for a tax-exempt vehicle, it is estimated that:
 - If we have 500 customers who are tax-exempt who all applied for a permit, the income generated at £12 per permit would be £4,800, taking VAT into account.
 - The cost of issuing such permits would be in the region of £3,360, if undertaken by a L8 Case Manager.
 - Printing costs would be approximately £1 per permit, a total of £500.

- Leaving an income of £940 for the Council.

4.2 However, this doesn't take into consideration the lost P&D income. This is not quantifiable and certainly not the main focus of this report.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 The recommendation is that no change is made to the current arrangements for all Blue Badge holders. However, it is recommended that the previous consultation exercise undertaken in respect of tax-exempt motorist be repeated, and that, should a substantial number of objections be received this time round, the issue be referred back to the Executive for further consideration, as we would for any amendment to the parking order which resulted in a large number of objections.
- 5.2 The consultation will be available to disabled customers via the South Hams Lifestyles website, which is 'a registered charity offering vital help and assistance to people with disabilities who live in the towns and villages of the South Hams'. I have discussed our wish to consult with disabled customers with the charity Co-ordinator, who has agreed to help with this.
- 5.3 The Environment Services Executive Member has been consulted in respect of the recommendations included in this report.
- 5.4 The proposal to maintain the current arrangements for tax-exempt vehicles is in line with the following priorities:
- Community well-being
 - Access to services
 - Towards excellence
 - Customer First

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		<p>The Council has power to provide off-street parking under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended).</p> <p>The Council has the power to deal with the provision, management and control of car parks.</p> <p>The Council has the powers to provide this service under the General Powers of Competence in the Localism Act 2011.</p>

Financial		The consultation exercise will cost approximately £600 to advertise.
Risk		None at this stage.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		A comprehensive impact assessment has been completed in respect of this matter (Appendix A) which shows that there is a negative impact for tax-exempt motorists. However, we are unable to revert to the previous arrangements due to the abolition of tax discs.
Safeguarding		No implications.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		No potential positive or negative impact on crime and disorder reduction.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		No implications.
Other implications		None.

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Appendix A – Comprehensive Impact Assessment.

Background Papers:

Executive minutes from meeting held on 5 June 2014.