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**Officer Name:** Michael Newsham

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**Title of report:** Residents Parking & On-Street Permit Fees

**Report :** This report reviews the fees charged for permits within the Ipswich Residents Parking Scheme and certain other on-street permit fees and makes recommendations for changes.

**What evidence/data is being used to support this equality analysis? Please select all that apply.:**

**Service area:** Vibrant Town Services

**Corporate Manager:** Hannah Leys

**Corporate Manager email:** Hannah.Leyes@ipswich.gov.uk

**Links to supporting documents where available:**

**Please upload any supporting documents:**

**What is proposed?:** This report reviews the fees charged for permits within the Ipswich Residents Parking Scheme and certain other on-street permit fees and makes recommendations for changes.

**Why are the changes being introduced?:** The Council has operated an on-street residents parking scheme in Ipswich since 1983. The function is undertaken on behalf of Suffolk County Council (SCC) but the Borough Council has control over the administration and enforcement of the scheme, including the fees that are charged for permits, which were last reviewed by Executive in 2021 (ref: E/21/23).

As the Council has control over permit fees, it takes 100% of the financial risk of operating the scheme and has to make good from the General Fund any deficits that occur on the scheme account at the end of each financial year. Any surpluses generated can only be used in accordance with Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, which includes offsetting any deficits charged to the General Fund for the previous 4 years.

Except in years when permit fees are reviewed, the income into the residents parking scheme account from the sale of permits and Penalty Charge Notices remains broadly static from year to year. However, the costs charged to the scheme account tend to increase each year in line with

increases in staff salaries and inflationary increases for example on supplies. As such, it is necessary to periodically review the fees charged for permits in order to help ensure that the scheme remains self-funding and to avoid deficits being charged to the Council's General Fund.

In 2023/2024, the residents parking scheme account returned a net in year deficit of £34,747. This was partly due to a change in the method of apportionment of the Council's overall costs for operating parking functions so as to better reflect the additional time that the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers spend in residents parking zones in order to provide the dedicated level of enforcement that residents pay for. In the absence of a residents parking zone the level of enforcement of other parking restrictions on the streets in question would be much lower, as these are typically side roads in residential areas.

The residents parking scheme account opened 2023/2024 with a cumulative surplus of £202,000 and as such with the in-year loss referred to above closed the year (and opened 2024/2025) with a cumulative surplus of £167,253.

In previous years, the Council has usually waited until the scheme account had a cumulative deficit (i.e. when the General Fund was being expected to meet ongoing deficits) before seeking to make any further increase in the fees charged for permits within the scheme. However, this approach has meant that when fees were increased they often had to be increased by an amount that could be relatively high in percentage terms. In the 2021 review, the price of a first and second residents parking permit, which are the principal permits issued, was authorised to be increased from £40 and £80 to £60 and £120 respectively, albeit that these increases were staggered across two years to try to help mitigate their impact.

If no action is taken then the existing cumulative surplus on the residents parking scheme account will be exhausted in about three years, at which point a further significant increase in permit fees would be required in order to avoid the increasing deficits being charged to the Council's General Fund. As such, an alternative approach is now being proposed whereby permit fees would be increased this year and every year for the following four years but with each increase being a much lower amount. In this way, the longer term financial challenges facing the scheme account can be addressed whilst limiting any one increase to lower levels.

This report sets out a proposal for the consideration of the Executive, and includes some fees and charges which are sometimes made outside of the Ipswich Residents Parking Scheme, such as for School Permits, Place of Worship Permits and for suspending an on-street parking bay.

**What evidence is being used to support this Equality Impact Assessment, and how is it being used?:** A qualitative assessment of the proposals and their impacts.

**How will this change be implemented?:** If approved by the Council's Executive Committee a statutory public consultation will be carried out on proposals to make a new legal order (known as a Traffic Regulation Order) in respect of the affected on-street paid for parking places in the Ipswich town centre area in accordance with the proposals in the committee report. Objections or representations will then be considered and determined by officers under delegated powers. Thereafter, the new legal Order will be made and the approved changes will be implemented.

**Age:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or**

**further promote positive impact.:** The proposals in this report do not have any specific impact on this protected characteristic.

**Disability:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Blue badge holders are legally entitled to free parking in all on-street paid for parking bays and as such this will assist blue badge holders with access to the town centre for shopping.

**Marriage & Civil Partnership:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** The proposals in this report do not have any specific impact on this protected characteristic.

**Race:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** The proposals in this report do not have any specific impact on this protected characteristic.

**Pregnancy & Maternity:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** The proposals in this report do not have any specific impact on this protected characteristic.

**Religion or Belief:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** The introduction of a fee for a Place of Worship Permit will affect those places of worship affected, but this is mitigated by the fact that there is no obligation on the Council to provide such permits and the continuation of them for an annual fee of £40 each still provides a substantial discount on the cost of parking. The permits provide 3 hours free parking and if this were paid for in an IBC off-street short-stay car park (which in each case is near by to the existing places of worship affected) once a week, then over the course of a year the proposed £40 annual fee would represent a 83% discount on the full price.

**Gender Reassignment:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** The proposals in this report do not have any specific impact on this protected characteristic.

**Sex:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** The proposals in this report do not have any specific impact on this protected characteristic.

**Sexual Orientation:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** The proposals in this report do not have any specific impact on this protected characteristic.

**I can confirm the report does meet Ipswich Borough Council's equality objectives:** I can confirm the report does meet Ipswich Borough Council's equality objectives

**The report helps us to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment & victimisation' in the following way(s):** By ensuring that all residents have the facilities to park in Ipswich town centre and blue badge holders continue to have free parking in paid for parking bays.

**The report helps us to 'advance equality of opportunity...' in the following way(s):** By ensuring that all local residents in communities in Ipswich have access to sufficient parking in Ipswich town centre to enable them to take part in shopping and leisure uses.

**The policy helps us to 'foster good relations...' in the following way(s):** By ensuring that all local residents in communities in Ipswich have access to sufficient parking in Ipswich town centre to enable them to take part in shopping and leisure uses.

**The new provisions will be reviewed in the following way(s):** No changes will be implemented before a statutory public consultation has been carried out and the results of this have been considered by officers. Any approved changes will be reviewed again after they have been introduced.

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