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Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities

30<sup>th</sup> January 2025

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cllr AS Khan, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Policing & Equalities

**Director approving submission of the report:**

Director of City Services & Commercial

**Ward(s) affected:**

Earlsdon

**Title:**

Petition – Petition against proposed car park charges at the War Memorial Park.

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive summary:**

A petition with 27 signatures was lodged by the Three Spires u3a, objecting to the current charges for parking in the Kenilworth Road car park at the War Memorial Park.

The Three Spires u3a are members of the u3a (University of the Third age) which holds group meetings on a regular basis between 10:30am and 12:30pm at the visitor centre in the War Memorial Park. The 3 hour free parking limit is insufficient for them to enjoy refreshments at the café after the group meetings have concluded.

In accordance with the City Council's procedure for dealing with petitions, those relating to parks are heard by the Cabinet Member for Policing & Equalities.

The Cabinet Member had considered the petition prior to this meeting and requested that the petition was dealt with by determination letter rather than a formal report being submitted to a meeting, to be able to deal with the matter more efficiently. On receipt of the determination letter, the petition organiser requested that the issue be considered at a Cabinet Member for Policing & Equalities meeting.

The petition reads as follows:

*“Petition against proposed charges for the car park at War Memorial Park – all charging at the Kenilworth Road car park should be scrapped”.*

**Recommendations:**

- 1. Note the Petitioners' concerns.**
- 2. Endorse the actions which had been agreed to be issued by determination letter to the petition organiser as detailed in paragraph 1.0 of the report.**

**List of Appendices included:**

None

**Background papers:**

**Other useful documents**

Cabinet member report for Strategic Finance and Resources 5 Feb 2024

**Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

**Report title:** Petition – Petition against proposed charges car park at War Memorial Park.  
Scrap all charges.

## **1. Context (or background)**

Three Spires u3a are objecting to the current charges for parking in the Kenilworth Road car park at the War Memorial Park.

They are members of the u3a (University of the 3<sup>rd</sup> age) which holds group meetings on a regular basis between 10:30am and 12:30pm at the visitor centre in the War Memorial Park. The three-hour free parking limit is insufficient for them to enjoy refreshments at the café after the group meetings have concluded and they are requesting that all car parking charges are removed for this car park.

Parking charges are necessary to meet the financial demands of maintaining Parks and Openspaces across the City including the WMP and its associated sites such as Spencer Park, Top Green and Allesley Parks.

Over the past 6 years, the council has embarked on a commercialism approach that seeks to maximise the value of every asset that the Council holds including seeking to generate new revenue for the Council, helping to protect, support and invest in services provided within the Parks and partially mitigates the impact of proposed/potential reductions in revenue for the service.

### **Budget Setting Proposals 2024/25**

The Council is required to set a balanced budget, and this legal duty is balanced with continuing to deliver the key services to residents and businesses in the City. The Pre-Budget report (2024-2025) forecast a £9m shortfall and indicated that this had been brought on by rising demand, underfunding and the tough economic climate, not just in Coventry but across the whole sector. As a result of these pressures, a number of cost-cutting proposals were put forward for residents, colleagues and businesses to comment on. The proposals were subject to an eight-week consultation period which ended on 7 February 2024.

One such proposal was to remove the current 3 hours free parking at the War Memorial Park and standardise parking charges with those at Coombe Abbey Park, as follows (based on 23/24 charges at the time):

Up to 1 hour - £1  
1-2 hours - £3  
2-4 hours £3.50  
Day ticket £5

However, this proposal was rejected, and the three hours period of free parking remains in place.

The financial impact of removing all charges for parking would be significant and contra to the city councils One Coventry Plan - enabling priority – Continued financial sustainability of the council.

It should be noted that the actual income received in 2023/24 was £54,395 against an income target of £139k as a result of the service not being able to implement the intended charges following budget setting for 24/25 placing further pressure on the Parks & Open Spaces service.

## **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

### 2.1. Options available are:

#### Option 1

Reject the petition and allow the current parking charges to continue.

#### Option 2

Accept the petitions recommendations.

### 2.2. Cabinet Member is recommended to approve option 1.

## **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

### 3.1. No consultation undertaken.

## **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

### 4.1. The decision will be implemented soon after Cabinet Member's decision.

## **5. Comments from Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Legal Officer**

### 5.1. Financial Implications

There are significant financial implications if the parking charges are removed. The reduction in income would have a significant impact on service delivery. Budget figures are detail with this report.

### 5.2. Legal Implications

None

## **6. Other implications**

### 6.1. How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan>

This decision contributes to the One Coventry Plan enabling priority – Continued financial sustainability of the council.

### 6.2. How is risk being managed?

None

**6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?**

Significant financial impact should the parking charges be removed. Removing the car park charges at WMP would result in a loss of income (c£54k) which would then impact on the standard of maintenance carried out.

**6.4. Equalities / EIA?**

An EIA has not been undertaken.

**6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?**

No assessment on the impact on climate change has been carried out.

**6.6. Implications for partner organisations?**

None

**Report author(s):**

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