

**TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL  
TUESDAY 7<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2023**

**BRIEFING NOTE  
ON STREET PARKING CHARGES**

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Council will recall that, at its November Meeting, the divisional County Councillor reported the intention of the County Council to introduce charges for on-street parking in the Town (Min No 285(c) refers).
- 1.2 The County Council's proposals are listed at <https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=133&MId=4462&Ver=4>) and <https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/s43796/New%20Pay%20and%20Display%20Schemes%20Impact%20Assessment%20October%202022.pdf>
- 1.3 However, these do not provide meaningful detail on the evidence collated in relation to Tavistock detailing any preparatory objective analysis of factors such as congestion (and separating same from the impacts of the A386), recirculation, vacancy rates, footfall, space utilisation and void rates, digital exclusion (for cashless options) and related applicable factors.
- 1.4 The County Council has been requested to provide timeframes for consultation on factors such as the above, the associated evidence base and assessment period for analysis already undertaken, methods of selection for review, consultation timelines etc.
- 1.5 However, to date, other than providing links to the Committee report (which do not include this information) and confirming there are no current proposals for residents parking permits (*'With regards residents parking permits, there are currently no proposals to introduce any further schemes in Tavistock (there is an existing scheme in Old Exeter Road)'*) no evidence has been provided by the Highway Authority.

- 1.6 Insofar as the business community are concerned the Tavistock BID Co has expressed serious reservations regarding the potential impact of the proposal on the local economy and are understood to be seeking crowd funding to enable specialist support to be engaged to look at the evidence for the proposal. The campaign is titled 'stop the meters'.
- 1.7 If the Council shares those concerns it may wish to consider supporting/contributing to that initiative.

## **2. THE CURRENT SITUATION**

- 2.1 This is a matter which historically the Town Council has objected to taking the view, inter alia, that arguably Tavistock does not meet the criteria for on-street charging, ie:
- Free flow of traffic – no evidence has been provided to demonstrate on-street parking related issues of congestion management in need of resolution (such congestion issues as there are being self-evidently a function of the A386 running through the Town);
  - Maintenance of reasonable access – in the view of the BID Co the current turnover and availability of regulated on street free parking likely positively contributes to the positive turnover and availability of on-street parking, no evidence has been provided to the contrary;
  - Links to off street parking – usage of the main of street car parks in the Town indicate there is no need for their promotion, especially at peak times.
- 2.2 Moreover, the introduction of on street charging would potentially:
- adversely affect the street scene in a World Heritage Site and Conservation Area through the siting of meters and signage;
  - cause displacement leading to the introduction and exacerbation of problems in other parts of the town;
  - establish a precedent for future changes (increases) in charging;
  - adversely affect both the local economy (so far as parking in the town centre was concerned), and local community in an area where for many residents (and

visitors from the hinterland) cars are a necessity at a time of cost of living crisis.

- 2.3 No evidence has been provided to indicate that the stated aims and objectives of on street charging (see section 3 of the DCC Impact Assessment) could be met. Indeed, the view of the local business community is clearly that the impact would in fact have an adverse impact on those criteria relating to business benefit and long term visitors abusing short stay on street parking.
- 2.4 Additionally, indications from the divisional Member (Agenda Item No 10(c)) refers) are that the reason for the proposed policy change by the County Council is not driven by the relevant factors (above) as listed in s45 Road Traffic Act 1984 (and as suggested in the report to the County Council), but instead are to raise income for the County Council to subsidise bus services in the County.
- 2.5 Given that the report to the County Council indicates pay and display should only be introduced where there is a 'traffic management need' there appears to currently be a contradiction between the criteria applicable for the introduction of parking charges on the one hand and both the lack of evidence and stated purpose to generate additional income for DCC on the other.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is difficult to come to an informed view unless/until the County Council is prepared to share the evidence on which its decision to select Tavistock for review at this time is based.
- 3.2 Moreover, as outlined above, there appears to be a tension between the emerging proposals and the failure to provide evidence consistent with compliance with the legislative requirements under the 1984 Act of:

*In determining what parking places are to be designated under this section the authority concerned shall consider both the interests of traffic and those of the owners and occupiers of adjoining property, and in particular the matters to which that authority shall have regard include—*

*(a) the need for maintaining the free movement of traffic;*

*(b)the need for maintaining reasonable access to premises; and  
(c)the extent to which [F6off-street parking accommodation, whether in the open or under cover,]is available in the neighbourhood or the provision of such parking accommodation is likely to be encouraged there by the designation of parking places under this section.*

3.3 Whilst some of the factors may emerge from consultation others can only be a matter of evidenced fact and that evidence is not available.

3.4 In the circumstances it is recommended that, in order to properly understand the nature of, and reasons for, the proposed introduction of charging for on-street parking in Tavistock the Council requests the following from the County Council as a matter of urgency:

- a) The evidence held on which the decision has been based to proceed with proposals to change/review the existing arrangements consistent with s45 Road Traffic Act 1984 and other factors listed in s2 of the Impact assessment as considered by the County Council on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2022;
- b) The evidence held which demonstrates compliance with and need against the factors listed in s3 of the Impact assessment as considered by the County Council on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2022;
- c) A commitment that the foregoing will be provided to the Town Council well in advance of any consultation for on street charges for parking in Tavistock being introduced.

3.5 The instructions of Council are sought.

**CARL HEARN  
TOWN CLERK  
JANUARY 2023  
TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL**