

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

LEAD COUNCILLOR	COUNCILLOR TONY PAGE - LEAD COUNCILLOR FOR STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT		
DATE:	30 JULY 2021		
TITLE:	PROVISION OF ON-STREET AND OFF-STREET PARKING FOR THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE HOSPITAL NHS TRUST		
SERVICE:	PLANNING, TRANSPORT & REGULATORY SERVICES	WARDS:	ABBEY & REDLANDS
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the decision of the Council to support the Royal Berkshire Hospital (RBH) NHS Foundation Trust with its parking provision for patients and front-line staff. The decision is to enter into an agreement to provide up to 600 spaces at Queens Road Car Park and a further 178 on-street spaces at a commercially agreed day rate per space.
- 1.2 The report sets the projected income associated with the proposed agreement.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 It is the decision of the Executive Director for Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, to enter into agreement with the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust to provide on and off street parking at an agreed day rate per space.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council is progressing an updated Reading Transport Strategy 2036, consultation of which ended in August 2020. The new strategy has been developed to help achieve wider objectives including the Reading 2050 Vision, the Climate Emergency which was declared in February 2019 and improved air quality. It is heavily focused on addressing these wider challenges through a package of solutions to both provide realistic sustainable alternatives to the private car, alongside measures to manage demand to improve air quality and congestion.
- 3.3 The Council is in the process of implementing a Customer Experience Strategy. This strategy sets out the Council's vision to achieve the best possible experience for its customers. This will have implications on public parking provision as well as value to

the council, customer service is a key requirement in the successful delivery of its parking services.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Current Position:

4.1.1 Currently 587 RBH/NHS staff are registered to park at Queens Road car park free of charge, as a result of the Government free parking initiative which ended on the 21 June 2021. This is a significant increase in use by the RBH from the previous season ticket arrangement pre-pandemic. Prior to the COVID pandemic, RBH had recognised the shortfall in parking availability and the need to provide suitable and convenient parking space for their patients and visitors whilst at the same time providing adequate parking for front line staff 24 hours a day.

4.2 Option Proposed

4.2.1 It is proposed to extend the use of Queens Road car park and additionally provide a solution for on-street Pay & Display (P&D) provision in the area of the RBH. Since the introduction of the on-street P&D scheme around the RBH there are some areas of capacity which have been identified and can be offered to the hospital. With this additional parking provision offered by the Council, RBH would be better able to meet the parking needs of patients, visitors and staff.

4.2.2 It is proposed to provide up to 600 daily spaces to the RBH at Queens Road park at a commercially agreed rate to be set out in Heads of Terms with the Trust. A further 178 on street spaces within the P&D provision has also been identified and will fees will be applied on a pay as you use basis rather than a fixed season ticket.

4.2.3 It is proposed that the agreement be set out for three years with an option to extend for a further 2 years. The hours of use for the allocation will be 24 hours, given the nature of use of the hospital.

4.2.3 On-street parking is offered at:

- **Upper Redlands Road** - 91 Spaces (Walking time Upper Redlands Road/Alexander Road junction to Maternity Block, 10 minutes)
- **Allcroft Road** - 22 Spaces (Walking time Allcroft Road/Whitby Road junction to Maternity Block, 9 minutes)
- **Kendrick Road** - 65 Spaces (Walking time Kendrick Road/Morgan Road junction to Maternity Block, 10 minutes)

4.2.4 The introduction of the On-Street element will require a modification to the current Permit Smarti application at a cost of approximately £3k with an estimated lead time of 3 months.

4.2.5 The on-street P&D use and space available reduces capacity problems generated at the hospital car parks.

4.2.6 It is proposed to commence this agreement with the RBH from 1st August 2021.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The parking strategy, procurement of civil enforcement services and changes to resident permit parking sits within the wider context of the Reading Local Transport Strategy 2036. Parking management and civil enforcement activities supports several strategic aims within the Reading Transport Strategy and Reading's Corporate Plan:

- **Healthy Environment:** Parking management has a positive impact on the public realm creating a safe and accessible environment for residents, workers and visitors. Parking management is part of the wider management of the road

network which contributes to safety, protecting vulnerable users and encouraging walking and cycling. The parking strategy encourages greener and cleaner vehicles using environment related tariffs. Specific restrictions with fair and consistent enforcement promote sustainable travel through efficient public transport

- Thriving communities: Good parking management ensures homes, business and leisure are accessible. Parking schemes such as resident permit parking and specific restrictions such as disabled parking contribute positively to the community.
- Inclusive Economy: Parking management of the town centre and local centres support the local economy. The structure of tariffs particularly in the town centre strikes a balance between supporting the local day-time economy whilst encouraging model shift for longer visits encouraging model shift and sustainable mobility.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Parking Strategy takes full account of the Council's climate change policy commitments as set out in the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25, the Council's Carbon Plan 2020-25 and the Draft Reading Local Transport Strategy 2036. The Parking Strategy aims to move towards environmental impact-based tariffs for all aspects of paid for parking within the scope of the Councils parking service. Civil enforcement contributes to an efficient public transport provision which in turn encourages model shift.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 It is not considered that the recommendations within this report will have a differential impact on: racial groups; gender; people with disabilities; people of a particular sexual orientation; people due to their age; people due to their religious belief and therefore no Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is relevant to the decision.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 An agreement will be drafted in consultation with Legal Services.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Over the last financial year, Covid has resulted in a 75% drop in revenue generated from car parking income, including a 70% hit on Queens Road Car Park, the biggest RBC car park by income. This initiative offers the opportunity to secure guaranteed income for the Council from the proposed arrangement with Royal Berkshire Hospital at a time of commercial uncertainty while at the same time offering up On Street parking spaces at under-utilised locations over the 3 - 5 years. Added benefit of assisting the hospital with its parking capacity issues at a time of ever-increasing demand.
- 9.2 Related costs are not material and include the completion of internal car park Automatic Number Plate Recognition system coding in addition to the required modifications to the on-street parking system (Permit Smarti). These will be funded from within existing Transport revenue budgets.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 None.