

Policy Committee

17 November 2025



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Introduction of Emissions based Charging
Purpose of the report	To make a key decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Emma Gee, Executive Director Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services
Report author	Phil Grant, Parking Services Manager
Lead Councillor	Cllr John Ennis, Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport
Corporate priority	Thriving Communities
Recommendations	<p>That the Committee;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Notes the consultation responses in Appendix 1 in relation to emissions based charges for on-street pay and display changes and agree to implement the proposed charges set out in Appendix 2.2. Authorises the Assistant Director of Environmental and Commercial Services in consultation with the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services to make permanent the resultant Traffic Regulation Order in relation to the on street pay and display charges.3. Notes the consultation responses in relation to emissions based charges for Permits in Appendix 3 and agrees to implement the proposed charges at Appendix 4.4. Authorises the Assistant Director of Environmental and Commercial services to implement the emissions based charging structure for the list of Parking permits set out in Appendix 4.5. Agrees that respondents to the consultations be informed of the decisions of the Committee accordingly.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 At its meeting of the Policy Committee in January 2025, the council set out proposals to introduce emissions-based charging (EBC) for on street parking, resident and all other parking permits across the Borough. The Council has considered the benefits of introducing EBC in response to its declared Climate Emergency and as part of efforts to improve air quality across Reading.
- 1.2 In accordance with the delegation granted in January 2025, officers undertook a broad informal consultation carried out in March 2025 covered multiple elements of the proposed emissions-based charging scheme, including resident parking permits, on-street pay and display parking and other permit types.

- 1.3 This was followed by a statutory consultation for the introduction of EBC for on-street Pay and Display only, carried out between 21st August and 12th September 2025.
- 1.4 In relation to permits, and after receiving further legal advice, it has been confirmed that the proposed change to parking permit charges is a change to policy rather than to Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). As such there is no requirement to undertake a statutory consultation. In contrast, the EBC for pay and display requires amendments to existing TROs, as the original charges were implemented through legislation and are set within those individual orders. The new EBC order will therefore amend all previous TROs containing the pay and display schedule of charges.
- 1.5 Consequently, a non-statutory consultation was undertaken in relation to EBC for permits between 25th September and 16 October 2025 to ensure residents had sufficient information for them to give due consideration to the proposal and provide feedback before a final decision was made.
- 1.6 This report sets out the results of the subsequent statutory consultation on the on-street pay and display element as well as the outcome of the residents permit consultation and makes recommendations for next steps.

Pay And Display Statutory Consultation - Summary of Responses

- 1.7 The most common themes of the 89 responses to the on-street pay and display statutory consultation are concerns about fairness for lower-income residents and those without alternatives to car ownership; doubts about environmental effectiveness; calls for broader or alternative approaches (including vehicle size/weight-based charges and better public transport); and a general sense that the policy risks being regressive unless carefully targeted and accompanied by supportive enforcement. There is however support for emissions-based charging in principle if implemented equitably and alongside other initiatives.
- 1.8 There was a common assumption through the responses that older vehicles are more polluting than newer ones, which is not necessarily the case. A random sample of 3 vehicles manufactured in 2009 shows that only one, a Citroen C3 would have an increased charge with a level of 159 CO2 emissions.
- 1.9 The response rate for the consultation was low and whilst the negative responses are noted this should be considered in the context of:
- the low level of response compared to the circa 60,000 transactions of on-street P&D in an average month
 - the quality and low cost of Park and Ride services into Reading from surrounding areas
 - the alternative off street parking (predominantly private but also Council owned) that do not base charges on CO2 emissions
 - the concerns flagged to the Council about the impacts of air quality by respondents and their families in the March 2025 consultation
 - that 20% of respondents to the March 2025 consultation indicated that the policy would lead to reconsideration of transport choices
 - the starting point at 150g of CO2 per KM meaning that the strongest pricing change is against higher polluting vehicles and that many smaller and older cars will not see a rise at this time
 - the ongoing investment the Council is planning and making with partners in improved buses, improved bus and cycle lanes, and improved electric vehicle charging infrastructure over coming years
 - the limited alternative levers at the disposal of the Council in influencing wider efforts in relation to the Climate Emergency.

- 1.10 When considering all of the factors above in 1.9, this policy change will form an important part of a mixed approach to bring improvements to air quality over time to Reading and could be advanced by the acceptance of the proposed recommendations.

Permits Non-Statutory Consultation - Summary of Responses

- 1.11 As with the March consultation the balance of the 30 responses were against the scheme for reasons of affordability and effectiveness, but these concerns need to be contextualised against:
- total number of permit holders, being around 10,000
 - the concerns flagged to the Council about the impacts of air quality on respondents and their families in the March 2025 consultation
 - that 20% of respondents of the March survey indicating that the policy would lead to reconsideration of transport choices
 - the high starting point at 150g of CO₂ per KM meaning that the strongest pricing change is against higher polluting vehicles and that many smaller and older cars will not see a rise at this time
 - the ongoing investment the Council is planning and making with partners in improved buses, improved bus and cycle lanes, and improved electric vehicle charging infrastructure over coming years
 - the limited alternative levers at the disposal of the Council in influencing wider efforts in relation to the climate emergency.
- 1.12 When considering all of the factors above in 1.11, this policy change will form an important part of a mixed approach to bring improvements to air quality over time to Reading and could be advanced by the acceptance of the proposed recommendations.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The service is continuing to develop workstreams that will link Parking Policy to organisational objectives such as Net Zero, the newly adopted Local Transport Plan and the current partial update of the Local Plan, the Air Quality Action Plan and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Strategy.
- 2.2. As part of the drive to Net Zero, emissions-based parking charges can be used as part of a toolkit to influence and change drivers' behaviour and reduce the number of vehicles overall as well as the number of vehicles with higher emissions using Reading roads, whilst delivering direct benefits for air quality and health.
- 2.3. The proposed charges will only apply to on-street pay and display parking as well as permits.
- 2.4. The introduction of EBC forms part of a wider system of improvements in the town, which aim to increase options and accessibility to public transport and active travel. The overall aim of the policy change is to encourage motorists to consider other more environmentally friendly modes of transport, such as walking, cycling or public transport.
- 2.5. It is accepted that over time more people will change to electric vehicles (EV) given the Government directive for the ban on the sale of new 100% petrol and diesel cars from 2030. The emission-based charge proposals aim to contribute to the improvement of air pollution now.
- 2.6. To further support this shift away from Internal Combustion Engines (ICE), the Council plans to install on street EV charging facilities throughout the Borough. Additionally, installation of EV charging points are being considered in suitable Council car parks.

3. Background and summary of consultation responses

- 3.1. The Council acknowledges the cost-of-living crisis and the sensitivity around current financial pressures. Nonetheless, there is a need to act to progress measures which aim to improve air quality. These proposals only impact motorists with more polluting vehicles, incentivising them to use alternatives, such as Park and Ride, which may also be more cost effective for them. This mode of transport helps to improve air quality and the health of pedestrians, in particular vulnerable people whose health is at significant risk of harm by poor air quality.
- 3.2. As noted in the National Air Quality Strategy, measures designed to address air quality issues will often have a positive effect on climate change. Whilst there is no attempt to justify these emission-based variable parking charges proposals on climate change grounds, it is anticipated that these proposals will help towards reducing the level of emissions that drive climate change. For example, as a result, of encouraging a switch to low emission vehicles.
- 3.3. The proposal seeks to improve air quality in the borough as a whole through a reduction in all pollutants. Incentivising motorists with more polluting vehicles to not bring their vehicle into the town centre and consider more sustainable travel alternatives instead. The level of charge is not likely to be sufficient to change a person's behaviour on its own, but it increases awareness of and helps make the connection to existing vehicle, travel choices and their impact on air quality.
- 3.4. While it is acknowledged that there is currently no direct, borough-specific evidence demonstrating that these proposals will immediately improve air quality, it is important to recognise that emissions-based charging is a well-established demand management tool.
- 3.5. Numerous studies and real-world examples (including schemes in Lambeth, Lewisham, Bath & North East Somerset, and Westminster) show that charging mechanisms influence driver behaviour through price elasticity—that is, as the cost of parking higher emission vehicles increases, use of those vehicles in affected areas tends to decrease.
- 3.6. This shift can result in a gradual transition towards cleaner vehicles and alternative modes of transport, contributing to lower overall emissions over time. For example, Bath's emissions-based parking charges led to a measurable increase in parking stays by lower-emission vehicles, even if the direct air quality impact was modest.
- 3.7. Furthermore, emissions-based charging is not intended to be a standalone solution, but rather a complementary measure within a broader strategy to address air quality and climate objectives. It sends a clear signal to residents and visitors about the Council's commitment to tackling pollution and encourages behavioural change, which is supported by national policy and statutory duties under the Environment Act 2021 and Climate Change Act 2008.
- 3.8. The Council will continue to monitor the impact of these measures and, where possible, collect data to assess changes in vehicle mix and air quality. The approach is consistent with best practice in transport demand management and aligns with the experiences of other local authorities.

Pay and Display Consultation

- 3.9 To make residents and visitors aware of the pay and display consultation, notices were posted at each pay and display location, published in a local newspaper, made available on the Council's web site with an accompanying press release on 21st August. This was supported by a social media campaign on the Council's Twitter X, Facebook and Nextdoor platforms, and an article was also added to the residents' email on 4th September which has a circulation of 80,000 people.
- 3.10 There were 89 responses in total to the on street pay and display (P&D) consultation. 28 supported the proposal and 49 objected with a further 12 being attributed solely to permit schemes which were not part of the statutory consultation. These responses and the officer responses to the objections are contained within Appendix 1.

3.11 Most respondents are opposed to the proposed emissions-based parking charges, with the strongest and most frequent concern being that the Policy will disproportionately penalise lower-income residents who cannot afford to upgrade to newer, lower-emission vehicles. Further themes are:

- A number argue that the Policy is unfair to residents who rely on on-street parking and have no viable alternatives due to lack of off-street parking or charging infrastructure for electric vehicles. Several respondents note that the Policy does not distinguish between residents and commuters, and that penalising residents for parking outside their own homes is particularly unjust.
- There is also some scepticism about the environmental effectiveness of the Policy. Many point out that parked cars do not emit pollution and that the main causes of poor air quality are congestion and idling traffic due to poor traffic management. Some highlight that encouraging the purchase of new vehicles ignores the environmental impact of car manufacturing and scrappage, arguing that maintaining older cars can be more sustainable overall. Others criticise the focus on CO2 emissions rather than more harmful pollutants like NOx and particulates.
- A number of respondents suggest alternative or additional approaches: -
 - Charging based on vehicle size or weight to discourage large SUVs and reduce road/pavement damage. -
 - Targeting non-residents or through-traffic rather than residents. - Improving public transport and providing incentives or support for switching to cleaner vehicles (e.g., scrappage schemes or more charging points).
 - Focusing on reducing overall car use and reallocating road space to active travel.
- Some respondents express concern about the potential negative impact on local businesses if parking becomes more expensive or complicated.
- A number of respondents support the principle of emissions-based charging as a way to improve air quality and encourage behaviour change, but even among supporters there are calls for careful implementation—such as excluding residents' permits from the scheme, ensuring charges are proportionate, providing positive incentives as well as penalties, and improving enforcement. A few respondents argue for even stronger action to reduce car use in central Reading (e.g., reducing parking spaces, expanding low-traffic zones), while others question whether the council has provided sufficient evidence or consultation to justify the Policy.

Proposed officer responses to submissions are set out in Appendix 3 and the reasons for considering moving forward with the proposals, despite negative responses or alternative suggestions, are summarised in section 1.9.

Permits Consultations

- 3.12 The consultation undertaken from 25th September to 16th October received a total of 30 responses set out in Appendix 3. Of those responses, 9 supported the proposal and there were 21 objections.
- 3.13 The consultation notice was published in a local newspaper, made available on the Council's web on 26th September. This was supported by a social media campaign on the council's Twitter X, Facebook and Nextdoor platforms. The consultation comprised

a clear proposal with associated detail of the proposed charging approach and allowed an open response, rather than answers to specific questions.

- 3.14 As with the March 2025 informal consultation the general concerns relate to the affordability and effectiveness of the scheme. Detailed submissions and proposed officer responses are set out at Appendix 3.
- 3.15 Given the low response rate councillors are invited to also review Appendices 6 and 7 and consider the objections from the informal consultation carried out in March 2025.
- 3.16 In response, it should be highlighted that the starting point of increased charges is high at over 150g of CO2 per kilometre and the bands are graduated with the first band for petrol cars on a first permit being around 18 pence per week more expensive. We anticipate around 50% of vehicles will not see an increase with a further 25% being within the first band.
- 3.17 There is an assumption that older vehicles are more polluting than newer ones, however that is not always the case. EU emissions standards have been in force some years, as a result many older vehicles of 10 years or more still meet the current emissions levels and will be in the lowest or lower bands.
- 3.18 In relation to the March 2025 consultation a detailed summary and analysis of the responses is included at Appendix 6 and 7, with the detailed commentary was set out in the June report to Traffic Management Sub Committee.

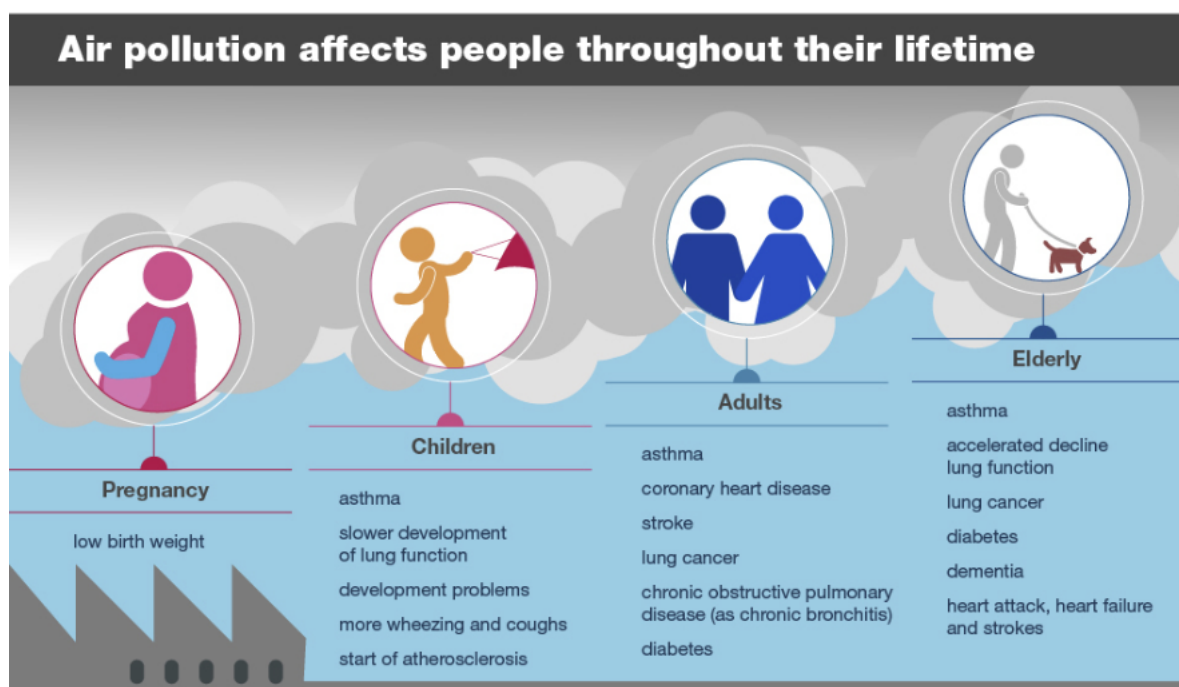
4 Proposal

- 4.1 The proposed charging structures for emission-based charges aligns with the Vehicle Excise Duty (VED), (commonly known as car or road tax) bands based on CO2 emissions, used by the DVLA. Charges will only increase for petrol or diesel vehicles that produce more than 151g/km of CO2. Emission band can be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/get-vehicle-information-from-dvla>.
- 4.2 The proposed changes to the pricing structure are set out in Appendix 2 and Appendix 4 and will affect users of on-street pay and display parking and permit parking users. Car parks are not included in this proposal. These charges do not apply to other road users or those that deliver goods to local businesses.

5 Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 5.1 The Council's new Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:
 - Healthy Environment
 - Thriving Communities
 - Inclusive Economy
- 5.2 These themes are underpinned by "Our Foundations" explaining the ways we work at the Council:
 - People first
 - Digital transformation
 - Building self-reliance
 - Getting the best value
 - Collaborating with others
- 5.3 Full details of the Council's Corporate Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the [Council's website](#). These priorities and the Corporate Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.
- 5.4 Poor air quality is considered the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK, because long-term exposure to poor air quality can cause chronic conditions which lead to reduced life expectancy.

- 5.5 The proposals are not designed to reduce CO₂ (which is a greenhouse gas not a pollutant) itself but uses established CO₂ bands. The aim is to use the mechanism to improve air quality by reducing other harmful pollutants from a vehicle's tailpipe. Increased CO₂ output from an engine is an indicator of increased combustion of fuel, and therefore other harmful by-products of combustion. It's commonly accepted that the burning of fossil fuels in internal combustion engines result in the production of harmful pollutants at the tailpipe and this is reflected in national and local policy.
- 5.6 In their recent 2025 report '*A breath of fresh air Responding to the health challenges of modern air pollution*' the Royal College of Physicians summarised the impact of air pollution on human health throughout the life course, from before conception to death. Numerous impacts have been identified, including birth outcomes (e.g. pre-term birth and low birth weight), impacts on children (lung health and asthma, risk of obesity, brain health and development etc) and impacts on adults via the respiratory, cardiovascular, metabolic and other systems. Information from epidemiological studies enables the incremental contribution of air pollution to be assessed for some effects, for example mortality, ischaemic heart disease, Coronary Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, dementia, asthma and lung cancer.
- 5.7 The Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (OHID) published guidance (Air pollution: applying All Our Health - GOV.UK) which set out that annual mortality by human made air pollution (all sources, including transport) in the UK is "roughly equivalent to between 28,000 and 36,000 deaths every year. It is estimated that between 2017 and 2025 the total cost to the NHS and social care system of air pollutants (fine particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide), for which there is more robust evidence for an association will be £1.6 billion." Overall, pollution is a contributory factor in 5% of all deaths.
- 5.8 A 2025 Rapid Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Reading included modelled data about the impact of poor air quality at a local level here in Reading. This used national data from the Office for National Statistics about deaths combined with estimates of those which are attributable to particulate air pollution provided by the Department of Environment and Rural Affairs. It was estimated that 61 of the 1144 deaths that took place in 2023 among adults aged over 30 years in Reading were from particulate air pollution
- 5.9 The illustration below sets out some of the impacts of poor air quality on the population throughout their lifetime. The infographic shows individuals more susceptible than others, including children, the elderly, individuals with existing cardiovascular or respiratory diseases, pregnant women, communities in areas of higher pollution, low-income communities.



- 5.10 Vehicles are major contributors to air pollution. In the UK, transportation is responsible for up to a third of the nitrogen oxides in the air. Vehicle emissions, such as carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) can have detrimental effects on human health, causing or worsening respiratory and cardiovascular diseases and increasing the risk of cancer. Additionally, the combustion of fossil fuels in car engines releases carbon dioxide, contributing to climate change. While individual car emissions may be small, the large number of vehicles on our road leads to significant air pollution, particularly in urban areas with high traffic congestion.
- 5.11 Reading Borough Council adopted its Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) in March 2024. The accompanying report explained that whilst air quality (NO₂) in Reading had improved there were still some locations in the town where air quality levels were below UK and World Health Organization (WHO) limits. The Action Plan was approved by Department Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in May 2024.
- 5.12 As a result of the high levels of car congestion and accompanying air pollution in parts of Reading, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared covering the town centre and key corridors into and out of the town. The AQAP aimed to target specific locations to achieve compliance with UK and WHO limits and sought to further improve air quality across the Borough as a whole. The Plan continues to focus on reducing nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels for which transport is a major contributor. One of the mitigation measures identified in the Action Plan is the introduction of emissions-based charging to encourage modal shift alongside delivery of additional walking and cycling infrastructure and improvements to bus infrastructure to maximise use of public transport.
- 5.13 The Council's Transport Strategy 2040 was adopted in October 2024 and also highlighted the importance of reducing emissions for Reading people and the environment. The Strategy sets out a roadmap to provide transport options to enhance quality of life, reduce emissions and improve air quality to create a carbon neutral town; with a vision to create healthier, greener and more equal communities through the future provision of travel options in Reading. The Transport Strategy is focused on promoting sustainable transport options as a realistic alternative to the private car, setting out how transport facilities and services will be developed to 2040 to help achieve the Council's wider objectives for the town as set out in the Council Plan. Significant progress is being made to implement the Strategy with investment, through securing external grant

funding of over £30m in the past few years, to improve public transport services and walking and cycling facilities.

- 5.14 Emissions based parking charges are already in operation in other councils in the country, such as Lambeth, Lewisham, Westminster and more recently Bath & Northeast Somerset, with positive impacts on air quality being demonstrated. Cardiff has also consulted on proposals.
- 5.15 The system can be used to support the Council's wider strategic aims of reaching Net Zero by 2030 through the introduction of charging based around emissions, as well as increasing other modes of transport such as bus, walking and cycling in line with the objectives of the Reading Transport Strategy

6 Environmental and Climate Implications

- 6.1 Transport contributes approximately 30% of all carbon emissions. By using up to date technology and a pricing strategy, motorists' behaviour can be influenced towards cleaner modes of travel.
- 6.2 The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020 – 25 contains a transport action plan which cites an objective as switching from cars to more sustainable modes of transport such as public transport, walking or cycling. Encouraging motorists to move from ICE to EV which are less polluting, will contribute and support the goals outlined in the plan overall. In particular:
- T2 Develop demand management measures to reduce traffic and encourage shift from high carbon transport².
 - T12 Implement traffic management schemes to support low carbon travel choices.
- 6.3 The climate impact assessment carried out for the June 2025 Traffic Management Sub committee has been reviewed and is unchanged.
- 6.4 Reduced parking charges are not proposed for electric vehicles. Whilst significantly better for the environment during use they are not resistant to producing airborne pollutants. This includes for example particles released from brake and tyre wear and road dust disturbed by a vehicle's motion regardless of the vehicle type or it's mode of power. Whilst emissions from EV vehicles on the road are significantly less than other vehicles, they still contribute to congestion and the use of kerb space.
- 6.5 In summary, the proposals are designed to encourage people to consider alternative modes of transport, other than the private car or select less polluting ICE cars over time. Where this scheme has been introduced in London boroughs, there has been a reduction in the use of diesel cars of up to 60%.

7 Equality Implications

- 7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, section 149, a public body must in the exercise of its functions have due regard to the need:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by this Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. Arrangements for Blue Badge holders to access goods and services in Reading remains an important consideration and is in accordance with our statutory Equalities duty. All on street pay and display bays within the geographical area of Reading are free to use by a Blue Badge holder providing a valid blue badge is clearly displayed. Additionally,

and as part of the national Blue Badge concession, badge holders may park for up to 3-hours on yellow lines where no loading restrictions are in place, providing a valid blue badge is clearly displayed.

- 7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) that was completed for the June 2025 Traffic Management sub committee and showed there are no specific negative impacts based on protected characteristics as the introduction of emissions-based charging for on-street pay and display systems affects all sectors of the community equally.
- 7.3 Based on the above, there will be no negative impacts on the community accessing pay and display for parking.
- 7.4 The Equality Impact Assessment has been updated and is contained within Appendix 5.

8 Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1 During the consultation processes, a theme has emerged about the impact of the emissions based charging on low-income families and particularly those who may own older vehicles.
- 8.2 The Council acknowledges these concerns and is committed to ensuring that any changes are implemented fairly and with due regard to equality impacts. It should be noted that specifically in relation to the permit EBC proposals, we anticipate that around 50% of current permit holders will remain in the lowest band with around a further 25% to be in the first band.
- 8.3 It is important to clarify that vehicle age and high emissions are not a given. While older vehicles are often perceived as more polluting, many are not. Many newer vehicles can also have higher emissions due to their size or weight, and many older models may meet lower emissions thresholds. The proposed schemes are based on actual emissions data, not vehicle age, to ensure a more accurate and equitable approach.
- 8.4 Additionally, the Council wishes to highlight that there are currently no plans to change off street parking charges to reflect emissions. The focus remains on on-street pay and display parking, and any future changes to off-street parking would be subject to a separate review.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 Following initial public engagement and subsequent approval by the Traffic Management Sub-Committee on 11 June 2025 to commence the statutory consultation, a statutory consultation was undertaken in accordance with the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. This consultation relating to the proposed introduction of an EBC scale for on-street pay and display parking, was conducted from 21st August 2025 to 12th September 2025.
- 9.2 Details of the proposal were made available for public inspection and published online via the Council's Govocal consultation platform. The scheme was also advertised in a local newspaper. Thames Valley Police and other key stakeholders were formally consulted. No objections were received from either Thames Valley Police or the consulted stakeholders.
- 9.3 Under the Council's Constitution, decisions on Traffic Regulation Orders are delegated to the Traffic Management Sub-Committee. However, Under the Council's Constitution, decisions on Traffic Regulation Orders are delegated to the Traffic Management Sub-Committee. However, the Policy Committee may take operational decisions across all functions of the authority where these have been delegated by Council to other committees, in the following circumstances: a) in between planned meetings of the committee, to avoid calling an additional meeting of the committee; b) on grounds of urgency. This reflects the strategic significance of the proposed emissions-based charging scheme and its potential policy implications. The change in decision-making body does not affect the validity or outcome of the statutory consultation, which has been carried out in full accordance with the relevant legal requirements.

- 9.4 The Council's powers under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 must be exercised for traffic management purposes, not to raise revenue. Courts have confirmed that parking charges should support objectives such as improving road safety, managing demand, and encouraging appropriate use of parking spaces and not to generate surplus income for other transport services.

Network Management Duty

- 9.5 The Council has considered its duties under the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Under Section 16 of the Traffic Management Act, the Council must manage its road network to ensure the efficient movement of all traffic including vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists while also reducing congestion and disruption. This ongoing obligation allows the Council to use regulatory tools, such as emissions-based charging, to help achieve these objectives and balance network performance with wider policy goals.

- 9.6 The proposal is considered to be consistent with these statutory considerations.

Section 122 Duty

- 9.7 In deciding whether to make a TRO, the Council must have regard to its duty under Section 122 duty under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) as well as the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway, so far as practicable while having regard to the matters specified in Section 122(2).
- 9.8 The proposal detailed in this report is considered to align with the objectives of the duty.
- 9.9 If the scheme to introduce the Emission Based charges for the on street pay and display is approved, the draft traffic regulation order will be sealed, dated and made permanent with a notice of its making and when it will come into effect published in a local newspaper.

10 Financial Implications

- 10.1 Implementation of EBC for on-street pay and display parking is expected to generate the following net income and the following expected budget changes have been reflected within the Medium Term Financial Strategy:

	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total ongoing annual benefit £000
Income from charges (net)	(25)	(157)	(182)

- 10.2 There are one off costs of circa £8k related to software changes to our machines and which is included in the 2025/26 figure. There are no additional ongoing costs expected with the EBC charging regime for pay and display.
- 10.3 Any additional revenues from EBC for permits is anticipated to contribute towards inflationary pressures related to management and enforcement of the permit scheme, crucial to ensure that it serves those permit-holders as designed.

11 Timetable for Implementation

- 11.1 Emissions based charging can be introduced in early 2026, subject to the successful completion of the legal processes and the completion of technical software changes from relevant contractors.

11.2 Subject to approval of the recommendations, pay and display machines will require a software update and reprogramming, which is estimated to take approximately 4 weeks from the point of instruction. Similarly, the Pay by Phone (Ringo) system will require an upgrade that may take up to 12 weeks. However, preliminary discussions have taken place to explore options for expediting this process, with a view to enabling implementation by 1st February 2026 at the latest, should approval be granted.

11.3 Proposed timetable below:

Emissions-Based Charging Implementation Timeline

Step	Date	Notes
Policy Committee decision on objections	17 November 2025	Regarding emissions based charging for pay and display and parking permits.
If decision is not to proceed	Process ends	
If decision is to proceed	Continue below	

Pay and Display Implementation

Step	Date	Notes
Statutory consultation ended	12 September 2025	
Analyse responses	Ongoing	
Respond to objections	w/c 17 November 2025	
Order sealed	19 November 2025	The commencement date of the order will be required.
Place orders for software	W/C 17 November 2025 (approx.)	Lead time: 4 weeks
Ringo Pay by Phone software	Lead time up to 12 weeks	Preliminary discussions suggest quicker turnaround The risk regarding Ringo software lead time is recorded in the risk register.
Notice of Making published	20 November 2025	The commencement date of the order will be required.
Web page updated with Notice of Making	20 November 2025	
Notice sent to stakeholders	20 November 2025	
Update website with new charges	TBC	Ahead of implementation
Develop comms plan	TBC	Ahead of implementation
Erect advisory notices on site	TBC	2 weeks before implementation
Implementation	By 1 February 2026	Target date

Permit Implementation

Step	Date	Notes
Notice of Variation of Charges published	25 September 2025	Ended on 16 October 2025
Analyse responses	Ongoing	
Respond to objections	w/c 17 November 2025	A response will be sent to all objectors.

Place orders for software changes	w/c 17 November 2025	Zat Permit implementation – approximately 4 weeks from instruction Unity 5 back-office implementation - approximately 4 weeks from instruction
Develop comms plan	TBC	Ahead of implementation
Implementation	By 1 February 2026	Target date

12 Background Papers

12.1 There are none.

13 Risk Assessment

13.1 The table below sets out the key risks and associated mitigations:

Key Risk	Key Mitigation
Legislation introduced by Government to change the policy on EV that brings forward or delays the ban on sale on internal combustion engines.	Review of policy and charging framework to consider the impacts of the changing legislative framework.
Potential for further legal challenge	Full consideration of objections by officers and councillors and compliant post decision processes.
That the number of ultra-low emission vehicles continue to increase, negatively affecting revenues therefore reducing the available income to reinvest into Reading.	Future reviews of the scheme will be necessary to consider whether the scheme needs adjustment.
There may be some displacement of motorists who seek to use other parking facilities, thereby reducing the predicted revenue stream.	This is a sensitivity that will be factored into our revenue projections.
Failure of the DVLA system to correctly identify a vehicle emissions classification.	This will be resolved through the use of a third party that can cross check the data.
Delays or failures by suppliers that affect the start of the new charging regime or result in technical issues at the point of purchase.	The approaches being undertaken are in use in a number of areas and our suppliers have experience. Close working with our suppliers with the provision of clear specifications and timescales associated with the changes will be provided.

14 Appendices

1. Responses to EBC on-street pay and display charges consultation
2. Proposed EBC charging structure for on-street pay and display
3. Responses from the EBC permit charges consultation
4. Proposed EBC charging structure for permits
5. Equality Impact Assessment
6. Consultation responses from the March 2025 consultation on permits and pay and display
7. Emailed consultation responses from the March 2025 consultation on permits and pay and display