



Maidenhead and District Chamber of Commerce

27th August 2009

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE VIEWS ON PARKING IN MAIDENHEAD

The following summarises the views of Chamber members and the Chamber Executive as regards current and future plans for parking sustainability in Maidenhead. The views are divided into

- parking garages and open paid parking areas
- street parking

as well as

- long term parking
- medium term parking
- short term parking

1. **Parking Garages and Open Paid Parking Areas**

The Chamber view is and always has been that the move from pay on foot to pay and display parking in the Nicholson Centre / Broadway car park was a mistake and relegated the town to a lesser status compared to regional competitors, Slough, Windsor, Reading, Bracknell and High Wycombe all of whom have pay on foot parking facilities.

ACTION POINT: Council to clearly indicate by end September 2009 when this car park will be returned to pay on foot.

Given that all car parking garages in Maidenhead are currently pay and display, additional methods of paying need to be introduced.

Consideration should be given to the advantage card being upgraded to a pre-charge card similar to an Oyster card in London which can then be used for parking, public transport etc.

Consideration should also be given to introducing a pay by mobile phone facility currently used in other centres nearby including the main council car park in High Wycombe.

All parking garages should have a long term (more than four hours), medium term (one to four hours) and short term (30 minutes) facility and should all have the same charge rate.

The charge rate should be simplified to ensure that customers are as much as possible likely to have the right amount of change unless the machines can be adapted to give change. Change machines that are situated away from the payment machines are not helpful in this regard. There is much evidence that customers are infuriated by machines that charge an inconvenient amount and then don't give change. The following is our recommendation:

- Up to 30 minutes = 50p (short term)
- Up to 1 hour = £1.00 (medium term)
- Up to 2 hours = £1.50 (medium term)
- Up to 4 hours = £2.00 (medium term)
- 4-24 hours = £4.00 (long term)
- Free parking in all car parks on Sunday including Magnet
- Overnight parking rate of £1.00 to be retained with a discount to say 50p for cinema visitors (similar to High Wycombe's Eden Centre - £1.50 night charge reduced to £1.00 with cinema validation)
- Free shopper parking at specific times – Saturdays, late night shopping - in the run up to Christmas, Easter etc to be reviewed and retained.

The parking in the Nicholson Centre should be adapted to cater for these charges as follows:

- All immediate ground floor parking converted to short term parking bays enabling customers to enter the car park, park and then leave the carpark without needing to climb a ramp.
- Disabled parking to be moved to the first ramp adjacent to the central stairwell.
- Open parking on the top floor to be converted to long term parking.
- All intervening floors to be medium term parking.
- Parking for larger vehicles catering for parents with children to be retained.

The parking in the Sainsbury/Hines Meadow car park should be adapted to cater for these charges as follows:

- About 20 bays in the parking area immediately adjacent to the Sainsbury escalators to be converted to short term parking.
- Hinds Meadow to retain its existing long term parking facility although its location might need to be adapted in light of the next point below.
- All other parking in these car parks to remain medium term.

In addition, the Crown Lane exit from the Hines Meadow car park should be adapted to cater for one entrance and one exit. This is urgently required, particularly in the light of the new hotel being planned a short distance away. There will need to be some work done to cater for this which could use Section 106 money for the development. This is extremely important since it offers a new parking opportunity for visitors to the town.

Stafferton Way car park to remain long term.

The council car park alongside Jenner's Café at the Riverside to be converted to specific opening and closing times rather than the existing reference to sunrise and sunset which is mis-leading and can result in cars being locked in for the night.

If the Advantage card is to be used to offer discounts then its use must be made much easier. There have been constant complaints about Advantage cards not working. Alternatively all advantage card parking discounts should be eliminated.

Some machines accept credit and debit cards. These machines should be clearly marked to avoid confusion. Some take both cards and cash and, again, should be clearly signed to avoid confusion.

ACTION POINT: Council to complete the above changes by end October to enable them to be in place for Christmas Shopping.

2. Street Parking

On street parking should be divided into 30, 60 and 120 minute areas enabling some flexibility in street parking use with the majority being 30 minute spots and those close to restaurants in Bridge Street and Bridge Avenue, say, being 120 minute spots. This suggestion is not definitive and needs to be debated.

All existing yellow line and double yellow line areas should be reviewed to see if they can be converted to street parking. In particular, the yellow line areas on the right of the one way system in the High Street between Queen Street and St Ives Road could be converted to 30 minute parking.

All street permit parking to be reviewed to ensure that the needs of all stakeholders are being met. Where appropriate, extensive season ticket discounts for town centre dwelling residents could be introduced so as to avoid the need for permit parking which inconveniences other stake holders such as restaurant customers etc.

Full consultation with the Chamber on the implementation of the above recommendations to take place. Mike Miller, Deputy President of the Chamber, Chamber representative on the MTP Executive and the lead member of the Chamber Executive on parking issues will make himself available to discuss these issues with Council representatives at any time that is mutually convenient.

MJPM/MDCC/August 2009