



Subject: Response from Cycle Kirklees Regarding Proposed Car Parking Charges

To: Kirklees Council Ref. DEV/D119-122/Car Parks

From: Cycle Kirklees Date: 22 April 2024

This submission is from Cycle Kirklees - the Kirklees Cycling Campaign promoting everyday cycling. We would like to offer our perspective on the proposed car parking charges consultation. Whilst we recognise the need for charging for parking, given the finite nature of parking space and the necessity to allocate it fairly among users, we have some reservations.

We agree with the principle of charges where they incentivise the use of public transport and active travel, which we hope will be underlined by proposed changes to Huddersfield and Dewsbury town centre, giving better connectivity to walkers and cyclists and faster journeys for bus passengers.

Secure cycle parking is a rare facility in Kirklees – and inhibits the use of bicycles for commuting, shopping and social purposes. To encourage modal shift, cyclists need parking facilities in town and village centres, close to key travel destinations.

Our concerns regard the potential implications of implementing these charges. Firstly, motorists seeking to avoid parking fees will resort to parking on main roads and residential side streets, and on the footway (pavements) – an increasing trend in all parts of Kirklees. Such a change of behaviour would have a detrimental impact on people walking and cycling and on communities, particularly where effective enforcement measures are not in place. This then has a knock-on impact on road safety incidents. We do not see recognition of this in the Impact Assessments.

Additionally, we are apprehensive about the potential negative impact that increased tariffs in our main town centres may have on local economies. Such increases will drive more traffic to out-of-town developments offering free parking or drive-in food and drink. To mitigate this trend, it is imperative that future planning decisions do not facilitate car-based shopping with free parking and drive-in catering. Planning arrangements for retail developments need to align with these charging principles to ensure fairness.

In light of these concerns, Cycle Kirklees advocates a flexible approach to parking charges in off-centre locations. To help alleviate some of the potential negative consequences on local shopping, we suggest that the council consider offering a free period for short-term users before charges are applied (e.g. 30 minutes). As we acknowledge there are challenges associated with enforcing parking regulations and collecting revenues in smaller off-centre car parks, we are not sure there is a business case for some very small car parks (e.g. less than 15 spaces).

In conclusion, Cycle Kirklees supports the objective of introducing and uplifting parking charges but urges careful consideration of the unintended impacts. We will want to see the implementation of enforcement measures against illegal and inconsiderate parking to mitigate adverse effects on communities and local economies, and on those who choose to walk or cycle.

Chris Knight (Chair, Cycle Kirklees)