

ST ALBANS CITY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION REGISTER

Portfolio(s) decision relates to:	Increase in fees for leased garages and car park spaces	Name of Portfolio Holder:	Anthony Rowlands
Name of decision maker:	Des Welton – Head of Enterprise & Development	Signature of decision maker:	
Name of relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	Overview & Scrutiny (Enterprise & Civic Environment)	Date of decision:	10 September 2007

Type of decision <i>(please tick)</i>	Key	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Significant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Virement	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
--	-----	-------------------------------------	-------------	--------------------------	----------	--------------------------	-------	--------------------------

Scheme of delegation reference under which decision is taken:	HoS18
---	-------

Has this decision drawn upon confidential information? <i>(If yes – please set out what confidential information has been taken into account on a separate sheet)</i>	No
--	----

DECISION *(Note this should be written in the style of a committee minute and should not include confidential information):*

That the fees for leased garages and car park spaces be increased by 9% to take affect from December 2007.

In arriving at my decision I have properly and thoroughly taken into account the legal, financial and workforce implications for the Council. My decision is within the Council's policy and budget framework and complies with the regulations and procedures set out in the Constitution. I have explicitly considered the Council's corporate objectives in arriving at my decision. In coming to my decision I have consulted with all relevant parties as appropriate and in accordance with the scheme of delegation.

REASON/S FOR THE DECISION

The basis for this decision is that a previous decision to increase fees for leased garages and car park spaces met with considerable reaction and was withdrawn. The original decision had been made during the budget setting process and was reported to Cabinet who noted the decision already taken and Council endorsed Cabinet's noting of that decision. As the decision on these charges is delegated to the Head of Enterprise & Development, Legal Services advised he could make a decision to change it again. Tenants were written to with formal notification of the withdrawal of the previously notified increase and were advised that Cabinet was under the impression that, in common with CPZ matters, the proposal would be subject to public consultation.

A report was submitted to the Car Parking Working Party, which though does not have executive powers does have a role in advising the Portfolio Holder. The report set out the background and gave comparisons with information and costs relating to CPZ permits, season tickets in the multi storey and premier parking (i.e. providing a guaranteed space) in the multi storey. The report included options for increases to charges, as identified below under other options considered.

The Working Party recommended to the Portfolio Holder an increase of 9% but did not feel it appropriate to commit to a long term trend of increases as set out in the relevant option presented in the report to the Working Party. Consultation took place with relevant Ward and County Members and also the tenants of the leased garages and car park spaces.

This decision is in accordance with the recommendation of the Working Party.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED:	REASONS FOR REJECTING THESE OPTIONS
1. Increase charges in line with increase in multi storey annual season ticket.	Charges would remain significantly below the existing level of charges for a season ticket which itself does not provide a guarantee of a space.
2. To achieve parity with the cost of a multi storey car park season ticket by phasing an above inflation rate increase over several years (approx 15% per annum), up to 2011.	Annual increase considered excessive.
3. As option 2 seek parity with the cost of a multi storey car park season ticket but phase over a longer period, up to 2014 (approx. increase of 9% per annum).	Though the Car Parking Working Party recommended an increase of 9% it did not consider it appropriate to commit to a long term trend of increases as reflected by this option. By agreeing a single increase at this stage the position can be monitored, including an assessment of demand for the garages and spaces.
4. Keep to previously announced (but withdrawn) increase, but phase in over a longer period	The original proposal would have resulted in the fees being increased higher than the cost of a season ticket or even premier parking (which provides a guaranteed space). Considered that there was a high risk that tenants would terminate their licences and park on street, further exacerbating problems with on street parking.

CONSULTEES

In making this decision, I have consulted the following people:

Name and Signature	Position	Date of consultation	Outcome of consultation (may cross reference to supplementary/background sheets)
Councillor Anthony Rowlands	Portfolio Holder – Community Engagement & Support	June – September 2007	Portfolio Holder agrees with decision to increase fees by 9%.
Councillor Chris Oxley	Portfolio Holder – Resources	1 August 2007	Portfolio Holder agrees with decision to increase fees by 9%.
Leased Garages & Car Park Spaces Tenants (also copied to relevant District and County Members for comments)		4 – 25 July 2007	As set out on attached sheet.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985

Bibliography	Custodian	File location
Background File	Des Welton	District Council Offices

O:\ Committee admin\ decision register \ blank decision form.doc

LEASED GARAGES & CAR PARK SPACES – SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Ref	Name/Address of Consultee	Summary of Comments Made	Officer Comments
1.	By email, no address supplied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council already acknowledged an issue with providing enough resident/visitor parking spaces. If price is increased many will give up their spaces forcing them to find spaces on already overcrowded streets • Fee is already extortionate • Bedford Road Car Park has no lighting or decent security • What is the money raised spent on, why do you need extra money • Wrong move for a Council serious about tackling environment and congestion issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply/demand for leased spaces and garages is currently in demand even though they are currently not strongly promoted. It is intended to promote their availability more proactively and to monitor the situation regarding voids. • The fee compares very favourably to the cost of a season ticket in the multi storey (£850p.a.) and this does not provide a guaranteed space. • We will investigate lighting/security issues. Providing lighting in car parks often results in complaints from neighbouring residents because of intrusiveness. • Income goes to the General Fund and helps to limit any increase in Council Tax • If environment/congestion was the only issue to consider the increases would be much higher to dissuade car ownership. However the Council is seeking to achieve a fair balance.
2.	By email, no address supplied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What improvements are we planning to justify an increase so much higher than the rate of inflation. We have not seen any evidence of maintenance during the three months or so we have occupied the space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not aware of which car park consultee uses but Adelaide & Inkerman Road Car Parks have recently been resurfaced. Other Car Parks are to be assessed and work programmed appropriately. Will also consider any specific requests.

3.	Garage Tenant of Russell Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to Bank of England current inflation rate is 2.5% can see no justification to charge nearly four times this. • There have been no improvements in service since the last increase and cleaning of the garage areas remains inadequate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has not been an increase in fees for more than two years. Fees are still very favourable when compared with the cost of a multi storey season ticket (£850p.a.) which does not guarantee a space. • Since the last increase CCTV has been introduced to that part of the car park. A gate has also been moved to deter rough sleepers. We liaise with the contractor on cleansing
4.	May Clarke House, Catherine Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents not eligible to join the CPZ, previously could park in Adelaide Street after 6.30pm but double yellow lines now installed. • Council should allow residents to use spaces in Adelaide Street or reduce fee to £200p.a. inclusive. • How can the Council justify a 9% increase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pay & Display car park in Adelaide Street provides free parking overnight after 6.30pm. • See comment above • There has not been an increase in fees for more than two years. Fees are still very favourable when compared with the cost of a multi storey season ticket (£850p.a.) which does not guarantee a space.
5	Resident of Folly Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflation is under 3% and most increases in wages or pensions is no higher • Do not have a garage because we want them but because have no parking outside our houses because of double yellow lines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See comment above • Gombards Car Park provides free overnight parking after 6.30pm. There is also free on street parking in Church Crescent.