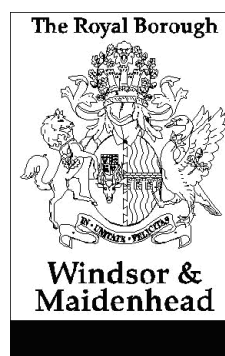


Report for: INFORMATION



Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	NO - Part I
Title	Congestion Charging Schemes
Responsible Officer(s)	Ben Smith, Head of Highways and Transport
Contact officer, job title and phone number	Christopher Targowski, Cabinet Policy Manager, 01628796431
Member reporting	Cllr Rayner, Lead Member for Highways and Transport
For Consideration By	Policy Committee
Date to be Considered	3 March 2016
Implementation Date if Not Called In	N/A
Affected Wards	All

REPORT SUMMARY

1. The Lead Member for Highways and Transport is interested in investigating whether a congestion charging scheme, where advantage card holders are exempt, could be introduced in the Royal Borough. This report looks at where congestion charging has been successfully adopted in Durham and London. The report also highlights two examples where congestion charging was considered but not ultimately adopted, Edinburgh and Manchester. The policy committee is asked to consider the report and decide whether congestion charging should be investigated further for consideration in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

If recommendations are adopted, how will residents benefit?

Benefits to residents and reasons why they will benefit	Dates by which residents can expect to notice a difference
1. Although Residents will not benefit directly from this report, the Policy Committee are considering the issue as part of exploring how new policy could be introduced to improve traffic management in the Borough.	

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION: That the Policy Committee:

Considers the report and decides to:

- i. Proceed with further investigation of congestion charging in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead**

Or

- ii. Not to proceed with further investigation of congestion charging in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead**

2. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 The Lead Member for Highways and Transport is interested in investigating whether a congestion charging scheme, where advantage card holders are exempt, could be introduced in the Royal Borough.

2.2 The introduction of the Transport Act 2000 introduced powers for local authorities to introduce road user charging schemes provided they form part of an integrated transport plan. Powers to introduce congestion charging in London was introduced in the Greater London Act 2009. Current schemes are the Durham congestion charge, the London congestion charge and the Dartford Crossing, which was converted from a traditional toll to a congestion charge in 2003.

Durham Congestion Charge

2.3 The Durham Road Access Charge scheme began operating in 2002. The first scheme to take advantage of the powers granted in the Transport Act 2000. The area covered by the congestion charge is the "peninsula", a UNESCO World Heritage site, which incorporates the Cathedral and Castle, the main retail centre of the City, the Chorister School, several colleges of Durham University, some private residences, and the Market Place. The charging area is 0.2 square miles and has one access point. Congestion was high because 3000 cars shared a very narrow street with 17,000 pedestrians. After the scheme was introduced there was a reduction of 85% in traffic volumes and an increase in pedestrian activity by 10%.

2.4 Users are charged £2 a day, payable Monday to Saturday 10 am to 4 pm but there can be exemptions, such as vehicles associated with permanent residents located within the charging area. Originally automatic bollards were used but this has been replaced in favour of an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system.

2.5 The entire cost of implementation was £250,000 and was funded entirely through the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) settlement. It has not been possible at this time to gather accurate information about both the income received and the running costs of the ANPR.

2.6 Further information can be found in appendix A

London Congestion Charge

2.7 This is a fee, introduced in 2003, charged on most vehicles operating within the Congestion Charge Zone. The charge is currently £11.50 a day, although Residents living within or very close to the zone are eligible for a 90% discount.

- 2.8 The zone is one of the largest in the world, covering 8 square miles. Cameras read a vehicle's number plate as it enters, leaves or drives within the charging zone and checks it against the database of those who have paid the charge or those who do not have to pay (because they are exempt or registered for a 100 per cent discount). Once a VRN has been matched, the photographic images of the vehicle are automatically deleted from the database. Drivers who have not paid the charge by midnight on the next charging day after they travel in the zone, will be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice of £130, which is reduced to £65 if paid within 14 days.
- 2.9 Traffic entering the original charging zone has remained stable at 27 per cent lower than pre-charging conditions in 2002. This means that nearly 80,000 fewer cars enter the original charging zone each day. Cycling levels in the Congestion Charging zone are also up by 66 per cent since the introduction of the scheme.
- 2.10 In 2014/15 revenue from the congestion charge was £257.4m and £80.7m was spent on running the scheme. Once other charges were deducted, the congestion charge brought in an annual operating net income of £172.5m for Transport for London. By Law, net revenue from the Congestion Charge must be spent on further improvements to transport across London.

Withdrawn Congestion Charge Schemes

- 2.11 Edinburgh City Council proposed a congestion zone in 2002. The initial plans envisaged a charging scheme that operated in the city centre between 7am and 7pm, Monday to Friday, starting in 2006. The intention was to use similar technologies to the London scheme. From the start there was significant opposition to the scheme, from residents and businesses. In February 2005 a postal ballot referendum was held. The turnout was 61.7% and 74.4% of those who voted rejected the idea. Edinburgh City Council accepted the result and the scheme was not implemented.
- 2.12 Greater Manchester, a metropolitan county, proposed a congestion charge for vehicles. The scheme would charge vehicles entering the area bounded by the M60 motorway £2.00 in the morning peak, with a further £1.00 for those entering the inner cordon, roughly corresponding to the Manchester Inner Ring Road. The area would have covered 80 square miles. Charges would have applied between 7:00 am and 9:30 am, outbound ones between 4:00 pm and 6:30 pm during the week and there would have been no charge for journeys going against the peak flow. A number of projects would have been funded from the scheme and the proposal was part of a bid to the Government's Transport Innovation Fund for a £2.7 billion package of transport funding. A referendum was held, run by the electoral society, and on a turn out of 53.2%, the scheme was rejected by 78.8% of the electorate who voted. Greater Manchester decided not to implement the scheme based on the public vote.

Points to consider for analysis

- 2.13 Is a congestion charging scheme suitable for the Royal Borough?
- 2.14 Should a scheme in the Royal Borough be exempt for Residents, as the Lead Member for Highways and Transport suggests?
- 2.15 Should a congestion charge cover the whole Borough or just a specific area(s) such as the centre of Windsor?

2.16 Should certain types of vehicles be exempt or targeted, low emission or electric cars for example?

2.17 Are there any particular transport improvements that should be funded through a charge for example improvements to roads or additional parking?

3. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Durham City Centre road charging scheme

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Ieromonachou, P.; Potter, S. and Warren, J.P. (2006). Evaluation of the implementation process of urban road pricing schemes in the United Kingdom and Italy. European Transport, 32 pp. 49–68.

http://oro.open.ac.uk/9947/1/TE_32_Iero_Pott_Warr.pdf

5. Consultation (Mandatory)

Name of consultee	Post held and Department	Date sent	Date received	See comments in paragraph:
Internal				
Cllr Bathurst	Principal Member for Policy	17/02/2016		
Cllr Rayner	Lead Member for Highways and Transport	17/02/2016	18/02/2016	Report Summary
Cllr Burbage	Leader of the Council	17/02/2016		
David Scott	Head of Governance, Partnerships, Performance and Policy	17/02/2016	17/02/2016	Throughout
Ben Smith	Head of Highways and Transport	17/02/2016		
Simon Fletcher	Strategic Director of Operations & Customer Services	17/02/2016	17/02/2016	

Report History

Decision type:	Urgency item?
Key decision	No

Full name of report author	Job title	Full contact no:
Christopher Targowski	Cabinet Policy Manager	01628 796321