

**Cabinet Meeting: Monday, 04 November 2024**

**Question from: Cllr Blagbrough**

**Question to:**

Short-stay Parking in Brighouse will skyrocket by a staggering 400% under these proposed plans by this Labour Cabinet. Local residents and businesses are still reeling from the unexpected blow from last year's increases which were hard enough, but these new proposals show a complete disregard for the impact these increases will have.

Brighouse is a vibrant town, and thanks to the £19.1 million investment from the previous Conservative government, it has a promising future. But now these drastic parking charges risk deterring people from shopping and visiting Brighouse, and could jeopardising all of our hard work.

Whilst I understand the council's financial pressures, these proposed increases are excessive. I've already seen one business relocate because residents are choosing to shop elsewhere to avoid parking charges. This Cabinet needs a more balanced approach that considers the long-term impact on local businesses and the revenue they generate through business rates. These proposals show a lack of economic foresight and business acumen. I strongly urge the Cabinet to reconsider these proposed massive increases.

**Response**

On-street charges in town centres are usually set at a higher tariff than off-street car parks in order to encourage motorists to use the car parks and leave the central spaces for those who really need them.

Offering cheap parking encourages motorists to circulate around the central streets 'hunting' for cheap spaces, which clogs up the town centre and doesn't support the council's climate emergency and vision zero policies.

Increasing parking charges is never popular but pricing is the most effective way to manage kerb space, and a town centre clogged up with vehicles is not going to be a safe, vibrant, and economically successful place.

A recent survey concluded that on-street spaces in Brighouse are at a premium and occupancy remains high on most days.

However, as part of the Brighouse Town Deal regeneration project, the number of on-street spaces will be reduced by around 50%, which will further increase demand for these premium spaces.

An increase in tariff will also help to encourage motorists to change their habits and to park in the nearby car parks now, so the disruption is minimised when the available spaces are reduced by the town centre improvements.

An analysis of the on-street and off-street car park data indicates that, even at peak times, there were over 160 available spaces in off-street car parks, and so there is plenty capacity to absorb vehicles from the central streets.

It is worth noting that Blue Badge holders are unaffected by these changes and can continue to park for free.

In essence, the demand for parking is high in Brighouse and the aim of these changes is to get vehicles to park in the outer car parks for anything other than the shortest of stays, particularly as the central spaces are going to be even more in demand following the Town Deal works.

There will still be plenty of parking capacity for those who chose to use a car (rather than bus, rail or cycle) to visit or shop in Brighouse, people with mobility issues will be unaffected, and the car parks still offer good value for money in the context of charges in other comparable towns - so there is no reason why Brighouse should not continue to thrive, both now and after the Town Deal investment.