



University of Aberdeen Car Parking Review 2011-2012

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Background

In September 2009 the University made significant changes to the way it managed car parking at its main Aberdeen campuses. A parking policy was developed which incorporated new parking permits, an online application system and a more robust enforcement system.

Between 2008 and 2011 various consultations were carried out to assess the need for parking charges and to ascertain what type of charging system would best meet the needs of the University community.

In September 2011 the parking system was updated to incorporate parking charges. Daily and annual charging options were made available and the online application system was redeveloped to incorporate daily and annual options.

This review will examine the uptake of daily and annual charging options and the usage of parking facilities as well as the revenue generated and what it has been used for.

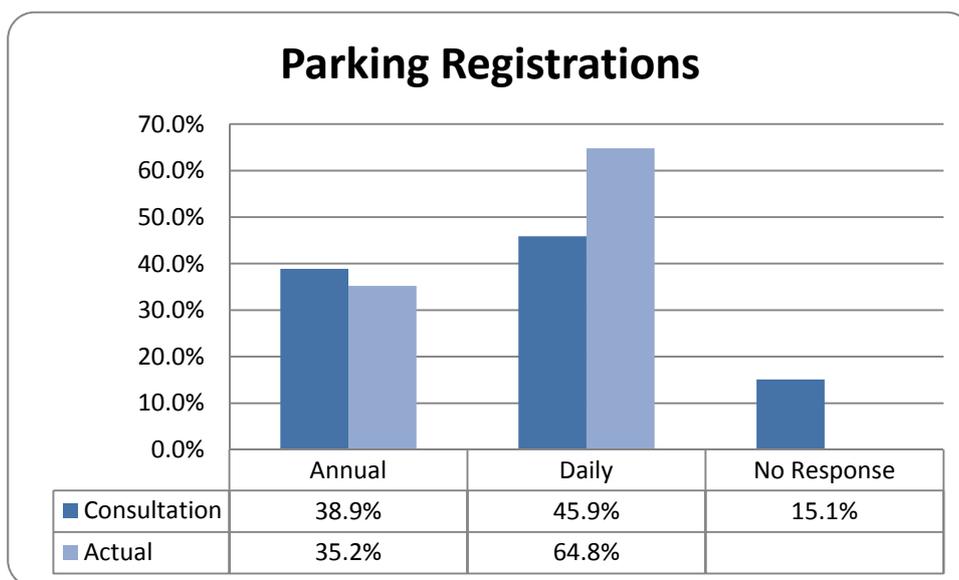
Staff

Permit and Voucher Registrations and Usage

Before parking charges were introduced the University issued 2,180 parking permits (2010/11 session). Staff registrations (taken at 17/04/12) were 1,708 which comprised 1,107 daily registrations and 601 annual registrations. A reduction of 472 registrations has therefore been achieved by introducing parking charges.

Annual Permits

- **Uptake**
 During previous consultations staff were asked to indicate a preference for either annual permits or daily vouchers. The split between annual and daily was fairly balanced (38.9% and 45.9% respectively) so the decision was taken to provide both options to staff. The actual percentage of annual registrations is relatively close to that suggested by the consultations at 35.2%.



- **Issues encountered**
 During the course of the year there have been relatively few problems raised with regards to annual permits. Those that have been raised have been minor and suitable action has been taken to mitigate or eliminate the problem.
 The most common issue encountered is the requirement for staff owning two vehicles to shift the permit between vehicles as required. This requirement is to prevent the possibility of two permits, registered by one staff member, being used simultaneously. The reporting of this issue has become less frequent as staff have adapted to having a single permit. A pragmatic approach to appeals lodged by staff who have received a PCN in these circumstances has also mitigated the impact of this requirement.
 Cancellations, changes to daily registrations and temporary cancellation due to maternity leave or sick leave were anticipated and administered without any difficulties.

Daily Vouchers

- Uptake

As previously mentioned, the preference shown between annual and daily, in previous consultations, was fairly balanced (38.9% and 45.9% respectively). The actual percentage of daily registrations has been somewhat higher at 64.8% although it is estimated that some of these registrations represent staff who rarely use car parking.

- Issues encountered

Like annual permits, problems with daily vouchers have been limited and relatively minor in nature.

Typical issues which have been raised include damaged or incorrectly dated vouchers, out-of-sight vouchers and multiple sheets of vouchers being displayed in a vehicle. In the case of damaged and incorrectly dated vouchers, these have been replaced where possible. Vouchers drifting out-of-sight has been frustrating for users and daily voucher holders have been sought to resolve this issue. While multiple sheets of vouchers being displayed is problematic for parking attendants it should not result in any errors in enforcement.

Parking Capacity and Usage

The University has 811 staff parking spaces on the Old Aberdeen campus and a further 437 at Foresterhill giving a total of 1,248 spaces¹. With total registrations of 1,708 the 'oversell' is 36.9%, which is over the industry standard of 25%. However this assumes that all staff who have registered for daily vouchers purchase and use a voucher every day. In reality this is not the case. Sales of daily vouchers suggest 339 are used on a typical weekday. Assuming all annual permits (601) are being used alongside these daily vouchers we can estimate that 940 spaces are typically being used of the 1,248 that are available. This would represent an 'undersell', or spare capacity, of 24.7%.

To test the figures above, analysis of parking capacity was conducted on a variety of different days at the Old Aberdeen and Foresterhill campuses. Sample days showed spare capacity was typically 28%. Individual campuses returned spare capacity of between 17% and 49%.

While spaces are not always available in the closest or most convenient car park the geographic spread of the campuses is such that parking is generally available within a 5min walk.

¹ To avoid providing an inaccurate or skewed representation; parking for disabled people, drop-off spaces and Hillhead residential parking are excluded from the above figures.

Students

Permit and Voucher Registrations and Usage

Students have similar parking options to staff in that they have access to both annual and daily parking options. Student parking consists of 38 spaces beside the Butchart building, which are available for daily voucher users and a further 50 annual permits. In consultation with AUSA, a criteria based application system was devised to ensure the most appropriate allocation of annual permits. The criteria applied included distance, carer responsibility and alternative travel. After initial indications during the first month of operation suggested the criteria level was pitched too high the scoring mechanism was adjusted, in consultation with AUSA, to ensure the allocation was appropriately issued.

Parking Capacity and Usage

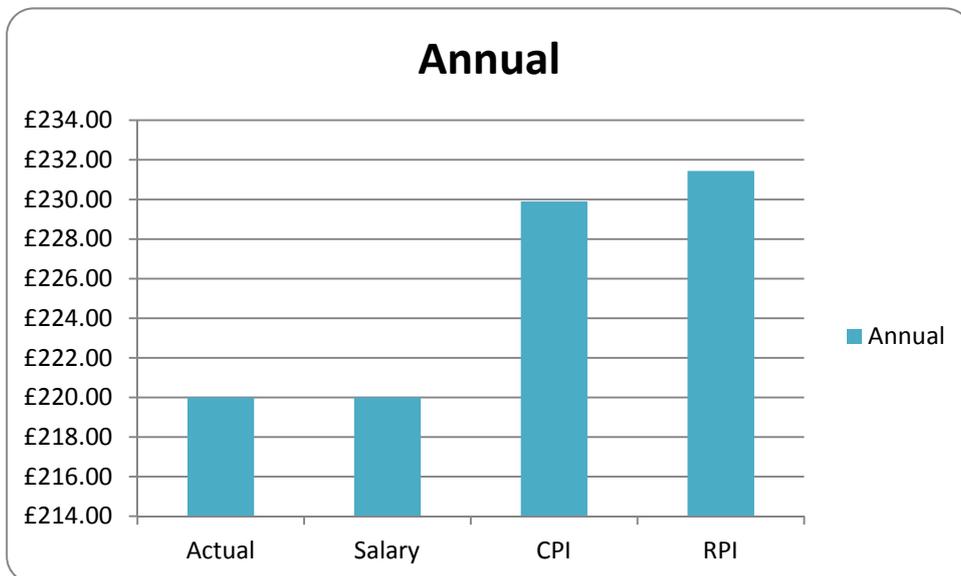
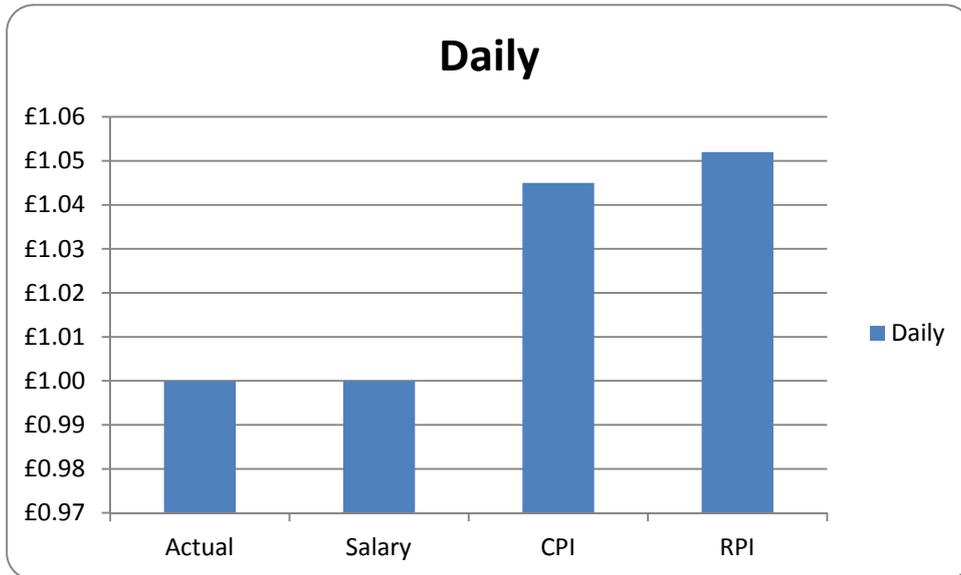
As mentioned above, students have access to 38 spaces at Butchart via daily vouchers and a further 50 spaces via annual permits.

It is assumed that annual permits are utilised all the time since alternatives would be used if the case was otherwise. Daily voucher sales average approx. 45 per day during term time. This suggests that there is a turnover of cars using the spaces at Butchart; in other words that students use spaces at Butchart for part of the day thereby allowing multiple use of a space in a single day. The approx. number of vehicles per space is 1.2. This rate does not seem excessive or suggest the need for an alternative method of administering charging. As with staff parking, analysis of parking capacity was conducted on a variety of different days. Sample days showed spare capacity of between 0% and 26%.

Finances

Charge level

The level of charging, and the intention to implement charging, was selected by the University in February 2011. The start of 2011 has therefore been selected as the starting point for the relative comparison of charging. Comparisons have been drawn between the current parking price, RPI, CPI and salary increases.



The main purpose of introducing car parking charges was to discourage car use when suitable alternatives were available. The parking price should therefore be reviewed, not only as a direct measure against pay increases and inflation, but also against its ability to discourage car use. With all these issues in mind there does not appear to be any reason to increase parking charges at this time.

Income

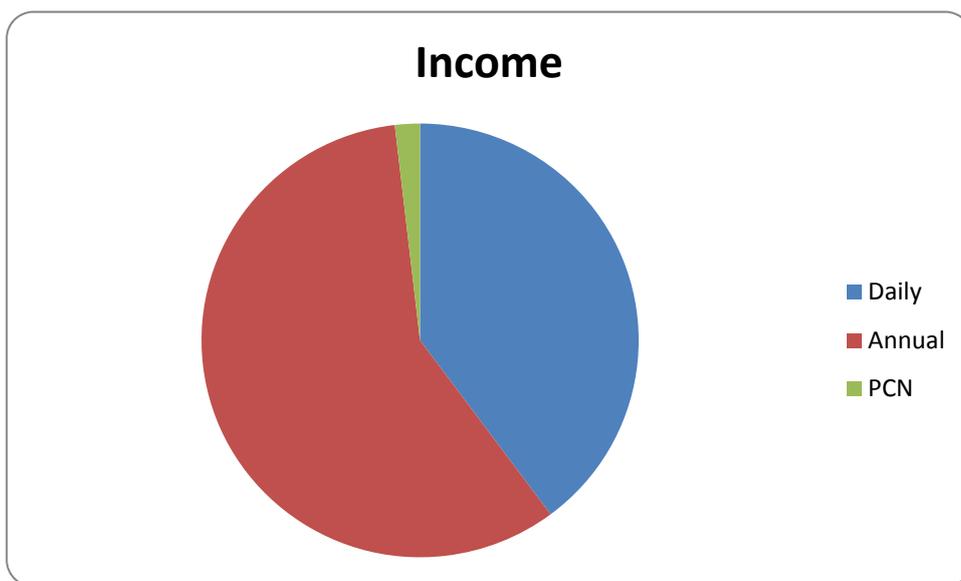
Income from parking charges over the year was £216k.

This comprised:

Daily Vouchers - £86k (40%)

Annual Permits - £126k (58%)

Parking Charge Notices (PCN) - £4k (2%)



Expenditure

The total income of £216k was used on the following:

VAT - £28k (13%)

Shuttle Bus - £113k (52%)

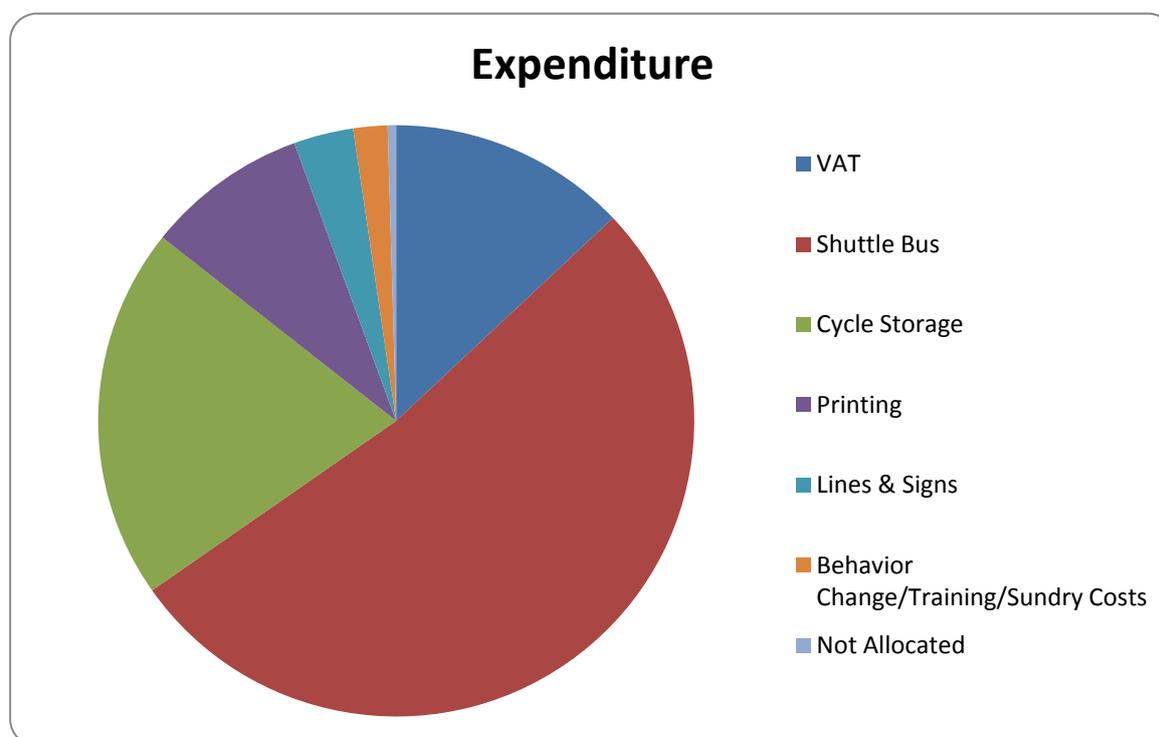
Cycle Storage - £44k (20%)

Printing - £19k (9%)

Lines & Signs - £7k (3%)

Training & Behaviour Change - £4K (2%)

Not Allocated - £1k (0%)



Conclusion

While the prospect of charging was undoubtedly unpopular it has been effective in reducing the number of vehicles on site. The charging level, while relatively low, has been enough to result in a change in habits and, given the current financial climate, there appears to be no need to change the rate at present.

There were concerns that users would not have a reasonable prospect of finding a parking space. The availability of spaces was therefore carefully monitored to enable appropriate adjustments to be made if necessary – the availability of spaces means that no such changes are required at this stage. Robust enforcement measures have ensured that spaces are kept available for permitted users and that agreed regulations are followed. While a number of cases have been subject to appeal and/or cancellation the enforcement methods used have generally been reliable and consistent.