Measure title : Workplace parking levy (WPL)
City, Country: Nottingham, UK (England)
Year(s): 1998 up to 2014, implementation started in 2011 (with payment in April 2012)

A1 Objectives

(I) Constrain congestion in peak periods and to limit it to relative to other areas against which it can be benchmarked[1].

(II) Enhance attractiveness of Nottingham as place to do business.

(III) Funding of other transport measures (especially Nottingham's tramlines 2 and 3) is a sub-objective of both of the above –.

A2 Description of the CS

The WPL scheme levies a charge on occupied private non domestic off street parking places i.e. those occupied by vehicles used by employees, regular business visitors or pupils/students. These are referred to as Workplace Parking Places (WPP). The scheme covers the entire Nottingham City Council area. Currently the charge per WPP is £362 (April 2014 to March 2015) per year although this is set to rise above the rate of inflation up to 2016. This escalator aims to coincide with the completion of the public transport improvements which the levy part-funds. Employers apply for a licence for each of their premises; this states the number of WPP they wish to use and they then pay the appropriate Levy. Frontline health and emergency services premises receive a 100% discount from the charge, as do employers with 10 WPP or fewer. Target groups are Employers with more than 10 staff; and these staff themselves, when commuting by car to work.

The scheme has been implemented successfully and without systematic non-payment or other protest from employers affected by it. The scheme is very cheap to run (about 5% of revenue is used to operate it). In terms of impacts, the scheme is very recent, so congestion monitoring shows little change so far in traffic levels. The local economy has fared similarly to that in other similar cities in the UK since scheme implementation.

B Costs and who paid them

Scheme development costs were estimated in 2001 at £1.7 million (2001 prices). The actual outturn cost is unknown. Operating costs are modest, at under £400,000 per year, and are financed entirely from the WPL income, of which they make up about 5%.

1. The WPL was chosen instead of a road user charging scheme in part because it was cheaper and simpler to implement and operate. It also directly impacts on commuting by car, considered to be the key driver of congestion in Nottingham.

[1] Congestion is primarilly a Peak Period (07:00-10:00 and 15:00-18:00) problem in Nottingham and one of the objectives of the WPL package is to constrain this relative to other UK Cities. The WPL scheme operates 24 hours a day and thus is likely to have some impact to travel patterns throughout the day.

2. It is estimated by staff involved that the implementation costs were in the region of £4 million (€4.8 million), spread over a roughly 10 year period. Operating costs are financed from the levy income and require about 5% of that, which is highly favourable compared to road pricing schemes such as that in London.

C Project objectives, indicators, data and impact/results

OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR	DATA USED	IMPACT/RESULTS
(I) Constrain congestion in peak periods and to limit it to relative to other areas against which it can be benchmarked. *(II) Enhance attractiveness of Nottingham as place to do business.* *(III) Funding of other transport measures (especially Nottingham's tramlines 2 and 3) is a sub-objective of both of the above – although this became more of a key objective in the run-up to implementation in October 2011.*	*Remarkable: Scheme development costs were estimated in 2001 at £1.7 million (2001 prices). The actual outturn cost is unknown. Operating costs are modest, at under £400,000 per year, and are financed entirely from the WPL income, of which they make up about 5%.*	*congestion monitoring*	*In terms of impacts, the scheme is very recent, so congestion monitoring shows little change so far in traffic levels. The local economy has fared similarly to that in other similar cities in the UK since scheme implementation.*

The scheme has been implemented against an economic background whereby the UK economy is rebounding from a recession, this has been reflected by an increase demand for travel.

D Implementation process

D1. Stages

The CS was implemented, as follows, in the following stages:
Stage 1: 1998-1999- Nottingham City Council began to consider such a scheme but could only commence planning once the enabling legislation was passed in the UK Parliament (Transport Act, 2000).
Stage 2: 2001-2003- The initial plan in the 2001 Local Transport Plan for the city was to have the WPL in place by December 2003 or shortly thereafter. The key stages within this plan were data collection and modelling during 2000 and 2001; consultation and scheme development from 2000 to 2002; publication of the legal definition of the scheme in summer 2002; thereafter a public inquiry (hearing) on the plans; a decision by national government to approve the scheme, in spring 2003; and the scheme's actual implementation in summer 2003.
Stage 3: 2006-2008 - The WPL scheme and associated package of public transport investment has been designed to directly or indirectly tackle congestion. The proposed WPL scheme and its supporting draft WPL business case (July 2007) underwent a public consultation process including a public examination during the summer and autumn of 2007. An Equality Impact Assessment, included in the Business Case, was undertaken as part of the scheme development process. In December 2007, the City Council's Executive Board, having considered the findings of the public consultation, agreed in principle to proceed with developing the scheme and submitted an updated WPL Business Case (April 2008) along with the approved WPL Order to the Department for Transport in May 2008 for confirmation by the Secretary of State for Transport.
It is intended to implement a fully operational scheme by the proposed start date of April 2010 in line with the assumed start of construction on NET Phase Two (tram lines 2 and 3).
Stage 4: 2011-2012 scheme started without charging in October 2011 and charges have been paid since April 2012.

D2 Barriers – what were the key problems or difficulties in implementing the CS?

Barrier 1 – lack of political acceptability - businesses and others criticise the scheme, for three main reasons. They see it as:

- an additional burden on business and thus damaging to a city's economy.
- ineffective as a tool to combat congestion.
- unfair on the motorist who already carries a high tax burden.

How barrier was overcome: The municipality gathered more and stronger arguments and continued the communication. It was vital to convince politicians first in order to gain wide political support during the implementation of the scheme.

Barrier 2 – no other municipality in Britain or the rest of Europe had ever before tried to implement a WPL so it was difficult to know how to do it, especially as the legislation does not specify exactly how such a scheme should be implemented and operated.

How barrier was overcome: The municipality secured high level legal advice and assembled a multidisciplinary project team to work through the practical problems and issues. This was achieved by developing policies to provide a detailed scheme which followed the spirit of the underpinning legislation where that legislation was not sufficiently specific.

Barrier 3 in order for a scheme to be approved by Government, the City Council had to be able to demonstrate (taken from GNLTP2, ch 12):

- The impact of the levy itself in tackling congestion,
- That some improvements in transport provision have been made before charges were introduced,
- That there has been full consultation on the scheme, and
- That plans for spending the proceeds are ring fenced for improvements to local transport and consistent with the objectives of the LTP.

How barrier was overcome: The municipality asked for help from researchers and experts in order to demonstrate the positive effects of the scheme on the points above. This was then synthesized into the 2008 WPL Buinsess Plan (Full ref needed as this is a key document: Nottingham City Council (NCC), 2008. *Workplace Parking Levy Business Case* [online], Nottingham: Nottingham City Council, April 2008, online,: http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=2672&p=0 [accessed 03/01/2013].)

Technology was not a barrier, as the scheme was designed to be simple to implement and operate (indeed this was a reason for choosing it). Environmental aspects were not a major driver, and the possible commercialisation of the WPL concept has only become important since the scheme was implemented. The regulatory authorities were broadly supportive.

D3 Drivers – what factors really helped in implementing the CS?

Driver 1 – political stability. City of Nottingham is solidly Labour politically so politicians are unlikely to be voted out of power on the basis of one scheme or measure. This allows these politicians to take more risks and a more strategic long term view than may be the case for politicians in more politically volatile cities.
Driver 2 – a strong team of council officers (civil servants) working on the scheme at the Council, from 2000 onwards, has been an important factor in its success. Supportive central government civil servants, especially in the first part of the 2000s, were also important.
Driver 3 – availability of some additional financing from UK Department of Transport through the LTP system, at least between 2000-2008,to fund the development of the WPL.

Extremely careful planning of the scheme has been key to its successful implementation. Factors such as implementation of controlled parking zones on streets around major employers, effective methods to count workplace parking places, effective but simple registration methods for employers and so on had to be developed to function perfectly, and in detail, in order for the scheme to be a success. This is all the more the case when the scheme is a controversial one like this because there is much public and media attention focused on trying to find problems with the way in which the scheme is designed and operated.

Sources based on an interview with Simon Dale Nottingham City Council and Steve Ison Loughborough University plus on a paper written by Simon and on various transport policy documents from the City Council.

See also:

Dale, S. J., Frost M.W., Gooding J., Ison S. G. and Warren, P., 2013, Workplace Parking Levies: the answer to funding large scale local transport improvements in the UK? *13th* **I**nternational *Conference on Competition and Ownership in Land Passenger Transport,* Oxford.