

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Environment Committee, 31st January 2023
SUBJECT:	Variation to Parking Charges
LEAD OFFICER:	Nat Slade, Group Head of Technical Services
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor David Edwards
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: <p>The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) considered at Policy and Finance Committee on 13 December 2022 recommended to Full Council the maximising of income including fees and charges, where possible, as part of the 2023/24 budget process. Car parking charges are discretionary and can be set by the Council in order to optimise its revenue in accordance with the Council's Off-Street Parking Strategy.</p> <p>This report sets out proposed car parking tariff options for Committee to select from.</p>	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: <p>The recently adopted Off-Street Parking Strategy sets out that the Council will review the charges annually. The Strategy aims to maximise the use of car parks in a way that supports the needs of businesses, workers, shoppers, commuters, and visitors, whilst looking to optimise yield from parking in line with the corporate charging principles. This report sets out proposed car parking tariff options for Committee to agree.</p>	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: <p>The Council's gross off-street pay and display income for 2021/22 was £1,329,300. Income from permits for using seasonal and town centre car parks generated gross income of £61,530 in 2021/22. Income from Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) for 2021/22 was £109,000 which is exclusively for re-investment into the delivery of parking services. The Council incurs costs in managing the parking services, planned and reactive maintenance of its car parks and on improvement initiatives.</p> <p>The Town Centre Car Parks as well as Town Centre permits have not seen an increase in charges since 2016.</p> <p>The three tariff options in Appendix 1 all generate additional revenue for the Council. Car parking income is highly dependent on the weather during the peak summer season which affects visitor numbers to the beaches.</p> <p>Option A is expected to generate £392K</p> <p>Option B is expected to generate £556K</p> <p>Option C is expected to generate £780K</p>	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the Committee's agreement to one of the tariff options set out in Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee agrees to introduce parking tariff option B with effect from 01 April 2023.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 The Council's Medium Financial Strategy assumes that income from all charges should be reviewed. The Off-Street Parking Strategy sets out that the vehicle parking tariffs will be kept under review to optimise yield. This report sets out proposed tariff options for Committee to select from them.

4. DETAIL

- 4.1 The Council operates 28 pay and display car parks within the district. The car parks provide a vital service to residents and the local economy facilitating visits by people outside our district, helping to support the tourism sector
- 4.2 The car parks are defined as short stay, long stay, seasonal or free depending on their location and charging structure. The short stay and long stay car parks are within town centres whilst the seasonal car parks are mainly on the seafront and have summer and winter charging structure.
- 4.3 The cost of delivering the Council's services is increasing which makes it necessary to increase its revenues. This is mainly due to the effects of inflation such as its impact on the national living wage and energy prices. Other cost factors are associated with the Council's move to reduce the carbon emissions from Parking Service in line with its declared climate emergency and adopted carbon neutral strategy. Examples include switching to an electric vehicle fleet and renewably sourced electricity supplies. Investments have been made in software which have enabled the Council to provide permits to customers electronically. Over the last two years a substantial programme of resurfacing has been delivered to significantly improve the condition of the car parks. Higher levels of maintenance funding are included in the five-year asset management plan than have been the case in previous years. Other investments needed in accordance with commitments in the Off-Street Parking Strategy include upgrading and/or replacing our 58 pay machines to meet the commitment within the strategy for all machines to enable contactless payments by 2024.
- 4.4 Consequently, three car parking tariff options have been prepared from which the Committee is asked to select. The tariffs within each of the three options all considered to be reasonable and have been developed with the need to ensure town centres and amenity areas remain accessible.

- Option A delivers the smallest increase in revenue for the Council. This has been achieved by rounding up the tariff charges.
- Option B delivers a medium increase in revenue, and this has been realised with detailing higher increases for longer stays in our Car Parks.
- Option C delivers the highest increase in revenue, with higher increases across all tariffs.

Option B is the recommended option and is considered to support the needs of businesses, workers, shoppers, commuters, and visitors, whilst optimising yield from parking in 23/24 in line with the corporate charging principles.

4.5 The proposals do not change the 2-hour free parking schemes that allow parking in Fitzleet, Hothamton, and Lyon Street car parks in Bognor Regis and St. Martins, Anchor Springs and Manor House car parks in Littlehampton. These schemes are funded by the District Council, Town Councils, traders in Littlehampton and the Bognor Regis Business Improvement District. Known as Littlehampton disc parking scheme and Bognor Regis disc parking scheme, a modest annual administrative fee is charged.

4.6 The proposal does not include introducing charging to car parks which are currently free to users. The proposals do not affect the parking charges at the Fitzalan Pool car park in Arundel. That car park is leased by the Arundel & Downland Community Leisure Trust and operated by Arun District Council under contract. Revenues from Fitzalan Pool car park in Arundel will continue to go to the Arundel & Downland Community Leisure Trust, less the Council's management costs.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 The only external consultation undertaken was with the Arundel & Downland Community Trust who had recently decided not to increase daily tariffs, having introduced charging between 6pm and 8pm within the last year at the Fitzalan Pool car park.

5.2 The proposed changes are allowed under of a Notice of Variation under Section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and Regulation 25 of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. The new tariffs must be advertised in the press and at the car parks for at least 21 days prior to their introduction on 1st April 2023.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

6.1 The 3 tariff options are attached in appendix 1. Each option will provide the Council with additional income to support its financial position.

6.2 Not to agree an increase in parking charges. The corporate budget is being prepared on the basis that the Council generates significant additional revenue in 23/24. Car Parking charges are one of the Councils largest sources of revenue. Charges for many other (non-related) charges are only permitted on a cost-recovery basis. If the Committee does not agree to increase the parking charges as set out in the appendix, savings from the proposed budget will need to be identified which will diminish the ability of the Council to deliver on its agreed vision aims.

7. COMMENTS BY THE INTERIM GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

7.1 The Medium-Term Financial Plan identifies a significant budget deficit for 2023/24. The recommended increase in parking charges will significantly help to reduce that deficit. Failure to increase fees and charges will inevitably result in additional budget cuts in the future to the detriment of the quality of parking services.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 The following risks and mitigations have been identified.

- Risk of negative economic impact and possible fall in town centre visitors. The Council are still offering 2-hour free parking disc within our town centres and the costs of parking in our town centres remains very competitive within the West Sussex area.
- Risk of not going far enough in terms of Climate change. This is a very difficult period and therefore it calls for a fine balance between economic recovery and the green agenda. Higher charges than those proposed maybe useful in encouraging modal shift.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1 The power to provide and maintain off-street parking spaces by a local authority is to be found in section 32 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. By section 35 the Act the Council has power to make orders for the

- (i) the use of the parking place
- (ii) the conditions on which it may be used, and
- (iii) the charges to be paid in connection with its use.

In exercising these powers the Council is required by section 122 of the Act to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities.

9.2 In this report committee is being asked to agree to the variation of parking charges in accordance with tariff B from 1 April 2023. It is a general principle of public law

that a public body must exercise a statutory power for the purpose for which the power was conferred by Parliament, and not for any unauthorised purpose. Section 122 empowers the Council to have regard to any relevant matters in exercising these functions and the Council's Off-Street Parking Strategy 2021-2026 is relevant in that it requires the council to consider optimising its charges.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1 The proposals do not have Human Resource Implications

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1 There are no direct health and safety impacts from the proposals/

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1 The Council car parks require regular maintenance to ensure that they remain in a good and safe condition to be used by members of the public.

12.2 Maintenance is part funded from penalty charge notices and part funded from the Council's general revenue budget. Income from parking charges is needed to support the latter funding source.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions to have due regard to:

- i. the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010,
- ii. the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not; and
- iii. foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

13.2 The Council is committed to all of the above which will be considered and included within the parking strategy as it is developed improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all residents in respect of socio-economic and health determinants.

13.3 An equality Impact assessment has been undertaken which identifies that there is a financial impact on almost all users of our car parks. However, the Council offers 2 hours free town centre parking schemes in Littlehampton and another in Bognor Regis. The Council also offers free all-day car parking in all its car parks to disabled

people displaying a “blue badge”. There is not, therefore considered to be an adverse impact on protected characteristics.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1 The increased in parking tariffs are not motivated by an intention to encourage modal shift from private cars. The scale of the increases proposed in the amended options are considered unlikely to do so. A potential impact of implementing the highest car parking tariff (option C) is to reduce car journeys and encouragement for people to switch to more sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling buses and trains. In turn, this may have a positive impact on air quality, carbon emission, physical activity levels and communities.

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1 Twenty-five of the Council’s car parks currently hold the “Park Mark” award. The Safer Parking Scheme is managed by the British Parking Association (BPA) on behalf of Police Crime Prevention Initiatives Ltd. A Park Mark is awarded to parking facilities that have met the requirements of a risk assessment conducted by local police. These requirements mean the parking operator has put measures in place to help deter criminal activity and anti-social behaviour, thereby doing everything they can to prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime in their parking facility.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1 The proposals do not adversely impact on human rights.

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1 There are no specific Freedom of Information or Data Protection Consideration issues arising from the proposals of this report.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Appendix 1 –Car Parking Tariff Options

Equalities Impact Assessment

[Council Vision 2022 - 2026](#)

[Off Street Parking Strategy 2021-2026](#)

[Carbon Neutral Strategy 2022-2030](#)

[Current ADC car park tariffs](#)