

# ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

## REPORT TO AND DECISION OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOODS COMMITTEE ON 17 November 2021

### REPORT

**SUBJECT:** Variation to Parking Charges

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Calvin Baylis, Customer & Parking Services Manager  
**DATE:** September 2021  
**EXTN:** 01903 737649  
**AREA:** Services

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Council's Medium Financial Strategy assumes that income from all charges should be reviewed. This therefore requires certain parking charges for 2022/23 to be varied to find the additional income. The purpose of this report is not to make the decision on the charges but to ask for approval to commence the consultation on an agreed set of proposed charges prior to return to Committee for final approval.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Committee is asked to

Approve the proposed charges as set out in Appendix A be put out for consultation after which a report will be returned to Committee for final approval.

#### 1. BACKGROUND:

- 1.1. Arun District Council own and operate 22 Pay & Display car parks. These car parks are located in Bognor Regis, Littlehampton and Arundel.
- 1.2. The car parks are defined as short stay, long stay or seasonal depending upon their location and charging structure. The short stay and long stay car parks are within the town centre while the seasonal car parks are mainly on the seafront and have a summer and winter charging structure.
- 1.3. The Council operates a 2 free hour disc parking scheme in the Fitzleet, Hothampton and Lyon Street car parks in Bognor Regis and St Martins, Anchor Springs and Manor House car parks in Littlehampton. This is funded by the District Council, the Town Councils and the traders.
- 1.4. The chargeable car parks all have ticket machines which accepts coins. The

smallest denomination that can be used is 5 pence. In 7 of our car parks the machines can also take contactless and credit and debit card payments. The Council have a contract with a company called RingGo which allows our customers to purchase virtual tickets by using the phone or by going on to a website.

1.5. The Council participates in the Safer Parking Scheme which is operated by the British Parking Association and the Police. Safer Park Mark awards have been given to 21 of our pay & display car parks and 3 free car parks plus a permit holder car park.

1.6. In Order to ensure that there is clear direction in planning for the future, the Council is being asked at this meeting to agree a vision for its Off Street Car Parks and to agree a Strategy to support that vision. It should be noted that an annual review of the parking tariffs is one of the action points of the Strategy.

## **2. FINANCIAL POSITION:**

2.1. The Councils agreed financial model assumes a 2.5% increase, which is based on the estimated rate of inflation as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, on all discretionary income.

2.2. This equates to roughly £32,000 of additional parking income.

2.3. This can be found by increasing charges in all the car parks or in some of the car parks providing there is sufficient evidence that the increase of charges will produce the necessary income. Indicative estimated income figures are illustrated in Appendix A. These figures are calculated based on ticket sales pre-covid and therefore do not take into account the changes that the pandemic may have had on parking. In addition, income from our car parks is seasonal and can be heavily impacted by weather, therefore previous ticket sales cannot always determine future income.

## **3. OPTIONS FOR THE VARIATION IN PARKING CHARGES**

3.1. There are 2 types of car parks when it comes to charging and they are identified by their location and reason for use. There are Town Centre car parks which are mainly used by shoppers or visitors to the Town Centre's and Seasonal car parks which are either close to the coast or parks and are used by residents and outside visitors who have parked to be close to recreational activities. Town Centre car parks have the same tariff throughout the year. The seasonal car parks have different tariffs for the summer and winter period. The Town Centre car park charges were last increased in April 2016. The seasonal car park charges were increased in April 2021.

3.2. A proposed schedule of parking charges is shown on Appendix A. This illustrates the potential amount of additional income that would be generated if Town Centre charges and Seasonal Charges are increased as well as Parking Permits. The estimates are based on past ticket sales prior to Covid.

3.3. It is proposed that following the consultation and agreements the new charges would come into effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.

#### **4. COMPARISON OF CHARGES**

- 4.1. Appendix B compares the average parking charge for 1 and 2 hours in the other District & Boroughs within West Sussex and broken down into Town Centre (flat surface) Multi-Storey and rural/coastal carparks.
- 4.2. The comparison shows that Arun has the second cheapest charges up to 2 hours in the Town Centre car parks.
- 4.3. In addition, Arun has the cheapest charges up to 2 hours for a multi-storey car park.
- 4.4. Within the Coastal car parks Arun has the highest average charge over the year. However, no other Council within West Sussex has seasonal tariff which sees the charges increasing during the summer and reducing in the winter. The coastal car parks can attract large numbers of visitors during peak season. It is known that day trip visitors are attracted from well outside of the district including from London.

#### **5. FREE CAR PARKS**

- 5.1. The Customer & Parking Services Manager has been tasked with reviewing all the free car parks both within the car parks portfolio and the parks and greenspaces portfolio to see what opportunities there might be to generate future income.
- 5.2. It is therefore proposed to trial the introduction of charging within five car parks which are currently free of charge. The charges for these car parks will enable the first hour of parking to be free of charge. The car parks concerned are Bersted Brooks, Brookfield, Littlehampton, Grassmere and Links Avenue in Felpham and Shrubbs Field, Middleton On Sea.
- 5.3. We receive contributions from the relevant Parish Councils towards the cost of operating Grassmere, Links Avenue and Shrubbs Field as free car parks and therefore consultation will take place with both Felpham and Middleton Parish Council and West Sussex County Council.
- 5.4. No contribution is currently received for operating Bersted Brooks or Brookfield as a free car parks, but as with all the charges, consultation will take place with the relevant Town or Parish Council.
- 5.5. Future investment to potentially extend the capacity make improvements to the Bersted Brooks car parks is planned. The Brookfield car park will be subject of review for future improvement.
- 5.6. It is proposed that all five car parks will be chargeable from 8am to 6pm.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1. The benchmarking exercise shows the Town Centre parking charges in the Arun District Council car parks are generally cheaper when compared with the parking charges in other local authorities in West Sussex. With the level of the proposed charges it would remain the case that ADC charges would continue to compare favourably when compared to the parking charges of the other District and Boroughs with West Sussex.
- 6.2. Income from Town Centre parking charges are relatively stable although it is likely that we are yet to see the full impact of Covid on Town Centre usage. Charges have not been increased in the Town Centre car parks since 2016.
- 6.3. However, with regard to Town Centre parking the Council continues to operate the 2 hour free parking scheme in 6 of its major Town Centre car parks.
- 6.4. The Seasonal car parks have benefited from 'staycations', but the income is almost entirely reliant on the weather. The seasonal car parks charges were increased on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1. Under Section 32- 44 of the Road Traffic Act 1984 the Council is required to consult on any proposed variation to the parking charges.
- 7.2. The proposed charges will be advertised as public notices in the Littlehampton Gazette and the Bognor Regis Observer as well as being advertised on the internet. Notices will be displayed in all the car parks affected. A consultation letter together with a schedule of the proposed changes will be sent to all District Councillors and bodies as listed in Appendix C inviting comments.
- 7.3. The consultation period will last for 4 weeks from the date that the public notices are published. All responses received will then be collated and be returned to Committee for approval prior to implementation.
- 7.4. With regard to the car parks the five free car parks specific consultation will need to take place with the Parish Councils and West Sussex County Council.

## **2. PROPOSAL(S):**

To approve the proposed charges as set out in Appendix A to be put out for consultation after which a report will be returned to Committee for final approval.

## **3. OPTIONS:**

- 3.1. Approve the charges as shown on Appendix A

3.2. Do not approve the charges shown on Appendix A and accept that the value of income from the parking charges will not increase in line with the Councils financial Strategy.

**4. CONSULTATION:**

**As determined by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984**

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		✓
Relevant District Ward Councillors		✓
Other groups/persons (please specify)		✓

**5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES:  
(Explain in more detail at 6 below)**

	YES	NO
Financial	✓	
Legal	✓	
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		✓
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		✓
Sustainability		✓
Asset Management/Property/Land		✓
Technology		✓
Other (please explain)		✓

**6. IMPLICATIONS:**

Approval of the proposed charges to meet financial requirements

**7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:**

Financial – To meet the Councils Financial Strategy

Legal process to increase parking charges

**8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

None