




12 October 2023 at 7.00 pm

Council Chamber, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks

Cabinet

Supplementary Agenda – Minutes marked to follow

	Pages	Contact
6. Annual Parking Fees & Charges 2024- 2025 	Replacement page 13	Trevor Kennett Tel: 01732 227407
7. Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) Fees 	Replacement page 25	Trevor Kennett Tel: 01732 227407
8. Gain or Retain a 5	Replacement page 31	Nick Chapman Tel: 01732 227167
9. Future of the Air Quality Monitoring Stations 	Replacement page 41	Nick Chapman Tel: 01732 227167

If you wish to obtain further factual information on any of the agenda items listed above, please contact the named officer prior to the day of the meeting.

Should you need this agenda or any of the reports in a different format, or have any other queries concerning this agenda or the meeting please contact Democratic Services on 01732 227000 or democratic.services@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

Item 06 – Annual Parking Fees & Charges 2024-25

The attached report was considered by the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee on 10 October 2023. The relevant Minute extract is below.

Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee (10 October 2023, Minute 21)

The Chairman presented the report, which set out the review of parking fees and charges for 2024/25. The review proposed changes to the hours of operation and charges in on- and off-street parking schemes, to support the local economy and services for residents. Increases were required to address rising operational costs, such as insurance and non-domestic rates. These increases would also be reinvested in the Council's car parks to ensure the assets remained safe and fit for purpose.

An additional £140,000 is required from parking fees following the 10-year budget agreed at Full Council on 9 February 2023, and recognising the current income levels. The Head of Direct Services outlined the options presented within the report. He corrected an error within Appendix B; Blighs car park charges were £1.00/30 minutes, £2/1hr, £4/2hr, £6/3hr, and £10/4hr. In response to questions, the officer outlined the changes in the parking demand. There were fewer commuters parking at sites every working day, as hybrid working arrangements have become more widespread. Premium parking was busier in the week than it had been previously. The options presented were data-based and aimed to minimise the impact of increases on local businesses, staff, and residents.

Members discussed the balance between the Council's Net Zero ambitions, which would encourage other forms of travel, and budget considerations. It was noted that the Sevenoaks District Council's Argyle Road car park would remain free to park in at weekends.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- a) the parking management proposals be considered; and
- b) That it be recommended to Cabinet that Option 3 be considered as the preferred option, prior to consultation.

Item 07 – Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) Fees Report

The attached report was considered by the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee on 10 October 2023. The relevant Minute extract is below.

Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee (10 October 2023, Minute 22)

The Chairman presented the report, which updated Members on the changes from a Statutory Instrument issued by the Government to increase on-the-spot fine levels for littering and fly tipping. The report proposed setting the maximum fixed penalty notice (FPN) levels issued by the Council to these new maximums, to deter waste crime.

The Head of Direct Services explained that the Government had increased the maximum levels for several FPNs to assist Council's in combatting littering and fly tipping. FPNs provided a quick and effective way of dealing with low-level environmental crimes, and were an alternative to prosecution. Members were advised that non-payment rates were reasonably high, and those that did not pay were still prosecuted. It was further highlighted that FPNs were only issued for smaller, one-off instances of fly tipping; large and commercial fly tips were immediately prosecuted. The discount offered for the first 10 days of the fly tipping FPN being would encourage people to actually pay, and would meet the Home Office guidance of giving consideration to the ability of people to pay fines.

The maximum amount for being caught fly tipping would increase from £400 to £1000, reduced to £300 if paid within 10 days; the maximum amount for littering would increase from £150 to £500.

In response to questions, the officer advised that littering FPNs were rarely issued, as they required uniformed officers to see the act. Only 3 had been issued in the 12 months prior. A high fee level with no discount was thus required as a strong deterrent. Serial fly tippers were uncommon within the district, and were prosecuted rather than fined. The changes would be communicated across the district with updated signage, and through the Council's social media, website, and InShape.

Members discussed the discounted rate offered for fly tipping.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that:

- a) the maximum FPN for being caught fly tipping be increased to £1000, and if paid within 10 days be reduced to £300; and
- b) the maximum FPN for being caught littering be increased to £500.

Item 08 – Food & Safety Team – Gain or Retain a 5

The attached report was considered by the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee on 10 October 2023. The relevant Minute extract is below.

Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee (10 October 2023, Minute 23)

The Chairman presented the report, which set out a proposed charging scheme for advice provided to food businesses before they receive food hygiene inspections. The Food & Safety Team inspected around 1000 food businesses each year, and scored them on a scale from 0 – 5. A score of 0 – 2 would invite further regulatory intervention to the business, and could have negative financial and reputational impacts. These ratings were fixed until the next full inspection.

The Team offered a chargeable “food hygiene rescore visit” service, through which a fresh inspection would be undertaken, without notice to the business, within three months. The demand for these visits had increased significantly. The Environmental Health Manager explained that the proposed scheme would allow the team to charge for advice in advance of inspections, to help businesses achieve higher hygiene ratings on their first attempt. The scheme would not guarantee an outcome but would give businesses the best chance at achieving higher standards of hygiene. The scheme would not be mandatory, and businesses would still be signposted to readily available information. The proposed charge for the service was £210.76, which would recover costs and align with the pricing for rescore visits, providing customers with differing options.

Members heard that the current provision of advice was limited by the volume of statutory work the team had at any given time. Placing the advice within a cost-recovery priced service would thus enable the team to serve customers better, as it could then be given as needed. Limited advice would still be provided for free; the paid service would give businesses bespoke information regarding their circumstances.

Members discussed the report.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- a) The contents of the report, including details of the proposed scheme and the suggested fees and charges, be noted; and
- b) That it be recommended to Cabinet that the Gain or Retain a 5 scheme be adopted within the Sevenoaks District.

Item 09 – Future of the Air Quality Monitoring Stations

The attached report was considered by the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee on 10 October 2023. The relevant Minute extract is below.

Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee (10 October 2023, Minute 24)

The Chairman presented the report, which proposed changes to the Council's air quality monitoring arrangements in Bat & Ball and Greatness. The Air Quality Stations (AQS) in these locations were nearing the end of their operational lives, and would require considerable investment to maintain. The air quality in the district had been steadily improving, and the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs had, in their response to Council's recent Air Quality Annual Status Report, advised the Council to consider removing its Air Quality Management Areas within 16 months. It was proposed that, unless a suitable management partner was found by April 2024, these stations be decommissioned and replaced with a network of portable AQS.

The Environmental Health Manager explained that the data analysis and operator duties costs for the sites had doubled, resulting in an in-year budget overspend. To keep the sites operational would incur significant immediate costs on top of this, as several analysers required replacing at once, and the shipping container which contained the Greatness site had deteriorated and needed replacing. Removing these stations would not impact the network of diffusion tubes which monitored nearly all of the district.

In response to questions, the officer explained that the portable AQS were indicative, and would not be the same standard as the sites they were replacing. Though this information would be less detailed, the sites would be easier to locate, and the data from them would be more easily shared with and understood by the public. These stations could be bought or leased as required.

The AQS at Greatness measured background levels of ozone, nitrous dioxide, and PM10, which allowed for more accurate readings at other sites, whereas the Bat & Ball AQS was a roadside measure. No sites were predicted to exceed the limit of 40 µg/m³, even in the worst case scenario that the AQS network measured.

Members discussed the impact of potential developments in the Greatness and Bat & Ball areas. They were advised that all planning applications were considered by the Environmental Health Team, during which they analysed the impact of the proposed development. Developers were expected to produce assessments of air quality impact for large developments, and could be

their impact before, during, and after construction. This would be facilitated by the proposed network of portable AQS. Conditions could also be imposed to mitigate the impact of new developments on air quality.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet:

- a) That Environmental Health seek a partner to take over the management and operating costs of the Air Quality Stations (Bat & Ball and/or Greatness Park) from 1st April 2024;

- b) If a suitable partner cannot be identified as above; that on the 1st April 2024 the Air Quality Monitoring Stations at Bat & Ball and Greatness Park are closed and decommissioned; and that

- c) In replacement of the two existing Air Quality Stations; that the District Council seek to develop a network of portable Air Quality Analysers to be sited strategically in areas of poorest air quality. The scale and extent of this network will be subject to technical constraints and available funding from within existing Environmental Health budgets and or additional grant (or similar) funding if/ when available.