

ANNUAL REVIEW OF PARKING MANAGEMENT 2020/21

Cabinet - 4 February 2020

Report of Chief Officer Finance and Trading

Status: For decision

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary: This report informs Members of the outcome of the public consultation on the annual review of parking management arrangements for 2020/21.

The review proposed moderate increases in:

- half hourly and 1-3 hourly charges in Blighs car park
- daily and resident and season ticket charges in Sevenoaks Town car park
- hourly and daily parking charges on street in Morewood Close (East), St Botolphs Road area, Morewood Close (West) and Holly Bush Lane and Plymouth Drive areas

It is important to mention that many of the charge increases within these proposals have not seen any increase since 2014 or 2015. The car parks and on-street parking affected represent a small minority of car parks and on-street parking facilities that the Council operates across the District. A majority of our parking charges have been frozen for the 2020/21 period.

This report supports the Key Aim of: The effective management of Council resources and supporting the local economy.

Portfolio Holder Councillor Margot McArthur

Contact Officer John Strachan, Ext. 7310

Recommendation to Cabinet:

That following consideration of the responses to the public consultation, the revised parking management arrangements for 2020-21 be agreed by Cabinet.

Reason for recommendation:

To help regulate and manage the use of parking facilities in the District; to ensure car parking charges are set to support a sustainable local economy; and, to support services for residents as set out in the approved 10-year budget.

Introduction and Background

- 1 This report considers the response to proposals for revised parking management arrangements in the Council's car parks for 2020/21, intended to help regulate demand for parking.
- 2 Following a careful review of both on and off street parking management arrangements, the proposals taken forward for consultation were moderate increases in:
 - a) half hourly and 1-3 hour charges in Blighs car park, to encourage more turnover in this "premium" car park and greater use of the town's Buckhurst 1, South Park and Suffolk Way car parks.
 - b) daily and season ticket charges in the new Sevenoaks Town multi-decked car park, which provides long stay parking for business workers in Sevenoaks town.
 - c) on-street pay and display parking in Morewood Close (West) close to Sevenoaks Magistrates Court.
 - d) on-street pay and display commuter parking in Ashley Close, Ashley Road, Chestnut Lane, Morewood Close (East) and St Botolphs Road. Bringing these charges more in line with the off-street commuter charges by Sevenoaks Station.
 - e) on-street pay and display parking in Holly Bush Lane and Plymouth Drive. Bringing these charges more in line with off-street town centre charges.
- 3 The proposals revoke the £35 Sevenoaks Town car park off-street resident permit. Moving a very small number of "historic" permit holders to the new £300 annual resident season ticket.
- 4 The scope of these proposals relate to a minor proportion of charged on and off-street parking spaces that the Council provided across the district.
- 5 Revenue income helps to meet the increased cost of operating public car parks following the recent Government valuation review of car parks and the subsequent increases in Business Rates for car parks.
- 6 Following the review, charges in a majority of on and off-street parking places both in Sevenoaks town and across Sevenoaks District remain frozen for the 2020/21 period.
- 7 Revised parking management proposals were considered by Cabinet on 7 November 2019, which resolved that the revised 2020/21 proposals be agreed for public consultation.
- 8 Signs erected in car parks, on street and on the Council's website promoted the public consultation that took place over November and December 2019. Over this period, the public were encouraged to contact the Council in writing, by email or by completing an online questionnaire.

9 Appendix C provides a table summary of consultation responses.

Consultation

10 A majority of respondents objected to the proposals.

11 Objections fell under 4 main themes:

- Charges were too expensive
- Increased charges would be detrimental to the town and the local economy
- Visitors and shoppers would be deterred from visiting the town
- Parking was cheaper or free elsewhere

Blighs car park

12 Most respondents who identified themselves as residents or shoppers felt that the proposals made parking too expensive and would be detrimental to the vibrancy and success of the town's local businesses.

13 There are strong parking management reasons for adjusting parking charges in Blighs car park.

14 Blighs car park is busy throughout the day. On most if not all days it becomes overfull at peak times. At times in the day it operates beyond capacity, with vehicles either queuing and circulating waiting for a parking space to become free.

15 Parking congestion deters visitors and it is a cause of increased levels of pollution from idling and queuing vehicles.

16 The revised charges in Blighs encourage the use of keenly priced more outlying town centre car parks, particularly for longer parking stays. Increasing parking "capacity" and footfall in the town centre. Easing traffic congestion and reducing pollution from idling and circulating vehicles.

17 Evening parking charges support the evening economy through provision of well-lit, secure, managed parking facilities.

18 An added convenience will be the ability to pay for the first half hour parking with a single coin.

Sevenoaks Town car park

19 Feedback on the proposed charges came in the main from local workers and businesses. A majority of those who objected said that the proposed increases were excessive and detrimental to town workers and businesses.

20 A total of 57 survey responses represents around 12% of the daily user capacity of the car park. A clear majority of customers did not participate

in the survey, possibly reflecting a wider degree of acceptance of the proposals.

- 21 The development of this new “state of the art” car park represents a major development and investment on the part of the Council, addressing the chronic shortage of long-stay parking in Sevenoaks town.
- 22 It is appropriate that users benefitting directly from the car park help to fund its development through these moderate charge increases. The burden of which would otherwise fall wholly on general taxpayers.
- 23 In terms of history, the daily charge at this car park has changed little since 2011, when a day’s parking cost £4. The current fee of £4.60 has remained unchanged since 2015.

St Botolphs and Morewood Close areas on-street parking charges

- 24 On-street parking in this area currently serves, in the main, commuters using Sevenoaks Station. The £5.50 daily fee has remained unchanged since 2014. In comparison, there is an all-day parking fee of £8 in the Council’s Bradbourne car park.
- 25 The proposal to increase parking charges here aims to provide greater parity with off-street parking charges around the station and to make parking more accessible for visitors to this area of the town during the day.

Holly Bush Lane and Plymouth Drive on-street parking charges

- 26 On-street parking in this area currently serves, in the main, all-day parkers working in the town. The £3 daily fee has remained unchanged since 2014. In comparison, the current all day parking fee in the new town car park is £4.60 and is due to increase to £5.50 under these proposals.
- 27 The proposal to increase parking charges here aims to provide greater parity with off-street parking charges in the town and to make parking more accessible for visitors to this area of the town during the day.
- 28 The consultation on revised parking management arrangements has taken place concurrent with a wider public consultation seeking the public’s views on on-street parking arrangements across the whole of Sevenoaks Town.
- 29 It is hoped that the outcome of this consultation will identify opportunities to help improve on-street parking provision, in particular long-stay parking for low-paid town centre workers.

Key Implications

Financial

The Council continues to focus on achieving a balanced budget and efficiencies while taking in to account the needs of local economies, our customers and the wider community.

Development of the new Sevenoaks Town Car Park represented a significant and a major financial investment on the part of the council, it is fair to recoup the investment in part through revised car park charges.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

Changes to the charges will require Notices of Variation in respect of the off-street Parking Order governing the management of off-street parking arrangements.

Equality Impacts

There is a low risk that the proposals in this report would have any implications under the Equality Act.

Community Impact and Outcomes

Measured and reasonable parking charges can encourage the use of more sustainable transport options and healthier lifestyles for journeys to school, work, and visits to shops and other amenities in towns and villages.

Human Rights

There are no human rights issues or implications.

Appendices

Appendix A - Levels of charge in neighbouring Authorities

Appendix B - Proposed parking management charges

Appendix C - Analysis of responses

Background papers None

Adrian Rowbotham,

Chief Officer Finance and Trading