

ANNUAL REVIEW OF PARKING MANAGEMENT 2022-2023

Cabinet - 21 April 2022

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer - Finance & Trading

Status: For Decision

Also Considered by: Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee - 19 April 2022

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary: This report updates on the annual review of parking management (fees and charges) for 2022/23. It proposes for consultation changes to the tariffs in on and off-street parking schemes.

This report supports the Key Aim: supporting and developing the local economy, providing value for money, and working towards Sevenoaks District Councils Net Zero ambitions for the district.

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Recommendation to Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee: The proposal for a flexible multi-year approach, to be continued to be employed, to allow the Council, as a local parking provider, to be responsive to economic cycles as well as the needs of its customers and communities. To be considered by the Committee, and its views be submitted for consideration by Cabinet, prior to consultation.

Recommendation to Cabinet: That the car park management proposal along with any proposals submitted by the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee be considered and approved prior to consultation.

Introduction

- 1 This report considers a proposal for the setting of parking charges in the Council's off-street car parks and the fees for on-street parking for the financial year 2022/23.
- 2 This proposal is expected to meet the increased income assumptions agreed by Council as part of the 10-year budget on 22 February 2022.

Covid-19 Pandemic

- 3 In March 2020, at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council was the first in Kent to remove all parking charges across the District Council's Car Parks, encouraging the use of those local businesses, which remained open, and allowing Sevenoaks District Council staff to support the community with food deliveries and welfare visits. Sevenoaks District Council was one of the last Councils in Kent to reinstate Car Park charges across its car parks, supporting residents and the local economy to recover, with charging resuming in all car parks by 23 July 2020.
- 4 The cost of these supportive measures amounted to a reduction in income to the council of £946,000.
- 5 When conducting the Annual Review of Parking Management for 2021/22, the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee recommended a freeze on all parking charges, both on and off-street, across the District. This approach was endorsed by Cabinet and adopted by the Council.
- 6 People are now returning to our town centres and car park usage is in line with the expectations set out in the 2021/22 Budget.

Environment

- 7 The Council has committed to Net Zero 2030 and is dedicated to helping the community achieve this too. At its January meeting, the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee received a progress report on its work on Net Zero 2030 and considered the Council's Air Quality Action Plan. For consideration alongside this item are reports on the rollout of Electric Vehicle Charging Points and the Council's Movement Strategy.
- 8 Other recent work has included: free parking provided for two weekends leading up to Christmas in Sevenoaks town and Westerham in off- street car parks on Saturdays and Sundays, 11 & 12 and 18 & 19 December 2021. The £17,000 cost in terms of loss of income for free Christmas parking was met by the Council.
- 9 The contribution private cars make to carbon emissions and air quality in the district is recognised and the Council is keen to promote the use of more environmentally considerate alternatives where possible.

Investment

- 10 In addition to operational costs such as business rates, insurance, general maintenance, utilities, enforcement and security, it is important to re-invest in the Council's car parks to ensure these assets remain welcoming, safe and fit for purpose. Improvements have included new safety barriers, increasing capacity, resurfacing, renewing drainage and upgrading lighting.

- 11 The Council has complemented these works by investing in service improvements, for example improved enforcement following customer feedback, better cash collection services and improvements to cashless parking services.
- 12 And it is working on delivering electric vehicle charging hubs for residents without access to electric charging points, pay on exit, utilising barrierless automated number plate reader (ANPR) technology, improving on-street safety outside schools and improvements across its car parks including car park resurfacing, landscaping etc.

Financial

- 13 Within the 2021/22 budget, there was a Service Change Impact Assessment (SCIA) for car park income inflation of £118,000 that was deferred by Members for one year. This will now need to be achieved in 2022/23.
- 14 For the financial year 2022/23, the car park income inflation figure will be a further £89,639.
- 15 This gives a total pressure of £207,639, which will need to be generated within the financial year 2022/23.
- 16 The Council operates a number of public car parks and on-street pay and display facilities in towns and villages across the District. It is important to regulate these finite resources in order to balance the needs of parking users, including commuters, local businesses, residents, shoppers and other visitors including tourists.

Proposal

- 17 The following proposals have been developed to support the local economy, further advance the District Council's move to Net Zero 2030 and support the local economy, they embrace the most up-to-date thinking on parking management.
- 18 The traditional approach to parking sees price used as a means of maintaining a high turnover of short stay spaces, maximising the usage of each bay. However, shopping habits have evolved following the pandemic and high streets continue to move towards focussing increasingly on experiences in favour of solely traditional retail. These shifts see people seeking long stay parking, who, in turn, can then spend more time taking advantage of all our towns have to offer. Furthermore, it is recognised the encouragement of lots of short visits would promote vehicle movements, thus risking having an adverse impact on air quality. We are therefore eager to keep abreast of these changes and support our town centres by rebalancing parking charges in favour of longer stays, whilst also ensuring there remains something for everyone.

- 19 It is important the services and our assets continue to receive investment as described earlier in the report. It is also important that the burden of changes to parking charges should not fall on one or two car parks.

Sevenoaks Car Parks

- 20 The proposals in this report will see over 48% of car park charges either frozen or removed, meaning that over 1000 spaces will not see any increase in prices. For those car parks where rises are proposed, most have previously been frozen for between six and eight years. Parking will remain free in all council car parks on Sundays, except for Bligh's and there will continue to be over 100 free town centre spaces in Sevenoaks Town centre available on Saturdays.

Blighs Car Park

- 21 Parking charges frozen and no changes proposed to the management of parking in this car park.

Buckhurst 1, South Park and Suffolk Way

- 22 Having been frozen since 2016, it is proposed by Members that the charges for up to one, two, three, and four hours be £2, £3, £4, and £5 respectively, with season tickets revised accordingly. The additional £1 levy to be used in part to support the District Council's Net Zero ambitions.

Sevenoaks Town

- 23 Parking charges frozen and no changes proposed to the management of parking in this car park.

Council Offices

- 24 To remain free with no changes proposed to the management of parking in this car park.

St Johns and St James

- 25 Having been frozen since 2014, it is proposed the charges for up to thirty minutes, one hour, two hours, four hours, and all day be £0.50, £1, £2, £3, and £5 respectively, with season tickets revised accordingly.

Bradbourne

- 26 In response to customer feedback, it is proposed a weekly and monthly cashless season ticket be introduced, the cost to be based on the existing charging structure, which would remain, unchanged. Officers will also

investigate options for the introduction of a product tailored towards the needs of rail travellers who use the new Flexi Season Ticket.

Other Car Parks

- 27 In addition to those car parks listed below, Members may wish to know that Swanley 'Car Park A' (Station Approach, BR8 8JD) is currently leased by the Council to Network Rail who, in conjunction with SE Trains Limited, have APCOA Parking operate it. The management of the car park is not currently in the Council's gift. However, the lease expires this year following which parking provision at the site will be considered by officers in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Cleaner & Greener. For reference, the Monday to Friday daily rate is £7.10. A full schedule of charges may be found at <https://www.apcoa.co.uk/parking-in/swanley/swanley-station-car-park-a/>

Bevan Place, Park Road and Station Road (Swanley)

- 28 Having been frozen since 2015, it is proposed the charges for up to thirty minutes, one hour, two hours, four hours, and (in the case of Station Road) all day be £0.50, £1, £2, £4, and £5 respectively, with season tickets revised accordingly.

Darent, Quebec Avenue and Vicarage Hill (Westerham)

- 29 For Darent, it is proposed the charges for up to 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours, over 4 hours and all day be £0.50, £1, £1.50, £2 and £4 respectively.
- 30 Continued improvements to this car park are a priority for the Council, the works will include the potential expansion of the car parking that is usable year round and also projects to make the car park safe, secure and welcoming to visitors
- 31 The proposal for the annual season ticket, quarterly season, resident first vehicle and resident additional vehicle be £60, £17.50 and £50 respectively with no change for the additional vehicle.
- 32 For Quebec it is proposed the charges for up to 30 minutes, 1 hour, 2 hours, 4 hours, over 4 hours and all day be £0.50, £1, £2, £3 and £5 respectively.
- 33 The proposal for resident first vehicle and resident additional vehicle be £50 and £100 respectively.
- 34 For Vicarage Hill the proposal is for up to 30 minutes, 1 hour, and 2 hours be £0.50, £1 and £2 respectively.
- 35 For resident first vehicle and resident additional vehicle the charges will be £50 and £100 respectively.

On street

Sevenoaks

- 36 Having been frozen since 2014 for the High Street, London Road and South Park the proposal for up to 30 minutes, 1 hour and 2 hours be £1, £1.50 and £3 respectively, with Sundays remaining free.
- 37 Sevenoaks Town, Holly Bush Lane and Plymouth Drive the proposal for up to 30 minutes, 1 hour, 2 hours and over 2 hours all day be £1, £1.50, £2.50 and no change to the £5 all day charge respectively.
- 38 Sevenoaks Station - Morewood Close West the proposal for up to 30 minutes, 1 hour, 2 hours and up to 4 hours be £0.50, £1, £2 and £4 respectively.
- 39 Sevenoaks Station - St Botolphs, Ashley Close, Morewood Close East, and Ashley Road the proposal for up to 30 minutes, 1 hour, 2 hours, up to 4 hours and over 4 hours and all day be £1, £2, £3, £5 and £8 respectively.

Swanley

- 40 Having been frozen since 2014 for Swanley Station - Azalea Road, and Goldsel Road the proposal for up to 30 minutes, 1 hour, 2 hours, up to 4 hours and over 4 hours and all day be £0.50, £1, £2, £3 and £5 respectively.
- 41 St Mary's Road, Swanley the proposal for up to 1 hour, 2 hours and 3 hours be £1, £1.50 and £2.50 respectively.

Westerham

- 42 Having been frozen since 2014, it is proposed the charges for up to thirty minutes, up to one hour, up to two hours, and (where available) up to three hours be £0.50, £1, £2, and £3 respectively, with the tariffs simplified by the removal of the fifteen minute charge.

Knockholt

- 43 Having been frozen since 2014, it is proposed the charges for up to four hours and all day be £3 and £4 respectively.

Resident Permits, Visitor Vouchers and Non-Resident Permits

- 44 Following changes made to the management of spaces in residential areas, and in response to residents' concerns, increased enforcement is now in place, the changes will support the continuation of this activity.
- 45 Having been frozen since 2012, it is proposed the first, second, third, and fourth resident permits be £50, £100, £175, and £325 respectively, with books of five visitor tickets £10.
- 46 The council has been approached by residents in Sevenoaks town centre Zone A to explore the possibility of Community EV Charging Hubs which the increase in permit charging will help support.

- 47 Having been frozen since 2012, it is proposed the non-resident permits for town, station east, and station west be £350, £650, and £780 respectively, with season tickets revised accordingly.

Conclusion

- 48 Proposals to review the off-street car parking charges and on-street parking fees are detailed within this report.

Key Implications

Financial

The Council's ten-year budget includes inflationary assumptions, which must be met, and Members remain committed to an exciting programme of investment in parking provision, which is a discretionary service.

The measures proposed by Members in this report are estimated to satisfy these requirements.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

All parking fees and charges are subject to statutory public consultation and a notice of variation in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the Parking Places (Variation of Charges) Act 2017.

Risks to this proposal are becoming uncompetitive and therefore reducing usage and income and vehicle displacement to other un-restricted locations.

Equality Assessment

There is a low risk that the proposals in this report would have any implications under the Equality Act 2010.

Sevenoaks District Council supports the Blue Badge Scheme allowing free parking in its off-street car parks and in on-street pay and display bays.

Net Zero Implications

Members are reminded of the Council's stated ambition to be Net Zero with regards to carbon emissions by 2030. The decisions recommended in this paper directly impact on this ambition. The impact has been reviewed and there could be a slight decrease on carbon emissions produced in the district as a result of this decision.

Increasing parking fees and charges could encourage car park users to find alternative travel and transport options, such as walking and cycling.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

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