

# Chichester District Council

THE CABINET

3 November 2020

## Review of Parking Charges

### 1. Contacts

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### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. **Cabinet approves the proposal as set out in 5.1 of this report to increase car parking charges, which subject to consultation responses, be implemented from 1 April 2021 for a one year period.**
- 2.2. **Cabinet approves some further minor amendments to the Parking Order to provide further clarification on details relating to the use of the Council's car parks as set out in 3.9 of this report.**
- 2.3. **That the Director of Growth and Place be authorised to give appropriate notice of any revised charges or changes as set out within this report pursuant to the Off-street Parking Places (Consolidation) Order 2019 and the Road Traffic Act 1984.**

### 3. Background

- 3.1. In accordance with the Review of Fees and Charges Policy, Cabinet will recall that parking charges were increased from 1 April 2020 in line with inflation at the time and to introduce some flat rate fees into two of the city centre car parks to assist with turnover of vehicles and to reduce congestion.
- 3.2. Car park users expect charges to be reasonable and proportionate. The Council generates income from car parking to cover its costs and to allow for future investment. Car parks occupy valuable sites and charges need to reflect this. If they are not serving their purpose effectively, or their usage could be consolidated, there may be another economically beneficial use to which a site could be put.
- 3.3. West Sussex County Council set the charges for on-street parking. Any amendments to off-street charges would be closely monitored for deflection onto the highway.

3.4 There are a number of points to be borne in mind when considering parking charges:

- Parking charges provide essential income to support other key services provided by the Council.
- Users should cover the cost of parking provision – i.e. each car park should be able to cover its own costs. There are a number of car parks at present which are not covering their own costs and therefore are being subsidised by income from other car parks in the district.
- Parking charges assist with reducing congestion and on-street parking, encouraging alternative forms of travel and to enable adequate turnover of spaces. The Council's policy is to increase fees and charges in line with inflation, or to reflect local circumstances where appropriate.
- National evidence suggests it is an area's broader retail, commercial, leisure and / or tourism offer that is the primary factor affecting its vibrancy, rather than solely parking charges.
- Blue Badge holders are able to currently park within CDC car parks free of charge.
- Spaces are not turning over adequately in the currently free of charge car parks and there is evidence of long-term parking with action being taken against owners of abandoned vehicles where possible.
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that a 'free of charge' period of parking can encourage customers to rush back to their vehicle before the end of the free period of parking has finished rather than encouraging visitors to stay for longer.

3.5 In response to the Covid 19 pandemic and to support essential workers at the time, the council made the decision to suspend all parking charges at the start of lockdown (23<sup>rd</sup> March) across all council-owned car parks. Charges were subsequently resumed on 8<sup>th</sup> June, following a decision at Cabinet. Cabinet agreed that a number of incentives should be introduced at that time:

- Free parking on Saturdays and Sundays at the Avenue de Chartres car park for three months;
- One hour free parking when selecting two hours when using the MiPermit app for three months
- Free parking for NHS / social health care staff at Northgate car park until April 2021.

It is worth noting that a number of the district's car parks already had in place a free of charge parking period.

3.6 The incentives were closely monitored and were well used. Over 8,000 customers benefitted from the free parking at weekends at the Avenue de Chartres, with a resultant cost estimated to be £17,000. The actual cost of having provided this scheme is likely to be higher given that a number of

customers will have opted to use the Avenue de Chartres car park on the weekends rather than other more expensive car parks in the city. In addition to this over 15,000 customers benefitted from the provision of one hour of free parking when selecting two using MiPermit to pay, with a resultant estimated cost to the authority of £15,000. This initiative was considered to assist with social distancing and also to encourage customers to sign up to the MiPermit app - an increase in the proportion of customers using the MiPermit app has been seen – from a transaction proportion of 6% in February 2020 to a proportion of just under 10% at the end of August. The MiPermit app enables customers to top up their stay remotely which can encourage visitors to stay longer, ultimately benefitting businesses. The Council also decided to provide free parking for NHS / social care staff at Northgate car park until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. Just over 600 season tickets have been issued, however, the number of vehicles using the car park with one of the season tickets averages around 37 per day which equates to an estimated cost to the authority by November in the region of £9,000.

- 3.7 Covid 19 has impacted significantly on CDC's parking income and it is expected that this will continue throughout the year as a result of the cancellation of key events and activities within the district; the reduction in visitors; the increase in the number of workers who continue to work from home along with residents who are choosing to shop online instead of using the city and towns.
- 3.8 The authority has, for a number of years, provide a free of charge Christmas Park and Ride facility each year in the run up to Christmas. There is a cost to the provision of the service along with the loss of income as a result. This year , due to Covid – 19 it is not felt appropriate to provide a Park and Ride service as this does not assist with enabling social distancing and the car parks are considered to be able to accommodate the level of parking which is anticipated this year prior to Christmas. Instead, the authority will this year be providing free parking in the Avenue de Chartres car park each weekend throughout December, alongside an incentive when using the MiPermit app during December of receiving a free hour of parking when choosing two hours within any car park in the district (with the exception of Westgate and Avenue de Chartres). These incentives will be closely monitored and the costs of these are estimated to be covered by the normal costs for providing the annual Christmas Park and ride.
- 3.9 CDC's Off-Street Parking Order is the legal basis for Off-Street parking provision, spaces, charges, enforcement etc. Whilst there has been an agreed Parking Order in place for some time, it is important that it is reviewed to ensure that it is consistent with the proposed use of the car parks and reflects all specific requirements relating to the car parks. The Parking Order is referred to when Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) are issued and is considered as part of the review of any appeals of PCN's by the independent Traffic Penalty Tribunal. Potential amendments to the Parking Order are considered throughout the year to ensure that clarity is provided and that the authority is able to enforce appropriately. Amendments under consideration for the revised Parking Order are to clarify the position relating to refunded parking charges; to reflect amendments concerning payment methods accepted in car parks and to clarify designation of the type and nature of car parks.

#### **4. Outcomes to be Achieved**

- 4.1. To ensure Chichester District parking charges remain competitive with neighbouring centres leaving our business centres in a strong position and do not cause unacceptable parking deflection into residential areas.
- 4.2. The proposed charges assist with delivering the objectives of both assisting with capacity issues in the higher demand car parks and helping to cover administration and maintenance costs of each car park.
- 4.3. To increase income in line with the Council's financial strategy.

#### **5. Proposal**

- 5.1. It is proposed that the following amendments to parking charges are undertaken from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 for one year – with further details outlined in Appendix 1:
  - Increase existing Pay and Display tariffs by the current Bank of England target rate of inflation in the council's five year financial model for 2021/2022 (2%) with some variations due to roundings and demand.
  - Increase season tickets as per Appendix 1 and introduce part-time season tickets on a trial basis for X roving customers.
- 5.2. The charges proposed are considered modest and competitive when compared with other neighbouring authorities. Details of charges in other similar centres are included in Appendix 2 and 3.

#### **6. Alternatives Considered**

- 6.1. A series of options were considered by the Chichester District Parking Forum and further consideration of appropriate options has been given since this time. These include third party and officer recommendations which are based on parking policy and monitoring the use of the car parks. Alternatives include the following:
  - Remove the free of charge parking period in all rural car parks
  - Introduce a maximum stay and a flat rate of parking charges into the currently free of charge Sylvia Beaufoy car park in Petworth
  - The expansion of Evening Charges
  - Remove the existing flat rate tariff for Sundays in Long Stay car parks in the city and replace with the Monday to Saturday long stay tariffs.

These alternatives may have an increased impact on the high street, leisure and hospitality sector at this current time with the businesses being affected by the

current pandemic. The authority is also able to achieve compliance with the fees and charges policy through the increase in line with inflation this year.

- 6.2 Do nothing –this would not assist with covering the costs of the provision of the car parks service, or assist with car park usage or turnover.

## 7. Resource and Legal Implications

- 7.1. To implement changes to charges and car parks there will be minor costs associated with the provision of new signs and necessary adjustments to the machine tariffs as well as changes to back office software; these costs are contained within the service’s revenue budget.
- 7.2. The Parking Order will require amendment once the charges and amendments are agreed and will be advertised for consultation.
- 7.3. The estimated income levels anticipated through the proposed increases is shown in Appendix 1.

## 8. Consultation

- 8.1. The proposed changes to parking charges were discussed by the Parking Forum meeting of 3 September 2020 and their feedback is included in Appendix 1. The forums have assisted with the formulation of the final proposals in this report.
- 8.2. Amendment to the Parking Order will include a further period of public consultation.

## 9. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 9.1. Any increase in charges could cause people to park within neighbouring residential areas and reduce the economic effectiveness of the localities they serve. The modest nature of the increases and other mitigation proposed is designed to minimise this risk.

## 10. Other Implications

	Yes	No
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>		X
<b>Climate Change and Biodiversity</b> Congestion due to drivers queuing to locate a parking space can have an impact on air quality. When parking charges are set at the correct level this can assist with encouraging alternative forms of transport or parking is less congested areas.	X	
<b>Human Rights and Equality Impact</b>		X
<b>Safeguarding and Early Help</b>		X

<b>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)</b>		X
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>		X
<b>Other</b>		

## **11. Appendices**

11.1 Proposed Chichester District Parking Charges 2021

11.2 Winchester parking charges - city

11.3 Winchester parking charges - rural

## **12. Background Papers**

None