

Agenda Item No: 8
Report To: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 30th January 2020
Report Title: Parking Charges Review
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Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager
Portfolio Holder: Vacant
Portfolio Holder for: Community Safety and Wellbeing



Summary: This report addresses car parking charges within council owned/operated car parks. Specific rates are set out within the report for individual car parks. It is to be noted that charges are reviewed on a three-yearly basis, the last increasing having taken place in 2017. The report describes the council's on-going programme of investment in our public car parks, for example, the increase in parking provision and the introduction of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) technology. The report seeks authorisation for the Head of Community Safety, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing, to modify charges as necessary, outside of the usual three-year review period, for example, to promote car park usage, offer discount schemes, and/or to achieve wider corporate economic, community and environmental objectives.

Key Decision: YES

Significantly Affected Wards: All

Recommendations: **The Cabinet is recommended to:-**

- i. Agree an increase in on-street and off-street parking charges, from 1st April 2020, across the borough by approximately 10% on current tariffs (e.g. £1.10 to £1.20, £2.20 to £2.40 etc.) and in accordance with the specific rates detailed within the report.**
- ii. Agree an increase in season ticket parking charges, from 1st April 2020, across the borough by approximately 10% on current tariffs and in accordance with the specific rates detailed within the report.**
- iii. Agree an increase in resident parking charges,**

from 1st April 2020, across the borough by £5 a year and in accordance with the specific rates detailed within the report.

- iv. **Authorise the Head of Community Safety, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing and Head of Finance, to modify charges as necessary outside of the usual three-year review period, for example, to promote car park usage, offer discount, and/or to achieve wider corporate economic, community and environmental objectives. This delegation will not permit variation to the base tariffs which will continue to be reviewed every three years and presented to cabinet for approval.**

Policy Overview: The review of parking charges is required to ensure an effective, efficient and sustainably service delivery including necessary enforcement activity. The proposed increases take into account rising costs experienced by the service.

Financial Implications: The additional income from the implementation of increased parking charges, based on current usage, will be approximately £172,000 per annum for on and off-street parking, approximately £20,000 per annum for season tickets and £3,500 from resident permits.

There are costs associated with changing the terminal parking software as a consequence of the tariff changes of approximately £200 per terminal. Based on current numbers this equals 54 terminals and therefore a total 'one off ' cost of £10,800.

Legal Implications: Legal implications relevant to car park leases and amendments to Traffic Regulation Orders are addressed within the body of the report.

Equalities Impact Assessment: Not required - The increase in charges are being applied across the borough and have an equitable impact, they are not discriminatory to any individual protected group. The policy of providing free parking¹ for blue badge holders remains unchanged.

Other Material Implications: None

Exempt from **NO**

¹ Three-hours limit for on-street parking.

Publication:

**Background
Papers:**

None

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Parking Charges Review

Introduction and Background

1. This report addresses car parking charges within the Borough with specific proposals set out concerning the increase in charges.
2. The car parking charges are reviewed every three years with the last review taking place in 2016 and those changes came into effect in April 2017.
3. The council has an important role to play in ensuring there is suitable and sufficient parking available within its town centres. While price increases are never popular, significant investment is taking place in our parking services not only in terms of increasing the number of spaces available for car parking but also terms of utilising new technology to improve our customers parking experience.

Current Position

4. There is a need to review the parking tariff charges in line with the policy that agreed by cabinet in 2016 (reference CA 090616 minutes number 25). By reviewing charges we ensure that the council's arrangements are fit for purpose, reflect costs associated with operating the service, and are supportive of wider corporate objectives.

Proposals

Recommendation (i) to increase parking charges across the borough by approximately 10% on each tariff

5. Specific recommendations for car parks are as follows:

Current tariffs in short stay car parks to be increased as follows:

Current	Proposed
£ 1.10 up to 1 hour	£ 1.20 up to 1 hour
£ 2.20 up to 2 hours	£ 2.40 up to 2 hours
£ 3.30 up to 3 hours	£ 3.60 up to 3 hours
£ 4.40 up to 4 hours	£ 4.80 up to 4 hours
£11.00 over 4 hours	£12.00 over 4 hours

6. The current tariffs for the Civic Centre/Stour Centre car park are as above with the exception of the first 2 hours which is currently set at £1.50 for visitors to the customer contact centre.
7. Since this tariff was introduced, customers who have booked appointments with the council are offered a visitor parking permit free of charge. In addition,

visitors can use the 15 minute bays, with no charge. This is useful for those dropping off documents or for quick queries with the contact centre. In light of these changes, it is proposed that this reduced tariff is removed and that all applicable areas of the Civic Centre / Stour Centre are covered by the same charges as indicated above. Those staying for up to an hour will actually be able to park more cheaply.

8. Current tariffs in long stay car parks are as above with the only exception as follows:

Current	Proposed
£5.00 over 4 hours	£5.50 over 4 hours

9. On-street charges to be increased in line with above tariffs i.e. 10p per hour or an overall approximate of 10%.
10. The increase in income for on-street parking based on current usage will be approximately £12,000 per annum. The increase in income from car parks (off-street) based on current usage will be approximately £160,000 per annum.
11. These increases keep our car parks cheaper than the tariffs of the NCP and station car parks and are comparable with neighbouring authorities.
12. The generated income will be used to improve transport provision in the area so that road users benefit, such as the introduction of ANPR in identified car parks. The ANPR solution allows customers to leave their vehicles for as long as they wish, paying for time consumed on exit. It also gives the council greater ability to move to easier and on line payment methods, as well as advanced booking.

Recommendation (ii) to increase season ticket parking charges across the borough by approximately 10% on each tariff

13. It is recommended that the cost of a season ticket be increased by 10%. The authority provides a variety of season tickets dependent on locations and/or duration. The most expensive is a 12-month town centre car parks (Ashford or Tenterden) season ticket at £760. This would be increased to £836.
14. The increase in income for season tickets based on current usage will be approximately £20,000. This ensures that we remain below the season ticket prices for the NCP and station car parks.
15. The generated income will be used to support the implementation of virtual permitting for season ticket holders which will be a significant advantage for our customer and reduce costs associated with the printing and distribution of the paper permits.

Recommendation (iii) to increase resident parking charges across the borough by £5 a year

16. It is recommended that resident permits be increased by £5 a year. The current breakdown of permits are as follows, along with the proposed increase:

Zone	Number of permits	Current annual cost £	Proposed annual cost £
Resident Permit Zone A	1	120	125
Resident Permit Zone B	86	50	55
Resident Permit Zones D,E,F,G	740	30	35

17. The increase in income for resident permits based on current usage will be approximately £3,500.
18. The generated income will again be used for the virtual permitting project.

Recommendation (iv) to enable amendment to charges between the three year period

19. It is necessary from time to time to vary charges (e.g. suspend or reduce charges) outside the usual three-year review period, for example, to promote car park usage, offer discount, and/or to achieve wider corporate economic, community and environmental objectives. ANPR technology we also will enable us to operate dynamic pricing arrangements within our car parks but clearly we could not report to cabinet every time we wanted to vary a charge. It is suggested therefore that such changes be permitted but limit the delegation in such a way as to prevent variations to the base tariffs other than via the three yearly review as and presented to cabinet for approval.
20. The delegation is to the Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and Head of Finance.

Implications and Risk Assessment

21. The main risk of increasing charges is that there is a consequential decrease in car park usage. Car park charges have not however been increased for three years and the increase is modest. They are also necessary to cover the rising costs of operating our car parks and necessary to enable introduce systems such and ANPR and virtual permitting which will be welcomed by our customers.
22. There are no legal risks associated with increasing the charges. The council does not owns all if its car parks, however, our leases do not prevent tariff revision.
23. There are no staffing implications associated with the changes proposed.

Equalities Impact Assessment

24. The increase in charges are being applied across the borough and have an equitable impact, they are not discriminative to any individual or protected group.

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

25. Awareness of the changes will be communicated by a variety of means to our residents, workers and visitors to the borough.
26. There are refund arrangements in place for Stour Centre and Tenterden Leisure Centre users. Both trusts have been advised of the proposed increases.
27. It is stressed that the off-street car parking proposals only relate to council run car parks. The Council does not set the charges in car parks run by other operators or private car parks.

Other Options Considered

28. The options that have been considered are detailed in the report. There is an option to maintain the current charging tariffs. This does not, however, enable the council to cover the increase in costs associated with its parking service or facilitate improvements in both the quantity and quality of our parking offer.

Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

29. The recommendation to review the charges is in accordance with the policy agreed in 2016. The proposed increases are in line with the increased costs of maintaining our car parks and providing suitable on-street provision. The increase charges will support the council's on-going desire to expand and modernise its parking offer for customers.

Next Steps in Process

30. It is anticipated that the recommendations would be implemented in accordance with the following timescale:
 - The proposed changes will require amendment to Traffic Regulation Orders and this will take place in accordance with statutory procedures.
 - Increase tariffs on parking charges as detailed within the report with effect from 1st April 2020.

31. By the time of the next parking charges review the service will have reviewed several other parking issues including:
 - Potential diesel surcharges in support of the 2030 carbon neutrality targets
 - Introducing electric vehicle discounts in car parks initially
 - Modifying payment options to encourage cashless transactions
 - Reviewing season ticket holders and incentives
32. Any significant changes would be the subject of further reports to cabinet.

Conclusion

33. The Cabinet are requested to support the recommendation to increase parking charges and the proposed delegation.

Contact and Email

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