

CAR PARKING FEES AND CHARGES 2020/21

Head of Service/Contact: Ian Dyer, Head of Operational Services
Urgent Decision?(yes/no) No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:
Annexes/Appendices (attached): Annex 1 – Car Park Fees 2020/21
Annex 2 – Car Park Permit Fees 2020/21
Annex 3 – West Hill Equality and Impact Assessment

Other available papers (not attached):

Report summary

This report seeks the agreement of the Committee for off street parking fees and charges during 2020/21 as proposed by the Car Park Working Group. It also proposes changes to the operational hours of Hook Road car park and some alterations to the current charging schedules within our car parks.

Recommendation (s)

Members to advise whether they accept:

- (1) the changes to car park fees identified by the Car Park Working Group in Annex 1**
- (2) the changes to car park permit fees identified by the Car Park Working Group in Annex 2**

That the Committee agrees in principle:

- (3) a) To Hook Road car park being opened on a Sunday from 8:30am to 5:30pm.**
b) That the period applicable for a discount fee for users of the Rainbow Leisure Centre who park in Hook Road Car Park is reduced from a stay of up to 3 hours to a stay of up to 2 hours.

- (4)
 - a) To remove the maximum stay tariff in the car parks at the Ashley Centre, Town Hall and Hope Lodge available from 1pm and 3pm.
 - b) To remove the maximum stay tariff in the car parks at Hook Road, Depot Road and Upper High Street available from 3pm.
 - c) To introduce a pre-payable evening rate in the Ashley Centre which will be available from 6pm – 11:59pm, so long as the user leaves by midnight.
- (5)
 - a) To the standard day time charges to apply in Bourne Hall car park for the period between 7am and 9am Monday to Saturday.
 - b) To the removal of the up to 30 minutes tariff in Dorset House and Ewell High Street car parks.
 - c) To the introduction of a weekly ticket in Dorset House and Ewell High Street car parks.
 - d) To the introduction of charging in Bourne Hall, Dorset House and Ewell High Street on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- (6)
 - a) To the extension of the daily rate tariff in West Hill car park to cover from 5am to 8am.
 - b) To the introduction of an evening tariff in West Hill car park.
 - c) To the introduction of charging in West Hill car park on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
 - d) That blue badge parking in West Hill car park is charged as per the rules in other Epsom town centre pay and display car parks.
- (7) To the introduction of an Ashley Centre parker card for those who work in Epsom town centre.
- (8) Authorises the Head of Legal to give such notice(s) and/or make such order as is considered necessary in order to give effect to the above recommendations. That any representations to these proposals are brought back to Environment & Safe Communities Committee in January 2020.

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 In considering parking fees and charges in this report the Committee will need to consider and balance the effective management of parking spaces and the economic impact on the Borough.

Environment and Safe Communities Committee 22 Oct 2019

2 Background

Fees and Charges

- 2.1 Following progressive cuts in Government funding, additional service and financial pressures arising from new legislation and service demands and inflationary pressures the Council needs to become more financially self-reliant. The Council also needs to ensure that it can meet the growing costs associated with maintaining and improving its car parks, some of which continue to be provided for free.
- 2.2 Approximately 5,000 drivers make use of the Council's car parks every day to enable them to go about their daily lives. This includes accessing local shops, leisure and community facilities, attending medical appointments, or commuting to work.
- 2.3 In October 2018 the Environment Committee decided that car park tariffs (which excludes permits) in Epsom & Ewell Borough Council car parks would not increase in 2019/20. The Committee decided that car park permit prices were increased by an increment of approximately 3%.
- 2.4 This decision left a shortfall of £104,000 against the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 2.5 As evidenced in Annex 1 a number of car park tariffs will not have increased for three or four years in April 2020.
- 2.6 In 2020/21 the expectation is that this shortfall, equivalent to a 3% increase in car park tariffs, would be met along with an additional increase in yield of a further 3% from car park revenue, totalling £220,000.
- 2.7 Using car park charges to promote greater use of public transport, walking and cycling is a legitimate goal for the Council and therefore may feature as an important component of the Council's future Climate Change Action Plan. This priority will need to sit alongside other Council priorities such as maintaining the viability of the borough's shopping areas and high streets and promoting the use of zero emission or lower polluting vehicles.
- 2.8 As part of the terms of reference of the Car Park Working Group fees and charges have been discussed by the Group for 2020/21. The proposed amendments can be found in annex 1 and annex 2.

Environment and Safe Communities Committee 22 Oct 2019

- 2.9 In recent years a significant investment has been made to improve Borough Council car parks. This includes the resurfacing of Level 4 of the Ashley Centre Car Park as well as the health and safety improvements to the stairwells and upper levels of the car park, the expansion of Hope Lodge car park and subsequent landscaping works, the resurfacing and relining of Depot Road car park and the introduction of new pay machines with card payment facilities across most of the Borough. Alongside these investments the Council has successfully introduced RingGo to provide additional payment options for car park users.
- 2.10 The cost to replace a lost token has increased to almost £6 per token.
- 2.11 The Car Park Working Group recognise the need to simplify the tariff boards and fees and have recommended fees in 'round numbers' often to the nearest pound.
- 2.12 With the majority of current charges in the Ashley Centre car park requiring 20 pence pieces in change it is necessary for an operator within the car park to manually refill the 20p change store in some machines on an almost daily basis (the refill can take approximately 10 minutes during which time the machine is out of operation). This is also an occasional requirement in Hook Road car park.
- 2.13 In the Town Hall and Hope Lodge car park in 2018/19 0.5% of car park users stayed in the car park for between 5 and 6 hours.

Hook Road Car Park Background

- 2.14 The Car Park Working Group discussed a proposal to open Hook Road car park on a Sunday to provide an additional parking location to those visiting, amongst other places, the Town Centre or the Rainbow Leisure Centre.
- 2.15 In November 2019 a soft play centre is due to open in the Rainbow Leisure Centre which is predicted to see increased numbers visit the Centre on a Sunday. The visitor numbers expected are likely to outweigh the availability of spaces in the Leisure Centre car parks.
- 2.16 In the first two quarters of 2019/20, between the regular shopping hours of 10am – 4pm, there have been more visitors to the Ashley Centre car park on a Sunday than on a Monday to Thursday.
- 2.17 Since the opening of the Rainbow Leisure Centre in 2002 the Council has offered a discounted rate of parking to Leisure Centre users who park within Hook Road car park.
- 2.18 From April 2017 the discounted rate for a Rainbow Leisure Centre user in Hook Road car park increased to a fee of £1 for a stay of up to three hours.

Environment and Safe Communities Committee 22 Oct 2019

- 2.19 In 2018/19 over 14,400 people parked in Hook Road car park using the discounted Rainbow Leisure Centre rate. Over 4,400 of these stayed for between 2 – 3 hours.
- 2.20 The Rainbow Leisure Centre currently charge 30p for a stay of up to 3 hours within its car park (albeit via a method of discounting an upfront payment).

Evening Charges

- 2.21 The Car Park Working Group discussed the evening economy in Epsom with the aim being to attract more people to visit the town. Ways to do so include simplifying the tariff boards, which currently offer several different rates in the evening, and also to provide a pre-payment option within the Ashley Centre Car Park.
- 2.22 In 2014 a maximum stay rate was introduced in the Borough Council car parks at various times of days. Some car parks have maximum stay charges after 1pm, 3pm, 4pm (Monday to Fridays) and 6pm on a Saturday. One effect of this maximum charge is that it can cause a lot of confusion for car park users when looking at the tariff boards.
- 2.23 Recent usage figures show that the maximum stay rates after 1pm and 3pm are not widely used.
- 2.24 Since April 2016 it has not been possible to offer a facility of pre-payment in the Ashley Centre car park, which has caused particular frustration to Epsom Playhouse visitors who are currently required to queue after the show.
- 2.25 The simplification of tariffs would allow for a pre-pay rate to be re-introduced.

Ewell Background

- 2.26 The Car Park Working Group discussed a desire to provide a consistent approach to car parking across the Borough.
- 2.27 Since the introduction of the evening charge in Bourne Hall car park in April 2017 it remains free to park in the car park between 7am and 9am.
- 2.28 In April 2017 an up to 30 minute tariff was introduced in Dorset House and Ewell High Street car parks. With the difference between the up to 30 minute stay and the up to 1 hour stay being only 10p the Working Group propose the removal of the up to 30 minute stay.
- 2.29 The Council has received requests from daily visitors to Dorset House and Ewell High Street car parks for a weekly permit, similar to that which is purchasable from Depot Road or Upper High Street car parks in Epsom.

Environment and Safe Communities Committee 22 Oct 2019

- 2.30 The car parks in Ewell have historically been free to use on Sundays and Bank Holidays. In Epsom car parks bank holiday fees have historically been charged at the daily rate. A flat rate is proposed on Sundays in Epsom for 2020/21.

West Hill Background

- 2.31 The Car Park working group also sought to introduce a consistent parking approach in West Hill car park.
- 2.32 The charging hours at West Hill car park are currently 8am to 6:30pm Monday to Saturday.
- 2.33 This can result in private hire taxi firms amongst others filling spaces outside of these times.
- 2.34 In July 2010 Full Council agreed that blue badge holders would be required to pay to park in named Borough Council car parks but that one additional hour be granted upon expiry of a pay and display ticket.
- 2.35 Whilst the recommendation was that blue badge charges apply in Epsom & Ewell Borough Council car parks the paperwork produced to Full Council from Environment Committee made no reference to the car park at West Hill. Upon implementation of the charging scheme the car park at West Hill was not modified and parking for blue badge holders remained free.
- 2.36 An equality impact assessment is attached in annex 3.

Ashley Centre Parker Cards

- 2.37 The Car Park Working Group discussed a proposal to introduce a Parker Card system in the Ashley Centre car park to help local businesses by providing a convenient alternative place for staff to park.
- 2.38 With the introduction of a number of resident parking zones within the Borough in recent years there is very limited available space for those commuting to Epsom to work to park on street.
- 2.39 The Borough Council do offer competitive all day parking rates for commuters to or from Epsom town centre in the car parks at Hook Road, Depot Road or Upper High Street.
- 2.40 The Hook Road Parker Card offers a convenient parking location and £3.50 all day charge for those commuting from Epsom, and in particular the station, however some employees working within Epsom may be encouraged to choose a more convenient offering within the Ashley Centre car park.

Environment and Safe Communities Committee 22 Oct 2019

- 2.41 The over 6 hours charge in the Ashley Centre car park is designed to deter all day parking within the car park, such as by commuters working outside the Borough.
- 2.42 Although an annual permit is available there is provision to offer a more convenient option to those working within Epsom to pay on a day by day basis.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 Members to advise whether they wish to accept the proposed tariff changes in annex 1.
- 3.2 That the up to 6 hour tariff in the rear Town Hall and Hope Lodge car parks are removed.
- 3.3 That the lost token charges are increased in line with the new all day stay in the car park tariff and the cost to replace each token.
- 3.4 Members to advise whether they wish to accept the proposed permit price changes in annex 2.
- 3.5 That Hook Road car park be opened on a Sunday from 8:30am to 5:30pm.
- 3.6 That Hook Road car park be opened on Bank Holidays (excluding Christmas Day, New Years Day and Easter Sunday) from 8:30am to 5:30pm.
- 3.7 That the discounted period of parking in Hook Road car park for Rainbow Leisure Centre users be reduced from 3 hours to 2 hours.
- 3.8 That Maximum Charge parking from 1pm and 3pm be removed from all Borough Council Car Parks.
- 3.9 That an evening charge be introduced in Depot Road and Upper High Street Car Parks from 4pm Monday to Friday or 6pm on a Saturday.
- 3.10 That an evening charge be introduced in the car parks at Hook Road, Town Hall and Hope Lodge from 4pm Monday to Friday and 6pm Saturday.
- 3.11 That an evening charge be introduced in the Ashley Centre Car Park from 4pm Monday to Friday and 6pm Saturday in conjunction with a pre-pay rate available to those entering the car park after 4pm and leaving prior to midnight.

Environment and Safe Communities Committee 22 Oct 2019

- 3.12 That Bourne Hall car park charges the standard rate of parking on a Monday to Saturday from 7am to 6:30pm.
- 3.13 That the up to 30 minute tariff in Dorset House and Ewell High Street car parks is removed as the fee proposed is now equal to that proposed for a stay of up to 1 hour.
- 3.14 That a weekly permit in Dorset House and Ewell High Street car parks is introduced.
- 3.15 That charging is introduced in Bourne Hall, Dorset House and Ewell High Street car parks on Sundays and Bank Holidays between 7am and 6:30pm.
- 3.16 That the evening charge is introduced in Bourne Hall, Dorset House and Ewell High Street car parks from midnight on Saturday night until 7am on Sunday and from 6:30pm on Sunday until 7am on Monday.
- 3.17 That the evening charge is introduced in Bourne Hall, Dorset House and Ewell High Street car parks until 7am on a Bank Holiday and from 6:30pm.
- 3.18 That the daily charging hours in West Hill car park are extended to include from 5am to 8am.
- 3.19 That an evening charge is introduced in West Hill car park from 6:30pm to 5am.
- 3.20 That a Sunday tariff is introduced in West Hill car park.
- 3.21 That a Bank Holiday tariff is introduced in West Hill car park.
- 3.22 That blue badge holders are required to pay to park in West Hill car park with one hour's grace time being added to the expiry of a pay and display ticket.
- 3.23 That an Ashley Centre Parker Card system is brought into operation requiring users to pay £15 per year for the use of a Parker Card and a maximum daily fee of £8 to park in the Ashley Centre car park.
- 3.24 That a maximum limit is placed on the number of Ashley Centre parker cards in operation based on usage figures of the car park.

4 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 4.1 If the proposals are agreed then there is potential for an increase in car park revenue by approximately £340,000.

Environment and Safe Communities Committee 22 Oct 2019

- 4.2 If Hook Road Car Park were to be opened on a Sunday and Bank Holiday between 8:30am and 5:30pm then it could be opened by civil enforcement officers within current operating hours. If it is recommended to close the car park later than the proposed times then the Security Guard would be required to lock the car park at a cost of approximately £1,000 per year.
- 4.3 Additional staffing of civil enforcement officers would be required on a Sunday if added restrictions in Ewell, West Hill and Hook Road were introduced.
- 4.4 Any additional on-going revenue costs relating to these changes, as detailed in the paragraphs above, will need to be met from the additional income generated.
- 4.5 The extent of changes proposed are likely to require the introduction of several new tariffs boards which may exceed the annual budget set aside for this. Before additional tariff boards and town signage can be progressed, cost estimates and funding should be identified and approved as necessary.
- 4.6 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** Budget targets, as set out in the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy, anticipate additional income from car parking of £220,000 in 2020/21. This represents an increase of 6% for car park fees and 3% for permits. The charges proposed in the attached annexes should achieve this target.
- 4.7 Any income generated in excess of the target would contribute to addressing a forecast shortfall in the current year's income budget. At Quarter 1, the forecast net income shortfall for 2019/20 is £250,000, as detailed in the quarterly budget monitoring report to Members.

5 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 5.1 Off street parking is regulated by Orders made under Part IV of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. There is a statutory process to be followed if an order is to be made or amended.
- 5.2 In summary the process is as follows:
 - 5.2.1 Prior to making an order there is a requirement to consult with certain organisations, to publish a notice of proposals in a local newspaper, and to display/deliver notices in places affected by the proposals.
 - 5.2.2 If any objections are made to the proposals, the Council must consider these and may make modifications to the proposals. If the modifications are significant and may affect certain persons, they should be given further opportunity to make representations about the modifications.

Environment and Safe Communities Committee 22 Oct 2019

5.2.3 The Council may then make the order.

5.3 The Council must then publish and where relevant give notice that it has made the order, setting out details such as a brief statement of the general nature of the order and description of the key provisions.

5.4 After this has all been done the order can come into effect.

5.5 Where an order makes provision as to the charges to be paid in connection with the use of an off-street parking place, and there is a proposal only to vary the charges to be paid, it is not necessary to make a full new order; a shorter process is available under section 35C of the 1984 Act.

5.6 A notice of variation of parking charges must be published in a local newspaper at least 21 days before the new charges are to come into force. Notice must also be displayed in the parking place. There is no provision for representations to be made or considered.

5.7 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** as above

6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

6.1 None for the purposes of this report.

7 Partnerships

7.1 The Council will engage with representatives of the BID team to discuss the fees and charges being proposed and the introduction of an Ashley Centre Parker Card.

7.2 The Council will continue to work in partnership with the Rainbow Leisure Centre and recognise their request for increased parking availability on a Sunday with the introduction of a soft play centre.

7.3 A flat rate on a Sunday could encourage longer stays in Epsom benefiting the retail and food and drink establishments as well as the cinema.

7.4 The Council will engage with hirers of Bourne Hall on a Sunday regarding the introduction of a charge for car park users.

7.5 The proposal is to reduce the cost of the annual parking permit in the Ashley Centre car park to encourage more local business use.

8 Risk Assessment

Fees and Charges

Environment and Safe Communities Committee 22 Oct 2019

- 8.1 With any fee increase there is a risk that some car park users will reduce their usage of the car park. The greater the increase the more difficult it becomes to predict car park usage and income generation in the coming year.
- 8.2 To mitigate the risk of car park users parking in car parks which may then charge a higher fee than expected, such as a user parking for the whole day in the Ashley Centre car park rather than Hook Road car park, the Car Park Working Group has recommended signs be placed around the town indicating the desired designation of short, medium or long stay of each car park.
- 8.3 The proposed tariffs by the Car Park Working Group propose a flat rate on a Sunday of £2. Currently in the Ashley Centre and Town Hall car parks over 70% of Sunday visitors stay for up to 2 hours so in effect would see an increase in charge. In Depot Road/Upper High Street car parks last year only 36% stayed for up to 2 hours on a Sunday. This is thought to be largely due to Cinema use. The proposal would therefore likely see a reduction in income for Sunday use in these car parks.

Hook Road Car Park

- 8.4 The biggest risk of opening Hook Road car park on a Sunday is that it could be underused and left largely empty which could encourage anti-social behaviour such as cycling or skateboarding.

Maximum Charges

- 8.5 The risk in removing the maximum charge from 1pm and 3pm from our car parks is that users of this tariff may seek alternative parking options. However given that these tariffs are used by less than 5 people per day on average the impact on revenue will not be significant.

Ewell

- 8.6 There is a possibility that car park users may seek alternative parking on street at times when restrictions are not in place.

West Hill

- 8.7 The risks to the introduction of charging for Blue Badge holders in West Hill car park will be identified by the Equality Impact Assessment (see Annex 3).

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 9.1 That Members consider the fees proposed in Annex 1 and Annex 2 and advise whether they wish to accept these fees or make moderations.

Environment and Safe Communities
Committee
22 Oct 2019

- 9.2 That Members consider the proposals in recommendations 3 to 7 and advise whether they wish to proceed with them on an individual basis.

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);