

CAR PARK FEES AND CHARGES

Head of Service:	Rod Brown, Head of Housing & Community
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 – Proposed Car Park Fees 2023/24 Appendix 2 – Proposed Permit Fees 2023/24 Appendix 3 – Other Budget Changes Identified

Summary

This report seeks the agreement of the Committee for the recommended off street parking fees and charges for 2023/24, as proposed by the Car Park Working Group.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) agree the car park fees in appendix 1, as proposed by the Car Park Working Group;**
- (2) agree the car park permit fees in appendix 2, as proposed by the Car Park Working Group.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 Each year policy committees are asked to agree the new fees and charges for services within their committee. This report sets out the recommended fees for off street parking for 2023/24, as proposed by Car Park Working Group.

2 Background

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- 2.1 In recent years the Borough Council has reviewed car park prices every two years, and consequently no fee increases were made for 2021/22, with the exception of annual permits. For 2022/23, the majority of changes proposed impacted only the car parks at Town Hall and Hope Lodge. Many of the other fees and charges have not increased since April 2020 or before.
- 2.2 The Car Park Working Group met in November 2022 to review the fees for 2023/24. The group acknowledged that car park visitor numbers had not returned to pre-pandemic levels as working and lifestyle choices have changed. In July 2022 Strategy & Resources Committee agreed a reduction in Car Park income budgets of £781,000, to reflect this impact on parking activity levels.
- 2.3 In July 2022, Strategy & Resources Committee agreed that income from fees and charges would increase by 6% annually for the next 3 years. In addition, to tackle the remaining budget deficit, Directors and Heads of Service were tasked with proposing savings and income generation options, which identified potential increases in income of £223,000 from car parking.
- 2.4 As the changes in car park fees in 2022/23 impacted predominantly on Town Hall and Hope Lodge the standard daily tariffs in these car parks have not been impacted by the proposed changes for 2023/24.
- 2.5 Car Park Working Group also discussed a number of initiatives due to come into effect in 2023/24 which are expected to impact positively on visitor numbers. It is anticipated that the expansion of the Greater London Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) from 29 August 2023 will dissuade shoppers driving to retail centres within the extended areas and choose Epsom instead. The opening of a new anchor tenant at the Ashley Centre is also expected to boost visitor numbers at the car park.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 As part of the terms of reference of the Car Park Working Group fees and charges have been discussed. The proposals put forward can be found in appendices 1 and 2.
- 3.2 The fees proposed do not impact on the up to 1 hour parking fee in Ashley Centre, Depot Road and Upper High Street to encourage continued use of these car parks for retail purposes. The up to 30 minute fee in Bourne Hall is also not impacted to encourage continued use of the Council venue.
- 3.3 In West Hill car park the periods of stay are proposed to change to hourly rates, with an over 4 hour stay, to bring it in line with other Council car parks.
- 3.4 The Sunday rate is proposed to change from £2 all day to £2.50 all day in Epsom car parks. In Ewell the rate is proposed to change from £1 all day to £1.50.

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- 3.5 The evening rate is proposed to change from £2.50 per night to £3 per night in Epsom car parks. In Ewell the rate is proposed to change from £0.50 to £1 per night.
- 3.6 The cost of parking in Hook Road car park with a daily parker card is proposed to change from £3.50 per day to £4 per day.
- 3.7 Annual car park permits have been increased by an average of 7.7%, as set out in appendix 2.

4 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

4.1 Equality Impact Assessment

4.1.1 None arising from this report.

4.2 Crime & Disorder

4.2.1 None arising from this report.

4.3 Safeguarding

4.3.1 None arising from this report.

4.4 Dependencies

4.4.1 None arising from this report.

4.5 Other

4.5.1 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.

4.5.2 To mitigate the risk of changes in shoppers habits the Car Park Working Group has proposed that the base rate of parking in many of the Borough Council car parks remains the same.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The 6% increase on car park income from fees and charges equates to an addition £216,000. Added to the £223,000 detailed in paragraph 2.3 gives a total of £439,000.
- 5.2 As detailed in paragraph 2.2, car park income budgets were reduced by £781,000 in July 2022 to take into account reduced usage following the pandemic. Therefore, after increasing current budgets by £439,000 the income budget for off street car park income remains below the pre-pandemic level set for 2020/21.

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- 5.3 Many of the proposed increases in car parking fees are below the current Consumer Price Index which for November 2022 was 10.7%.
- 5.4 The changes proposed in appendices 1 and 2 of this report identify a potential increase in income of £272,200.
- 5.5 In addition, a further £37,700 has been identified from other savings and income streams into the car park budget as shown in annex 3.
- 5.6 It is anticipated that the balance of £129,100 will be achieved through an increase in visitor numbers as the country recovers following the Covid-19 pandemic as well as the impact of the expansion of ULEZ and changes at the Ashley Centre, detailed in paragraph 2.5.
- 5.7 Officers will continue to closely monitor car park visitor numbers throughout the year and quarterly budget monitoring reports to Audit and Scrutiny Committee will report on actual income compared to budget.
- 5.8 Section 151 Officer's comments: **The proposed budget for 2023/24 included within a separate report to this Committee, anticipates an increase in car parking income from changes in tariffs and demand of £401,300, and a further £37,700 from other savings and income streams.**
- 5.9 **The fees set out in appendices 1 and 2 proposed by Car Park Working Group, coupled with the anticipated rise in visitor numbers are expected to achieve an overall increase in car park income of £439,000.**
- 5.10 **Any changes that result in a reduction in anticipated income will increase the Council's projected budget deficit, and will need to be compensated for with decreases to expenditure budgets, or increased income generation, elsewhere within the Environment and Safe Communities Committee.**

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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.

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- 6.4 **Legal Officer's comments:** Under section 32 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA 1984) the Council has the power to provide off-road parking. Section 35(1) (b) RTRA 1984 permits a local authority to charge for off road parking but not parking on the street. Section 46A of RTRA 1984 allows the Council to make an order to vary its existing parking charges.
- 6.5 The Council must comply with the notice of variation procedure set out in Regulation 25 of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 of publishing the notice in a local newspaper before the change comes into force. The notice of variation shall specify the date when it is due to come into force; identify every parking place to which the notice relates; specify in respect of each such parking place (i) the charges payable for the use of the parking place at the date the notice is given (ii) the charges that will payable when the notice comes into force (Regulation 25(5)).
- 6.6 The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not and (c.) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

7 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

7.1 Council's Key Priorities:

The following Key Priorities are engaged:

Effective Council / Opportunity and Prosperity

7.2 Service Plans: The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

7.3 Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:

Using car park charges to promote greater use of public transport, walking and cycling is a legitimate goal for the Council however 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.

7.4 Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:

None arising from this report.

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7.5 **Partnerships:**

7.5.1 In considering the fees and charges proposed the Car Park Working Group has considered the wishes of local retailers to preserve the base rate of parking in Council car parks.

7.5.2 The Car Park Working Group has also preserved the parking rate of visitors to the Rainbow Leisure Centre who park in Hook Road car park.

8 **Background papers**

8.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- None

Other papers:

- Strategic Financial Planning – 2023/24 to Strategy & Resources Committee - 26 July 2022