

Report to Cabinet

21 July 2022

By Cabinet Member for Finance and Parking



DECISION REQUIRED

Not Exempt

Extension of Parking Charge Increases to Additional Car Parks

Executive Summary

This report sets out three additional areas which should be subject to price increases in line with the parking charges agreed in February 2022. Extending the increase to these additional areas will ensure tariffs are consistent and proportionate, as well as maintaining simplicity for users of the Council's car parks.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- i) Recommend to Council extending the 12.5% increase to the new 4 hour tariff in North Street Car Park
- ii) Recommend to Council extending the charge increases agreed for Southwater Country Park summer tariffs to the winter weekend tariffs
- iii) Recommend to Council extending the 10% increase on season tickets to the day passes available in the Forum, Swan Walk & Piries Place.
- iv) Recommend to Council approving an increase in income of £22,500 to the Parking 2022/23 revenue budget.

Reasons for Recommendations

These additional charges will ensure that consistency is maintained between car park tariffs and pricing structures. It will also ensure a smooth customer journey and simplicity where pricing structures vary based on the day or time of year. Only Full Council can approve budget changes.

Background Papers

2022/23 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy – Cabinet 27 January 2022
Appendix 1 – Car Parking Fees & Charges

Wards affected: All

Contact: Marc Rankin – Interim Head of Parking

Background Information

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 As a result of parking income reducing during the pandemic, increases to parking charges were agreed by Full Council on 9 February 2022. These included increases in car park tariffs, season tickets and the annual parking disc.
- 1.2 Since the approval of these charges, a number of additional areas have been highlighted which also need to be increased.
- 1.3 The 4-hour tariff in North Street carpark, Southwater Country Park weekend tariffs during the winter and the day passes in the Forum, Piries Place and Swan Walk all require increases at the rate previously agreed.
- 1.4 Extending the increases to these additional three areas will ensure tariffs are kept consistent and fair, it will maximise income from the implementing new charges and maintain good customer experience.

2 Relevant Council policy

- 2.1 Paragraph 1.1.1 of the 2019-23 Corporate Plan commits the Council, through the Local Plan, to *“promote healthy, vibrant town and village centres, deliver facilities and identify the infrastructure necessary to support growth in a way that protects the overall character of the District.”*
- 2.2 Paragraph 5.3.4 of the 2019-2023 Corporate Plan sets out the principle that the Council will *“Continue to manage our finances prudently and identify new sources of revenue to balance our budgets as funding from central government reduces”*

3 Details

- 3.1 To enable a full charge using an electric vehicle charging point, a 4-hour tariff was introduced in North Street Carpark on 1 February 2022 at a rate of £4.40. This was introduced after the pricing review was completed in 2021/22. This 4-hour tariff should therefore be increased at the same rate (12.5%) resulting in a new charge of £5.00.
- 3.2 Southwater Country Park has a varied pricing structure based on the time of the year. The following tariffs apply to all days of the week 1 April – 31 October, they also apply to weekends 1 November – 31 March. The current tariffs and agreed new tariffs are shown below:

Hours	Tariff	Agreed New Tariff
1 hour	£1.00	£1.10
1-3 hours	£2.00	£2.20
3-4 hours	£3.00	£3.40
All day	£6.00	£7.00

- 3.3 Ensuring the new tariffs also apply to winter weekends will enable simpler signage within the car park, an improved customer experience, and means the car park can continue to operate on the pre-existing seasonal pricing structure.

3.4 Day passes within the multi-storey car parks can be bought in batches of varying lengths. These were not subject to price increases in February 2022, whereas quarterly season tickets were subject to 10% increases.

3.5 The following table shows the current day pass prices and the new prices with a 10% increase:

Piries & Swan	Current Price	New Price
5-day	£27.50	£30.25
10-day	£55.00	£60.50
15-day	£82.50	£90.75
20-day	£110.00	£121.00
25-day	£137.50	£151.25

Forum	Current Price	New Price
5-day	£19.75	£21.75
10-day	£39.50	£43.45
15-day	£59.25	£65.20
20-day	£79.00	£86.90
25-day	£98.75	£108.65

3.6 Implementing these new prices will increase the Council's income, which aligns with the pricing reviews strategic aim and will ensure that all options available in the multi-storeys are increased at a consistent rate.

4 Next Steps

4.1 The proposals included in this report need to be discussed and approved by Cabinet who can then recommend to Full Council for approval.

5 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations

5.1 The Finance & Parking PDAG were briefed on 27 June 2022.

5.2 The Interim Director of Resources was consulted and provided recommendations on how to proceed.

5.3 Legal Services and the Monitoring Officer are aware and advised this matter needs approval by Full Council before the charges can be implemented.

6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

6.1 Other courses of action have been rejected due to the adverse effect they would have on car park users or due to the inconsistencies they would create within the car parks pricing structure.

6.2 Not extending the increases to the winter period at Southwater Country Park could create a confusing pricing structure for users and would mean signage would need to be replaced, causing unnecessary cost.

- 6.3 Not extending price increases to the 4-hour tariff in North Street would mean the tariffs were disproportionate to one another.
- 6.4 If day passes remain the same whilst quarterly season tickets are increased, sales for quarterly season tickets could be affected and have an impact on the Councils income.

7 Resource Consequences

- 7.1 Based on 2021/22 annual sales, increasing the price of day passes at the Town centre multi-story car parks by 10% could generate an additional £25,000 per year over a full year. The additional income from the changes at North Street and Southwater Country Park is estimated at £20,000 per year over a full year.
- 7.2 As the changes will not be implemented until 1 November 2022, the estimated impact on the 2022/23 financial year is a £22,500 increase in income in the revenue budget.

8 Legal Considerations and Implications

- 8.1 In order to increase the included parking charges and to adhere to the Traffic Management Act 2004, the Council are required to amend the General Parking Order 2006 by notice. This involves publishing a notice of variation for 21 days in number of locations, including online and in the affected car parks.

9 Risk Assessment

- 9.1 There is a risk that these charge increases could attract media reports or negative responses from residents/stakeholders. However, these proposals are minor in comparison to February's and any responses previously received have been successfully managed with the support of the Communications department.

10 Procurement implications

- 10.1 There are no procurement implications associated with these proposals.

11. Equalities and Human Rights implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

- 11.1 The proposals will not have a particular impact on any groups with protected characteristics and therefore an EIA is not required.

12 Environmental Implications

- 12.1 There are no environmental implications associated with these proposals.

13 Other Considerations

- 13.1 Implementing prices increases has no additional impact in relation to GDPR/Data Protection or Crime & Disorder.