

District Car Park Charges

Date: 30th October 2024

Report of: Parking Manager

Report to: Chief Officer Elections & Regulatory & Chief Officer Highways & Transportation

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

PPV to check consistency around objections coming back to Board

Brief summary

This report outlines the response to proposals to introduce car park charges at 6 district car parks following recent public consultation. A modest parking charge would be introduced and drivers would pay a charge for each visit, with a season ticket option available for regular visitors. Payment methods would be by card at the machine or mobile phone. Blue Badge holders would be exempt from paying car park charges.

The consultation results highlight clear opposition in principle to introducing charges, but acknowledgement that some car parks are busy and that it can be difficult to get a space. A minority of people prefer to use cash with the majority choosing card or app payment.

Following representations received during the consultation the proposal has been amended to offer a period of free parking at all sites.

This report sets out the relevant legal requirements and key considerations required to implement all necessary arrangements to the Chief Officer, Highways and Transportation as per the Council's scheme of delegation for the introduction of off-street charging at the locations specified above.

This report therefore sets out the consultation analysis, concludes the need to introduce charging and seeks approval to move to the formal stages of the introduction of car park charging in the public car parks shown in appendix one, along with approval to commence the Parking Places Order (PPO) procedure. It should be noted there will be statutory public consultation as part of the PPO procedure.

Recommendations

The Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory is recommended to:

- a) To note the findings of the report and support the principle of the introduction of car park charges at the following car parks: Wilderness & Station Gardens in Wetherby;

Fink Hill in Horsforth; Barleyhill Road in Garforth; Marsh Street in Rothwell & Netherfield Road in Guiseley.

- b) Note, subject to the Parking Places Order (PPO) being sealed and made, that the Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory is delegated to operate the off-street car parking and associated decriminalisation and issuing of parking contravention notices.

The Chief Officer, Highways & Transportation is requested to:

- c) Instruct the City Solicitor to advertise a draft Parking Places Order in respect of those off-street car parks detailed in Appendix 1, and if no valid objections are received, to make and seal the Order as advertised. If valid objections are received, these will be reported to the Chief Officer for further consideration; and
- d) Note the timescales for implementation and that before and after surveys will be undertaken in the streets around the above car parks and that, should further restrictions be required, these will be, subject to further recommendations, fully funded by Communities Housing & Environment and reported to the Chief Officer, Highways & Transportation.

What is this report about?

- 1 This report outlines the response to initial proposals to introduce car park charges at 6 district car parks and seeks approval for the introduction of car park charging at Wilderness & Station Gardens in Wetherby; Fink Hill in Horsforth; Barleyhill Road in Garforth; Marsh Street in Rothwell & Netherfield Road in Guiseley, along with approval to commence the Parking Places Order (PPO) procedure as set out in the recommendations.
- 2 Parking in other car parks managed by the Council in these districts will remain free as will all on street parking.
- 3 Originally there were separate proposals for Wetherby and for the car parks in the other 4 districts, and so far reporting and consultation has been done separately for each. The proposals were slightly different with Wetherby offering a free parking period that was not offered in the other districts. As the proposals are very similar, and are now following the same timetable, they have now been combined to avoid duplication.
- 4 There were 2 consultations. Wetherby ran from 5th December 2023 until 21st January 2024. Garforth, Guiseley, Horsforth & Rothwell (GGHR) ran from 4th December until 11th January. There were 1100 responses to the Wetherby proposal and 4134 responses to the GGHR proposal. This is non statutory consultation and informs the decision on the principle of introducing charges in these specific car parks. The location of each car park is shown at Appendix One.
- 5 A summary of the proposals is as follows.
 - Parking charges to be introduced at Wilderness, Station Gardens, Fink Hill, Barleyhill Road, Marsh Street & Netherfield Road Car Parks.
 - Drivers would pay a charge for each visit, although there is potential for a season ticket option to be introduced for those who regularly visit.
 - 'Blue Badge' holders would be exempt from paying car park charges.
 - Payment will be made by credit or debit card or mobile phone. Cash payments are not proposed due to the problem of theft and vandalism.
 - The possible need for measures to prevent overspill parking by introducing new traffic restrictions would be assessed during the PPO process and also once the charges have been introduced.

- 6 The original proposal was to charge all vehicles using the GGHR car parks during the charging period. Following representations received during the consultation this has now been amended so that the first hour is free. This was already proposed in Wetherby.
- 7 The survey included a comments section and 289 respondents to the GGHR survey suggested a free hour. This will allow free parking for drivers making short stops for shopping, collecting and dropping off goods, dog walking etc and should mitigate the impact on local businesses. Encouraging shorter stays allows for a greater turnover of spaces.
- 8 Provision has been made to introduce Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) if required to manage and control parking on the adjacent highway, for example, the introduction of double yellow lines. This is detailed below.
- 9 The suggested prices are as follows. They include the 15p fee for making a card transaction.

Charging hours Monday – Saturday 8am – 6pm

Up to 1 hour free. For longer stays :

Up to 2 hours £1.15

Up to 3 hours £1.65

Up to 4 hours £2.15

Up to 5 hours £2.65

Up to 6 hours £3.15

Up to 7 hours £3.65 (daily maximum charge)

Weekly ticket £12.15

- 10 Lower prices are proposed at Station Gardens in Wetherby. Due to its location this car park is not currently used by commuters. However, if changes are introduced at Wilderness it will be the only free long stay car park in the town and therefore it is considered likely that displacement would occur. The proposal at Station Gardens is therefore intended to support the charges at Wilderness. As many sports teams use it the free parking period has been extended to 3 hours. In the other districts we are not proposing to introduce charges in more than one car park.

Station Gardens

Charging hours Monday – Saturday 8am – 6pm

Up to 3 hours free

£2.15 daily charge after that

Weekly ticket £10.15

What impact will this proposal have?

- 11 The introduction of a modest charge for car parking would enable improvement works to be carried out as well as meet costs associated with maintaining car park areas. This will improve the standard of both facilities as currently there are no budget resources to fund this work.
- 12 It is recognised that there may be the potential for displaced parking onto the adjacent highway network. Any obstruction to the highway or any other resulting road safety concern would be closely monitored before the implementation of new restrictions through a TRO is considered. Provision has therefore been made to introduce TROs if required to

manage and control parking on the adjacent highway, for example the introduction of double yellow lines.

13 The proposal seeks to address the concerns raised during consultation.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing Inclusive Growth Zero Carbon

14 The scheme is intended to contribute to the Council's Best City Ambitions of Inclusive Growth, Health and Wellbeing and Zero Carbon, tackling congestion by encouraging motorists to change to different modes of transport and supporting local economies by increasing turnover of spaces in district car parks.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: Horsforth , Garforth & Swillington, Guiseley & Rawdon, Rothwell, Wetherby

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

15 Wetherby Consultation

The consultation commenced on Tuesday 5th December and ended on Sunday 21st January. Posters were displayed at both sites containing details of how to respond with paper copies made available at Wetherby Town Hall and links to the survey were widely shared on social media. Overall, 1100 people completed the survey.

Appendix 2 provides a summary analysis of the results. Whilst there is clear opposition, there is some support for the detailed aspects of the proposal with examples as follows:

- A majority of respondents (58%) report difficulty in finding a space
- There is a clear majority (82%) in favour of 'blue badge' holders going free.
- A minority of people (21%) use cash to make payment with the majority choosing card or app payment.

16 A briefing was provided to local ward members who did not support the proposals. This was followed by a public meeting, where attendees were generally in opposition, and a meeting of Wetherby Town Council meeting. The Town Council passed a motion opposing the changes and wrote to the Council (full text at appendix 4). There was also a petition organised with 5069 signatures (full text at appendix 4).

17 Garforth, Guiseley, Horsforth & Rothwell consultation

The consultation commenced on Monday 4th December and ended on Thursday 11th January. Posters were displayed at all sites containing details of how to respond with paper copies made available on request. The survey was promoted through Communications team and links to the survey were widely shared on social media. Overall 3675 people completed the survey and 4134 responses were received as some people commented on more than one site.

| Car Park | Responses |
|------------------|--------------|
| Fink Hill | 672 |
| Barleyhill Road | 1,173 |
| Marsh Street | 1,841 |
| Netherfield Road | 448 |
| total | 4,134 |

18 Appendix 3 provides a summary analysis of the results. The proposal was not supported with 84 % of Wetherby and 90% of GGHR respondents opposed. Whilst there is clear opposition, there is some support for the detailed aspects of the proposal with examples as follows:

- Half the respondents (50%) report difficulty in finding a space
- A minority of people (21%) use cash to make payment with the majority choosing card or app payment.

19 A briefing was provided to local ward members and the proposal was widely reported in local press and social media. Two petitions opposing the proposal were received, from Horsforth (733 signatures) and Guiseley (1375 signatures). The text of these petitions is at appendix 5.

What are the resource implications?

20 It is not proposed that a decision on introducing charges is made at this stage as this will come at the end of the PPO process, however for budget purposes, financial projections for introducing charges are as below :

| Car Park | Annual revenue |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Barleyhill Road | £25,500 |
| Netherfield Road | £49,000 |
| Fink Hill | £20,500 |
| Marsh Street | £56,500 |
| Wilderness | £147,000 |
| Station Gardens | £37,000 |
| Total | £335,500 |

21 This takes account of prudential borrowing costs associated with capital improvements along with other revenue costs and costs associated with purchasing equipment and implementing traffic regulation orders.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

22 It is clear from the consultation analysis that there is opposition in principle with 89% of respondents disagreeing with the proposal on average (the range was 84% - 96% opposed across the 6 sites). This is not surprising given that people are being asked to pay for something that they have considered to be free.

23 It is recognised that there may be the potential for displaced parking onto the adjacent highway network. Any obstruction to the highway or any other resulting road safety concern would be closely monitored before the instigation of the Parking Place Orders. Highways & Transportation’s Traffic Engineering service will support this approach by conducting detailed before and after surveys of the surrounding roads and reporting the results to the relevant Chief Officers.

24 Subject to the findings of these before/after surveys recommendations for additional Traffic Regulation Orders to manage parking using No Waiting “At Any Time” restrictions will be prepared and presented to the Chief Officer (Highways & Transportation). Any additional TRO and accompanying works will be funded by Communities and Environment and go through the appropriate statutory reporting process.

What are the legal implications?

- 25 An assessment has been made of the deeds relating to these car parks and there is nothing within any of them that prevents the introduction of car parking charges.
- 26 The Chief Officer, Highways & Transportation will be required to consider all objections received following publication of the order.
- 27 The Council has the power to provide off-street parking places alongside the No waiting at any Time under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 alongside Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. Those powers include introducing a charge for car parking and the enforcement of that charge. The procedure for making a car park Order includes requirements for advertising and consultation, and consideration of the objections, if received.
- 28 Whilst it is proposed that Blue Badge Holders are exempt from charging, enforcement for parking in these bays for non badge holders will be via Penalty Charge Notice.
- 29 The charge in the event of non-payment is as follows - A penalty charge of £70 on the issue of a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) for higher level contraventions and £50 on the issue of a PCN for lower level contraventions in accordance with the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (Guidelines on Levels of Charges) (England) Order 2007, but discounted by 50% if payment is received within 14 days of the issue of the PCN or within 21 days for PCNs issued by post. The Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory is delegated to operate the off-street car parking and associated decriminalisation and issuing of parking contravention notices as set out in the recommendations.
- 30 In preparing and determining the proposals set out in this report, the Council is required to have regard to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. It is considered that the proposals set out in this report are proportionate.
- 31 This is a key decision and is subject to call in.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 32 The alternative options would be to either leave the car parks free of charge as they are now or to introduce other controls such as limited waiting. However, neither option would generate the revenue needed to meet budget assumptions. During the consultation process several representations have been received, and 3520 people made a comment on the surveys, but no firm suggestions have been received that would replace the expected revenue from these proposals.

How will success be measured?

- 33 Success will be measured by the introduction of car park fees increasing turnover of spaces and reducing congestion without a negative impact on the economic viability of these areas as district centres.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

- 34 Parking Place Orders to implement charging will be developed and implemented by Parking Services in conjunction with Traffic Engineering.
- 35 Subject to the outcome of the statutory process, the order will either be abandoned or, if the Order is proceeded with, it is anticipated that this would take around 5 months to move to implementation. Once this is completed, then preparations could be made on site to

install signage and payment machines anticipated to be completed within one month of PPO implementation.

- 36 Advance surveys will be undertaken prior to the implementation of any PPO. Post-implementation surveys will take place around 3 months following the introduction of charges, to allow any change in behaviours to take effect.
- 37 Any required TRO will be implemented following recommendations to the Chief Officer (Highways & Transportation). TROs typically take 6-9 months to implement depending on the level of objections received.

Appendices

1. Car park locations
2. Analysis of consultation results Wetherby
3. Analysis of consultation results Garforth, Guiseley, Horsforth and Rothwell
4. Other responses Wetherby
5. Other responses Garforth, Guiseley, Horsforth and Rothwell
6. Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration (EDCI) screening

Background papers

None.