

Annual Review of Car Parking Charges in Off- Street Car Parks – (Corporate Head of Customer Digital and Collection Services – Linda Norman

Synopsis of report:

This report reviews the current charges in the Council's car parks, including the charges for permit and contract parking.

Recommendations:

Car park and permit charge levels should remain unchanged for the next year to support residents and businesses with the cost-of-living crisis; and

The Committee authorises the Corporate Head of Customer, Digital and Collection Services along with the Corporate Head of Assets and Regeneration to engage with the British Legion and local businesses to review the current lease arrangement with a view to renegotiating the contract, If agreement cannot be reached a recommendation to remove the car park from the councils "off street" car parking order for September 2023 will be bought back to Committee for further discussion in February 2023.

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 At its meeting in September 2005, the former Economic Development Committee resolved that there should be an annual review of car parking charges. Charges are reviewed in November each year for implementing any changes in April, along with the Council's other Fees and Charges.
- 1.2 Public car parks are an amenity provided by the Council for the convenience of the public. In shopping areas, they also encourage and maintain the viability of businesses but the income from the car parking charges is expected to, at least, cover the cost of providing and maintaining the car parks.
- 1.3 This report predominantly focuses on the current fees and charges for parking services including the pay and display' car parks. Borough car parks where pay and display charges are imposed are listed in Table 1. The current charges are shown in Table 2.

Table 1 – Borough Pay and Display Car Parks

Car Park	No of Spaces
Waspe Farm, Station Road, Egham	119
Hummer Road, Egham	78
Victoria Street, Englefield Green	34
St. Jude's Road (Cemetery), Englefield Green	39
Memorial Gardens, Virginia Water	90
British Legion, Virginia Water	19
Beomonds, Heriot Road, Chertsey	55
Chertsey Library, Heriot Road, Chertsey	174
Gogmore Farm Park, Chertsey	53
Pooley Green	35
Woodlands	102
Homewood (Open Spaces)	70
Runnymede Pleasure Grounds, Windsor Road, Egham (Open Spaces)	352

Notes

- i) Figures in the above table include disabled bays and motorcycle bays.
- ii) The Runnymede Pleasure Grounds Car Park has higher charges due to its popularity as a leisure destination. All the income must be used for the improvement and maintenance of the site due to the terms of the Runnymede Pleasure Grounds Trust. The charges here are reviewed annually by the Council's Community Development business centre, which manages parks and open spaces. Responsibility for managing this carpark was transferred to the Corporate Head of Customer, Digital & Collection Services in August 2022 to ensure all Council owned car parks were being managed efficiently.
- iii) Homewood car park is also an Open Spaces car park with pay and display income going to Community Development business centre which also sets the charges. This management of this carpark has also recently been transferred to the Corporate Head of Customer, Digital & Collection Services.
- iv) The car park at the Sainsbury Centre in Heriot Road, Chertsey, (170 spaces) is managed by Sainsbury's, which has full discretion to set the charges in that car park. Sainsbury's operates the car park under a Management Agreement.
- v) Tesco have taken back ownership of their 45 spaces from September 2022 in Hummer Road so this has reduced the number of parking spaces under the Council's Parking Orders.

1.4 There are two scales of car park charges. A lower scale of charges operates in the smaller 'Out of Town Centre' car parks. These are Victoria Street and St Jude's Road car parks in Englefield Green, Pooley Green Car Park and Gogmore Farm Car Park in Chertsey. The other car parks are subject to the higher 'Town Centre' scale of charges, but some only offer short term parking within the scale of charges.

1.5 As well as the scale of parking charges, car parking income also comes from parking permits, contract parking permits and penalty charge notices.

Parking permits in most car parks are currently £700 per annum or £250 per quarter. Residents living in close proximity to the car parks can purchase these at £300 per annum or £100 per quarter. Englefield Green and Pooley Green the permits are £125 per annum or £50 per quarter. The parking permit charges for residents and non-residents were increased in January 2019.

Contract parking bays are reserved bays in Beomonds Row and White Hart Row, Chertsey and are currently £750 per year and were last increased in January 2016. A reduced rate of £250 for residents of these areas was agreed by this Committee at its September 2018 meeting.

- 1.6 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued for contraventions in the car parks are set at two levels depending on the contravention. The charges are designed to reflect the severity of the contravention where, for example, someone parking in a disabled person's bay when not entitled would be subject to a higher-level penalty. Someone whose ticket has expired would receive a lower level. Higher level penalties are £70 (reduced to £35 if paid within 14 days). Lower level penalties are set at £50 (reduced to £25 if paid within 14 days). The scale of penalty charges is set nationally by the Department for Transport.
- 1.7 In November 2018, increases to all parking charges were approved and were introduced on the 27th January 2019. Town Centre charges: 1 hour £1 to £1.30, 2 hours £2 to £2.50, 3 hours £3 to £3.50, 4 hours £3.50 to £4, 5 hours £4 to £4.50, 6 hours £5 to £5.50, All day £6.50 to £7. Out of Town Centre charges: 1-hour 40p to 60p, 2 hours 80p to £1.20p, 3 hours £1.50 to £2, 4 hours £2.50 to £3, 5 hours £3 to £3.50, All day £5 to £5.50.

Permit charges were also increased. Town Centre £650 to £700 per annum, Residents £250 to £300 Out of Town £100 to £125. Contract Parking £700 to £750.

Due to the slow economic recovery from the pandemic, it is not proposed to increase charges for 23/24 financial year but to have another year of stability, supporting our businesses and encouraging the public back into our town centres.

- 1.8 The following table shows a comparison of Runnymede parking charges with other Surrey and Neighbouring Councils.

Table 2 – Comparison of Runnymede Parking charges with other Surrey and Neighbouring Councils

	Up to 1 hour	Up to 2 hours	Up to 3 hours	Up to 4 hours	Up to 5 hours	Up to 6 hours	Up to 7 hours
Woking	£1.60	£3.20	£4.80	£6.40	£7.60	£7.60	£12
Spelthorne	Free - £1.40	£1.00 - £2.30	£2.00 - £3.00	£3.00 - £4.00	£3.70 - £7.00	£7.30 - £12.20	
Elmbridge	Free - £1.50	£1.80 - £3.00	£3.70 - £4.50	£3.60 - £5.60	£4.00 - £7.00	£3.70 - £7.80	
Tandridge		Free £2.00 -	Free - £6.10 £2.50 -	£5.00	£20.00 £2.50 -	£20.00 £2.50 -	
Epsom & Ewell	Free - £2.00 £ 4.00 -	£3.00 £ 4.00 -	£4.00 £3.60 -		£6.00	£25.00 £7.20 -	
Guildford	£6.00	£6.00	£6.00			£29.00	
Mole Valley	55p - £1.10	£2.20	£3.30	£4.40	£5.50	£6.60	£7.70
Reigate & Banstead	£1.10 - £1.40 £ 1.00 -	£1.60 - £2.20 £1.50 - £	£2.10 - £2.70 £2.00 -	£2.60 - £3.60 £3.00 -	£3.30 - £4.10		
Surrey Heath	£2.00	1.80	£2.30 £2.80 -	£3.50 £3.60 -	£4.50 -	£4.00 - £5.00	
Waverley	20p -£1.10 £1.30 -	20p - £2.20 £2.50 -	£6.00 £3.50 -	£6.00 £4.00 -	£6.50 £4.50 -	£8.00 £5.50 -	£10.00
Runnymede	£1.50	£3.00	£4.50	£6.00	£6.00	£6.00	

Many have remained the same since the last report. This indicates that many councils, like Runnymede are trying to get customers back into their town centres by not increasing their parking charges. Should Runnymede decide to increase the parking fees, this could result in customers choosing to go elsewhere which could further impact on parking income.

- 1.9 There are also a number of free Borough Council car parks in parks, cemeteries, recreation grounds and corporate buildings. These are currently managed by Open Spaces.

2. Report

- 2.1 Table 3 below shows a comparison of the ticket sales in all of the Council's car parks for the periods 19/20 to 21/22 inclusive:

	19/20	20/21	21/22	% change
Beomonds	5512	3466	5679.5	64%
British Legion, Virginia Water	733	256	245.5	-4%
Chertsey Library	22991	7423	16363.6	120%
Hummer Road	108754	92730	134328.8	45%
Memorial	14250	6938	12709.7	83%
Waspe Farm	14137	12266	10847.7	-12%
Woodland	65462	21988	24614.3	12%
St Judes	4033	4959	2282.5	-54%
Victoria Street	2590	2026	2165.2	7%
Pooley Green	122	376	60.3	-84%
Gogmore Farm	7639	4573	2236	-51%
Total	246223	157001	211533.1	35%

- 2.3 The effect of the pandemic and the current financial crisis is still significantly affecting car park use across the board. Memorial carpark in Virginia Water is predominantly a commuter car park and has shown an improvement on the previous year but is still below that of 2019/20. Chertsey Library will again be used to support the NHS vaccination programme this winter and as such, parking fees will be below what was expected for the majority of the year. At the current time, it cannot really be predicted when, or if, their use will return to normal levels with many companies now supporting homeworking for their employees.

Hummer Road in Egham, which provides car parking for Tesco, has maintained a relatively good throughput. However, with Tesco taking back control of their area from September 2022, this will impact income for future years.

The Council currently pay the British Legion £20,000 per year to lease that car park in Virginia Water. That car park is not currently widely used and the income generated no longer covers the cost of that lease agreement. It is recommended that officers contact the British Legion to ascertain whether there is an enhanced arrangement can be found where there is limited cost to the Council. If no agreement can be made the matter will be considered further at its February 2023 committee.

- 2.4 RingGo now accounts for 52% (109,509) of all parking transactions compared to 78,797 for 21/22. This is a small increase on the previous year so the Council should continue to provide a choice for customers to pay their car parking.
- 2.5 The current pay and display machines were installed in 2003 and are now at end of life and will need replacing for 23/24 year. The current machines only offer payment by coin or note and are powered mainly by electricity. It is proposed as part of the hardware refresh, the machines will be replaced with the latest models and enable contactless payments to be made. It is anticipated that they will also be solar powered, reducing the carbon footprint of both the machine and the requirement to empty them thus providing a modern and secure method of payment and giving customers a choice of how to pay for their car-parking. The cost of secure cash collection is approximately £13k per annum which will be used to offset the processing fees for contactless payments.

- 2.6 Car park season tickets and permits are available in most of the Council's car parks. Income from the sale of these permits was £53,165 for 21/22. This includes £10,906 from contract parking. Permit sales have reduced significantly when compared to previous years;
- £83,400 for the 20/21
 - £128,542 in 2019/20.
- 2.7 The renewal of parking permits for 22/23 is again down with only 30% being renewed. This reduction in take-up is believed to be due to a change in people's lifestyles with many now working from home and not returning to offices. The table below shows the number of permits available against the number issued.

Table 4

CAR PARK	ISSUED	NUMBER OF		ON WAITING LIST	PERMIT COST
		PERMITS ALLOWED			
HUMMER ROAD	13	45	2		Quarterly £300.00 Annual £700.00
WASPE FARM	8	56	5		Quarterly £ Annual £700.00
GOGMORE	2	18	2		Quarterly £ Annual £500.00
BEOMONDS	0	13 RES/10 NON RES	2		Quarterly £100.00 Annual £300.00 R Annual £700.00 N-R
CHERTSEY LIBRARY	8		2		Quarterly £250.00 Annual £700.00
POOLEY GREEN	7		0		Quarterly £50.00 Annual £125.00
RUNNYMEDE PLEASURE GROUND	0		0		
ST JUDES	10	10	0		Annual £125.00
VICTORIA STREET	15	15	3		Annual £125.00
WOODLANDS CAR PARK	10	35	0		Annual £700.00
MEMORIAL GARDENS	2	40	1		Annual £700.00
BRITISH LEGION	1	10	0		Quarterly £250.00 Annual £700.00
TOTALS	76	252	17		

Customers on the waiting lists have been contacted but permits have not been taken up prior to the writing of this report.

- 2.8 Customer surveys have previously been carried out using prepaid postage survey cards which are placed on vehicles. This method of collecting data is not appropriate at the moment and it was agreed in November 21 by this committee to suspend customer surveys until the completion of the phase 3 (ANPR & EVC) of the Parking Services Review which is due to commence in 2023/24.
- 2.9 As part of the Road Traffic Act 2008, the Council is required to consult with the public and SCC if there is an intention to change the level of off-street parking charges. The Borough is obliged to consider any responses received prior to implementing the changes.
- 2.10 When considering the level of car parking charges Members normally balance the costs of operating car parks and the income for the Council with the impact on the viability and vitality of the town and neighbourhood centres in the Borough. An increase of tariff charges is likely to be based on demand, so if a car park is not in high demand, an increase in charges is likely to result in a reduction in customers and consequently a drop in income despite charges being increased. The cost of updating all the carpark notices with the increase will also need to be considered as this will have to be offset against any income received.
- 2.11 The last two years have been unprecedented with the economic recovery much slower than anticipated together with a fundamental change in people's working patterns, it is difficult to estimate the potential future income of parking at this current time.

- 2.12 Furthermore, Surrey CC have given notice not to renew the agency agreement for On-street Parking Enforcement when it comes to an end on 31 March 2023. This will have a further impact on parking income as currently 60-70% of the Parking Team's costs are attributed to SCC. A separate report will be issued to all councillors detailing the implications of this decision.

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan includes in its overarching strategies; Economic Development and Health & Wellbeing. Maintaining car park fees at the current level will help to stimulate the creation of sustainable towns, that reduce the need for residents to travel outside of the Borough to access retail, commercial and leisure facilities. It will also not increase the financial burden to residents wishing to use Council car parks for everyday life.

4. Resource implications/Value for Money

- 4.1 The table below shows the current income target for each of the Council's car parks and income received up to the end of September 22. The income is significantly below what was budgeted for and reflects the change in people's working habits. To increase car park fees at a time when car parks are not being fully utilised could cause further loss of income particularly as neighbouring authorities are not proposing to increase their charges. A consequence of increased fees could encourage people to park on the highway effecting road safety and impact on free flow of traffic. This income will be closely monitored through the next year to see whether these estimates are accurate.

Car Parks	Current Budget	Income as at September 2022	Potential 2023/24 income
Gogmore farm	14700	2001	4100
Chertsey library	53200	23004	47800
Beomonds	12600	2643	5500
Woodlands	102900	25351	52700
Waspe Farm	56000	16602	38000
Hummer Road	121800	66436	58100
Pooley Green	1400	270	600
Victoria Street	2800	2073	4300
St Judes Road	12000	7693	16000
Memorial Gardens	63700	23286	48400
British Legion	7700	811	900
TOTAL	448800	170170	276400

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Section 35 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 allows Local Authorities to impose charges for parking, with Penalty Charge Notices to enforce, by designating car parks under the Act. This was undertaken for the car parks in this report by the Borough of Runnymede (Off Street Parking Places) Order 2008 (as amended)
- 5.2 Increases or variations in charges introduced by Order can be made by issuing a Notice. The notice of any new charges must be given in a local newspaper and in the affected car parks, at least 21 days before they are implemented.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 Parking Services have previously conducted an Equality Impact Assessment. Part of that assessment looked at the provision of parking facilities for disabled persons. All Borough pay and display car parks contain dedicated and marked provision for disabled badge holders who are currently also able to use the car parks without charge or time restriction.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 The proposed hardware refresh of pay and display machines in the Council's car parks supports the green agenda
8. **Other implications (where applicable)**
- 8.1 None
9. **Timetable for Implementation**
- 9.1 1 April 2023
10. **Conclusions**
- 10.1 Parking charges in the Borough need to be maintained at a level that ensures the operational costs of running the car parks are met whilst also encouraging people to use local facilities and businesses.
- 10.2 Car park and permit charge levels should remain unchanged for the next year to support residents and businesses with the cost-of-living crisis.
- 10.3 The Committee authorises the Corporate Head of Customer, Digital and Collection Services along with the Corporate Head of Assets and Regeneration to engage with the British Legion and local businesses to review the current lease arrangement with a view to renegotiating the contract, If agreement cannot be reached a recommendation to remove the car park from the councils "off street" car parking order for September 2023 will be bought back to Committee for further discussion in February 2023.

(To resolve)

Background papers

None stated.