

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 06 December 2022

Portfolio:	Health & Public Protection
Subject:	Review of parking charges at coastal locations and options identified in September 2020 Review
Report of:	Director of Leisure and Community
Corporate Priorities:	Strong, Safe, Inclusive and Healthy Communities. Dynamic, Prudent and Progressive Council.

Purpose:

This report sets out the results of a review of charging at coastal car parks, introduced in August 2021, and reconsiders options for town centre parking identified as part of the September 2020 review.

Executive summary:

A review of parking services was considered by the Executive on 07 September 2020. As a result of the review, the Executive agreed to the introduction of charging in coastal car parks, which took effect from August 2021 (March 2022 at Portchester Castle sites).

A review of charging at coastal locations has now been undertaken, and suggests recommendations based on the effectiveness of the new arrangements following one full year of operation.

Options for town centre car parks, including a review of tariffs, evening charging, season tickets and blue badge charging, were identified as part of the September 2020 review but were deferred until a later date. These options have been considered again as part of the current review.

The recommendations proposed within this report support the need to generate income to continue to provide maintenance and enforcement activity across all Council car parks, whilst supporting the Borough economy to recover from the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendation/Recommended Option:

It is recommended that the Executive agrees that:

- (a) a full review of town centre parking be undertaken in 2024;
- (b) the charge for a coastal season ticket be raised to a concessionary rate of £95 per year, with a higher standard rate of 50% more for non-concession / non-Borough residents;
- (c) hourly charges in coastal car parks be increased by 10% in line with inflation;
- (d) the existing £6 per day cap on charges at pay-and-display coastal car parks be removed;
- (e) a feasibility report to support categorisation of additional car parks as coastal should be undertaken; and
- (f) height barriers at Portchester Precinct are not installed.

Reason:

Changes to coastal parking charges will provide additional income for the Council, whilst ensuring that the town centre economy is not adversely impacted.

Cost of proposals:

There are costs associated with revised signage and software updates. These are currently expected to be in the region of £4,680. The additional costs will be met from income generated by the inflation-based increase to pay-and-display tariffs.

Appendices: **A:** Detailed Parking Review Results

Background papers: None

Reference papers: None

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	06 December 2022
Subject:	Review of parking charges at coastal locations and options identified in September 2020 Review
Briefing by:	Director of Leisure and Community
Portfolio:	Health and Public Protection

INTRODUCTION

1. This report sets out the results of a 12-month review of charging at coastal locations, introduced in August 2021, and reconsiders options for town centre car parks previously considered as part of the September 2020 parking review.

BACKGROUND

2. There are 43 off-street Council-controlled car parks, providing approximately 4,178 spaces, across the Borough. Parking charges apply in 14 town centre car parks and 9 coastal car parks.
3. A Parking Services Review was presented to the Executive on 07 September 2020 which approved, amongst other things, the introduction of charging in the Council's coastal car parks. A number of options relating to town centre car parking, such as evening charging, were considered, but a decision was deferred.
4. At the meeting, the Executive asked that an update on the outcome of the original review regarding coastal car park charges be undertaken after the first full year of operation to measure the effectiveness of the new arrangements. The majority of coastal car parks started charging in August 2021.
5. This second review took place between May and August 2022 and incorporated desk research, car park counts and analysis of comparator councils. The main findings from the review are presented below and in the detailed review document found at Appendix A.
6. Income from car parking in Fareham supports the maintenance of all 43 car parks across the Borough, and enforcement activity for both parking and environmental actions. Parking charges do not provide a profit for the Council.
7. The introduction of charging at coastal car parks was agreed at the Executive in September 2020 as a means of helping to offset not only the day-to-day management and maintenance costs of the parking service, but also to support major improvements

to Osborn Road Multi-Storey Car Park. The May 2022 Executive agreed a revised scheme for Osborn Road Multi-Storey, costed at £1.96m.

TOWN CENTRE PARKING

8. *Parking income was in decline prior to the COVID-19 pandemic:* Annual income from town centre car park dropped by £0.7m from £2.5m in 2011/12 to £1.8m in 2019/20, the last full year pre-pandemic.
9. *Parking income has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels:* Revenue dropped to £0.643m in 2020/21 and rose to £1.3m in 2021/22. Some further recovery in the first quarter of 2022/23 can be seen, but income remains below pre-pandemic levels whilst repair and maintenance costs have increased and continue to do so.
10. *Town centre car parks are currently underutilised:* A parking survey in May 2022 found that Osborn Road MSCP was only 20% occupied, whilst Fareham Shoppers MSCP at Civic Way was 16% occupied. Market Quay, the Council's premium rate car park, is consistently the most popular, with 61% occupancy recorded.
11. Parking demand and provision in the town centre will be impacted by the work to develop Fareham Live and to replace Osborn Road MSCP with a surface level car park. This work is due to be completed in 2024.
12. *Pay-on-foot machines have reduced failure demand:* The new pay-on-foot payment machines and barriers installed in the Osborn Road, Market Quay and Fareham Shoppers car parks have significantly reduced instances of failure and improved the customer experience.
13. *Good value for hourly charging is still offered:* Inner and outer car park charges have not risen since 2010 and 2008 respectively and generally compare well with other Councils in Hampshire.
14. *A growing number of Councils charge in the evening:* A number of Hampshire Councils now charge for evening parking in their town or city centres. Analysis shows that around 200 cars use Market Quay after charging ceases at 6pm each evening, indicating the potential for income generation.
15. *Town Centre Season Tickets offer really good value:* The £520 cost of an annual season ticket is the second lowest in Hampshire and £584 below the average. This is the equivalent of 149.5 days parking, so provides up to 216.5 days free parking for regular users. The current season ticket offer provides flexible options to support part-time and hybrid working patterns.
16. *Blue Badge charging is becoming more common:* Some Hampshire Councils, including Rushmoor Borough Council and Southampton City Council, have introduced some form of charging for Blue Badge holders in their car parks. Fareham continues to offer free parking for all Blue Badge holders in its pay-and-display car parks, and free parking in the pay-on-foot car parks for Borough residents who register with the Council.
17. *Town centre parking provision should be reviewed in 2023/24:* Whilst there is potential for significant additional parking income generation potential, the town centre is still recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and now would not be considered the right time to change or introduce new charges.
18. *The Town Centre Masterplan proposals will become clearer over the coming months*

and the town centre should continue to recover. Therefore, it is proposed that a dedicated review of town centre parking provision takes place during 2023/24. This would enable any new approach to be in place for the opening of Fareham Live and the new Osborn Road car park in 2024.

COASTAL CAR PARKING

19. *Charging in nine coastal car parks was introduced in August 2021:* These sites offer 665 spaces across nine car parks. Season tickets went on sale in advance to ensure that they were in place for the charging start date. Portchester Castle charging did not come into effect until March 2022. Fareham Borough Council was the last Council on the South Coast to introduce coastal charging.
20. *Season ticket sales have exceeded initial expectations:* Fareham has the lowest priced coastal season ticket on the south coast at £80 per year. This is the most likely reason why the number of season tickets purchased has exceeded initial expectations with 1,217 season tickets sold in the first year against the projected amount of 300. This is almost double the total number of coastal car parking spaces available, which currently sits at 665. Of the total coastal season tickets sold, 70% were purchased by residents of the Borough, with 30% being purchased by non-residents.
21. *Our Coastal Season Ticket charge is well below many other Councils:* Based on evidence from comparator Councils across the south coast there is scope to increase the Councils coastal season ticket charge. To support Fareham residents, however, a concessionary residents rate for season tickets could be offered.
22. *High season ticket sales likely reduced hourly charge income:* Total income from coastal car park charges in the first full year of charging was £438,040. This is just short of the £450,000 income budgeted. The level of season ticket sales will have impacted on income from hourly charging, alongside the delay in introducing charging at Portchester Castle.
23. *An increase in the Season Ticket charge would still offer good value:* Raising the annual season ticket to a concessionary rate of £95 per year, with a higher standard rate of 50% more for non-concession / non-Borough residents, would mean that the current tariff would still be well below the average South Coast season ticket cost of £228.88. These rates are equivalent to just 26p per day for Borough residents compared to 22p per day currently. With a projected additional income of £25,124 from this increase, the Council would meet its projected budget income.
24. *Solar powered pay-and-display machines have proven to be a success:* The new machines are easy to use, reliable and avoided nearly 3 tonnes of carbon emissions in the first year.
25. *Coastal pay-and-display tariffs are good value:* The £1 per hour charge, up to a maximum of £6, is below the Hampshire average and currently offers visitors up to 2 hours free normally chargeable parking per day.
26. *The pay-and-display tariffs for coastal car parks should be raised in line with inflation:* The Council strives to strike a balance between providing value for money and delivering its core services. During a time of increased inflation, uplifting our coastal car park tariffs by 10% will provide a projected income of up to £40,639 per year.
27. *Charges in the coastal car parks do not begin until 10am:* Following feedback during the initial consultation, the charging period for the coastal car parks was set at 10am-6pm.

This was to ensure that residents using the coast for exercise and dog walking purposes in the early mornings and evenings could do so freely.

28. *Most Hampshire Councils have extended chargeable hours in their coastal car parks:* Hayling Island charges are in place from 6am-10pm and Gosport charge 8am-7pm. Fareham are the only Council who begin charging at 10am, and in a minority of those who stop charging at 6pm.
29. *Chargeable hours in coastal car parks should remain the same:* Following feedback on initial recommendations, chargeable hours in our coastal car parks should remain from 10am–6pm. This will continue to provide free access for residents and visitors using the coast for exercise and dog walking in the early mornings and evenings. It will also continue to support attendance at evening events and community activities.
30. *The existing cap of £6 per day on coastal charges should be removed:* Removing the existing cap of £6 per day would bring Fareham Borough Council in line with comparator Councils without extending charging hours. Visitors staying the whole day would pay £8 per day (£8.80 per day if the 10% uplift to hourly charges is agreed). This would make the proposed residents' season ticket charge of £95 equivalent to 11 full days parking (17 full days for non-residents paying £145 per year).
31. The impact of removing the charging cap will be seasonal, with higher use in the summer months. Based on 20% of the available coastal car parking spaces being occupied by residents and visitors for an additional 2 hours per day using the pay and display machines for 100 days per year, this could generate additional income of £21,280 per year (£23,408 per year if the 10% uplift to the hourly charges is agreed).
32. *The Council should consider adding additional car parks to the coastal car park cohort:* Wicor Recreation Ground, Seafeld Park and Shearwater car park all offer easy access to the coast and could be considered coastal car parks. A full feasibility report, including engagement with interested parties, should be undertaken to investigate their potential categorisation as coastal car parks.
33. *Barriers at Portchester Precinct Car Park have been considered:* On 22 March 2022 the Health and Public Protection Scrutiny Panel discussed the request for the installation of 3 height barriers at Portchester Precinct Car Park. It found that it would not be reasonable, proportionate, cost effective or affordable to install height restriction barriers and recommended that they are not installed.

FINANCES

34. The projected additional income will be £89,171 per year (£25,124 from season ticket increases, £40,639 from increasing hourly tariffs by 10% and £23,408 from removing the daily charging cap for pay and display users).
35. There are costs associated with revised signage and software updates. These are currently expected to be in the region of £4,680. The additional costs will be met from income generated by the inflation-based increase to pay-and-display tariffs.

CONCLUSION

36. This report sets out the results of a review of charging at coastal locations after one full year of operation and proposes a set of recommendations based on the potential effectiveness of the new arrangements.

37. Options for town centre car parks identified as part of the September 2020 review have been reconsidered and recommendations made to ensure the Council supports the recovery of the town centre in the coming years, with a further review proposed in 2023/24.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Kat Hillman. (Tel: 01329 824443)