

Report to: Cabinet
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Subject: Car Parking Tariff Review

Purpose of report: In our service plan for 2019/20 we set out proposals to engage with the public on proposals to introduce changes to our car parking tariffs in some of our car parks. This report asks Members to consider detailed proposals for better management of our car parking assets and to authorise the required statutory advertisement and consultation on the proposals.

Recommendation:

To authorise the statutory advertisement and consultation procedures required to make changes to the East Devon District Council (Off-Street) Parking Places Order 2008 (as amended).

To authorise a 12-month trial of free coach parking in Seaton Jurassic coach park effective immediately.

To authorise a promotional tariff of £2 all day parking to apply in Canaan Way and Brook Street car parks in Ottery St Mary effective immediately.

Reason for recommendation: To consider more efficient operational management options for our car parks including new or revised tariffs in the context of a strategic objective to maximise the value of our car parking assets whilst continuing to recognise their importance to our communities and town centre economies.

Officer: Andrew Ennis, Service Lead

Financial implications: The proposals and reasons for the tariff changes are outlined in the report. It is also projected that this will increase revenue income in the region of £300k to £400k but this projection has a number of caveats and is heavily dependent customer reaction to the tariff changes. The recommendation aligns to the Council's Transformation Strategy.

Legal implications: There are two statutory procedures, either of which could be adopted, to effect some of the changes referred to in this report. The simplified one (designed for varying parking charges) does not include a formal consultation. Parking Services would therefore need to instruct Legal Services on whether they wish to carry out an informal or formal consultation, before effecting some of the changes set out in this report. Any informal consultation should be conducted by Parking Services before instructing Legal Services. The timeline for Legal Services making such changes would be circa two to four months depending on which procedure is adopted. In either case, costs would be incurred in

advertising these changes in newspapers circulating in the locality of the parking places affected (although only one public notice, as opposed to two, would be required if no formal consultation was required).

Equalities impact: Low impact

Climate change: Medium Impact
The provision of plentiful affordable car parking is still important for our town centre economies and local communities. However the present climate emergency recognises the significant contribution that the exhaust emissions from petrol, diesel and LPG fuelled private motor cars add to our towns' carbon footprint. Over time we may want to consider incentives and initiatives to encourage alternatives and by inference to discourage the parking of private fossil fuel driven motor cars within our town centres.

Risk: Medium Risk
There is a clear risk that in the short term any increases in our car parking tariffs will be unpopular especially if considered in isolation outside of this Council's transformation and evolving commercialisation strategy and our Careful Choices programme.

Links to background information: [Environmental Health Service Plan](#)

Link to Council Plan: Continuously improving to be an outstanding Council.

Report in full

Section 1 – Review of car park tariffs

East Devon District Council currently manages a portfolio of fifty car parks.

Many of these currently operate on one of our standard £1 per hour tariffs.

Typically these are:

- (a) coastal long stay (maximum £6 for 24 hours)
- (b) inland long stay (maximum £3 for 24 hours) and
- (c) short stay (maximum £3 for 4 hours)

The £1 per hour tariff has been in place now since 2010 and we have consistently resisted increasing it to ensure that we continue to provide the best possible support for our town centre economies. However, we are under increasing pressure to review our activities and move to a position where we are managing all of our car parking assets responsibly and transparently.

Officers have identified a number of opportunities for consideration here that we believe reflect current good management practice in the car parking sector and will assist us in better strategic management of our off-street parking assets. In consequence of these changes we anticipate that

some modest increases in charges will deliver a significant increase in the contribution that car parking fees and charges make to our general fund. For the avoidance of doubt, this relates to increases in income from paid for parking sessions and NOT to any predicted increase in penalty charges.

I am proposing that we should now propose changes to the way in which we manage our car parks under the following headings:

1. Car Parks currently available for public parking free of charge
2. Car Parks in prime areas where demand is high, parking spaces are at a premium and a price increase would assist us in better managing that demand by displacing some customers to a lower tariff car park in a slightly less convenient location nearby.
3. Car Parks that are currently free of charge but busy during the evenings with customers enjoying the attractions of that town or village.
4. In addition we are now open to suggestions that some of the car parks in our portfolio may be suitable for an asset transfer to a Town or Parish Council and that would of course be subject to the usual considerations set out in our asset transfer policy. That policy is currently in draft form and will be brought forward for consideration by Asset Management Forum and Cabinet in due course.
5. Special arrangements in response to a request from Ottery St Mary Town Council for Ottery St Mary's car parks.
6. Free coach parking pilot in Seaton

1. Car Parks that are currently available for public parking without charge

Each of our car parking assets incurs a range of direct and other costs associated with ownership, maintenance and management including business rates, electricity charges, boundary and surface maintenance, tree and landscaping maintenance and insurance liability.

It is suggested that we should now consider the potential for each of the following assets to generate revenue to recover some of these ongoing costs and in some cases to fund overdue repairs and to carry out improvements that will enable us to maximise the potential of each asset:

Car Park	Location	Proposal
Upper Station car park	Budleigh Salterton	end leasing to Town Council and operate as a long stay pay and display car park.
Brook Road car park	Budleigh Salterton	operate as a short stay pay and display car park.
The Green car park	Broadclyst	operate as a long stay pay and display car park.

School Lane car park	Newton Poppleford	operate as a long stay pay and display car park.
Temple Street car park (free for 2 hour spaces)	Sidmouth	operate as a short stay pay and display car park.
Manor Farm Estate car park	Sidbury	operate as either a permit holder or resident reserved space car park.
Jarvis Close car park	Littleham Cross, Exmouth	operate as a short stay pay and display car park.
Blackmore Gardens car park	Sidmouth	operate as a short stay pay and display car park with special arrangements for health centre and library users

2. Car Parks where demand is high

We manage a number of short stay car parking assets in prime locations that are extremely popular with our customers with consequent congestion as motorists drive around looking for (and waiting for) a parking space. London Inn short stay car park in Exmouth is a good example of this. In all cases we have other less popular car parks in the vicinity that will usually have spaces available.

We are currently giving serious consideration to the challenge of providing suitable and sufficient electric vehicle charging infrastructure around East Devon to support what we believe will become an increasing number of visitors and residents who will be choosing to drive electric (or plug-in hybrid) vehicles over the next few years. At present, charging infrastructure requires a significant investment amounting to around £6,000 per parking bay (subject to the proximity of a 3-phase electricity supply).

Our proposal is therefore to introduce a 50% tariff increase in these most popular car park locations. We anticipate that the higher tariff will encourage some customers to switch to our less popular (and less expensive) car parks thereby alleviating some of the parking stress at the most popular locations. The additional revenue generated will then be of value within our overall careful choices programme and subject to the usual considerations, the council would be able to consider reinvesting some of that money in accelerating our programme of delivering charging infrastructure locally.

We propose to increase the hourly charge in the busiest car parks to £1.50 per hour whilst retaining the current £1 per hour tariff in at least one nearby alternative car park.

Car Park	Location	alternatives at £1 per hour
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Lace Walk short stay car park	Honiton	THG long stay car park Silver Street car park King Street car park New Street car park
West Street short stay car park	Axminster	West Street long stay car park South Street car park Poplar Mount car park Coombe Lane car park
Orchard car park	Seaton	Seaton Jurassic car park Underfleet West car park
Central car park (short stay)	Beer	Cliff Top (Beer Head) Central car park (long stay)
Ham East / West / Roxburgh and Mill Street	Sidmouth	Manor Road car park
Rolle Mews car park	Budleigh Salterton	Lime Kiln car park
London Inn car park Imperial Road car park and Queens Drive car park	Exmouth	Estuary car park Imperial Recreation Ground Camperdown Terrace Queens Drive Echelon Foxholes car park Maer Road car park

3. Car Parks that are currently available for evening parking without charge

Our short stay car parking tariff currently allows members of the public to park free of charge between 8pm and 6am. We know that the evening period (typically 5pm to 9pm and beyond) can be busy and is presently unregulated with no need for enforcement officers to visit during non-charging hours. It is proposed to introduce an evening parking charge (initially at a flat rate of just £1) to make a proportionate contribution to management, enforcement and wear and tear costs associated with the facility. The affected car parks would be:

Lace Walk short stay car park	Honiton
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West Street short stay car park	Axminster
Orchard car park	Seaton
Central car park	Beer
Ham East / West / Roxburgh and Mill Street	Sidmouth
Rolle Mews car park	Budleigh Salterton
London Inn car park Imperial Road car park	Exmouth
Exmouth Pavilion car park	Exmouth

4. Possible Asset Transfers

In addition to ongoing work on the Beer pilot, there has been interest in possible asset transfers expressed by other Town and Parish Councils including Sidmouth and Broadclyst. This Council's new asset transfer policy will apply to any such proposals.

5. Ottery St Mary

Representations from Ottery St Mary Town Council have suggested that the impact of this year's tariff increase in Canaan Way car park is already impacting negatively on the footfall in the town's retail businesses. Our car park transaction data for June and July does suggest a reduction in activity although the situation is significantly more complex with other towns where tariffs had not changed seeing similar reductions. However, in the interests of enabling the town's retailers to re-launch their autumn offer I am proposing that we introduce our usual winter price offer (all day parking for just £2) here with immediate effect rather than waiting for 1 November. It is our experience that this offer does not impact negatively on our own revenue with customers seeing £2 all day as great value. The additional revenue from more £2 tickets being purchased outweighs any loss of revenue from higher value sales.

6. Seaton Coach Parking

The Ward Member for Seaton has formally requested that we assist the Town Council in branding Seaton as a coach friendly town. Free daily coach parking has been requested. By coincidence the pay and display ticket machine in this coach park is faulty beyond repair and requires replacement. Coach drivers are therefore currently expected to pay using the Park Mobile app. During June and July our coach parking revenue here was less than £100 so the risks associated with responding favourably to this request are minimal. I am recommending that we offer free

coach parking for a twelve month trial period starting immediately to enable us to assess whether the offer results in increased coach visits to the town. Local customers who purchase permits to use the coach park regularly will be unaffected by this offer.

Discussion

The proposals set out above will assist Officers in the more efficient day to day management of our car parking assets. The additional revenue arising from these changes will pass into the general fund and will be available for allocation to providing essential services within the context of our careful choices programme.