

6. CAR PARKS REVIEW (ES)

1. Purpose of the report

To seek approval for the additional income, estimated at £256,522 including VAT (excluding VAT it is £213,768). Figures within the rest of the Report are exclusive of VAT unless stated. This is through the:

1. amendment the tariff for the Authority's pay and display car parks
2. implementation of the mechanism to regularly increase the pay and display charges
3. inclusion of additional car parks for pay and display

Key Issues

- **Members approved biennial reviews of the car park tariffs. The last reviews took place in 2016 and was implemented in 2019.**
- **Additional car parks have been identified as, whilst assisting traffic management also having potential as chargeable sites.**
- **The expected gross income from the proposed changes exceeds £150,000 for the existing and additional sites annually and therefore requires approval of the Programmes and Resources Committee in accordance with the Authority's Standing Orders (Part 7.2(b) and 7.G-1).**

2. Recommendation(s)

1. **That the proposed increase in charges is approved.**
2. **That the proposed mechanism to regularly increase charges is approved.**
3. **That charging is introduced to the additional proposed car parks.**

3. How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

The provision of car parking within the National Park for visitors supports the PDNPA in providing a sustainable, welcoming and inspiring place for all.

The need for visitors to access the countryside has been highlighted through the COVID-19 pandemic. The provision of public car parks helps to facilitate and manage this access. The majority of the car parks are associated with facilities and land that the Authority manages for visitors to use free of charge. This includes the multi-user trails, North Lees Estate and public toilets.

The car park infrastructure provided by the Authority and others helps to manage traffic flow within the park, reducing the incidence of verge-parking and resultant damage to roadside flora.

In addition to assisting traffic management car parks provide a sustainable source of income to offset the management costs of the Authority's assets. The recommendations contained within this report, if approved, will make a significant and planned contribution to the achievement of KPI13 within the current Corporate Strategy period.

4. Background

On 4 October 2016 the Authority, through RMT, agreed several measures to improve car park management at Authority sites, this included alterations to the tariff and introduction of civil enforcement through the Derbyshire Parking Partnership.

The report seeks authorisation to amend the existing tariff, based on inflation, cost increases and benchmarking against other providers. With maintained car park usage this should offer the Authority an estimated increased income of £68,066 (exclusive of VAT).

The report seeks authorisation to increase the number of pay and display car parks operated by the Authority. Based on average income per space in 2019/20, this should offer the Authority an estimated increased income of £145,702 (exclusive of VAT).

The Authority currently operates 44 car parks of which a pay and display system operates in 18. The gross car park and permit income to the Authority in 2019/20 (exclusive of VAT) was £357,920. This has been used as the base figure for all income calculations within the proposals.

The income that the Authority receives from car park charges helps to offset the cost of providing the car parks and the sites that they service, most notably the Monsal, High Peak and Tissington Trails, North Lees Estate and the public washroom facilities..

The operation of the Authority car parks is subject to the Authority Byelaws, and within Derbyshire to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for pay and display car parks. These will require amendment to implement the revised tariff and include additional car parks within the pay and display system. The process of amending the Byelaws is expected to take between 12 and 24 months, however, this is within the control of DEFRA. Implementation of the proposed changes will commence as soon as possible following amendment of the Byelaws.

Amending the Byelaws and TRO requires public consultation, this is advertising within the car parks and the local press. Details will also be included on our website and social media. The TRO consultation process will be managed by Derbyshire County Council (DCC). Consultation in relation to the Byelaw amendments will be carried out by the Authority. This has been normal practice for previous changes.

5. Proposals

The proposals are to:

1. **Increase the current tariff.** Table 1 shows the current and proposed tariffs.

TABLE 1 – Proposed Tariff Increase

Tariff structure	Existing Charge (£)	Proposed Charge (£)	Excluding VAT (£)	% Increase
Up to 1 hr	1.50	£1.75	£1.46	17%
Up to 2 hr	2.50	£2.90	£2.42	16%
Up to 4hr	4.00	£4.65	£3.88	16%
All day	4.75	£5.50	£4.58	16%
Coaches (where permitted) 2hr	4.00	Increase to 3hrs £5.10	£4.25	n/a
Horse boxes/lorries up to 2 hr	4.00	Increase to 4hrs £5.10	£4.25	n/a
Horse boxes/lorries all day	7:00	£8.10	£6.75	16%
Motorcycles all day	1.50	£2.10	£1.75	40%
Blue badge holders	Free	Free	Free	0%
Cycles	Free	Free	Free	0%
Permits				
Visitors Permit (annual)	40.00	£66.00	£55.00	65%
Holiday permit (week)	15.00	£17.50	£14.58	17%

The above tariff is a 3% per annum increase for 5 years, it has also been benchmarked against local councils and other National Parks. Over the 5 years this is effectively an average 16% increase, this would give an increase in income of £53,742.

The 3% per year is based on levels of inflation since October 2016, the annual rates have varied over this time and at present are lower. Operational costs have also increased during this time. The slightly higher than inflation increases are proposed to enable a robust tariff and income stream for the Authority, until the next tariff review.

Separate charges are proposed for different users, this is to make payments at the car park machines simpler for users. The charge differential will also allow analysis of car park users.

The coach hours have been increased to every 3 hours in line with other local councils. The horse box is altered to half (4 hours) and full days as it has been established that 2 hours is not a feasible length of time.

The annual permit has been raised to 12 days parking, in line with the Severn Trent permit. Comparison with other local authorities is not possible as their passes have much higher charges for the town centre car parks. Based on the number of permits sold in 2019/20, income would increase by £14,324.

2. Regularly increase the pay and display tariff

To improve efficiency and to keep the National Park charges up to date it is proposed to link the pay and display tariff to the annual increases in the Retail Price Index (RPI). The prices will be rounded to the nearest five pence, or the smallest coin the car park machines take. The tariff should be increased on 1st April every three years, starting in 2024.

3. Increase the number of Authority pay and display car parks

All of those car parks currently not part of the pay and display portfolio have been assessed for suitability for inclusion. In addition to assisting traffic management (and in particular the enforcement of parking restrictions) such car parks must be financially viable. In order to be financially viable they must be of a size and character that will sustain the investment in required infrastructure and the cost of cash collection services (where applicable).

Car Park machines require a strong mobile signal to operate card transactions. An assessment of signal strength has been carried out to inform this report and recommendations. They need to be in suitable locations for our staff to undertake maintenance and other call outs.

Table 2 identifies the car parks where the introduction of charges will be economically viable and the potential gross income that could be achieved from each site, based on the average revenue per space achieved in 2019/20. The car parks serve our Trails and North Lees Estates with a number of others in popular locations.

Additional operational costs will be incurred, similar to those of the existing car parks around payment processing, machine maintenance, enforcement and lease fees. These have been estimated, and may vary with the level of usage of the car parks and with the split between cash and card payments.

TABLE 2 – Potential Additional Sites

Site Name and locality	Spaces	Potential income - existing tariff (excluding VAT)	Potential income - new tariff (excl. VAT)	Estimated additional annual revenue costs	Estate budget
Friden (Nr Newhaven)	45	£12,701	£14,734	£2,031	Trails
Minninglow (Nr Pike Hall)	25	£7,056	£8,186	£2,008	Trails
Narlows Lane (Thorpe)	45	£12,701	£14,734	£2,299	Car parks and toilets
Thorpe Station (Thorpe)	45	£12,701	£14,734	£2,299	Trails
Dennis Knoll (Nr Stanage Edge)	10	£2,822	£3,274	£1,807	North Lees
Hook's Carr (Nr Stanage Edge)	50	£14,113	£16,371	£2,366	North Lees
Upper Burbage Bridge (Nr Stanage Edge)	25	£7,056	£8,186	£2,737	North Lees
Barber Booth, (Edale)_	20	£5,645	£6,548	£1,941	Car parks and toilets
Alstonefield	25	£7,056	£8,186	£1,408	Car parks and toilets
Milldale (Nr Alstonefield/ Dovedale)	40	£11,290	£13,097	£1,609	Car parks and toilets
Derwent Overlook (Nr Fairholmes)	60	£16,935	£19,645	£2,523	Car parks and toilets
Blore Pastures (Ilam)	55	£15,524	£18,008	£1,832	Car parks and toilets
Total	445	£125,600	£145,702	£24,860	

Table 3 shows the current PDNPA parking space provision allocated as chargeable and non-chargeable and the impact of the proposed changes on this provision.

TABLE 3 – Space Analysis

Type of space	Number of spaces	% of spaces
Currently chargeable	1,053	58%
Marked disabled bays – non-chargeable	44	2%
Proposed for charges	445	25%
Remaining non-chargeable	264	15%
Total	1,802	

In implementing the additional car parks there will be some initial set up costs including advertising, DCC Officer time associated with amending the Traffic Regulation Order (required to enable enforcement), new P&D machines and additional signage. The initial set up costs are estimated at £106,000. Income projections show that this should be recouped in the first year.

Consideration has been given to utilising the car park at Aldern House during weekends by including it within the byelaws and utilising it as a public P&D car park. The demand for this is

unknown and cannot easily be predicted therefore the financial viability of installing a P&D machine is difficult to evaluate.

It is proposed that this site is included in the byelaws as a chargeable car park and an older P&D machine (scheduled for replacement) from one of our existing sites is repurposed/refurbished and installed at Aldern House, thereby reducing the investment required. This will enable the car park to be opened to the public on a trial basis.

Introducing charging to car parks has the potential to displace users to nearby provision or on road parking, the majority of our car parks are on rural roads that has the potential to cause problems. A number of the sites already experience on road parking, or are on roads too narrow and with unsuitable verges for on road parking.

To mitigate for any additional on road parking it is proposed to undertake additional communication at the sites to highlight how parking fees are spent and the negative impact of verge parking. Previously targeted engagement and PR led to an increase of 29% in parking fees at the Hollin Bank Car Park. In addition on road parking will be surveyed prior to charges being implemented and afterwards to assess the impact, if significant change is identified then further targeted PR will be undertaken, with other actions reviewed.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

6. Financial:

There is a risk that expected increase in income may not be achieved. There are a significant number of factors that affect car park income, one of the most unpredictable is the weather as a much smaller number of visitors come during poor weather. The COVID-19 restrictions have had an impact on 2020/21 figures with charging suspended for part of the year, as well as visitor restrictions for most of the remaining year.

The addition of pay and display car parks requires significant investment, this is estimated at £106,000. To limit and manage the risk then the implementation could be phased over a number of years. Table 2 has been ordered to show the potential order for a phased implementation.

The Corporate Property Asset Management Plan 2020 highlighted a backlog of maintenance associated with the Authority's build infrastructure. Car park income is critical to fund ongoing maintenance liabilities, enabling the Authority to continue to provide the facilities that are essential to our visitors and local communities. If the recommendations are not approved/implemented in order to provide the required funds then the backlog of maintenance is likely to continue to increase. No other comparable source of additional income has been identified.

7. Risk Management:

There could be delays to the processes as the Byelaws rely on two consultation periods with DEFRA, the TRO process is to be managed through Derbyshire County Council (DCC), and as such relies on Officer time of a third party.

Charging for currently free car parks has a risk as visitors may choose not to use the car parks and use road side spaces instead. This is not a safe possibility at some locations. This is also a risk with increasing the tariff. This was highlighted as a risk during the 2016 car park review but those concerns were not borne out.

As part of the implementation of these changes a communications plan will be devised to encourage responsible behaviour and highlight the important role that car park income has in enabling the Authority to carry out its work and provide essential facilities for visitors.

It is not possible to foresee if or where problems might arise. Close monitoring of sites will be required so that mitigating measures can be implemented quickly, in partnership with the Highway Authority.

Pay and display machines in the more remote, and therefore more vulnerable, locations will be card only machines to reduce the risk of machine theft and damage.

8. Sustainability:

The proposed, new pay and display machines will be solar powered, and where possible card only machines will be installed to reduce the need for regular vehicular visits for cash collection and maintenance. The new machines are all mobile enabled so ticket levels and other maintenance issues can be monitored remotely, therefore reducing and managing vehicular visits.

9. Equality:

Annual and weekly permits are available that significantly reduce the cost of parking for regular users.

The charges apply between 9am and 6pm daily and this is not proposed to change. This gives the opportunity to access free of charge outside these hours.

The proposed P&D machines will be installed with consideration to those with mobility limitations.

Consideration has been given as follows to the protected characteristics described in the Equality Act 2010:

Age – no impact

Disability – There will be a small positive impact as the changes will improve flow on PDNPA car parks meaning that there is more likelihood of finding a space. Parking for blue badge holders will remain free of charge and access to disabled parking bays will be protected through the enforcement of restrictions. Some parking providers do now charge for the use of allocated accessible parking however, in order to support visits to the park by under-represented audiences, officers suggest that this approach is not adopted. Anecdotal information indicates that this provision is viewed positively by visitors.

gender reassignment – no impact

marriage and civil partnership – no impact

pregnancy and maternity – no impact

race – no impact

religion or belief – no impact

sex – no impact

sexual orientation – no impact

10. Climate Change

The proposal does not directly contribute to the Authority's role in climate change or the carbon net zero targets. The machines will be managed remotely as outlined in the sustainability section.

Indirectly the car parks provide a mechanism for the Authority to engage with visitors to the National Park regarding issues associated with climate change.

11. Background papers (not previously published)

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – car parks identified as inappropriate for introduction of charges and rationale

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