

SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: Portfolio Holder for Place and/or Executive Director - Place

To: Cabinet Tuesday, 29 October 2019;

(Author: Charlotte Paine Environmental Services Manager)

Subject Car Parking Review

Purpose: To review and consider the parking tariffs for Spalding and Holbeach car parks

Recommendations:

- 1) That members consider whether they wish to vary existing car parking charges, and introduce new charges for Gore Lane and Castle Sports Complex (dry side), as shown in Appendix A;
- 2) That all agreed varied charges be subject to a notice of variation to be published under section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, such charges to come into effect on 1 January 2020
- 3) To agree, in principle, that the South Holland District Council (Off Street Parking Places) (Civil Enforcement) Order 2012 be amended so as to include within the Order:
 - a) the car park at Gore Lane, Spalding, with new charges as agreed under recommendation 1 above, subject to no impediments being identified
 - b) the new area of the Castle Sports Complex car park (dry side), to the rear of the bowling green, with new charges for the whole of the dry side as agreed under recommendation 1 above,
 - c) if necessary, arrangements for permits or tickets for regular and casual users of the swimming pool and Castle Sports Complex.
- 4) That the Environmental Services Manager be authorised, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Place, to:
 - a) finalise arrangements for the issue of permits or tickets for regular and casual users of the swimming Pool and Castle Sports Complex for inclusion, if necessary, with the amended Order
 - b) finalise the necessary notice of proposal and statement of reasons relating to the proposed amendments to the existing Off-Street Parking Places Order detailed in recommendation 3 above
 - c) undertake the necessary consultation and equality impact assessment in relation to the proposed amendments to the car parking order and report back to the portfolio holder following completion of the consultation process
 - d) determine the position of any parent/toddler parking bays in appropriate car parks
- 5) That the portfolio holder for Place be given delegated authority to:
 - a) consider the results of the consultation on the proposed amendments to the South Holland District Council (Off Street Parking Places) (Civil Enforcement) Order 2012, and the required Equality Impact Assessment, and determine whether or not to amend the Order, including any non-substantial modifications considered appropriate

- b) consider all and any pricing incentives for the current financial year and future years such as altered pricing structures during festive seasons, subject to publication of any necessary notices of variation under section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 South Holland owns and maintains 13 car parks across Spalding, Long Sutton and Holbeach. In total there are 594 spaces available to park in Spalding with an additional 26 disabled spaces available.
- 1.2 Across our car parks we offer a variety of car parking options with free parking available in some, short and long term stay available in others. Where there are tariffs, these vary greatly even within a town and our tariffs are considered low, ranging from 20p for 2 hours in Spalding to a maximum charge of £1.50 all day in another of the Spalding sites. Parking on evenings and Sundays are free of charge.
- 1.3 Comparisons with local Districts in Lincolnshire and Norfolk show that South Holland offers car parking at the lowest available price on average, compared to the other 6 areas reviewed. It was also seen that two of the authorities reviewed charge for evenings, Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- 1.4 There has not been a change in the SHDC car parking tariffs for 10 years, despite increasing costs for the running and maintenance of the car parks during those 10 years. In addition, the council is investing and proposes further significant investment in its car parks. In light of this, it is considered necessary to review the charges in SHDC car parks and produce some recommendations, as set out in this report.
- 1.5 A review of tariffs was undertaken considering the following:
- Impact on users and to ensure effective use of the councils car parks;
 - Impact on the local area and economic growth;
 - Cost of maintenance and provision of car parks;
 - Delivery of corporate plan aims including;
 - *'Support the expansion and growth of Spalding and Holbeach to be attractive places where people want to visit, live and work'*
 - Impact on car park usage;
 - Legislation such as Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, regarding generation of income.
- 1.6 The recommendations have been put forward with careful consideration of the potential impact and influence on economic growth as a local authority through our car parking provision. The Local Government Association (LGA) best described this as *'Effective traffic management is one of the core tools local authorities use to nurture local economic growth, an essential part of which is parking provision and enforcement. Councils need to have the full range of tools to deal with this increasingly complex and significant problem.'*
- 1.7 Therefore, the recommendations are made to ensure that they allow SHDC to deliver good quality car parks that are reasonably priced when compared locally, encourage use of our car parks by residents and visitors to our towns, whilst supporting that the car parks are not

misused, and help to fund delivery of a high standard of cleanliness, street pride and the significant investment by this council in supporting the delivery of highways infrastructure.

2.0 OPTIONS

- 2.1 **Option one** – Increase car parking tariffs in Spalding Car Parks, including Castle Sports Centre (dry side), in line with the **maximum** of the average tariffs in the analysis. This would see the highest increase in the short term and is not the recommended option.
- 2.2 **Option two** – Increase car parking tariffs in Spalding Car Parks, including Castle Sports Centre (dry side), in line with the **overall average** tariff in the analysis as detailed in Appendix A. This would similar increases to option three and set prices in line with the average charges in the local area. This is the recommended option of this report.
- 2.3 **Option three** – Increase car parking tariffs in Spalding Car Parks, including Castle Sports Centre (dry side), in a **tapered increase over 4 years to achieve the maximum** of the average tariffs in the analysis. This option provides the lowest charges in the first year but would result in the highest of the charges by the end of year 4.
- 2.4 **Option four** – Do nothing, do not increase car parking tariffs. This would not allow SHDC to continue to maintain car parks to a good standard or invest as it needs to do, nor manage the parking demands of the car parks.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 It is a recommendation of this report that consideration should be given, working with the current leisure provider, to establish fees at both the Castle Sport Centre and Castle Pool car parks that are reasonable and ensure fair use of the car parks and the leisure facilities. Currently one car park is free whilst the other has minimal charges. This causes disproportionate use at the free car park and limits the availability for those wishing to use the leisure facilities.
- 3.2 The proposal is for installation of a machine and introduction of fees at the Castle Sports Centre (dry) after amending the South Holland District Council (Off Street Parking Places) (Civil Enforcement) Order 2012, and for the fee at this and the Castle Swimming Pool to be aligned with the suggested tariffs as set out in Appendix A. Alongside the proposed increase it is recommended that, through working with the current leisure provider, a concession mechanism, such as a permit scheme, is introduced so that members of the leisure complex are not unduly impacted by increases in car parking tariffs. The purpose for introducing charges and aligning them with nearby car parks is to ensure that these car parks are available for leisure users and therefore ensuring they are not disproportionately affected by increases to the tariffs.
- 3.3 The recommendation and proposed tariffs set out in Appendix A look to align the charges at SHDC owned car parks to ensure that charges are fair to users and that car parks are maintained to a standard that attracts users to the car parks and the town. Therefore, it is a recommendation of this report that the current Gore Lane car park be added to the South Holland District Council (Off Street Parking Places) (Civil Enforcement) Order 2012 alongside the fitting of a new machine and introduction of fees, subject to no impediments

being identified. This recommendation is made to enable the laying of a new surface which will provide a better and safer experience for those using the car park.

- 3.4 The analysis of the tariffs has been undertaken to establish the most appropriate parking tariff (price and duration) as this is an essential element of managing supply and demand and ensuring footfall is not deterred. It is important to note the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 includes provisions to control the use of any parking income surplus generated, as set out in s55. This ensures that the income from penalty charges are utilised appropriately to meet the costs of car parking provision or for road or environmental improvement.
- 3.5 The recommendation to increase tariffs is made to ensure SHDC can deliver a car parking service to residents that are not a cost to the Council tax payer and provide car parks that can afford to be maintained to a good standard with appropriate safety features and new technology available for users. A recent investment in the car parks has been the introduction of new machines that have cash, card and mobile payment facilities. The increase in tariffs would look to see continued investment in the car parks, including consideration for parent and toddler bays, improved linings, security and surfacing repairs, with the potential for further future investments and provision.
- 3.6 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, Section 55, details how enforcement revenue must be used to meet the costs of car parking provision and also for road or environmental improvement. Income from normal tariff charges does not have to be used for section 55 purposes, however there is nothing to prevent this income being used for section 55 purposes. This provides an opportunity, where any excess income is available, for the increase in tariffs and season ticket costs to contribute towards highways infrastructure and projects such as the Pride in South Holland initiative which will ensure that the towns are well served, cleaned and attractive to residents and visitors. A cleaner and well maintained town and car parks should in turn ensure better use of the car parks and the local shops and facilities.
- 3.7 It is recommended that, with the increase in Spalding tariffs, season ticket prices for Spalding should also have an increase. The option for the increasing the season ticket prices has been included in Appendix A. The recommendation is that season tickets remain available to purchase quarterly, the amount shown in this report refers to the annual cost.
- 3.8 It is also the recommendation of this report that the tariffs, including season ticket prices, in Holbeach remain as they are currently. This is because the work that is presently being undertaken in regards to regeneration bids in Holbeach, which may result in a bigger piece of work to review provision of the area including car parks. Therefore it is not considered an appropriate time to make changes whilst this other work is still being considered.
- 3.9 The recommendation of this report, alongside the earlier decision to have Lincolnshire County Council take over monitoring and enforcement in the car parks on behalf of SHDC, will also ensure that our car parks provide visitors with space to park safely and close to our local amenities. Ensuring that compliance to the parking restrictions is maintained will enable visitors to access spaces in the car parks easily throughout the week and ensure people are not deterred from visiting the area.

4.0 **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

- 4.1 Approval of any of the recommendations will likely see an increase in the level of income received and this will be utilised for the ongoing cost of parking provision in South Holland, with any excess potentially being used for highways improvements and environmental improvements. It will ensure that investment in suitable safety features are available in our car parks and that ongoing investment will be maintained into new technology to provide a better experience for our users.
- 4.2 Option two sees the lowest overall increase in charges to users, compared to option one or three. Whilst option three will have lower charges initially, due to the level of increase to charges over time, the overall increase is higher than that seen in either option one or two. Therefore in order to keep Spalding parking prices attractive to users, option two is recommended. This will ensure that users will still be able to receive the benefits of improvements without losing the good value that is currently seen in Spalding Car parks. As seen in the benchmarking, option two still ensures that the tariffs remain in line with the average tariffs for parking in the local districts analysed.
- 4.3 Research has shown that the tariff of a car park is not the main factor for users when deciding which car park to use. The Association of Town and City Management (ATCM) compiled a report called [In-Town Parking: What Works? Innovative Practices in Parking Provision](#) in which they found that the top reasons for choosing a car park were;

Ranking	Car Park Users
1	Location
2	Personal safety
3	Safe environment
4	Tariffs
5	Ease of access
6	No/little queuing
7	Number of spaces
8	Effective surveillance
9	Size of parking space
10	Appropriate lighting

Therefore the recommendation to increase the tariffs in order to improve the security and safety of our car parks should draw users rather than put them off based on the above and tariff charges are shown to not be the sole determining factor for car park usage. The research showed that other key factors include value for money, choice and technology which we believe the recommended option of this report will enable us to continue to provide and improve.

- 4.4 The recommendation to increase tariffs will enable SHDC to review the layouts of car parks including lining improvements and consideration as to whether alternative bays should be provided, such as parent and toddler spaces. These bays provide additional space around the vehicle to enable safe entry and exit of the vehicle for babies and children.
- 4.5 The recommendation is also looking to improve security and safety measures in car parks and additional income could be used to consider additional maintenance to the surfaces,

signage, pedestrian walkways and ensure sufficient lighting is used to ensure that users feel they are in a safe environment and are attracted to use our car parks, as shown in the table above regarding what attracts people to car parks.

- 4.6 The recommendation is seeking to introduce new tariff banding in a number of the car parks, as set out in Appendix A, which provides users with more choice and flexibility over the tariffs they purchase and aligns each of the car parks tariffs to provide consistency to users.
- 4.7 The recommended change in tariffs is considered the best option as it will allow for improvements, as set out above, to be made to car parks and research suggests this would attract users. Consideration has been given to reducing tariffs and even making parking free, however when considering the research these are not recommended as there are risks that can be seen with these options.
- 4.8 Free parking, whilst often considered by users to be the preferred option, comes with a number of unintended consequences. Providing free parking often leads to car parks becoming attractive to commuters who park all day in spaces that would usually be occupied by visitors to the area. Once these spaces are filled there is no longer any 'churn' in car parks with people in the spaces all day which therefore removes the ability for people wishing to use shopping and leisure facilities to park. This can then have a negative impact on businesses and the local economy.
- 4.9 Free or reduced tariffs would impact the ability for SHDC to provide car parks that can be maintained to a high standard, including improved technology and improved security and alternative parking spaces. Therefore free or reduced tariffs are not recommended as they are likely to create further issues with the parking in Spalding and could deter users and could create unsafe environments.
- 4.10 The recommendation provides regular users, including residents, the opportunity to purchase season tickets quarterly which continue to offer good value to car park users.
- 4.11 The recommendation to increase tariffs is made to provide additional benefits to the users of our car parks, as set out in this report. There are further benefits that could be considered if this recommendation is implemented, such as looking to incentivise car park users with offers such as free parking mornings or afternoons on certain days during the year, such as in the Christmas period. This could allow SHDC to work with businesses in the area to support trade and entice shoppers to come to Spalding and support car park users by offering discounted parking tariffs where possible.

5.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

In preparing this report, the report author has considered the likely implications of the decision - particularly in terms of Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues; Constitutional & Legal; Contracts; Corporate Priorities; Crime & Disorder; Data Protection; Equality & Diversity/Human Rights; Financial; Health & Wellbeing; Reputation; Risk Management; Safeguarding; Staffing; Stakeholders/Consultation/Timescales; Transformation Programme; Other. Where the report author considers that there may be implications under one or more of these headings, these are identified below.

5.1 **Constitutional & Legal**

5.1.1 Changes to parking provision is an executive matter. If the proposals included within this report are approved the following changes and legal procedures will apply:

- Amended charges will apply at all Spalding car parks included within the existing Order as shown in Appendix A, with the exception of car parks at:
 - Albion Street (behind the public house) where no charges will continue to apply
 - Love Lane where no charges will continue to apply
 - Priory Road where no charges will continue apply
 - Chestnut Avenue (off Churchgate) where existing charges of 50p for up to 4 hours and £1 all day will continue to apply
- Season tickets, where available for Spalding car parks, will increase from £260 per annum to £460 per annum, or £115 per quarter

5.1.2 Section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 enables the Council to vary existing charges by publishing a notice at least once in a local newspaper at least 21 days before the amended charges are due to come into force. It is suggested that the above charges be introduced by way of such notice. It is proposed that these amended charges come into effect on 1 January 2020.

5.1.3 The below changes will require amendment to the existing South Holland District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) (Civil Enforcement) Order 2012.

- The car park at Gore Lane, Spalding may be added to the Order subject to no problems being encountered with this proposal. If this remains possible then new charges will apply as shown in Appendix A
- The dry side at the Castle Sports Complex off Albion Street, Spalding will be subject to new charges, and the new area of this car park to the rear of the bowling green will be added to the Order. It is proposed that casual and regular users of the swimming pool and Castle Sports Complex will not be subject to the charges, and permit and/or ticketing arrangements will need to be finalised to secure this.

5.1.4 The procedure for amending the Car Parking Order is set out in the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 and includes the following:

- Consult the police, county council, road haulage association, freight transport association and any other relevant bodies about the proposed changes
- The officer/member protocol in the Council's Constitution also requires ward members to be included within any form of consultation exercise pr
- Publish notice of proposed making of the Amending Order (called "notice of proposal") in local paper and in car parks
- Place documents on deposit for inspection by members of the public, including the "notice of proposals", and a statement of reasons setting out why the Council proposes to make the Amending Order
- Consider all objections and representations received during the consultation process. Note that substantial changes to the initial proposals may result in additional consultation, and where any objection has not been wholly acceded to the decision maker must include reasons why

- If approved, make the Amending Order
- Publish notice that the Amending Order has been made (called the “notice of making”) in local paper and on car parks, and notify all objectors.
- Notify all objectors of the Council’s decision. Notification must include the reasons why any objections have not been wholly acceded to
- The Order, if approved, takes effect on the date contained in the notice of making.

5.1.5 Members will appreciate that the Council cannot at this stage make a final decision to amend the Car Parking Order as it must first consult, and take into account any representations received. The Equalities Act 2010 also requires a public authority, in exercising its functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation etc.; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between persons who come within the terms of the Act and those who don’t. It will, therefore be necessary to carry out an equality impact assessment before any final decision is made.

5.1.6 Members should note that:

- There are no proposed amendments to the maximum waiting times at any of the car parks.
- Parent/toddler spaces may be introduced at appropriate car parks.
- New arrangements may be introduced to allow for incentives to be explored such as altered pricing structures during the festive season.
- Season tickets for the Boston Road car park, Holbeach car park will not be increased.

5.2 Corporate Priorities

5.2.1 The corporate plan priorities and critical activates detail how SHDC looks to support towns with economic growth opportunities and it is considered that effective and attractive parking facilities support delivery of those. Therefore the approval of the recommendation would allow SHDC to deliver on these elements of the corporate plan.

5.3 Crime and Disorder

5.3.1 Adequately lit, well maintained and secure car parks can help to deter crime and disorder and ensure that car park users feel safe and their vehicles secure. This recommendation looks to ensure that the car parks of SHDC can continue to be maintained to a level that supports safe and secure car parks and attract users.

5.4 Financial

5.4.1 All options have financial impacts with higher levels of income anticipated, should usage figures remain or grow. Details regarding the proposed tariffs are included in Appendix A.

5.4.2 Assumptions using average car park usage figures, which have been dropping over recent months, anticipate income with option two would increase from £244,580 per annum to £349,905. It is this income that would be used to maintain the running of the car parks and set to extend and improve car parks, as set out in this report. Any additional income from

enforcement could then be used to fund highway infrastructure and environmental improvements if considered appropriate.

5.4.3 Details of the benefits that will be seen through the changes in tariffs are set out through section 4 and include;

- increasing car park provision;
- improvements to car park lining;
- improvements to car park spaces, including new bays;
- improvement to car park security;
- improvement to surfacing;
- improvement to car park facilities and cleanliness;
- improvement to signage.

5.4.4 An example of the type of investment already seen in the car parks are the new card and cash machines that improve the accessibility of our car parks by improving the options available to our users to make quick and accurate payments. This investment has been over £40,000 and is the type of innovation that we could deliver following implementation of option two.

5.4.5 Initial investment proposed as part of this report includes the capital purchase of two new payment machines to be located at Castle Sports and Gore Lane car parks. It is estimated that the cost for these machines will be £12,000. A further report will come forward shortly with the costings for surfacing works on the remaining car parks, such as Gore Lane.

5.5 **Reputation**

5.5.1 The effective use of any additional income will ensure the users of the car parks see that the money is being positively invested into well-maintained, safe car parks with up to date technology. This, alongside a positive parking experience where spaces are available due to a good turnover of users, will enable visitors to reap the benefits sought with tariff increases. It will allow the council to make future investments to support car parking.

5.6 **Risk Management**

5.6.1 There is a risk that the increase in tariffs could see a reduction in the number of visitors using SHDC car parks. However, this risk is mitigated by the recommendation to approve option two, which is a lower overall increase, and the analysis that shows this option ensures SHDC car parks are still fairly priced.

5.6.2 This risk is considered in the assumptions made regarding the financial impact of the recommendations. There is an assumption that potentially there may be a reduction in usage, this has been factored in during the financial modelling. It is assumed that over time, with the improvements that will be seen to the car parks, that any lost users would return or additional users drawn to the car parks based on the research detailed in 4.3 about reasons why people use particular car parks.

5.6.3 There is also a risk that the increase in tariffs could have an impact on surrounding car parks or on street car parking. In order to mitigate this, close working with LCC to monitor the impact of this would be undertaken and considered further should there be any

negative impacts seen that cannot be overcome.

5.7 Stakeholders / Constitution / Timescales

5.7.1 There will need to be a statutory 21 day consultation period to amend the South Holland District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) (Civil Enforcement) Order 2012. This will be undertaken with car park users, advertised in the media and also provided to the Police, County Council, Road Haulage Association and Freight Transport Association.

5.7.2 There is also a 21 day notice period for increase of tariff fees.

6.0 WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

6.1 All

7.0 ACRONYMS

7.1 SHDC – South Holland District Council

7.2 LGA - Local Government Association

7.3 ATCM - Association of Town and City Management

7.4 LCC – Lincolnshire County Council

Lead Contact Officer

Name and Post: Charlotte Paine Environmental Services Manager

Telephone Number

Email: cpaine@sholland.gov.uk

Key Decision: Y

Exempt Decision: N

This report refers to a Discretionary Service

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A Proposed Tariffs for All Options