

SUBJECT:	Annual Review of Pay and Display Car Parks
REPORT OF:	Officer Management Team - Director of Services Prepared by - Head of Environment

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to review the car park charges and related matters for the Council's pay and display car parks and recommend the commencement of a consultation re 2012/13 charges.

2.0 Links to Council Policy Objectives

- 2.1 The annual review of car park charges contributes to the Council's medium term aim of planning for a thriving and sustainable South Bucks, with vibrant towns and villages.
- 2.2 This matter also contributes to the Council's aim to deliver value for money services that are driven by customer and community needs.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Council has ten pay and display car parks located in Beaconsfield, Burnham, Gerrards Cross and Farnham Common. They are regulated by the South Bucks Council Off Street Parking Places (Amendment No.1) Order 2011. The current fees and charges are detailed at Appendix A.
- 3.2 The ten car parks provide a total of 789 spaces for public use as well as a number of disabled bays. During 2011 all the Council's car parks have once again been awarded the safe and secure parking award.
- 3.3 Charges are currently payable between 0800 and 1800 Monday to Sunday. We have two full-time car park attendants who check that cars are parked correctly and have valid tickets. In addition we have two attendants employed on a casual basis: one provides cover every third weekend, and the other works ten hours a week.
- 3.4 The budgeted total income for 2010-11 was £883,000 and the actual income for the year was £881,328.
- 3.5 The budgeted total income for 2011-12 for all the car parks is £936,570 (i.e. 6.1% above that for the previous year).
- 3.6 The last increase in charges was introduced in January 2011:
 - To replace the free half hour tickets at The Broadway and Summers Road with a charge of 30p;
 - To raise the first hour charge by 10p at all relevant car parks.

4.0 Discussion

- 4.1 Over the first three months of this financial year the revenue from the sale of tickets is 6% lower than the comparable figure for 2010-11. The current estimate is that total income for 2011-12 will be £850,000 which is below target by £87,000.
- 4.2 The proposed SBDC target for increase in income in 2012-13 is 2%. This implies a budget figure of £955,300, i.e. additional income of £18,730.
- 4.3 **Beaconsfield.** Overall we are seeing a small increase in business at these three car parks. For the first quarter of 2011-12 there has been year-on-year a 2% improvement in ticket issuance (+1249 tickets) and a 3% increase in revenue (+£2,705). There will be a separate report to examine the possibility of having another deck on one of the Beaconsfield car parks. In addition the County Council has recently let a contract for the enforcement of on street parking controls in the 3 District areas where this has already been decriminalised. The contract allows for its extension into South Bucks District if and when on-street parking is decriminalised and it can be anticipated that further discussions between Members of both Councils will need to take place fairly shortly concerning this matter.
- 4.4 **Burnham.** The removal of the free half hour at Summers Road from January 24th 2011 has affected parking patterns in Burnham. Comparing the months April to June for 2010 and 2011, there has been a decrease in tickets issued at Summers Road of 52% (-7119 tickets) but an increase in tickets at Jennery Lane of 12% (+2314). Revenue at Summers Road has increased by 12% (£574) and increased by 13% (£1661) at Jennery Lane. Although fewer people are using these car parks, the predicted increase in revenue has been achieved. Taking the two car parks together, the decrease in tickets has been 15% (-4805) and the increase in revenue has been 13%, which is £2,235 for the quarter (equivalent to £9,000 in a full year).
- 4.5 **Gerrards Cross.** There has been a significant decline in use of all three car parks since January 2011. For the first quarter of 2011-12, on a year-on-year basis, we have seen a 33% decline in the number of tickets issued (-17000 tickets) and a 28% decline in revenue (£17,552) which is equivalent to £70,000 in a full year. This may or may not be due to the free parking available at Tesco and it may or may not represent a structural change to parking patterns in the District it being too soon to tell. Also a significant increase in use of Station Road car park is expected when the Waitrose store opens in early 2012. Finally there will be a separate report to consider whether to have another deck on this car park.
- 4.6 **Farnham Common.** The removal of the free half hour at The Broadway took effect from January 24th 2011. In the first quarter of 2011-12 there has been a decrease of 30% (-8658 tickets) but an increase in revenue of 108% (£6,479)

which is equivalent to £26,000 in a full year. Thus while use of the car park has dropped, the revenue increase has matched expectations.

5.0 Annual Review of Charges

- 5.1 Members should note that the timetable for revising car park charges implies that any increases could not take effect until April 2012. No interim changes are proposed at this time to make up the predicted income shortfall for 2011/12, which will continue to be closely monitored.
- 5.2 Following discussions with Gerrards Cross Parish Council, consideration is being given to a scheme to offer discounted season tickets in Station Road for the remainder of the financial year. This will take up unused spaces we have available at the car park and benefit shop and office workers in the village. If this proposal is to be recommended then it will form the subject of a further report.
- 5.3 Members are requested to consider whether any alterations to car park charges should be proposed for public consultation to meet the proposed budget for income in 2012-13.
- 5.4 Members are therefore requested to consider the following officer suggestions:
- 1 - Raising ticket prices by 10p across the board would produce £52,000 in a full year, assuming current rates of ticket issuance. Typical charges in the main car parks would therefore be 70p for half an hour; £1.40 for one hour; £2.40 for three hours. As a percentage such an increase is disproportionately high for the shorter tariff bands, but approximately 50% of tickets issued are for half an hour and thus an increase for that band will generate most additional income.
 - 2 - By extending charges for car parking from 6.00pm until 8.00pm, it is estimated that an additional £20,000 per annum might be raised. This figure is speculative and based on assumptions about the use of car parks for people going to restaurants etc. However an allowance would need to be made of approximately £5,000 for the cost of having a car park attendant on duty out of normal hours for say every other evening.
 - 3 - By abolishing charges for half an hour and having a minimum of one hour, at current hourly charges and ticket issuance, up to approximately £150,000 per annum might be raised. To make this more acceptable to customers, the charge for an hour at the larger car parks could be reduced from £1.30 to £1.10, and this would overall produce additional income of approximately £95,000 per annum.
 - 4 - As the free hour at Summers Road and The Broadway was removed earlier this year, members may wish to consider a variant on option 3 above. In this option, charges in Burnham and Farnham Common would be left as

they are, but there would be a minimum one hour charge at the Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross car parks. In this case simply deleting the half hour band would produce an additional amount of approximately £119,000 per annum. If the one hour charge were lowered to £1.10 then the additional revenue would be approximately £65,000 per annum.

6.0 Pay by Phone

6.1 In December 2010 the Environment PAG decided to move ahead with a six month trial of a pay by phone system in several of the car parks.

6.2 Two companies have quoted for such a scheme. Company A has offered this at nil cost to the Council, for all car parks, for a minimum of one year. Company B has offered a similar scheme if the Council pays the credit card charges, for all car parks, for a minimum of fifteen months.

6.3 Members are asked whether we should go ahead with the offer made by Company A.

7.0 Financial and other implications

7.1 The predicted car park income for 2011-12 is £850,000 against a budget figure of £936,570.

8.0 Summary

8.1 Members are asked to advise the Portfolio Holder as to whether:

1 - To carry out a consultation with a view to raising car park charges as set out in para 5.3 for 2012-13.

2 - To ask Company A to proceed with a trial for Pay by Phone - minimum 1 year.

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Background Papers:	Services working file