



Report to Cabinet

Date: 13 October 2020

Title: Handy Cross Park & Ride Car Park - Introduce Charges

Relevant councillor(s): Councillor David Martin

Responsible Officer: Rob Smith (Director of Highways & Technical Services)

Author and/or contact officer: Julie Rushton (Interim Head of Off-Street Parking)

Ward affected: High Wycombe Abbey ward

Recommendations: Cabinet is asked to agree to the introduction of parking restrictions and a tariff structure at Handy Cross Park and Ride car park in High Wycombe as set out in the paragraph below and AUTHORISE the making of the orders which are necessary to give effect this decision:

1. Tariff structure:

Up to 30 minutes - £0.00

Up to 4 hours - £1.20

Up to 10 hours - £3.00

Up to 24 hours - £4.00

Up to 48 hours - £8.00

Up to 72 hours - £12.00

Up to 96 hours - £16.00

Maximum stay of 96 hrs

2. Parking Permits priced at £60 per calendar month, purchasable in monthly increments up to a maximum of 12 months for £720.
3. Car park open and chargeable 24hrs per day, seven days a week and 365 days of the year with the exceptions of Christmas Day, official Boxing Day and Easter Sunday, when the car park will be open; but charges will not apply.
4. Car park fees and charges to apply for electric vehicle users to enable electric vehicle bays to be effectively managed and availability of space maximised.
5. Disabled Badge holders park for free; in line with the majority of council owned/managed car parks in Buckinghamshire.

Reason for decision: This is a Park & Ride (P&R) car park in a relatively recently developed site (opened in 2015) with adjacent businesses and nearby schools. Since the car park was built the intention has

been for it to be chargeable to ensure consistency with other Council owned car parks, along with ensuring it is available for use for customers travelling on the P&R and other buses/coaches that stop at the site, without parking charges being prohibitive to other members of the public.

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 Under the delegations afforded to the Service Director to execute duties relevant to their areas of responsibility, and in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, a statutory consultation has taken place to consult on amending the Off-Street Parking Order. This is to introduce charges at the Handy Cross P&R car park. The consultation, which commenced on Friday 28/8/20, ended on Sunday 20/9/20.
- 1.2 This report provides the outcome of the consultation and seeks Cabinet approval to make the Amendment Order and introduce the charges and restrictions as per the recommendations.

2. Content of report

Background

- 2.1 The Handy Cross development, which is ongoing, commenced in May 2014, with the intention of introducing charges in the 396 space P&R car park once the car park was finished.
- 2.2 The car park will be barrier controlled; this work is currently being progressed.

Tariffs

- 2.3 The purpose of introducing charges is to enable the car park to be effectively managed and encourage customers to park at this location and use the park and ride facility. This helps to discourage parking in the town centre, consequently reducing congestion and pollution.
- 2.4 The tariff structure has been proposed taking into account nearby tariffs for privately owned car parks, tariffs in town centre car parks, and planning conditions attached to the land. An overview of tariffs for these car parks is provided in Appendix A.
- 2.5 With this in mind the 10hr tariff is proposed at £3.00 to enable schools' staff and pupils and business staff to be able to park for a school day or shift at relatively low cost compared to parking in the Town centre, and the 4hr tariff is at £1.20 to help support parking for the nearby leisure centre. The longer stay tariffs provide flexibility to support the wider community.
- 2.6 Parents can park in the bays on the spine road, which travels through the Handy Cross Hub site, however, this has restricted capacity and could not be expected to cope with the peak traffic at the beginning and end of the school day. A 30 minutes free parking period is therefore proposed to support parents dropping off and picking up children. This free parking session can also be used by all customers wishing to park at this location.
- 2.7 Charges are proposed for electric vehicle owners to enable sufficient turnover of vehicles re-charging on the car park, thus help to increase availability of the electric vehicle recharging bays, and to be consistent with other Buckinghamshire Council parking locations.
- 2.8 Parking permits will provide more flexibility on payment options for customers and help reduce contact with equipment, thus supporting distancing measures in the car park.
- 2.9 Subject to Cabinet approval and the amendment order being made, customers will pay for parking upon their return and pay only for the time they have used. Payments can be made at the machine with credit / debit card using both chip and pin and contactless payment functions. Work is also underway to include an alternative payment method (RingGo) to further enhance customer experience and provide an additional contactless payment option.

Park and Ride Facility

- 2.10 For customers parking to use the park and ride facility, parking is free. Similar to general car park customers, park and ride customers will take a ticket at the barrier upon entering the car park and present this to the bus driver. The bus driver will then validate the ticket allowing customers to obtain an exit ticket from the machine upon returning to the car park. This then allows them to exit the car park without paying a car parking charge.
- 2.11 Notices explaining the process will be displayed throughout the car park.
- 2.12 The fare for the bus from the Handy Cross park and ride car park to the town centre is currently free Monday to Friday and charged at £2.50 for Saturdays. This arrangement, which is funded from CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy), is in place until 31/3/21. Decisions around bus fares continuing to be free is subject to future CIL applications.

Car Park Usage

- 2.13 Prior to Covid19 the car park operated at 40-50% occupancy. Introducing or increasing charges has historically shown that a percentage of customers initially resist new charges and opt to find parking elsewhere. Based on this alongside usage data above, it is predicted that occupancy will initially be in the region of 25% increasing to 50% in future years.
- 2.14 This initial level of use equates to approximately £52k for the financial year 2020/21 and £105k pa thereafter. Income received in this regard will help to mitigate the wider pressures on parking income, support car park functions and will be factored as part of the wider Medium Term Financial Plan process. A table outlining the income levels is provided in the Finance section.
- 2.15 A more accurate income prediction will be provided once the car park charges have been introduced and bedded in; and current COVID-19 uncertainties have been resolved.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 A number of different tariff options were considered for Handy Cross. However, to make best use of the space and to contribute to the cost effectiveness of the site in terms of income and expenditure, it is believed the proposed tariffs are in the best interest of the Council, local businesses, and visitors.
- 3.2 Consideration was also given to extending the free parking period. The comments received in respect of the consultation showed that the majority of the comments relating to free parking were concerns over dropping off and picking up children from the nearby schools. Due to the close proximity of the schools, it is deemed that 30 minutes is sufficient to accommodate this activity. In addition, there is a Waitrose on the Handy Cross development, which has a car park and permits 90 minutes free parking for their customers. This negates the requirement to extend free parking for customers shopping at Waitrose.

4. Legal and financial implications

Legal

- 4.1 The statutory consultation forms part of a legal process to amend the Off-Street Parking Places Order. The Council has a statutory duty to consider and respond to the comments/objections received and then decide whether to make the Order with or without modification to the proposals consulted on.
- 4.2 A synopsis of the comments received from the consultation is provided in Appendix B.

4.3 The decision to make the Order lies with Cabinet in accordance with the Council’s Constitution.

Finance

4.4 Estimated annual income based on potential occupancy levels are set out in Table 1. These levels will need to be tested against potential occupancy levels during pandemic conditions and post Covid19. Ongoing sensitivity analysis will be required in line with the wider parking picture.

Table 1

<u>Approximate estimated income</u>	
Usage	Income (net)
25% Occupancy	£52,000 pa
50% Occupancy	£105,000 pa

5. Corporate Implications

- 5.1 Appendix C details the Equality Impact Assessment for this report.
- 5.2 The Council’s car parks contribute to the Council’s medium term aim of planning for a thriving and sustainable County, with vibrant towns and villages.
- 5.3 Effective and efficient parking management also contributes towards the Council’s aim to deliver value for money services that are driven by customer and community needs.

6. Consultation and communication

- 6.1 Statutory consultation is in accordance with The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended). This included a legal Notice in the press, Notice to Thames Valley Police, and Notice to affected Town and Parish Councils. Discussions also took place with the High Wycombe Town Committee, subsequent to the legal Notice being sent to the Committee.
- 6.2 In addition, consultation papers were made available at The Gateway, Aylesbury; Wycombe Access Point, Queen Victoria Road, and throughout the car park; thus ensuring we meet our statutory obligations. Information was also available on the Council’s website.
- 6.3 The statutory consultation ran from Friday 28/8/20 to Sunday 20/9/20; the statutory minimum time period is 21 days. Responses to the consultation are summarised in Appendix B.
- 6.4 Finance has been consulted on the report - no comments/concerns received.
- 6.5 We have also received a number of comments from Members of the Council, including Cabinet Members, which have helped inform the overall report.

7. Next steps and review

- 7.1 Subject to Cabinet’s approval, the Amendment Order will be made and the charges introduced with effect from Monday 16/11/20.

8. Background papers

- 8.1 None