



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET - 10 JANUARY 2022
Report Number	AGENDA ITEM 9
Subject	REVIEW OF PARKING CHARGES AND SEASON TICKETS
Wards affected	<p>All wards in the District are impacted as residents, visitors and businesses will use car parks across the District but the following wards are particularly impacted:</p> <p>In Cirencester, the following Wards: Abbey, Four Acres, Watermoor and St. Michaels.</p> <p>In Tetbury, the following Wards: Tetbury East & Rural, Tetbury Town and Tetbury with Upton.</p> <p>Moreton West</p> <p>Bourton Vale and Bourton Village.</p> <p>Stow.</p>
Accountable member	<p>Cllr Mike Evemy, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance</p> <p>Email: mike.evemy@cotswold.gov.uk</p>
Accountable officer	<p>Maria Wheatley - Parking Manager</p> <p>Email: maria.wheatley@publicagroup.uk</p>
Summary/Purpose	<i>The report proposes changes to the charges, charging periods, season ticket allocation and season ticket fees in the District car parks.</i>
Annexes	<p>Annex A: Current car park tariff charges</p> <p>Annex B: Proposed car park tariff</p> <p>Annex C: Current season ticket charges</p> <p>Annex D: Proposed season ticket charges</p>
Recommendation(s)	<p><i>That Cabinet considers and approves:</i></p> <p><i>a) aligning charging periods for all car parks owned by the Council to 8am to 6pm on Mondays to Saturdays, removing the 'free after 3 pm' concession from six car parks;</i></p>



	<p><i>b) the removal of the four hour charging period in the Forum car park to encourage the use of the car park for short stay purposes;</i></p> <p><i>c) the proposal to align charges across the District over time;</i></p> <p><i>d) the proposed increases to charges in Church Street and West Street in Tetbury to improve the availability of parking spaces;</i></p> <p><i>e) the proposed increase to charges in Old Market Way in Moreton in Marsh to move towards alignment of car parking charges across the District;</i></p> <p><i>f) the introduction of charges for the large vehicle bays reserved for coaches and minibuses at the Mangersbury Road car park in Stow-on-the-Wold;</i></p> <p><i>g) that car park charges, are increased by 5% (rounded up to nearest 10p), to reflect the impact of inflation since April 2020;</i></p> <p><i>h) implementing a maximum season ticket allocation of 50% in each car park;</i></p> <p><i>i) removal of the Nursery permit;</i></p> <p><i>j) increasing the fee for season tickets as per Annex D, a higher than inflationary increase to reduce the level of subsidy offered for season tickets;</i></p> <p><i>k) reducing the season ticket fee for the Whiteway car park to reflect the fact that it can only be used Monday to Friday rather than Monday to Saturday as in the other Cirencester car parks;</i></p> <p><i>l) introducing three month and six month season tickets in the Whiteway car park in line with all other season tickets.</i></p> <p><i>m) the requirement to invest in the Council's car parks through its Capital Programme to be considered by Cabinet and Council in February 2022.</i></p> <p><i>n) an update the Parking Order to enable enforcement action to be taken for vehicles utilising parking spaces equipped with Electric Vehicle Charging Points in all Council owned car parks; and</i></p> <p><i>o) delegating authority to consider the Parking Order consultation responses to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance.</i></p>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● delivering our services to the highest standards
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/	The Leader of the Council, The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for



Consultation	<p>Finance, The Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive Officers, The Monitoring Officer, The Interim Head of Legal Services, The Finance Business Partner, The Group Manager for Resident Services.</p> <p>The Council consulted on changes to car park charging periods as part of the budget consultation carried out from the period 5 October 2021 to 19 November 2021. Feedback from this consultation is contained in the body of the report at section 3.</p> <p>Further statutory and public consultation will be carried out as part of the process to make changes to the Off-Street Parking Order.</p>
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I. BACKGROUND

- I.1** In February 2020, as part of the Council's budget setting process for 2020/21, a review of car park charges was carried out which resulted in the first increase in car park charges in ten years. It was further agreed that car park charges would be subsequently reviewed every two years. The next review is now due and will take effect for the 2022/23 financial year. This report sets out proposals for changes to charges, charging periods and season tickets for all Council owned car parks.
- I.2** Prior to the pandemic and the subsequent 'lock downs', Cirencester car parks were in high demand for spaces particularly Monday to Friday and many season ticket holders struggled to access spaces. For this reason a hold was placed on any new issues of season tickets. At that time, a maximum of 80% of any car park could be allocated for season ticket holders.
- I.3** The car park charges review for 2022/23 has compared the charging periods for each car park across the District. Consideration has been given to the charges for evenings, overnight and on Sundays. Currently, the majority of car parks are charged between 8am and 6pm, however some car parks are provided free of charge after 3 pm. Free after 3pm was introduced several years ago when Cirencester car parks were under pressure from high demand due to the Market Place refurbishment scheme and improvements to the Forum car park. Free after 3pm was introduced to draw shoppers into town at a less busy time of the day to spread the demand. Free after 3pm was removed from Rissington Road Car Park Bourton on the Water at the review in 2020 with no comments or complaints being received.
- I.4** The Council has a policy objective of understanding the cost of free or subsidised services. In light of this, the Council's policy on free parking stays was reviewed to question the appropriateness of this when compared to charged stays.



2. PROPOSED CHANGES TO PARKING CHARGES AND SEASON TICKETS

Charging Periods and Parking Charges

- 2.1** The current car park charges are set out in **Annex A**. Car park charges were last increased in the 2020/21 financial year, following a ten year price freeze. Over the last two years the Retail Prices Index has increased by 6.0% and the Consumer Prices Index has increased by 4.2%. Using the inflationary indices as a guide, it is proposed that the Council's car park fees are increased from April 2022 by 5%, rounded up to the nearest 10p.
- 2.2** It is estimated that the opportunity cost of providing free car parking after 3 pm in certain car parks is £350,000. It is therefore proposed that each car park has the same charging periods of 8am to 6pm Monday to Saturday. The car parks impacted by the extension of charging from 3pm to 6pm are: Brewery and Forum in Cirencester, West Street and Church Street in Tetbury, Mangersbury Road in Stow on the Wold and Old Market Way in Moreton in Marsh.
- 2.3** Introducing charges for parking during evenings and overnight and on Sundays has been considered. However, respondents to the budget consultation ranked these options below charging between 3 pm and 6 pm. It is expected that charging between 3 pm and 6 pm in all car parks will meet the revenue budget requirement to increase income by £300,000. Therefore, it is not proposed to extend charging periods further.
- 2.4** In order to encourage long stay parking in car parks designated for that purpose in Cirencester, it is proposed to remove the 4 hour tariff in the Forum car park. The aim of this change is to increase turnover in the Forum car park enabling more town centre visitors to find a parking space.
- 2.5** There are currently parking capacity issues in Tetbury. Visitors can currently park for 3 hours in Church Street for £2.70, but an all day charge in West Street is £2.50. It is therefore cheaper to pay for all day parking in West Street than it is for 3 hours in adjoining Church Street. The Railyard car park within the town also offers free parking.
- 2.6** In order to improve the turnover of vehicles in the Church Street and West Street car parks, users need to be encouraged to use the free long stay Railyard car park. It is therefore proposed, over time, to align the charges in Tetbury to those in Cirencester and to introduce a 3 hour charge in the West Street. For clarity the current charges and the proposed changes are set out below:

Current Charges:



Location	½ hr	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	10 hours
West Street	60p	90p	£1.80		£2.50
Church Street	60p	90p	£1.80	£2.70	

Proposed Charges:

Location	½ hour	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	10 hours
West Street	70p	£1.10	£2.00	£2.90	£3.50
Church Street	70p	£1.10	£2.00	£2.90	

- 2.7** The parking charges at Old Market Way in Moreton in Marsh are currently lower than charges in Cirencester. There is no rationale for a lower charge in Moreton in Marsh as there is free on-street car parking available and the Council's car park charge would remain lower than the charges at the train station car park. It is therefore proposed that the car parking charges are harmonised across the District, over a period of time.
- 2.8** The large vehicle bays reserved for coaches and minibuses at the Mangersbury Road car park in Stow-on-the-Wold are currently provided free of charge. The cost of this subsidy is around £4,300 per annum. It is proposed that charges are introduced for these bays.
- 2.9** The proposed fees, reflecting all of the above changes, are attached at **Annex B**.

Season Tickets

- 2.10** A review has been carried out of the Council's current arrangements for season tickets and permits. Details of the current season ticket prices are included at **Annex C**.
- 2.11** The Council suspended the selling of season tickets in 2014/15 for Abbey Grounds, Waterloo, Old Station & Sheep Street car parks due to customers' concerns in respect of capacity issues. During the recent pandemic, agile working has become acceptable to some businesses and therefore capacity issues have subsided.
- 2.12** There is currently a waiting list of 49 customers requesting town centre car park season tickets. In order to allow all town centre car parks to be available to day visitors (meaning those without a season ticket) it is proposed to implement a maximum season ticket allocation policy of 50% for each car park.



- 2.13** In some car parks this will mean season tickets can be made available for allocation to those on the waiting list. In other car parks, where the number of season ticket permits exceeds 50% of spaces, renewals will be permitted but new season tickets will not be available. For example, this will result in no new season ticket sales for Abbey Grounds in Cirencester and West Street in Tetbury until the season ticket allocation is reduced to below 50%. The 49 customers on the waiting list will be contacted and offered a space in line with this policy. Once the offer has been made, it is proposed that the waiting list facility be removed.
- 2.14** The current “nursery permit” allows parking in either the Sheep Street or Old Station car parks in Cirencester as follows: Monday to Friday 08.45am to 09.15am, 15.15pm to 15.45pm and 17.15pm to 17.45pm. The permit costs £44 per year. There has never been a high demand for these permits and currently no demand at all. It is proposed, therefore, that the Nursery permit is removed.
- 2.15** The Council invested in the new Whiteway car park to increase car parking provision within Cirencester prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Whiteway car park is a permit holder only car park. Permits are currently available for a 12 month period at a cost of £550. In order to encourage take up of permits in this car park it is proposed that the annual fee is reduced to £500 as permit holders are unable to park on Saturdays, and that permit periods for the Whiteway car park include an option for 3 months and 6 months at £125 and £250 respectively.
- 2.16** It is proposed that a higher than inflation increase of 9% is applied to permits. In previous years, permits have been heavily discounted when compared to pay as you go use of the car parks. The increases will reduce the level of discount offered by £15,000.
- 2.17** The proposed season ticket arrangements are set out at **Annex D**.

Benchmarking charges

- 2.18** A comparison of the current car parking charges with car parking charges at Cheltenham, Swindon, Gloucester City and Gloucestershire on-street parking charges in Cirencester is set out below:

Duration	Cotswold - Cirencester	Cheltenham	Swindon	Glos City	Glos CC-On Street Cirencester
1/2hr	£0.70				
1hr	£1.60	£1.70	£1.40	£1.40	£1.40
2hr	£2.80	£3.10	£2.80	£2.30	£2.80
3hr	£3.70	£4.50	£4.20	£3.50	-



4hr	£5.00	£6.00	£5.60	£4.50	-
10 hrs/all day	£7.50	£10/£12	£9.10/23.80	£6.00	-
Free periods	after 3pm in some	N/A	N/A		
Blue Badge	all free	1st 3 hours free	Unknown	1st 3 hours	
Charge period	8am-6pm	8am-8pm	6am-6pm/24 hrs	7am-7pm/6pm	8am-6pm
Sun	Mostly free	10am-8pm	As above	As above	

Investment in Car Parks

- 2.19** The Council has a priority to tackle the climate emergency. The Council will therefore be installing more electric vehicle charging stations in its car parks. The Capital Programme includes £750,000 for investment in charging points.
- 2.20** The Council has also approved investment of £337,000 for refurbishment of the Rissington Road car park and work will take place during 2022.
- 2.21** The additional revenue generated from these proposals will support the capital financing costs of further investment in the Council's car park estate. An action plan is in preparation with the objective of ensuring that all of the Council car parks meet the latest parking standards, are modern and offer car park users the best possible experience.
- 2.22** In light of the objective of providing customers with the best possible experience, the Council has recently decided to change the way car parking enforcement is operated. Bringing this service within those services provided through Publica provides the Council with more control, flexibility and improves accountability to the Council.

Enforcement

- 2.23** To ensure that the Council is able to enforce newly installed parking bays equipped with Electric Vehicle Charging Point in all Council owned car parks, it is proposed to update the Parking Orders to enable the enforcement team to issue Penalty Charge Notices where appropriate.



Implementation

- 2.24** If approval is given to increase the charges for day tariffs and season tickets the revised charges will come into effect on or around 4 April 2022. Part of the implementation process includes the Statutory Consultation period of 21 days for the variations to the parking order. Changes to systems and installation of new signs for customers will take 6 weeks.

3. BUDGET CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

- 3.1** During the annual budget consultation process questions relating to car parks and charging periods were included. Residents were given a number of questions and asked to choose which statement they agreed with. These questions were as follows:
- a.** I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme to continue and for parking to remain free on Sundays and during evenings and overnight
 - b.** I would like to see free parking remain on Sundays, during evenings and overnight but think charges should be made between 3pm and 6pm in all car parks
 - c.** I think all free parking in the Council's car parks should be removed
 - d.** I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme and free evening and overnight parking to continue but think charges should be made on Sundays
 - e.** I would like to see free parking remain during evenings and overnight but think charges should be made between 3pm and 6pm and on Sundays
 - f.** I would like to see free Sunday parking remain but think charges should be made after 3pm in all car parks and during evenings and overnight
 - g.** I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme and free parking on Sundays to remain but I think charges should be made during evenings and overnight
 - h.** I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme to continue but think charges should be made on Sundays and during evenings and overnight
- 3.2** The table below sets out the responses to this question and the response information is also illustrated graphically.

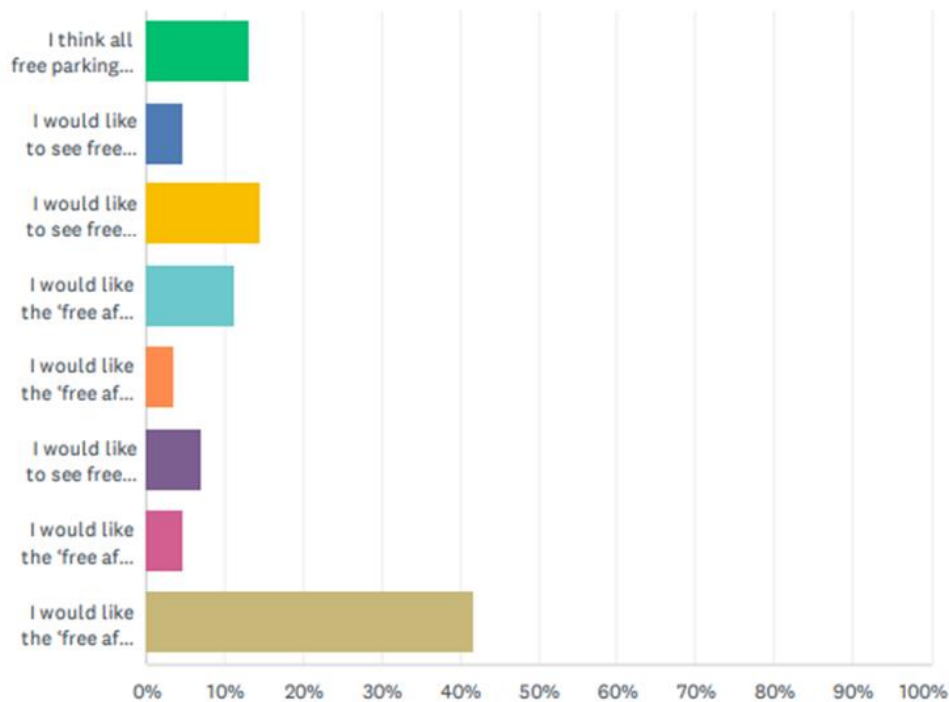
	Answer Choice	Response %	Response No.



a	I think all free parking in the Council's car parks should be removed	13.02	56
b	I would like to see free Sunday parking remain but think charges should be made after 3pm in all car parks and during evenings and overnight	4.65	20
c	I would like to see free parking remain on Sundays, during evenings and overnight but think charges should be made between 3pm and 6pm in all car parks	14.42	62
d	I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme and free evening and overnight parking to continue but think charges should be made on Sundays	11.16	48
e	I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme to continue but think charges should be made on Sundays and during evenings and overnight	3.49	15
f	I would like to see free parking remain during evenings and overnight but think charges should be made between 3pm and 6pm and on Sundays	6.98	30
g	I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme and free parking on Sundays to remain but I think charges should be made during evenings and overnight	4.65	20
h	I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme to continue and for parking to remain free on Sundays and during evenings and overnight	41.63	179
	No. of Responses		430



Answered: 430 Skipped: 2



3.3 While 42% of respondents wanted no change to the current car park charging periods (answer h) 58% of respondents opted for a change. The options for change, listed in order of the number of responses, are set out below:

	Answer Choice	Response %	Response No.
c	I would like to see free parking remain on Sundays, during evenings and overnight but think charges should be made between 3pm and 6pm in all car parks	14.42	62
a	I think all free parking in the Council's car parks should be removed	13.02	56



d	I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme and free evening and overnight parking to continue but think charges should be made on Sundays	11.16	48
f	I would like to see free parking remain during evenings and overnight but think charges should be made between 3pm and 6pm and on Sundays	6.98	30
b	I would like to see free Sunday parking remain but think charges should be made after 3pm in all car parks and during evenings and overnight	4.65	20
g	I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme and free parking on Sundays to remain but I think charges should be made during evenings and overnight	4.65	20
e	I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme to continue but think charges should be made on Sundays and during evenings and overnight	3.49	15

3.4 The budget consultation requested feedback on options for removing free car parking in the evenings and overnight, between 3 pm and 6 pm and on Sundays. The number of respondents supporting each of these options is set out below:

	Charge for evenings and overnight	Charge between 3 pm and 6 pm	Charge on Sundays
c		62	
a	56	56	56
d			48
f		30	30



b	20	20	
g	20		
e	15		15
Total	111	168	149

- 3.5** The option which had the greatest support from respondents was to charge between 3 pm and 6 pm in all car parks with support from 168 respondents. Charging on Sundays in all car parks received support from 149 respondents with 111 respondents supporting charging during evenings and overnight.
- 3.6** As part of the legal process to change the Off-Street Parking Order, a statutory consultation will run for a 21 day period.
- 3.7** In order to implement these changes in a timely manner, delegation is proposed to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance to determine the final changes following receipt of any feedback from the statutory and public consultation.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** The financial implications of the proposed changes to car park charges, charging periods and season tickets is set out below:

	Potential income at current charges
Removing free after 3 PM - and other amendments to charging periods	£350,000
Inflationary increase to car park fees and charges	£85,000
Changes to season ticket prices	£15,000
Estimated Additional Income	£450,000

- 4.2** The draft budget proposals for 2022/23 include additional income from changes to car park fees and charges of £300,000 and an inflationary increase of £100,000. The proposals set out above exceed the assumptions in the draft budget proposals by £50,000. However,



forecasting demand for car parking in 2022/23 is difficult due to the potential impact of Covid-19 on customer behaviour. It is possible that there could be further periods where the Government encourages work from home or imposes other limitations which would lead to reduced demand for car parking.

- 4.3** It is therefore proposed not to reflect the additional £50,000 in the budget proposals for 2022/23 but to review the car park income budget to reflect demand as part of the 2023/24 budget process. This provides a contingency of £50,000 (11% of the estimated increase in income) in the 2022/23 budget.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** Any changes to the existing terms and conditions and or charges in the car parks will require a variation to the Off-Street Parking Order.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1** Demand for car parking is uncertain. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed customer behaviour, for example, many businesses are encouraging home working and shopping habits have changed with increased use of online shopping. More recently, the Government's response to the Omnicron variant of Covid-19 demonstrates the level of uncertainty the Council is facing. The Council's draft budget proposals for 2022/23 recognise this risk and include a provision for reduced car demand with a financial impact of £250,000, an assumption of reduced demand of 9%. The proposals in this report also include a further contingency of £50,000.
- 6.2** The estimates used in this report are based upon experience of car park use and intelligence gained from a spot check carried out in August 2021. This modelling of additional income as a result of charging for car park use until 6 pm across the District has been compared to the income which would have been generated from demand in 2015/16, the last time the Council charged for this period. A prudent estimate has been made of the financial impact of the proposals.
- 6.3** There is a risk that an inflationary increase to prices could result in reduced demand for car parking. However, the previous price increase, which was implemented in September 2020, did not result in reduced demand.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1** No impact on any specific groups has been identified. Vehicles displaying a valid blue badge are able to park for free in all the Council's car parks.

8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS



- 8.1** Removing the 4 hour tariff in the Forum car park and introducing the 3 hour tariff in the West street car park will result in an increase in vehicle turnover. This will help the reduction in carbon emissions as there will be a reduction in vehicles circling and idling within the car parks waiting for vacant parking bays.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 9.1** Cabinet can consider an alternative inflationary fee increase, to charge for evenings or Sundays in some or all car parks.

(END)