

To: **BRACKNELL TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION COMMITTEE**
13 SEPTEMBER 2021

TOWN CENTRE OFF STREET DAY RATE CAR PARK CHARGES – OCTOBER 2021
Executive Director: Delivery

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Council reviews its fees and charges for its town centre car parks on an annual basis. Season ticket prices were reviewed as part of the Council's annual budget and increases were made in line with inflation from 1 April 2021. This paper looks at options in respect of the off-street Council run car parks in the town centre which are reviewed annually in September in line with the anniversary of the opening of the Lexicon in 2017.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee notes the proposed charging tariffs for The Avenue, High Street, Braccan Walk and Weather Way car parks from 1 October 2021 as detailed in Table 2 Option 1 set out in the report below to be approved by the Executive Director: Delivery.**

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The fees for The Avenue, High Street, Braccan Walk and Weather Way car parks are reviewed annually in line with the anniversary of the opening of The Lexicon. If the recommendation in this report are agreed and assuming that there is no year-on-year changes to the volume and dwell time of visitors, the proposed increases will generate an additional maximum of £90,000 per annum. At these rates, Bracknell Forest's car parks would still remain more competitive than most other local retail centres

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 The Council could maintain the current charges for The Avenue, High Street, Braccan Walk and Weather Way car parks. However this option is not recommended in the current budget circumstances as increasing current rates could generate additional income of up to £90,000 per annum if car park usage is 75% of 19/20 (pre-Covid). Covid-19 has had a significant detrimental impact on usage and income since March 2020 and whilst the Council has been in receipt of Government grants for loss of income these relate to 72% only and finished at the end of June 2021. Usage levels are not yet back to pre covid levels and as yet there is no real indication as to if/when this will occur.
- 4.2 If tariffs are not increased this year and increased in 12 months time in October 2022 then the increase will effectively be greater at that point which may be considered negatively by the customer.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 The Council entered into a 40-year lease to manage The Avenue multi-storey car park and Weather Way surface car park in 2017. The Council owns and manages the High Street and Braccan Walk multi storey car parks.
- 5.2 When car park fees are set, the Council needs to consider the fee structure from a commercial perspective alongside the inter-relationship with the vitality of the town centre.
- 5.3 The lease for The Avenue car park sets the method of calculating the maximum permissible fee increases for day rate parking. High Street and Braccan Walk car parks align with this methodology in order to maintain the balance for Council run car parks in the town centre.
- 5.4 In order of popularity, The Avenue, Braccan Walk, High Street and Weather Way car Parks operate alongside Princess Square and Bracknell Station (including The One) multi-storey car parks.
- 5.5 All town centre car parks face competition from the three hours free parking in the Peel Centre and one and a half hours free parking at Waitrose. There are obligations on the relevant parties to ensure that through their own enforcement procedures, they are regulating this in order to try to deter abuse. Princess Square offers a more competitive charging regime although currently doesn't offer any free periods.
- 5.6 The Avenue and Braccan Walk mainly provide for the needs of shoppers. High Street traditionally has been used for season tickets and BFC staff parking, both of which have been dramatically impacted by covid-19. Weather Way car park provides the only unrestricted height accessible public car park for town centre users.
- 5.7 As stipulated in the lease for The Avenue car park, there is a cap on the fee increases. The Council has previously chosen to implement the same fee increase across all car parks it manages in the town centre.
- 5.8 As detailed in table 2, below, the options for increasing daily charges are as follows:
 - Rates are increased in all four car parks by the amount that is permissible in The Avenue car park, according to the lease.
 - Rates are increased by a maximum of £0.10 in all four car parks for all charging bands that it is permitted for in The Avenue car park, according to the lease.
- 5.9 The fees for The Avenue, High Street, Braccan Walk and Weather Way car parks are reviewed annually in line with the anniversary of the opening of The Lexicon. If one of the above charging options is agreed on, the proposed increases could generate the following amount of additional income:

Table 1 – Potential Additional Income to be Realised from Charging Options

Option	Approximate Maximum Additional Annual Income Under Pre-Covid Usage Levels	Approximate Maximum Additional Annual Income Under 75% of Pre-Covid Usage Levels	Assumptions
1	£120,000	£90,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Price increases won't deter people from using the car parks The proportion of users staying in the car parks for the time frames with no price increase will remain the same as 19/20
2	£90,000	£70,000	

Please note that these figures are the maximum estimated amount of additional income that will result from price increases – there is no available data to allow us to understand what proportion of cars enter the car parks during night time hours so the calculations are based on the incorrect assumption that all users enter during the day and pay day time fees.

5.10 The potential additional income is restricted and estimated at 75% of pre-Covid levels due to the impact of the pandemic and the numbers of people currently using the town centre car parks.

5.11 The night charge tariff remains at £1.70. Anyone entering the car park from 6am will remain on the day tariff until up to 7pm to allow for the night rate switchover from 6pm and so that two separate levels of charges (day time and night time) are not incurred within the same charging period. Anyone entering the car park after 6pm will immediately incur the night rate only.

Table 2 – Options for changes to car park daily charges

Option 1: maximum permissible increases to all rates as allowed in the Avenue lease

Option 2: increases limited to £0.10 where an increase is permissible in the Avenue lease

Hours	Current Rate	Option 1 Proposed Rate	Option 1 Proposed Increase	Option 2 Proposed Rate	Option 2 Proposed Increase
0 – 1	£1.60	£1.60	£0.00	£1.60	£0.00
1 – 2	£2.70	£2.80	£0.10	£2.80	£0.10
2 – 3	£3.50	£3.60	£0.10	£3.60	£0.10
3 – 4	£4.10	£4.30	£0.20	£4.20	£0.10
4 – 5	£5.40	£5.60	£0.20	£5.50	£0.10
5 – 6	£6.20	£6.40	£0.20	£6.30	£0.10
6 – 7	£6.80	£7.10	£0.30	£6.90	£0.10
7 – 8	£7.70	£8.00	£0.30	£7.80	£0.10
8+	£9.00	£9.30	£0.30	£9.10	£0.10
Night Charge	£1.70	£1.70	£0.00	£1.70	£0.00

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Financial Advice

- 6.2 This increase is the maximum permitted under the car parking lease and represents a 4.2% increase on the current budgeted income for these car parks in 2021-22.

Other Consultation Responses

- 6.3 N/A

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 Attached as a separate document

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 The Council owns the High Street and Braccan Walk car parks and has taken on the rent liability for The Avenue Car Park that it now manages. All car park income is subject to variations in demand. The proposals set out the maximum level of fees that can be charged and will be applied to all off street BFC car parks.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.6 The proposed increase in town centre charges will have minimal impact on climate change. Should there be any impact it will be to slightly reduce the number of cars driving to the four car parks referenced in this report.

Background Papers

N/A

Contact for further information

Damian James, Assistant Director: Contract Services, Delivery - 01344 351325
damian.james@bracknell-forest.gov.uk