

To: **BRACKNELL TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION COMMITTEE**
12 SEPTEMBER 2022

TOWN CENTRE OFF STREET DAY RATE CAR PARK CHARGES – OCTOBER 2022

Executive Director of 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 1st April 2022. 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 options on charging tariffs for The Avenue, High Street, Braccan Walk and Weather Way car parks from 1st October 2022.**
- 2.2 **The Committee approves their preferred option as detailed in Table 2 Option 1 set out in the report below.**

3 Reasons for Recommendations

- 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 is agreed and assuming that there is no year-on-year changes to the volume and dwell time of visitors based on 21/22 usage, the proposed increases will generate an additional maximum of £473,130 per annum.

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 £473,130 per annum based on 21/22 usage. Usage rates remain 15% down from pre covid levels and income targets are unlikely to be achieved in 22/23 as they have been returned to precovid levels. There is no real indication of if/when this will occur and perhaps not likely to given a move to online retail shopping.
- 4.2 If tariffs are not increased this year and increased in 12 months time in October 2023 then the increase will need to be greater at that point in order to rebalance income which may be considered negatively by the customer.
- 4.3 The Avenue car park is by far the busiest car park in town and at peak periods can sometimes reach capacity with some level of queuing. In order to better manage supply and demand across the whole estate the daily tariffs at Braccan Walk and High Street could be set at a slightly lower level so as to reduce demand at the Avenue at peak periods. Clearly this would have a negative effect financially.

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 continue to be impacted by Covid-19 as the pattern of working from home remain. Weather Way car park provides the only unrestricted height accessible public car park for town centre users and is a small but popular site.
- 5.7 For longer stays and particularly for those that work in the town centre preferential rates are available at Albert Road car park where season tickets are available.
- 5.8 As an additional item for information there is a validator in Braccan Walk and it has been agreed in consultation with the College that the rate of £1.50 will be increased to £2.00 from the 1st September inline with the new academic year and will be reviewed annually thereafter. This allows all day parking for a considerably reduced rate for eligible students.
- 5.9 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.
- 5.10 As detailed in table 2, below, the options for increasing daily charges are as follows:
 - Rates are increased in all four car parks (including Weather Way) 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.
- 5.11 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 (based on 21/22 usage)
1 maximum permissible increases to all rates as allowed in the Avenue lease	£473,130
2 increases limited to £0.10 where an increase is permissible in the Avenue lease	£119,035

*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.

- 5.12 Increasing the tariffs by the maximum permissible (option 1) will provide a significantly bigger income this year. When the last review was undertaken the 1-2hr tariff didn't attract an increase as the inflation rate was much lower at the time. Based on the new calculations there is an increase across all tariffs. Inflation levels are much higher and therefore results in much greater increases.
- 5.13 The night charge tariff increases to £1.90. 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.
- 5.14 The lost ticket charge has remained at £10 for several years but needs to be increased to £12 this is to ensure that those who stay for over 8hrs pay for a lost ticket which would have been cheaper than the fee of £10.50.

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 (lease) Proposed New Rate	Option 1 Proposed Increase	Option 2 (10p) Proposed Rate	Option 2 Proposed Increase
0 – 1	£1.60	£1.80	£0.20	£1.70	£0.10
1 – 2	£2.80	£3.20	£0.40	£2.90	£0.10
2 – 3	£3.60	£4.10	£0.50	£3.70	£0.10
3 – 4	£4.30	£4.80	£0.50	£4.40	£0.10
4 – 5	£5.60	£6.30	£0.70	£5.70	£0.10
5 – 6	£6.40	£7.20	£0.80	£6.50	£0.10
6 – 7	£7.10	£8.00	£0.90	£7.20	£0.10

7 – 8	£8.00	£9.00	£1.00	£8.10	£0.10
8+	£9.30	£10.50	£1.20	£9.40	£0.10
Night Charge	£1.70	£1.90	£0.20	£1.80	£0.10

5.15 At these rates, Bracknell Forest's car parks would remain cheaper than the Oracle, Reading and Alma Road, Windsor but more expensive than the Atrium, Camberly although its likely these will be reviewed as part of their budget setting process.

	Proposed BFC rates	Atrium, Camberly	Oracle, Reading	Alma Road, Windsor
0-1	£1.80	£1.80	£1.70	£1.80
1-2	£3.20	£1.80	£4.00	£3.60
2-3	£4.10	£2.20	£6.00	£5.50
3-4	£4.80	£3.40	£8.00	£7.30
4-5	£6.30	£3.40	£10.00	£11.50
5-6	£7.20	£5.00	£12.00	£14.50
6-7	£8.00	£5.00	£13.00	£14.50
7-8	£9.90	£5.00	£15.00	£14.50
+8	£10.50	£7.00	£20.00	£14.50
Night charge	£1.90	£2.00	£1.50 <1hr £3.50 >1hr	- - N/A

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 6.1 The changes to the parking charges will require a statutory consultation, advertisement and Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to be formally made and introduced under Section 35C Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 by way of a Notice of Variation. Any objections and observations will be formally considered and reported . The Notice of Variation is to be advertised in the local paper, on each car park and on line for a minimum period of 21 days in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and in accordance with Regulation 25 of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

Financial Advice

- 6.2 The financial implications are contained within the report.

Other Consultation Responses

- 6.3 The Lexicon – they have requested that the Council defer the increase in charges for 12 months due to the current cost of living issues.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 Reviewed for 2021 changes and no amendments required.

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 influence it will be to slightly reduce the number of cars driving to the four car parks referenced in this report which would have a positive climate impact. The uplift in car parking charges may support increases in the use of public transport, cycling and walking into the town centre.

Background Papers

N/A

Contact for further information

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