

Executive Committee

9 August 2016

Review of Car Park Charges

For Decision

Portfolio Holder(s)/ Briefholder
Councillor John Russell

Senior Leadership Team Contact:
M Hamilton, Strategic Director

Report Author:
Jack Creeber Parking & Transport Manager

Statutory Authority
The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To review the condition of the Council's car parks and determine the level of investment and charges required to upgrade these.
- 1.2 To consider how the Council can assist local residents and the commercial sector in dealing with the significant seasonal fluctuations in the coastal car park occupancy both during the day and evenings.

2. Officer Recommendations

- 1.3 To approve a planned maintenance budget for the current year of £100,000 to enable immediate repairs and upgrades (Appendix 1) that are essential to be carried out within the car parks.
- 1.4 Approve £300,000 for planned specified capital works (Appendix 2) that are necessary to improve the condition and safety of the car parks.
- 1.5 Approve the car parking charges as per Appendix 3 in respect to increased car parking charges.
- 1.6 Agree to renegotiate the fees for the management and/or collecting pay & display cash from car parks that this Council does not own

3. Reason for Decision

- 1.7 In order to avoid the car parks falling into an unacceptable condition it is essential that recommendation 2.1 is approved and that a budget of £100,000 is made available to carry out repairs and upgrades to the councils car parks during this financial year as indicated in Appendix 1.
- 1.8 In addition to the immediate maintenance issues there are a number of more major works that need to be carried out and therefore it is necessary for recommendation 2.2 is approved so that funds of £300,000 can be made available in order to deliver these projects as specified in Appendix 2
- 1.9 In order to provide the necessary funding to carry out the improvements and maintenance to the Council's car parks it will be necessary to increase parking charges. Many car parks have not had parking charge increases since 2008 and these are needed to keep pace with the increased costs of operating the car parks, as well as to assist in the payment for the required works to maintain them.
- 1.10 The fees charged to other car park owners for operating and undertaking cash collections in their car parks have not been increased for a number of years. These charges are perceived currently to be low and need to be increased to keep pace with costs and to ensure that the service provided is still financially viable.

2 Background and Reason Decision NeededThe Current Position

- 2.2 The current stock of West Dorset District Council car parks is shown in Appendix 4. There are currently 36 car parks as well as 3 car parks that the Council operate on behalf of other organisations.
- 2.3 In the financial year 2014/15 this Council spent a total of £310,000 to renew its aging stock of pay and display machines, together with around £120,000 on general maintenance. The new pay & display machines have provided huge benefits in understanding the dynamics of the council car parks and assisting with the development of a new parking policy.
- 2.4 In 2015/16 some £100,000 was spent on general maintenance works.
- 2.5 Investment in our car parks is vital for the commercial viability of the various market towns and seaside resorts across West Dorset, because the first impression of a town / destination for any motorist is the car park and more importantly it is also their last impression.
- 2.6 To provide quality, well maintained and safe car parks requires a continuous rolling programme of planned works being carried out. Some of the more imminent issues facing this Council include, but not limited to:
 - a. The introduction of the new £1 coin will require all the pay & display machines to be recalibrated in order for them to accept the new coin.
 - b. Introduction of credit card facilities to the pay & display machines
 - c. It is essential to provide safe car parks for the public to use and therefore constant maintenance of the surfaces, fencing and vegetation is required.

- d. Once a car is parked the motorist becomes a pedestrian and therefore requires a different set of directional signage.
- e. These maintenance works will greatly assist this Council in acquiring more Park Mark awards for its car parks. Park Mark is awarded for good quality car parks that are safe to use and that have no or very little criminal related incidences. This award is assessed by Dorset Police together with the British Parking Association.

2.7 Car Park Condition

2.8 Many car parks historically were constructed based upon nominal ground preparation with little thought to surface water runoff resulting in undulating car parks, and ponding because of no or insufficient drainage. This may well have been due to original car park creation as being temporary at the time but has since been determined that the car park is required to meet the demands of the traffic on our streets today.

2.9 It is considered necessary to carry out a full survey of the facilities and conditions of the relevant components of the car parks so as to better plan and understand works and maintenance to be carried out.

2.10 The scope of these inspections will need to include:

- a. The conditions of the car park surface and construction,
- b. What drainage exists and its condition
- c. Fencing condition
- d. Pay and display machines
- e. Signage for both cars arriving and pedestrians
- f. Bay and line marking
- g. What lighting exists

- 2.11 Forward planning of works gives more certainty and an appropriate rolling maintenance program. One advantage of the seasonal use of the coastal towns car parks is that works can be carried out without too many implications for the operation of the car parks, but towns such as Dorchester will provide greater challenges.
- 2.12 It is vital however that there is a forward planned maintenance budget as well as a capital works programme to allow the Council to manage this, e.g. scheme design and works to the surfacing and drainage systems.
- 2.13 Maintenance**
- 2.14 There has been a lack of investment in the Council's car parks over a number of years and there is a limited maintenance budget which is insufficient to provide the required improvements and only barely covers essential maintenance on a reactive basis.
- 2.15 Before a planned rolling maintenance programme can be developed and implemented there is a need to carry out significant repairs and improvements to the car parks which cannot be catered for within current budgets nor indeed any separate capital programme.
- 2.16 There is a need to increase parking charges in order to achieve sufficient surplus that would allow general maintenance as well as specific capital works, otherwise the condition of the Council's car parks will deteriorate to an unacceptable level.
- 2.17 This Council currently has 6 car parks which have been awarded the Park Mark accreditation; however these awards were given with the understanding that a number of remedial measures had to be undertaken.
- 2.18 The general public however are rightly expecting our car parks to be well maintained and providing quality facilities and this Council is proposing to undertake a significant amount of maintenance work as it strives to achieve more Park Mark awards for its car parks.
- 2.19 The objective is to obtain this nationally recognised award for each of the Council's car parks, but this will be challenging due to the poor condition of a number of the car parks without considerable investment.
- 2.20 A preliminary action plan for the coming year's maintenance / investment programme has been devised and is to be found as Appendix 2.
- 2.21 It is anticipated that the action plan will deliver a number of benefits that includes providing an enhanced customer experience through easier car parking, improved surfacing and signage. It is also being considered where possible to introduce some larger sized parking bays to accommodate more of today's vehicles.
- 2.22 There are 36 car parks and to ensure all have all maintenance items done a certain number of the car parks have to have certain works completed each year. This assumes that all car parks are in good condition now and that is not the case so to allow for current shortcomings the capital works program of upgrades is also needed.

2.23 Looking at the appropriate maintenance cycle for the work type it will be necessary to carry out works each year dealing with maintenance tasks along the following lines:

Task	Frequency	No of car parks per Year
Refresh car park bay & road markings	Every 4 years	9
Surfacing	Every 10 years	4
Renew signage	Every 6 years	6
Maintain boundary fencing	Every 10 years	4
Pay & Display machines	Every 10 years	4
Lighting	Every 5 years	7
Drainage	Every 3 years	11
Vegetation	Every year	36

2.24 **The need to charge for car parking**

2.25 The last change to the parking charges varies across West Dorset

Town	Long Stay Car Parks	Short Stay Car Parks
Beaminster	2014	2007
Bridport	2011	2008
Charmouth	2014	
Dorchester	2011 (Fairfield Road 2014)	2008
Lyme Regis	2014	2007
Sherborne	2011	2008
West Bay	2014	2007 (The Mound & Esplanade 2011)
Sunday Charges	Beaminster, Bridport Dorchester, Sherborne Removed 2010	
	Overnight charges Removed 2010	

2.26 The cost of providing substantial amount of off street car parking is absolutely essential to accommodate the large number of visitors and holiday makers across the whole of West Dorset. The land on which the car parks are located incurs this Council with considerable expenditure, including but not limited to:

- Approximately £350,000 in Business Rates required to be paid annually.
- Some £90,000 is paid out in respect of rent for car parks located on private land.
- Expenditure of some £100,000 was incurred as a result of maintaining the car parks during 2015/16.
- Staff salaries to manage the operational element of the service such as permits, enforcement processing and appeals, as well as staff required to patrol the car parks, together with collecting cash and maintaining the car parks.

- Then there are on costs associated with the building from which the service operates together with all the other support services that enable the day to day running of all the systems and wellbeing of the staff.

2.27 Parking Charges Review

2.28 A number of factors have been considered in the review and these include, but not limited to:

- Reviewing the impact of the current charges in relation to car park occupancy levels.
- Comparison of parking charges of the Council's competitors e.g. privately operated public car parks in West Dorset, other council districts, and other nearby seaside resorts.
- Income received against the level of expenditure required to provide high quality car parks.
- Investment is required to carry out improvements to the car parks.
- The seasonal demand for car parking across West Dorset coastal towns.
- Short stay parking –v– long stay car parking
- Whether the car park income covers the expenditure associated with the car park
- Retail Price Index

2.29 Parking Charge Comparisons

2.30 There are some privately operated free public car parking within West Dorset however these car parks are associated with the supermarkets and the Retail Parks, that usually allow 2 hours limited waiting with the understanding that the motorist will be visiting the stores.

2.31 Dorchester has chargeable public car parking that is not provided by this Council, for example the Railway station car parks, retail parks and supermarkets. Lyme Regis has a car park operated by NCP.

2.32 Dorset County Council operates the on street pay & display public car parking in Dorchester.

2.33 The current charges for West Dorset District Council owned car parks are as follows:

Short Stay

	Beaminster	Bridport	Charmouth	Dorchester	Lyme Regis	Sherborne	West Bay
20 mins		20p		40p	40p	20p	
1 hour	30p	40p		60p	70p	40p	50p
2 hours	60p	80p		£1.00	£1.60	70p	£1.00
3 hours		£1.70		£2.00	£4.00	£1.70	£1.60
4 hours		£4.00		£4.00		£4.00	
All day							
Each additional hour		£4.00		£4.00	£4.00	£4.00	3hr Max Stay

Long Stay

	Beaminster	Bridport	Charmouth	Dorchester	Lyme Regis	Sherborne	West Bay	West Bex
1 hr	30p		30p				50p	60p
2 hrs								
3 hrs	£1.10	£1.70	£1.20	£2.60		£1.70		£3.50
4 hrs								
All day	£2.00	£2.80	£2.00	£4.00	£2.00	£2.80 (Acreman St £2.10)	£2.00	£5.00

2.34 The table below shows the current car parking charges for the private operated chargeable public car parking

	On Street (max stay 4 hours)	NCP Lyme Regis	Waitrose Dorchester (max stay 3 hours)	Dorset County Hospital
30 mins	80p	£1.00		
1 hour	£1.50	£1.60		£1.60
2 hours	£3.00	£3.20	70p	£2.10
3 hours	£4.50	N/A	£2.00	N/A
4 hours	£6.00	£6.40	£20.00	£4.20
5 hours	N/A	N/A		£6.50
6 hours	N/A	£10.60		
All day	N/A	£12.20		

2.35 Neighbouring Seaside Resorts

2.36 The table below shows the current car parking charges for some neighbouring seaside resorts

	Poole Town	Poole Seafront	*Bournemouth	**Christchurch	Swanage	Bognor Regis
30 mins	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1 hour	80p	£1.50	£2.00	N/A	£1.80	80p
2 hours	£1.50	£2.50	£4.00	£2.00	£3.40	£1.60
3 hours	£2.50	£3.50	£6.00	N/A	N/A	£2.40
4 hours	£3.50	£4.50	£8.00	£3.30	£6.40	£3.20
5 hours	£4.50	£5.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
6 hours	£5.40	£6.50	£12.00	N/A	£7.20	N/A
All day	£8.50	£12.00	£15.00	£6.00	£8.00	£7.00
Each additional hour	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Charging hours	8am–10pm	6am–10pm	24 hour charging	24 hour charging	24 hour charging	8am – 6pm

* £2.00 flat charge from 11pm until 8am

** £2.00 flat charge from 7pm until 8am

2.37 The car parking charges across Devon are typically £1.00 per hour, however they charge 24 hours a day.

2.38 Neighbouring towns

2.39 The table below shows the current car parking charges for some neighbouring towns

	Weymouth (Short Stay)	Weymouth (Long Stay)	Yeovil	Exeter	Salisbury	Blandford
30 mins	£1.00					40p
1 hour	£2.00	£1.00		£1.20	£1.30	70p
2 hours	£3.00	£2.00	£1.40	£2.20	£2.40	£1.20
3 hours	£4.00	£3.50	£2.00	£3.30	£3.80	£2.40
4 hours		£4.50		£5.70	£5.00	
5 hours				£7.70	£6.00	
6 hours		£6.00				
All day		£8.00		£10.80	£8.00	£4.00
Each additional hour	3 Hour Max Stay	N/A	£1.20	N/A	N/A	N/A

2.40 The above does indicate that West Dorset parking charges are the lowest by almost any assessment criteria.

2.41 It is interesting to note the charging hours that are adopted by some of the neighbouring seaside resorts. Devon, Bournemouth & Christchurch and Swanage operate a 24 hour charging regime and Poole charge until 10pm.

2.42 Proposed Car Parking Charges

2.43 Appendix 3 lists the charges that are proposed to be introduced as from the 1 January 2017.

2.44 Management of car parks belonging to others, and Cash Collection Fees

2.45 This Council manages a number of car parks on behalf of some town councils and private land owners, as well as collecting and banking cash from pay & display machines. These fees associated with these activities need to be increased to ensure that they are still financially viable.

2.46 The fees for the management of car parks not in this Council's ownership vary and some are tied into leases

2.47 Many of the town council car parks such as Beaminster, Sherborne and Bridport run at a loss with the inclusion of the services provided and a general review of all will be undertaken.

2.48 In some cases charges will be increased, others rent payments will be reduced by negotiation and the frequency of enforcement staff visits may also be reviewed. All of these actions are within the delegated authority of officers, who will seek to ensure that there is a reasonable return on the time and effort invested by the car parking team.

2.49 Members are requested to note the intended actions to be taken and that the relevant Portfolio Holder will be kept apprised of the outcomes and actions being taken.

Implications

2.50 Corporate Plan

Priority A4 a) Implement town centre strategies to sustain and develop town centres economic viability through to 2017

2.51 Financial

The recommendations contained in this report will result in the generating sufficient income to cover the required expenditure necessary for the investment in the Council's car parks as well as meeting the future projected income budget.

2.52 Equalities

There are no direct equality issues as a result of this report

2.53 Environmental

The suggested investment will improve the environmental conditions of the Council's car parks.

2.54 Economic Development

The suggested investment to improve the facilities of the car parks and should assist the economic development of the town

2.55 Risk Management (including Health & Safety)

The suggested investment will improve the health and safety of all users of the Council's car parks.

2.56 Human Resources

There are no direct implications for Human Resources as a result of this report.

Consultation and Engagement

There has been no consultation with external bodies at this time.

Appendices

2.57 Appendix 1 2016 / 17 Action Plan

2.58 Appendix 2 2016 / 17 Capital Programme Plan

2.59 Appendix 3 Proposed car Park Charges 2017/18

2.60 Appendix 4 List of West Dorset Car Parks

Background Papers None

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2016/17 Capital Works Programme

Car Park	Task	Estimated Cost
Various	Introduction of credit card facilities	£35,000
West Bay Road West Bay	Surface improvement	£70,000
Bridport Arms West Bay	Surface improvement	£50,000
Station Yard West Bay	Surface improvement	£70,000
Acland Road Dorchester	Surface improvement	£75,000

It is necessary to introduce a number of chip and pin credit card devices that will benefit the service by reducing the number of coins placed in the pay & display machines which will result in increased savings the more credit card transactions are made.

A section of West Bay Road car park is in a really poor state and is in need to major works to improve the overall safety and to maximise the number of vehicles that can be parked in this car park.

Bridport Arms and Station Road car parks needs a tarmac surface to allow a proper parking layout to be introduced in order to maximise the amount of car parking that can take place.

Acland Road (Charles Street) is the main shoppers car park for Dorchester and it has had a lack of investment due to the uncertainty of proposed development of the site and it is in real need of upgrading.

APPENDIX 3

Proposed Car Park Charges

Beaminster

Short Stay Car Parks: Yarn Barton, The Square

Hours	30 mins	1 hour	2 hours Max Stay
Current Charge	30p		60p
Proposed Charge	40p		80p

Long Stay Car Parks: Yarn Barton, The Square

Hours	30 mins	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	All day
Current Charge	30p			£1.10	£2.00
Proposed Charge	40p			£1.30	£2.30

Bridport

Short Stay Car Parks: East Street, Rope Walks, South Street, Wykes Court

Hours	30 mins	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	6 hours	Per hour thereafter	All Day
Current Charge	20p	40p	80p	£1.70	£4.00		£4.00	
Proposed Charge	N/A	60p	£1.00	£2.10	£4.20	£5.20		£6.30

There is no evidence that anyone actually pays the £4 per hour for hour 5 on beyond, so it is more appropriate to have an all day parking charge and this applies to all West Dorset.

Long Stay Car Parks: East Street, Hope Terrace, West Street

Hours	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	6 hours	All Day
Current Charge		£1.70			£2.80
Proposed Charge	£1.10	£2.10	£3.00	£3.50	£4.50

Charmouth

Long Stay Car Parks: Lower Sea Lane

Hours	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	All Day
Current Charge	30p			£1.20	£2.00
Proposed Charge	40p	70p		£1.40	£2.30

Dorchester

Short Stay Car Parks: Acland Road, Old Market, Trinity Street

Hours	20 mins	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	6 hours	Per hour thereafter	All Day
Current Charge	40p	60p	£1.00	£2.00	£4.00		£4.00	
Proposed Charge	N/A	70p	£1.10	£2.10	£4.20	£5.20		£6.30

Wollaston is currently a short stay car park because of the proposed Charles Street development, however it is to be returned to a long stay car park. The 20 minute period is to be removed because too many people receive parking fines because they overstay by way over 10 minutes and this should improve the customer experience.

Long Stay Car Parks: Durngate, Fairfield Road, Top O Town, Wollaston Field

Hours	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	6 hours	All Day
Current Charge		£2.60			£4.00
Proposed Charge	£1.10	£2.10	£3.00	£3.50	£4.50

The proposed charges are intended to provide more customers with more flexibility and avoid confusion between the different charges for using the same car parks, especially on a Wednesday when Fairfield Road long stay becomes a short stay car park. Fairfield short stay is underutilised and therefore it is proposed to have one set of charges for Fairfield Road car park.

Lyme Regis

Short Stay Car Parks: Broad Street, Cobb Gate

Hours	20 30 mins	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours max stay
Current Charge	40p	70p	£1.60	£4.00
Proposed Charge	50p	80p	£1.80	£4.20

It is proposed to increase the short 20 minute period to 30 minutes

Long Stay Car Parks: Charmouth Road, Holmbush

Hours	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	6 hours	All Day
Current Charge					£2.00
Proposed Charge	£1.10	£2.10	£3.00	£3.50	£4.50

Sherborne

Short Stay Car Parks: Culverhayes, Newland North, Old Market Yard

Hours	20 mins	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	6 hours	Per hour thereafter	All Day
Current Charge	20p	40p	70p	£1.70	£4.00		£4.00	
Proposed Charge	N/A	60p	£1.00	£2.10	£4.20	£5.20		£6.30

Long Stay Car Parks: Acreman Street, Coldharbour, Culverhayes

Hours	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	6 hours	All Day
Current Charge		£1.70			£2.80
Proposed Charge	£1.10	£2.10	£3.00	£3.50	£4.50

West Bay

Short Stay Car Parks: Bridport Arms, Quayside, The George,

Hours	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours max stay
Current Charge	50p	£1.00	£1.60
Proposed Charge	60p	£1.00	£2.10

Esplanade, The Mound

Hours	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours max stay
Current Charge	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00
Proposed	£1.10	£2.20	£3.30

Charge			
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Long Stay Car Parks: Station Yard, West Bay Road

Hours	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	6 hours	All Day
Current Charge	50p					£2.00
Proposed Charge	60p	£1.10	£2.10	£3.00	£3.00	£4.00

East Beach due to its proximity to the beach should have a premium price

Hours	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	6 hours	All Day
Current Charge	50p					£2.00
Proposed Charge	£1.00	£1.30	£2.40	£3.40	£4.00	£6.00

West Bexington

Car Park: The Beach

Hours	1 hour	3 hours	All Day
Current Charge	60p	£3.50	£5.00
Proposed Charge	70p	£3.70	£5.30

Commercial Parking Charges

Hours	Per hour
Current Charge	£1.00
Proposed Charge	£1.20

Season Tickets

Season tickets provide regular users of the Council car parks with substantial financial discounts.

A current Level 5 Dorchester Season tickets provide a 25% discount based upon a 5 day a week over 48 weeks in a year. It should be noted that the season ticket also allows the holder to park in any long stay car park across the whole of West Dorset.

A current Level 3 Season ticket that allows parking in the long stay car parks in Beaminster, Lyme Regis, West Bay, West Bexington and Acreman Street Sherborne provides a 64% discount.

Long Stay Car parks	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Beaminster – Yarn Barton	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Charmouth – Lower Sea Lane	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lyme Regis – Charmouth Road Holmbush	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
West Bay – East Beach Station Yard West Bay Road		✓	✓	✓	✓
West Bexington – Beach		✓	✓	✓	✓
Sherborne – Acreman			✓	✓	✓
Sherborne – Coldharbour Culverhayes				✓	✓
Bridport – East Street Hope Terrace West Street				✓	✓
Dorchester – Durngate Street Fairfield Road Top O Town					✓
Current Charge	£220	£230	£240	£500	£720
Proposed Charge	£230	£240	£250	£520	£740

APPENDIX 4

West Dorset Car Parks

Town	Car Park	Bays	Comments
Beaminster			
	The Square	24	Managed on behalf of Beaminster Town Council
	Yarn Barton	72	
Bridport			
	East Street	143	
	Bridport Football Club		Managed on behalf of Bridport Town Council
	Hope Terrace	22	
	Rope Walks	158	
	South Street	98	
	West Street	93	
	Wykes Court	96	
Charmouth			
	Lower Sea Lane	26	
Dorchester			
	Acland Road	255	
	Durngate Street	48	
	Fairfield Road (SS)	140	
	Fairfield Road (LS)	418	
	Old Market	60	
	Top O' Town	201	
	Trinity Street I & III	200	
	Trinity Street II	122	Managed on behalf of a private owner
	Wollaston Field	155	
Lyme Regis			
	Broad Street	36	
	Charmouth Road	264	
	Cobb Gate	17	
	Holmbush	333	
Sherborne			
	Acreman Street	45	
	Coldharbour	70	
	Culverhayes	263	
	Digby Hall	46	Managed on behalf of Sherborne District Council
	Newland North	54	
	Old Market Yard	111	
West Bay			
	Bridport Arms	35	
	East Beach	150	Shingle surface estimated capacity
	Esplanade	38	
	Quayside	67	
	Station Yard	125	Unmade surface estimated capacity
	The George	17	
	The Mound	24	
	West Bay Road	437	Used as a summer park & ride for Bridport Town. Part unmade surface estimated capacity
West Bexington	The Beach	78	