

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
20TH JULY 2010

Wyre Forest Car Parking Review

OPEN	
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	Economic Success Shared by All
CORPORATE PLAN AIM:	District wide regeneration
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor M J Hart
DIRECTOR	Director of Planning and Regulatory Services
CONTACT OFFICER:	Mike Parker, Director of Planning & Regulatory Services – Ext. 2500 Mike.parker@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES	Appendix 1 – Recommendations for Community & Regeneration Committee 10 th June 2010 Appendix 2 – Criteria for considering requests for passes or the use of car parks in connection with events.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider a number of matters in connection with car parking provision within the district and proposed changes as a way forward for a number of site specific proposals.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to **RECOMMEND** to Council that:

- 2.1 the Wyre Forest District Council (Off Street Parking Places) (Consolidation) Order 2009 be amended and consulted upon as required to accommodate the following changes:

- The car park at Vale Road, Stourport be made chargeable from 1st October 2010, or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter, depending on response to consultation, as set out in paragraph 4.2iv of this report and that Restricted Season Tickets be made available once the charge is introduced.
- The land at 8 & 8a Bridge Street, Stourport be included as a future pay & display car park to be charged for in the same way as Raven Street Car Park, Stourport.
- The land at Worcester Street, Kidderminster (Coronation Gardens) be included as a future pay & display car park to be charged as set out in paragraph 4.7 of this report.
- If there is not agreement reached with the Parish Council on the transfer of the land to them, then the car park at The Avenue, Blakedown be made

chargeable from 1st October 2010, or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter, depending on response to consultation, as set out in paragraph 4.2i of this report.

- The Order be amended as appropriate to reflect Blue Badge holder dispensations.
- The exemption from the 23 hour maximum stay in any 24 hour period for a period not exceeding two months for holders of Full, Restricted and Resident Season Tickets.
- The removal of Westbourne Street car park as a public car park.
- Reference to 'Other Season Tickets' to be added to ensure consistency with the provisions of the Financial Strategy;

and that Cabinet be given delegated authority to consider any representations made as a result of public consultation on the above and to finalise the revisions to the Order.

- 2.2 That the Director of Legal & Corporate Services be authorised to progress the lease of spaces at Westbourne Street car park, Bewdley in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Legal & Corporate Services and Cabinet Member for Housing & Environmental Services and to determine criteria for selection of lessees.
- 2.3 That car park charges and season ticket prices be increased from January 2011 to reflect the increase in VAT from 17.5% to 20%.
- 2.4 In response to the Community & Regeneration Committee recommendations:
 - i. That the maximum stay period of 23 hours in any 24 hour period be retained in the Car Park Order but that the Order be amended to exempt Full, Restricted and Residents' Season Ticket holders from having to meet this requirement for a period of no more than two months at one time.
 - ii. That Resident Season Tickets be withdrawn on a phased basis, commencing in April 2011 with the withdrawal of the 12 month Season Ticket and in October 2011 with the withdrawal of the 6 month Season Ticket.
 - iii. That from October 2011, Dog Lane and Gardners Meadow car parks be included in the list of car parks where a Restricted Season Ticket may be purchased.
 - iv. That, until October 2011, the issue of new Residents' Season Tickets be limited to those streets set out in paragraph 4.4iii of this report only.
 - v. That the Director of Planning & Regulatory Services investigates the introduction of tickets purchased from machines the previous evening to continue into the following day and 2 day tickets, subject to there being no software impediment or financial cost to the Council, and introduces them from October 2011.

Cabinet is asked to DECIDE:

- 2.5 **To introduce a season ticket for specific events and to charge for the issue of passes for the use of car parks for non civic and non charitable requests for such, as set out in paragraph 8.3 of this report and to agree the criteria set out in Appendix 2 of this report for considering such requests.**
- 2.6 **That the Committee Officer writes to Bewdley High School regarding the possibility of operating a Park & Ride facility from their car park.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Every February as part of setting the budget, Council also sets the charges to be applied in its public car parks for the following year; these come into effect on 1st October of that year. At the same time, Council agrees charges for the forthcoming year for all types of season ticket.
- 3.2 The Wyre Forest District Council (Off Street Parking Places) (Consolidation) Order 2009 was agreed by Council in May 2009. This Order establishes the designation and use of parking places, the charges and exemptions from charges, the contraventions and penalty charges and other miscellaneous provisions which govern the manner by which the Council operates its public car parks.
- 3.3 As part of the financial strategy 2010/11 the Council agreed to undertake a strategic review of car park tariffs, this report sets out the framework for this to proceed and the options by which the anticipated £7,500 additional revenue anticipated for this financial year could be achieved.
- 3.4 At its meeting of 15th June 2010, Cabinet received the recommendations from the Community & Regeneration Committee's scrutiny of the 23 hour maximum stay period within the Council's car parks and the provision of Bewdley Residents' Season Tickets. The recommendations are set out at Appendix 1 to this report and are considered in detail later on.

4. KEY ISSUES

The Council's Free Public Car Parks

- 4.1 The Council currently provides public car parks at the following locations without making a charge for their use:
- The Avenue, Blakedown
 - Broadwaters Drive, Kidderminster
 - Westbourne Street, Bewdley
 - Vale Road, Stourport
- 4.2 The Council has the option to consider introducing charges for the use of these car parks in line with the other pay & display car parks across the district. The potential for this on each car park is considered below:
- i. *The Avenue, Blakedown (22 spaces)* – in the autumn of 2009, the Council's officers engaged in a dialogue with the Parish Council about the potential to introduce a charge for the use of the car park. Complaints had been made that the car park spaces were being taken up by rail commuters opting to

avoid the £3.50 per day charge for parking at Kidderminster station and parking for free at Blakedown instead. It was felt that this impeded the proper use of the car park by customers of the local shops.

The Parish Council set up a working party to consider the possibility of charging. The Parish Council felt that the introduction of charges would simply lead to more on street parking by those using the railway station. They felt that a more considered approach was required, which might include transferring the car park to the Parish Council to administer. There was also concern that the discussion about the 23 hour maximum stay period (at the time the Bewdley issue arose) might impede the use of the car park by Birmingham Road residents who had nowhere else to park. It should be noted though that the Parish Council would not benefit from the same powers that the Council uses to enforce the use of its car parks, should the car park be transferred to them and would have to rely on enforcing the laws of trespass to ensure proper use of the car park. A dialogue on this option is continuing but, in the absence of a satisfactory solution on that basis, it is felt that a bespoke solution is required to ensure the proper use of this car park by customers to the shops and it is therefore recommended that, with effect from 1st October 2010, pay & display charges be introduced. It is proposed that 11 spaces be designated as short stay with the first hour being free and 50p for up to two hours and 10 spaces designated as long stay and including a charge of £2.50 for over two hours. One space will remain for disabled users.

- ii. *Broadwaters Drive, Kidderminster (56 spaces)* – this car park principally serves Broadwaters Park and events at the Rose Theatre and is used by residents in the evening. The future of this car park will be considered as part of the strategic review set out at 4.3 below.
- iii. *Westbourne Street, Bewdley (16 spaces)* – currently used by residents of neighbouring properties, SVR enthusiasts and for access to the town on foot. This car park is comparable to that in Lax Lane in terms of its size and general location. The Lax Lane car park contains 15 spaces which have been leased to nearby premises. It is proposed that spaces in the Westbourne Street car park are let to occupants of nearby premises on short term leases, and, under the Director of Legal & Corporate Services, the property team offer spaces for rent to residents in the immediate vicinity of the car park at a rental (inclusive of service charge for future maintenance) to be determined by the Director of Legal & Corporate Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Legal & Corporate Services and Cabinet Member for Housing & Environmental Services.
- iv. *Vale Road, Stourport (75 spaces)* – this car park is currently well used to support the northern end of the town. The principle of charging on this car park has been considered before and was delayed pending the introduction of a pedestrian crossing across Vale Road by the County Council. Such a crossing is not a priority for the County Council and is not expected to be implemented. The lack of such a crossing does not appear to diminish the level of use of the car park and it is recommended that charges for its use be introduced from 1st October 2010 on the same basis as Raven Street, i.e. up to 2 hours – 70p, over 2 hours £5.00. Recognising that residents and local businesses may wish to park regularly at the site, it is also proposed

that Restricted Season Tickets be made available for purchase for this Car Park.

A Strategic Review Of Chargeable and Free Car Parks

- 4.3 The remaining public car parks in the district all have charges applied to them. In advance of the 2011/12 budget, it is proposed that these car parks and Broadwaters Drive be reviewed to consider their future and what charges should be applied. Such a review will include consideration of current usage, function in respect to town centre economic viability, consistency of charges and potential for alternative uses.

Community & Regeneration Committee Recommendations

- 4.4 The recommendations of the Community & Regeneration Committee meeting of 10th June 2010 are included at Appendix 1 to this report. Taking each in turn, the following is recommended:

- i. **The maximum stay period of 23 hours in any 24 hour period to remain applicable across the Council's car parks, but 24/7 parking be allowed for Full, Restricted and Residents' Parking Passes, with no uninterrupted stay in one space for longer than two months.**

Response: this recommendation is agreed.

- ii. **To continue to provide Residents' Parking Passes in Bewdley and limit them to one per household.**

Response: Cabinet need to be mindful that there is concern that a consistent, fair and equitable policy should apply across the district with regard to the availability of Residents' passes. It is recognised that the availability of such passes to Bewdley residents only is inconsistent with other car parks across the district. It is understood that the Community & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee recognised this and proposed the district wide availability of such passes (see recommendation iv. below). However, to be consistent with the geographic limitations also proposed at iii. below, would also require similar limitations being applied to all car parks across the district. This would be a complex administrative process, placing further strain on limited resources, further, it would add complications to the operational enforcement of the car parks. There must also be concern that increased availability of subsidised Residents' Passes could further undermine car park revenue as availability and turnover of spaces could be reduced.

It is therefore proposed that Residents' Season Tickets be withdrawn in their current form and the system be restructured on a phased basis as follows:

The twelve month Residents' Season Ticket be withdrawn from April 2011 and the six month Residents' Season Ticket be withdrawn from October 2011. From October 2011, therefore, no Residents' Season Tickets will be available for purchase; those purchased before October 2011 will have run out by 1st April 2012 at the latest. From 1st October 2011, those residents wishing to purchase Season Tickets in Bewdley

will have the option of purchasing Restricted Season Tickets, as it is intended that these be made available from that date for Dog Lane and Gardners' Meadow car parks. Until October 2011, it is not proposed that tickets be limited to one per household.

- iii. **The Director of Planning & Regulatory Services Directorate draw up a set of restrictions governing the eligibility of Residents' Parking Passes and the decision on this be taken at management level.**

Response: given that residents passes will only remain available in Bewdley until October 2011, it is intended that their availability be restricted as they currently are to:

Load Street, High Street, Lower Park, Lax Lane, Welch Gate, Dowles Road leading to Dog Lane, Severnside North, Severnside South.

- iv. **The Director of Planning & Regulatory Services should look at where Residents' Parking Passes might be introduced across the District as part of the budgetary process for the 2011 to 2014 budget.**

Response: in the light of ii above, this recommendation would no longer be necessary.

- v. **The price of Residents' Parking Passes as set out in the 2010-2013 budget should remain unchanged.**

Response: in the light of ii above, the prices set in the budget for October 2010 will remain in effect until October 2011 at which time they will no longer be available. The availability of a 12 month Ticket will cease at April 2011.

- vi. **The Director of Planning & Regulatory Services to examine the possibility of both the overnight roll over of Pay and Display payment, and also weekend tickets, as part of the October 2010 software update to the Pay and Display Ticket Machines.**

Response: this recommendation is agreed and will be brought into effect, subject to their being no technical or cost reasons to prevent it, in October 2010. However, rather than the 'weekend' tickets being made available, it is proposed to enable 2 day tickets to be purchased at any time during the week or at weekends. There will have to be a consequential amendment to the Car Park Order to exempt such tickets from the 23 hour maximum stay provisions. This change would not include Weavers' Wharf (which is owned by Hendersons plc) where space turnover needs to be maximised.

- vii. **The Director of Planning and Regulatory Services to estimate the cost of providing Residents' Parking Passes as part of the budgetary process for the 2011 to 2014 budget.**

Response: in the light of ii above this recommendation will not be necessary.

- viii. **A letter be sent to Bewdley High School asking whether they would consider setting up a Park and Ride Service using the school car park during peak holiday periods.**

Response: this recommendation is accepted; the Committee Officer to write to Bewdley High School to enquire about availability of car park for this purpose.

Miscellaneous Amendments to Car Park Order

- 4.5 There are further additional amendments required to the Car Park Order. In respect of Blue Badge Holders, such holders currently enjoy free parking for up to three hours in any of the Council's car parks, but this is inconsistent with the maximum length of stay for short stay car parks in the Order. It is, therefore recommended that the Car Park Order be amended to reflect the exemption for Blue Badge Holders.
- 4.6 In July 2009 the Council acquired land at 8-8a Bridge Street, Stourport (the Lloyds Garage site) as part of its redevelopment plans, in partnership with Advantage West Midlands and British Waterways to link the canal basins to the town. The occupier of the site was given an 18 month lease at a peppercorn rent to enable him to seek relocation of the business. The lease ends in January 2011 and it is proposed that the Council take occupation of the site in readiness for redevelopment (potential developer(s) are being actively sought). It is considered that the site will be more marketable with the existing garage buildings demolished and this will also enable detailed ground investigations to be carried out where necessary, and, as a short term measure until redevelopment is ready to take place, the land be used as a temporary car park. It is proposed that the site be included in the Car Park Order and that a pricing structure identical to Raven Street be adopted.
- 4.7 At this Cabinet meeting, Members are also considering a report from the Director of Legal & Corporate Services about land at Coronation Gardens, Kidderminster (also known as KTC3) which proposes the temporary improvement of the site pending its future redevelopment. As part of that scheme, it is proposed to introduce parking bays off Worcester Street. It is intended that these bays will be chargeable as pay & display purposes for short to medium stay. It is proposed that these bays be included in the Car Park order and the following charges applied from 1st October 2010 – 80p up to 1 hour, £1.10 up to 2 hours, £1.90 up to 3 hours, £3.70 over 3 hours, which reflects the charges at Bromsgrove Street car park.
- 4.8 As part of the government's emergency budget on 22nd June, the announcement was made that, from January 2011, VAT would be increased from 17.5% to 20%. Clearly this rise will need to be reflected in the car park charges across the district and it is recommended that Council agrees this increase in order not to suffer lost revenue. The cost of changing the signs at each car park and the ticket machines is negligible in relation to the potential lost revenue.

Requests For Events Involving Use Of Council Car Parks

- 4.9 The Council's Financial Strategy has always made provision for the Council to have discretion in issuing season tickets, as appropriate, in addition to the Full, Restricted Resident and Senior Citizen Season Tickets and this needs to be reflected in the Order for consistency.

- 4.10 The Council is regularly requested to either make available some or all of its car parks for certain events to be held, or to make available a number of passes for vehicles to park for free in connection with certain events. A specific form is available to make such requests.
- 4.11 Where the event in question is a civic or charitable event, such requests are usually granted without question at no charge. However, in the past it has been the expectation of event holders who are arranging non charitable events that they too will receive the spaces at no charge and, indeed, this has been the case.
- 4.12 Within the list of Season Tickets available, there is also a category of 'Other' which, in effect, enables the issue of a season ticket to any persons and with any conditions as the Council shall decide. Under this category it is recommended that the Council make available a specific season ticket for events, for the duration of the event only, which can be issued either free of charge for those civic or charitable events or for a charge to non charitable events where the request is accepted. The suggested criteria for considering requests for parking spaces or passes in connection with events are included at Appendix 2 to this report. Where a charge is appropriate it is suggested that this be made available at a discount of £1 below the maximum all day charge on the particular car park in question.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council is anticipating revenue of £7,500 in the 2010/11 financial year from the review of car park charging tariffs. Although the introduction of charges on the free car parks can lead to unpredictable responses in the behaviour of those who previously parked for free, it is anticipated that the additional income received by charging on currently free car parks, together with some additional income from event purchases of passes, will provide additional income for the Council broadly in line with the figure anticipated.
- 5.2 The emergency budget on 23rd June made the announcement that, with effect from 4th January 2011, VAT will increase from 17.5% to 20%. The Council's current car park and season ticket charges are based on 17.5% VAT. It is estimated that the Council would have to subsidise current charges by up to £20,000 between January and April if no change is made to increase VAT from 4th January. The operational cost of making these changes is estimated to be in the region of £3,500.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Wyre Forest District Council (Off Street Parking Places) (Consolidation) Order 2009 sets out the legal framework for the way the Council is able to manage and charge for its public car parks. There are a number of proposed changes set out in the report that will require formal amendment to the order and consultation on it.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equality & Diversity Screening assessment has been carried out and has not highlighted any adverse implications.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 There is a potential risk that parking behaviour changes as a result of introducing charges when car parks had previously been free of charge such that anticipated income is not forthcoming. If this appears to be the case, then it is still open to the Council to consider the future of such car parks as part of the strategic review in readiness for the 2011/12 budget.
- 8.2 If the Council fails to consider such strategic matters from time to time, the cost effectiveness of providing and maintaining public car parks will not be maximised.
- 8.3 If the Council fails to ensure that from time to time the Car Park Order is not updated, then there will be inconsistencies between the Order and the enforcement of the use of the car parks.
- 8.4 If the Council fails to take account of the VAT increase from 4th January, it is estimated that it would have the effect of subsidising car park and season ticket sales of in the order of £20,000.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 This report sets out a number of interrelated issues to do with the use of its car parks, ranging from a review of free car parks to some minor updating of the Car Park Order.

10. CONSULTEES

Director Legal & Corporate Services
Director of Resources
Parking Services Manager

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wyre Forest District Council (Off Street Parking Places) (Consolidation) Order 2009
Community & Regeneration report 7th January 2010
Community & Regeneration report 10th June 2010

Community & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee 10th June 2010

Recommendations

- 4.1 The maximum stay period of 23 hours in any 24 hour period to remain applicable across the Council's Car Parks, but 24/7 parking be allowed for Full, Restricted, and Residents' Parking Passes, with no uninterrupted stay in one space for longer than two months.
- 4.2 To continue to provide Residents' Parking Passes in Bewdley, and limit them to one per household.
- 4.3 The Director of Planning and Regulatory Services draw up a set of restrictions governing the eligibility of Residents' Parking Passes, and the decision on this be taken at management level.
- 4.4 The Director of Planning and Regulatory Services should look at where Residents' Parking Passes might be introduced across the District as part of the budgetary process for the 2011 to 2014 budget.
- 4.5 The price of Residents' Parking Passes as set out in the 2010-2013 budget should remain unchanged.
- 4.6 The Director of Planning and Regulatory Services to examine the possibility of both the overnight roll over of Pay and Display payment, and also weekend tickets, as part of the October 2010 software update to the Pay and Display Ticket Machines.
- 4.7 The Director of Planning and Regulatory Services to estimate the cost of providing Residents' Parking Passes as part of the budgetary process for the 2011 to 2014 budget.
- 4.8 A letter be sent to Bewdley High School asking whether they would consider setting up a Park and Ride Service using the school car park during peak holiday periods.

Criteria for Considering Applications for Event Parking Passes

The following criteria will be used in considering requests for car park passes for events, or in instances where the car park or parts of it have been requested for non car par uses;

- Is the event a civic event or a charitable event? (if yes, then the passes will be available, as long as other operational criteria can be met, and at no charge).
- Does the event have other operational implications, e.g. closing off/barriers/enforcement and can this be provided.
- That the date and timing of the event does not clash with other events in the vicinity at the same time nor particularly busy days, e.g. Bank Holidays.
- The number of passes/spaces required and duration and impact this would have on car park revenue.
- The availability of the alternative parking facilities in the vicinity.
- The potential impact on nearby residential properties and business premises.
- Whether the request is supported by the venue at which the event is to be held.
- Any health & safety issues arising.