

East Herts Council Non-Key Decision Report

Date: 23 February 2023

Report by: Councillor Graham McAndrew, Executive member for Environmental Sustainability

Report title: Re-introduction of car park charges at Stanstead Abbots car park

Ward affected: Stanstead Abbots

Summary

- Following the cessation of external sponsorship for Stanstead Abbots car park to be free to users, this report proposes to re-introduce car park charges.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DECISION:

(A) To approve the re-introduction of car parking charges in Stanstead Abbots Car Park with the tariff structure proposed in para 2.7.

(B) To progress with the development of a Traffic Regulation Order in order to implement this proposal subject to consultation feedback.

1.0 Proposal

1.1 To re-introduce car park charges in Stanstead Abbots Car park following the cessation of sponsorship from French and Jupps.

2.0 Background

2.1 In 2014 a business in Stanstead Abbots, French and Jupps,

approached East Herts Council with an offer to gift the equivalent of the annual pay and display income (£7,500) for the village's car park, enabling the facility to be made free to users. The offer was accepted by the Council's Director of Neighbourhood Services. The arrangement ended in 2022. As a result, the car park has received no financial contribution or direct income.

- 2.2 The council operates all its car parks on a chargeable basis to ensure spaces are effectively regulated, in respect of turnover thus benefitting residents, visitors, and local businesses.
- 2.3 The council has a duty to ensure an equitable return on its investment, to deliver value for money to the council and taxpayers. The council's accepted principle that the user pays for the service further underpins the rationale for reintroducing charges.
- 2.4 The proposal is to reintroduce charging including the installation of two Pay and Display Flowbird machines and other associated equipment to allow charging to take place.
- 2.5 The introduction of a Pay by Phone service is required to supplement the P&D system and align payment options with other East Herts car parks. The P&D machines will offer full functionality in the context of coin, electronic payment and "Check in and Check Out" (CICO) service that mimics a Pay on Exit type programme, allowing customers to pay for the time used.
- 2.6 The introduction of charges is estimated to produce £12,939 (exc VAT) annually, based on 30% occupancy in the context of two daily transactions per bay, with an average two-hour payment (£1.70) across 54 chargeable bays that operate from Monday to Saturday. There are 3 additional disabled parking bays in the car park with no charges applicable.

2.7 The tariff structure is proposed to match Ware car parks as listed below:

Stanstead Abbots Mixed Use (short and long stay) 2023/24 Monday to Sunday: 7.30am – 8pm	
First 30mins	Free
Up to 1 hour	90p
Up to 2 hours	£1.70
Up to 3 hours	£2.10
Up to 4 hours	£2.80
Up to 5 hours	£3.90
Up to 12.5 hours (all day)	£5.00
Sunday Up to 12.5hours (all day)	£1.50

3.0 Reason(s)

3.1 The introduction of charging at this car park will ensure income generated from this car park contributes to the operation and maintenance of the car park.

4.0 Options

4.1 Not Recommended – No charging introduction. This will create a deficit in the budget following the cessation of the sponsorship. Given the financial challenges faced by the Council it would be prudent to introduce a charge in this car park. There are no free car parks anywhere else in East Herts.

5.0 Risks

5.1 A possible risk is the negative feedback from residents and motorists. The consultation process will determine if this risk is realised.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

6.1 Statutory consultees such as the Police will be consulted, and this will be followed by public consultation.

Community Safety

Yes – cash collection from the machines could pose an issue but it is unlikely from our experience.

Data Protection

No

Equalities

Yes, an EQIA will be developed before consultation and updated following consultation.

Environmental Sustainability

It not anticipated that car use will increase following the re-introduction of charging in the car park.

Financial

There is an approximate start up cost of £10,000 in developing the Traffic Regulation Order, installation of pay and display machines, programming and signage. Expected income is projected to cover this cost after the first year of implementation.

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

The Traffic Regulation Order is a legal procedure pursuant to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ("the Act"). If the report is approved in principle, the statutory procedures under the Act will need to be carried out which will include statutory consultations before a decision to implement is determined and any Order is made.

Specific Wards

Yes – Stanstead Abbotts

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 None

Contact Member

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