

East Herts Council Report

Executive Committee

Date of meeting: 13 February 2024

Report by: Tim Hoskin - Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability

Report title: Reintroduction of car park charges in Stanstead Abbots Car Park.

Ward affected: Stanstead Abbots

Summary – Subject to the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 this report considers the twenty-seven objections received in response to the advertised Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) proposing to reintroduce car parking charges in Stanstead Abbots car park.

RECOMMENDATION FOR Executive:

- a) **To overrule twenty seven Traffic Regulation Order objections for the reasons set out in Appendix A and reintroduce parking charges.**
- b) **To authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to publish a Notice of Making under the Road Traffic Regulation Act to give effect to the introduction of the tariff structure as shown in Appendix C.**

1. Proposal

- 1.1 French & Jupps approached East Herts in April 2014 and proposed to pay £7,500 annually to cover the pay and display income from the village car park and allow it to operate on a free to use basis for the public. East Herts accepted the offer.
- 1.2 The French & Jupps corporate funding was withdrawn in July 2022, and this led to East Herts undertaking a review to ensure that the operation of the car park was funded appropriately.
- 1.3 East Hertfordshire District Council proposed an amendment to the 2014 East Herts Rural Off-Street Parking Places Order and a public consultation was undertaken between 3 August and 15 September with a proposal to reintroduce car park charges as set out in Appendix B.

2. Reason(s)

The council has a duty to deliver a reasonable return for taxpayers in the context of the non-statutory (off street) car parks' service.

Car park charging is intended to maintain a balance between providing funding to deliver the service, encouraging modal change, supporting the vitality and economy of the village, supporting residents, visitors and local businesses.

East Herts operates all its car parks on a chargeable basis to ensure the available spaces are effectively regulated, in respect of demand and turnover.

The rationale for introducing charges is associated with the principle that the user contributes towards the costs of service provision, and that the council or general taxpayers do not disproportionately fund such costs.

Car park charges will help ensure optimal use of the available parking spaces, and can support a modal shift away from private vehicle use. A well-managed car park will support the village by effectively regulating turnover and providing parking options for a variety of customers.

Options: there are two options:

- Not Recommended: Maintain the current free parking arrangements.
- Recommended: Overrule the objections to enable the reintroduction of parking charges.

Recommendation:

Reintroducing parking charges will deliver a service that meets the needs of stakeholders and supports businesses in line with the council's priorities: "Enabling our communities" and "Encouraging economic growth".

Parking income will contribute towards the financing of the car park in line with the principle that the user pays an appropriate tariff. The payment structure will provide an equitable model and align this car park with all other East Herts car parks.

3. Risks

By not introducing parking charges the costs associated with operating the car park (business rates, grounds maintenance, lighting, Civil Enforcement Officer patrolling) will be unfairly borne by the council and taxpayers.

4. Implications/Consultations

The Traffic Regulation Order proposal was advertised to the public between 3rd August to 15th September via local newspaper and posters were erected inside the car park. Statutory consultees were consulted from 04th July to 24th July.

5. Data Protection

No issues. No personal information is associated with this report.

6. Equalities

The Council has a statutory duty under the Equalities Act 2010. The proposal does not conflict with East Herts Equality policy. There are no charges associated with blue badge holders parking in the car park.

7. Environmental Sustainability

Car park tariffs can play a role in encouraging modal shift in behaviour and improving the environment. East Herts seeks to promote alternative modes of transport such as walking or cycling. The new parking charges may reduce demand, and associated carbon emissions, leading to improved air quality. No negative impact to the environment is expected.

8. Financial

The reintroduction of parking charges is estimated to generate **£16,174** revenue annually. The annual French & Jupps contribution was **£7,500**.

The East Herts annual operating costs shown below total **£10,874**:

- CCTV camera - monitoring and maintenance - £4,286.00
- National Non-Domestic Rates - £2,395.00
- Civil Enforcement Officer patrolling - £1,950.00
- Car park lighting and electricity (estimated) - £150.00
- One Pay and Display machine maintenance - £380.00
- Supply of Pay & Display tickets (a section of the car park operates a time limited free parking tariff with ticket required) - £130.00
- Grounds maintenance and tree inspections - £865.00
- Cleansing (litter picking) - £324.00
- Gulleys and channels cleansing - £394.00

An additional expense was incurred in 2023/24 in relation to a severe impact to the car park barrier: £1,455 contractor costs to make safe. Further costs may be incurred in respect of any replacement unit.

9. Health and Safety

No concerns.

10. Human Resources

N/A

11. Human Rights

N/A

12. Legal

East Herts council has complied with its duty to consider Traffic Regulation Order objections under Regulation 13 of The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

13. Background papers and appendices

Appendix A - Traffic Regulation Order objections by theme.

Appendix B - Proposed car park charging tariff structure plan.

Appendix C - Car park charging tariff structure plan for implementation.

Contact Member

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