

Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: Tillingbourne

Report of Director of Service Delivery

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Shere Parish Council Car Park – Introduction of Charges

Executive Summary

In 2008 Guildford contributed significantly to the refurbishment of the visitor car park in Shere. As part of the agreement, the Parish and Council agreed that there would be no tariffs initially, but there was a review mechanism which set out that the Parish could seek approval to adjust tariffs in the future with our agreement. The car park is in need of some significant work and the Parish feel that it would be appropriate for the users of the car park to contribute towards the ongoing expense of maintaining the car park. In the event of any surplus revenue, this could also support the parish councils' wider activities and services for visitors and residents. The Parish are seeking approval to set parking tariffs.

Recommendation to Executive/ Committee/ Council (*delete as appropriate*)

That the Executive/ Committee/ Council approves

1. the request by the parish to make charges for the use of their car park under the 2008 agreement.
2. That authority is delegated to the Head of Operational and Technical Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Environment to agree the tariffs that can be applied by the Parish for parking in this car park now and at any future review requested by the Parish.

Reason(s) for Recommendation:

1. To enable the Parish to raise revenues for the ongoing upkeep of the car park and other activities of the Parish.
2. To ensure that tariffs for parking in this car park are appropriately balanced between the needs of the Parish and against the need to ensure that tariffs do not result in unintended consequences in the wider parish and neighbouring areas. To also allow future flexibility in the setting of those charges.

Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication? (delete as appropriate)

No

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval for formally agreeing to the Parishes request to set charges for car parking in their 93 space visitor car park, and the mechanism for current and ongoing review and approval.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 By agreeing to the request we will be delivering on the core value within our corporate plan of “We will work constructively with other councils, partners, businesses and communities to achieve the best outcomes for all.”.

3. Background

- 3.1 There is a popular destination for visitors with a good range of attractions as well as being a gateway to the Surrey hills and nearby Newlands Corner and Silent Pool. In 2008 we provided financial support of approximately £90,000 as well as technical assistance for a full resurfacing of the 93 space car park that provides the only off street parking facility for visitors to Shere.

- 3.2 The current condition of the car park is now poor, with significant potholes and whilst temporary repairs have been undertaken by the Parish, there is a need for a significant investment in the car park, with a further full resurfacing needed. The Parish are responsible for this but they have reported that this would be challenging financially and would like to start charging for the use of the car park so that the users of the car park contribute to the ongoing costs of maintenance. Please see letter at Appendix 1.

- 3.3 As part of the funding agreement the car park was set to be free to use unless the Council agreed to parking tariffs. The text from the agreement is within the letter from Shere at Appendix 1, and is as follows:

From the Development Completion Date SPC shall operate and make the Car Park available to the public without charge at all times of the days or night on a first come first served basis or in accordance with any other operating terms and conditions agreed between the Parties from time to time which for the avoidance of doubt could include charging for the use of the Car Park in appropriate circumstances.

- 3.4 It is clear that charging users of the car park to generate funds for the Parish was a potential longer-term outcome.

- 3.5 Whilst there have been no specific counts of users of the car park by the Parish, we do know that the car park is very busy, especially at the weekends and there is often displacement parking into the village centre which can cause disruption to through traffic.
- 3.6 In terms of an estimate of use even if each space was only used once per day, this would equate to over 33,000 visits per year. In reality there is likely to be many uses of each space in a day and a conservative estimate would put visits in excess of 100,000 per year.
- 3.7 As a result parking fees could bring two key benefits. Firstly, even a modest tariff will generate significant income levels. Secondly charging may encourage a greater turnover of spaces allowing more parking events, which in turn may reduce the displacement into village and alleviate some of the associated issues.
- 3.8 Equally a high parking tariff, may have the opposite effect, it may encourage further displacement and disruption into the village or beyond and reduce the income the Parish is able to achieve. It is for these reasons that it is important that the Council expressly agrees the tariffs that are being proposed by the Parish to ensure that we can take a view on the likely wider impacts of charges at this car park and have an ongoing influence on whether there are charges and what those charges are in the future.
- 3.9 It should be noted that there are some residential users within the car park and the Parish intends to operate a permit scheme for a small number of residents with properties in the vicinity of the car park.
- 3.10 The Parish would be entirely responsible for all aspects of the change including, selecting a method of stay, such as pay and display or pay on foot, the methods of payment. The installation of any equipment needed to support the tariff structures well as any maintenance. The Parish would also be responsible for managing payment, including cash receipts as well as arranging appropriate enforcement. In the spirit of cooperation, we would provide advice and support to the Parish where resources allow.

4. Consultations

None – this is a matter for the Parish to consider as part of their proposals for car parking tariffs.

5. Key Risks

- 5.1 That the charges result in significant displacement of visitors onto the public highway or into other neighbouring areas.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 This will allow the Parish to become more self-sufficient in its activities and may reduce requests for financial support from the Council in the future.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The agreement from 2008 allows the Parish to apply a parking tariff subject to our agreement and for those tariffs to be reviewed from time to time. It is important that both initial as well as future terms and conditions are considered, reviewed and formally approved by this Council, to ensure that they do not result in unacceptable unforeseen consequences.

8. Human Resource Implications

- 8.1 There would be a limited amount of officer time involved in considering and reviewing requests for changes to the operating terms and conditions of the car park from time to time

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 9.1 None Identified

10. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

- 10.1 This may result in less visits by car. In addition, we would encourage the Parish to install or allow the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points as part of their future plans for the car park.

11. Summary of Options

- 11.1 We could decline this request but doing so will place significant burdens on the Parish whilst removing a method to generate revenues to address those burdens.

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 The car park is nearing the end of its built life and is in need of significant work and expense over the coming years. There are also opportunities for extending the network of EV charge points at this location, subject of course to supply and funding. By allowing tariffs this will allow the Parish to be self sufficient in its management of this car park and the income may also provide additional surpluses which could support the Parish's other services and activities.
- 12.2 The recommendation is therefore to agree to parking tariffs and delegate authority to agree those initial tariffs and future tariffs to the Head of Operational and Technical Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Environment.

13. Background Papers

None

14. Appendices

Letter from Shere Parish Council