

Wyre Forest District Council

Record of a Council Decision delegated to be made by an Officer

This includes a record of an Executive Decision made by an officer under Regulation 13, Part 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Item decided: That the proposed amendments to the Wyre Forest (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2019 to introduce a range of new car park and season ticket charges as set out in the Cabinet Medium Term Financial Strategy agreed in December 2019, is agreed and implemented from April 2020.	
Officer who has taken the decision	Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place
Date of the decision	21st February 2020
Reason for the decision/alternatives considered	At the December 2019 Cabinet meeting as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy a series of proposed amendments to car park and season ticket charges across the district were agreed subject to advertising as changes to the Car Park Places Order 2019. The proposals had been subject to Overview and Scrutiny consideration and recommendation. Cabinet delegated the advertisement and consideration of any objections to the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place in consultation with the Corporate Director: Community, Well Being and Environment, Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments and Cabinet Member for Operational Services. The proposals were advertised in the Kidderminster Shuttle and a summary of objections received and the response is attached to this decision.
Date and source of Delegated Decision (if appropriate)	Cabinet 18th December 2019
Council/Cabinet member consulted – if applicable	Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments and Cabinet Member for Operational Services.
Any interest declared by the Consultee or officer	None

Changes to the Wyre Forest District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2020

The Cabinet considered a parking charges review at its meeting of 17th December 2019 and concluded that there is a need for further simplification of the charging structure, which, whilst retaining the principles of fairness, equity and consistency in respect of parking charges adopted on previous reviews would also recognise the different circumstances of each of the towns in the district, such as seasonal demand, allowing for a more bespoke structure of charges within the adopted principles. It therefore approved a series of changes which have been subject to public consultation by way of advertisement in the Kidderminster Shuttle in January and February 2019.

In total 6 objections and one 'no objection' were received in response to the consultation; the Council also received a petition of 2870 signatures (760 online + 2110 hard copy) submitted in advance of the consultation but raising a matter regarding one of the proposed changes and this has also been treated as an objection for the purposes of the consultation. A summary of the objections and the Council's response is set out below.

Objection	Response
Extending the charging period to 9.00pm will adversely affect local clubs and societies who use the car parks in the evening; people will be less likely to attend events in the evening if they have to pay to park as well.	There should be no differentiation between people using facilities in the town during the daytime and having to pay to park than those using facilities in the town during the evening and expecting not to have to pay to park. It is very common in many towns and cities that charging extends into the evening period, there is no reason why this cannot also be the case in the Wyre Forest.
Extending the charging period to 9.00pm will adversely affect local eateries whose customers use the car parks in the evening; people will be less likely to use the facilities in the evening if they have to pay to park as well.	There should be no differentiation between people using facilities in the town during the daytime and having to pay to park than those using facilities in the town during the evening and expecting not to have to pay to park. There is no evidence to support the assertion that people will be less likely to use facilities in the evening if they have to pay to park than they would during the day when they have to pay to park.
The proposals target Bewdley and its visitors.	The proposed changes to car park charging apply across the district consistently, there are no different charges applied to Bewdley than

	elsewhere in the district. The proposal to apply a seasonal increase in charging also applies to Stourport.
Will no longer shop in Kidderminster when £1 charge comes in.	It already costs £1.40 to park for up to an hour on car parks where there is no free hour, the introduction of the £1 charge is a reduction on the existing charge.
Extending the charging period to 9.00pm will adversely affect voluntary groups who use the car parks in the evening; elderly and less mobile people will be most affected.	There should be no differentiation between people using facilities in the town during the daytime and having to pay to park than those using facilities in the town during the evening and expecting not to have to pay to park. There is no evidence to support any assertion that elderly and less mobile people will be adversely affected. Those in possession of Blue Badges will be able to park during the evening as they do during the day; others who would pay to park during the day should be able to pay in the evening as well.
<p>Withdrawal of hour free parking and the extension of the charging period to 9.00pm will affect Bewdley town's well being (and it has no major supermarket car parks to rely on) and particularly impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local residents • patients attending the medical centre • small shops and businesses day time trade • visitor numbers attending the museum and parks • community groups holding evening meeting • restaurants and pubs serving early evening food • illegal parking/traffic obstructions (drivers trying to avoid paying parking charges- there does not appear to be any provision for an increased Enforcement Team) 	<p>There is no evidence to support the assertion that withdrawal of the 'free hour' will have the effects outlined. The most popular car parks in Bewdley are Dog Lane and Load Street where there is no 'free hour' in operation. The proposals will see a reduction in the charge to park for up to an hour from £1.40 to £1 and it is considered that this will have a positive effect on the town and its economic wellbeing.</p> <p>The Council will continue to enforce against any illegal parking, it does not require any increase in the size of the Civil Enforcement team to continue to enforce the proposed charging changes.</p>
Shortage of on street parking in Bewdley and Stourport will mean these towns are affected more than Kidderminster.	As stated above the proposed changes will see a reduction the cost of parking for up to an hour compared to the current charges. It will cost the same as it

	currently does to park for up to two hours and only 20p more to park for three hours than at present. Those three bands account for 67% of all ticket sales. It is therefore not expected that the proposals will result in the implied increase in demand for on street parking.
Seasonal charging will affect Bewdley and Stourport and impact on tourists and residents and the economy of the towns.	The proposed seasonal charge is £1 more during April to October for those staying longer than three hours. It is not considered that this is likely to discourage the vast majority of visitors to those towns who expect to stay longer than three hours.
Will increase incidences of illegal parking to avoid the charges.	As stated above the proposed changes will see a reduction the cost of parking for up to an hour compared to the current charges. It will cost the same as it currently does to park for up to two hours and only 20p more to park for three hours than at present. Those three bands account for 67% of all ticket sales. It is therefore not expected that the proposals will result in the anticipated increase in illegal parking. Any such incidences would in effect be to avoid paying an extra 20p to park for three hours.
Increasing season ticket charges is unfair to those on low incomes; six month charge is proportionately too high for those who cannot afford 12 month tickets. Withdrawal of senior citizen 6 month ticket is “mean minded”.	Prices for all three bands of season ticket (12 months, 6 months and 1 month) are all being reduced compared to existing charges. The Council also offers a direct debit payment scheme to enable payment for a 12 month ticket by ten instalments. The withdrawal of the six month senior citizen season ticket is based on empirical evidence of take up; in 2018/19 only 10 of the 142 tickets sold were for six months only.
All the proposals are unfair when there is no reliable public transport alternative to rely on.	See all the above comments; when you examine the proposals closely many offer a cheaper alternative than currently exists which it is felt demonstrates a balanced proposal rather than one that can be called “unfair”.
Increased charges and removal of free parking will have direct impact on local traders in Bewdley.	There is no evidence to support the assertion that withdrawal of the ‘free hour’ and ‘increased’ charges will have the direct effect outlined. The most popular car parks in Bewdley are Dog Lane and Load Street where there is no

	'free hour' in operation. The proposals will see a reduction in the charge to park for up to an hour from £1.40 to £1 and it is considered that this will have a positive effect on the town and its economic wellbeing.
No objections (Worcestershire County Council)	Noted
Propose two hours free parking in Bewdley to encourage local people and visitors to the town and save the town's high street from further decline.	This is not strictly a response to proposed changes to parking charges but it does relate to the withdrawal of the 'free hour' on some of the car parks. The most popular car parks in Bewdley are Dog Lane and Load Street where there is no 'free hour' in operation. There is no evidence to support the assertion that introducing two hours free parking will alter local behaviours nor attract more visitors, nor that in the case of Bewdley the high street is "in decline".