

## FORM 2

### NOTICE OF DECISION OF CABINET MEMBER

Pursuant Section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 2000, as amended by section 63 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the senior executive member may discharge any of the functions that are the responsibility of the Cabinet or may arrange for them to be discharged by another member of the Cabinet or Officer. On 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010, the Council adopted the Strong Leader Model for Corporate Governance 2011 as required under Part 3 of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (The 2007 Act).

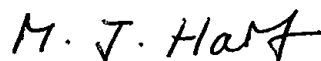
In accordance with the authority delegated to me, I have made the following decision:

| Subject  | Decision  | Reason for decision  | Date for Decision to be taken |
|--|---|--|-------------------------------|
| Car parking arrangements in Bewdley during flood defence works | To agree a variation of charges at Gardners Meadow car park. The variation is limited to charges in the period from 6 November 2023 to 31 March 2025, to permit one hour's free parking limited to one occasion per calendar day to be between 8am and 6pm on Mondays to Fridays only and to delegate to the Head of Community and Environmental Services, in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council and the Cabinet Member for Operational Services to take all steps as are necessary to implement the variation. | To implement free one hour parking on weekdays in Gardners Meadow car park from 6th November 2023 to 31 March 2025 | 6 October 2023                |

**I confirm that the appropriate statutory officer consultation has taken place with regard to this decision.**

Dated: 6 October 2023

Signed:



Councillor: Marcus Hart  
Leader

# WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

## STRONG LEADER REPORT

### CAR PARKING ARRANGEMENTS IN BEWDLEY DURING FLOOD DEFENCE WORKS

| OPEN                        |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>CABINET MEMBER</b>       | The Leader of the Council                                 |
| <b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>       | Ian Miller Ext 2700<br>Chief Executive                    |
| <b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b> | Steve Brant, Head of Community and Environmental Services |
| <b>APPENDICES:</b>          | Nil   |

#### 1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek authority to implement free one hour parking on weekdays in Gardners Meadow car park from 6th November 2023 to 31 March 2025.

#### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Leader is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- 2.1 **agree a variation of charges at Gardners Meadow car park. The variation is limited to charges in the period from 6 November 2023 to 31 March 2025, to permit one hour's free parking limited to one occasion per calendar day to be between 8am and 6pm on Mondays to Fridays only and to delegate to the Head of Community and Environmental Services, in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council and the Cabinet Member for Operational Services to take all steps as are necessary to implement the variation.**

#### 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The main phase of works on the flood defences at Beales Corner, Wribbenhall commences on 19 October 2023. For a period of between 18-22 months, the traffic management will involve a one way system where the traffic flows into Bewdley Town Centre from Wribbenhall, which is how most visitors to the town enter normally. All roads will remain open both ways for pedestrians and cyclists. The Cabinet wishes to introduce a car parking offer in Bewdley in respect of this unique situation. The proposal is to provide one free hour in Gardners Meadow, 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday starting on 6 November 2023 and ending 31 March 2025.

#### 4. **KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 The proposed change to charging arrangements at Gardners Meadow car park would apply over a considerable period. There is no provision in the parking places order that would permit introduction of the arrangements that the Cabinet has proposed, and it needs to be dealt with by a variation order to vary charges under section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Once an order is made it is necessary to publish proposals about a variation to the parking places order before it comes into effect in a locally circulated newspaper for 21 days.

4.2 The measures are being introduced to counter concerns that the long-term traffic works may have an adverse impact on businesses in the town and its economy. Such an impact can be measured only after the traffic works have been in place for a period. There are few levers that the Council can operate as the majority of business premises in Bewdley have rateable values lower than £12,000. Such businesses qualify for small business rate relief meaning that they pay no business rates at all – and thus do not contribute towards the only business tax that forms part of local government funding. It also means that the Council cannot consider introducing any local relief from rates as a compensatory measure. In 2023-24, retail, hospitality and leisure uses can qualify for 75% relief if they face a bill.

4.3 The following arrangements will be set out in the variation to the parking order, in addition to the requirements that already apply (such as parking in a marked bay):

- The start date will be 6 November 2023 and the end date will be 31 March 2025.
- The free one hour ticket will be valid only at Gardners Meadow – it will not be transferable to other car parks.
- The ticket will permit one hour's free parking per one calendar day between 8am and 6pm on Mondays to Fridays only.
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4.4 The following arrangements will be set out in the conditions of use, which will be clearly indicated at the pay and display machine within the car park:

- A ticket must be obtained from the pay and display machine to cover the one hour free parking. It will not be available on the Mi-Permit phone app.
- The normal evening charges will apply from 6:00pm.

4.5 The parking places order is generally amended each year with effect from 1 April. The period during which this concession operates therefore comes to an end on 31 March 2025 to align with the annual change.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Net income from car parking provides an important contribution to a range of services provided for users of car parks such as street cleaning and litter clearance and parks. Income in 2023-24 is below the amount assumed in the approved medium term financial strategy, by about £70k, which is linked to the poor weather experienced in July and August. Given the Council's funding gap and the income position for 2023-24, officers would not ordinarily recommend any change that would have a significant adverse impact on the Council's income.

5.2 The estimated impact of introducing the concession is £25k in a full year, made up of lost income from 30 minute and one hour tickets at Gardners Meadow; estimated displacement of some 30 minute and one hour parking periods from other car parks in Bewdley; and estimated reduction in issue of two hour tickets in Bewdley (by users who choose to complete their tasks within one hour instead of spreading them over two, in order to take advantage of the free parking offer). The impact in the remainder of 2023-24 is estimated at £8k.

- 5.3 There is no evidence that the change in traffic arrangements in Bewdley will affect the number of visitors to the town centre, and the measures in this report are being taken without proof that they are required. Since the ultimate purpose is to demonstrate that the Council is supporting the economy of the town centre, it is appropriate that the estimated cost in 2023-24 should be met by from the State of the Area budget.
- 5.4 The impact on car parking income in Bewdley will be closely monitored, and a revised estimate for 2024-25 will be built into the next medium term financial strategy.

## **6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Powers vary the charges for parking provided under an order are provided in section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Procedures for doing so are specified there and in the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 This report has been screened for its equality impact on people with protected characteristics. Holders of blue badges already benefit from free parking at this and other car parks. The proposals are not considered to have a disproportionate impact on any specific group, as the one hour of free parking concession will be available to any user of the car park. Therefore, no full equality impact assessment is required.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 Apart from the impact on the Council's income, the principal risk is considered to be that it will prompt calls from other towns for similar treatment. This risk is mitigated because the proposals arise solely from the unique situation of the only bridge in Bewdley being one way for 18 months. It creates a precedent for Stourport if its bridge was converted to one way operation for a lengthy period, but no such situation can arise in Kidderminster.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

The Leader is invited to approve the recommendation set out in section 2.

## **10. CONSULTEES**

- 10.1 Cabinet Members for Operational Services and for Finance & Capital Portfolio.  
10.2 Corporate Leadership Team.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 Parking places order

[Off street parking places consolidation order | Wyre Forest District Council](https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk)  
([wyreforestdc.gov.uk](https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk))