

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET

06 June 2023

### Report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services

#### Part 1- Public

#### Executive Key Decisions

#### **1 CAR PARKING FEES AND CHARGES – HAYSDEN COUNTRY PARK - OUTCOME OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

##### **1.1 Summary**

**This report considers the objections and comments received during the statutory consultation period relating to proposed off-street parking charge changes at Haysden Country Park in Tonbridge**

##### **1.2 Introduction**

1.2.1 At the November meeting of Cabinet, Members considered a number of proposals for revision to the Council's fees and charges for services. One of the elements agreed by Cabinet was an increase in parking charges for users of Haysden Country Park.

1.2.2 At this meeting of Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022 it was agreed that the proposed charges would be approved for consultation in accordance with the requirements of Statutory Regulations. To enable the charges to be introduced a new off-street Traffic Regulation Order is required.

1.2.3 Where there is a statutory process a local authority should comply with the process as laid out. In the case of the proposed car parking charges this is under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, following the procedure set out in the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England & Wales) Regulations 1996. Regulation 8 of the 1996 Regulations requires a 21 day consultation period.

1.2.4 This report covers proposals for the changes to tariffs in the Council's Haysden Country Park car park.

##### **1.3 Consultation**

1.3.1 The statutory consultation was carried out between 6<sup>th</sup> January and 29<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

1.3.2 The proposed charges considered in this report are outlined in the Formal Consultation Notice, shown at **Annex 1**.

1.3.3 The statutory consultation process followed a number of steps inviting comments or objections as follows:-

- Notices were placed in each car park by each pay and display machine;
- Adverts were placed in the Kent Messenger;
- Letters were sent to each Parish/Town Council and Borough Council Member;
- Letters were sent to statutory consultees.
- Emails were sent to all current Haysden Country Park Season Ticket holders.
- Consultation documents were placed “on-deposit” for inspection at the Council Offices in Kings Hill and Tonbridge Castle.

The consultation documents were also placed on the Council’s website. In line with the Council’s new Digital Strategy respondents were able to make comments online.

1.3.4 During the consultation period 4 responses were received.

1.3.5 There were two responses from Members of the Council at this time, who are no longer Council Members. One response was from ex-Cllr Luker, commenting;

*“Looking at the income generated and the damage to trading centres in the Borough I feel that however deemed necessary any increase would be detrimental to shop and businesses and their continuing viability.*

*I am aware of some large employers in town struggling as staff have no access to parking and because of shift patterns erratic public transport cannot get to work putting their continued presence in jeopardy, not good for town centres”*

1.3.6 The other Member response was from ex-Cllr Branson, commenting on the print layout in the tables, rather than about the proposal itself.

1.3.7 There were two responses from members of the public. The first public response raised a number of maintenance related issues that have been forwarded to Leisure Services to address, but also commented:

*“The parking permit has gone up more than inflation over the past 3 years, and we haven’t had full use of the Barden Lake / Haysden Lake Country Park for at least a year now, so hard to justify the new £65 charge.”*

1.3.8 The second public response related to the increase in charge:

*“I have a season ticket for Haysden Country Park that expires in March 2023.*

*The one I had from 2021-2022 cost £40, the current one was £50 but the proposal below says an increase of £5 but to £65. Please can you clarify this?*

*I understand an increase but going from £40 to £65 in two years seems excessive.”*

1.3.9 In response, the Season Ticket holder’s previous permit was purchased before the previous price change was applied in July 2023, so was at the lower rate.

1.3.10 The redacted consultation responses are included in **Annex 2**

1.3.11 Given the context of the parking charges proposals, it is recommended that Cabinet note the responses received and set aside the objections.

## **1.4 Legal Implications**

1.4.1 The consultation on the proposed parking charges followed the requirements of statutory regulations as detailed in sub-sections 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 of the report.

## **1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.5.1 The proposed charges were reviewed within the context of a set of guiding principles, the cost of the parking service to the Council and ongoing investment in the parking management service. It is anticipated that the new charges will be introduced in late July 2023.

## **1.6 Risk Assessment**

1.6.1 The estimated additional income outlined in the report to Cabinet was modelled on the basis that future parking patterns and demand match current activity.

## **1.7 Equality Impact Assessment**

1.7.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.7.2 Blue Badge holders can park free of charge in the Council’s car parks for up to 23 hours. The Blue Badge scheme has recently been extended by Central Government to include people with “hidden disabilities”. This includes people with learning disabilities, autism, and mental health conditions.

## **1.8 Policy Considerations**

1.8.1 Asset Management

1.8.2 Community

1.8.3 Customer Contact

**1.9 Recommendations**

1.9.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet:-

- i) Set aside the objections to the proposed charges to the off-street parking charges, as detailed in the report.
- ii) Approve the appropriate Traffic Regulation Order be made to facilitate the variation of the off-street parking charges to come into effect as soon as practical.

Background papers:

Nil

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Annex 1 – Formal Consultation notice

Annex 2 – Redacted consultation responses