

Meeting Date: 02 June 2021
Portfolio: Environment and Transport
Key Decision:
Within Policy and
Budget Framework Yes
Public / Private Public

Title: AMENDMENT TO CAR PARK SEASON TICKET CHARGES
2021-22
Report of: The Deputy Chief Executive
Report Number: CS.24/21

Purpose / Summary:

The Council agreed its scheme of fees and charges for car parking as part of the 2021-22 budget setting process. This introduced a new formula for calculating the cost of car park season tickets which unfortunately created some unintended, disproportionate price increases in some car parks. Temporary steps have been taken to correct this, but formal approval is now required from Executive to formalise this.

The report also confirms the intention of Executive to freeze the charges for car parking at Talkin Tarn Country Park at the 2020 rates.

Recommendations:

Executive is recommended to approve the amendments as outlined in the report.

Tracking

Executive:	02 June 2021
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 As part of its annual budget setting process, Council agreed its scheme of fees and charges for 2021-22. This included the schedule of charges for car parking, including pay + display and season ticket / permit options. As part of these discussions, a revised model was presented for calculating the price of season tickets.
- 1.2 Two issues were subsequently identified: Firstly, in relation to the charges for car parking at Talkin Tarn, and secondly, in relation to the disproportionate impact of the formula on the price of season tickets in some other pay + display car parks. This report updates Executive on the action taken to address this and seeks approval to formalise the changes.

2.0 Car Parking Charges at Talkin Tarn Country Park

- 2.1 Customers have the option of purchasing a permit (season ticket) to park at Talkin Tarn or to purchase a pay + display ticket. The number of permits available at this car park is restricted. The Council agreed to freeze the permit charges for parking at Talkin Tarn at the 2020-21 rates, a decision which was subsequently implemented. Pay + display charges were however increased in line with inflation consistent with the increase applied across all other Council car parks. However, it later became clear that it was the Council's intention to freeze all the parking charges at this car park, not just the permit prices, and this needed to be reversed.
- 2.2 All charges were therefore frozen at 2020-21 levels for parking at Talkin Tarn. This change was implemented prior to any price increase being applied so no-one was negatively affected by this.
- 2.3 Subject to approval by Executive, a formal notice will be issued to confirm this change. All parking charges at Talkin Tarn will be reviewed again for 2022 - 23.

3.0 Amendment to Car Park Season Ticket Charges

- 3.1 Customers have the option of purchasing season tickets which provide a saving against the cost of purchasing a pay + display ticket each day. Different packages are offered covering five, six or seven-day parking, from one to 12 months.
- 3.2 It was recognised that the season ticket prices had not been reviewed for some time and there was a need to apply a more consistent model that would continue to incentivise customers to take up this offer. The new model proposed a 10% discount compared against paying each day but also passed on the transaction fee to the customer; this fee was currently being paid by the Council for each transaction.

- 3.3 The model was agreed, and the formal notices issued with the new charges implemented from April 2021. Unfortunately, it became apparent that the new formula had created some unintended and disproportionate increases on the price of season tickets in some car parks which needed urgent action.
- 3.4 Following discussion with the Portfolio Holder and Leader of the Council, all season ticket charges were immediately frozen at 2020-21 rates across all car parks, pending review. Nine people had purchased season ticket at the wrong rates; all were contacted within a few days, most within 24 hours, and all have been offered a refund, an explanation and apology. Pending approval of Executive, and the issuing of formal notices, the correctly adjusted rates for season tickets will be implemented from Monday 05 July 2021.
- 3.5 The new rate will apply an uplift of 3% consistently across all 2020 permit charges but will retain the decision to pass on the transaction fee of £0.98p to the customer which was previously paid by the council. For example, a customer buying 3 x 1 monthly permits will pay 3 x £0.98p. However, if they purchase a three-month permit in a single transaction, the transaction fee would be 1 x £0.98p. Previously these fees would be paid by the council.
- 3.6 This is illustrated as follows:

Monday to Friday One-month permit	2020 rate	2021 rate	
Caldew riverside	£27.00	£28.79	2020 rate + 3% + fee (£0.98)
Castle	£25.00	£26.73	
Paddy's Market	£25.00	£26.73	
Viaduct	£45.00	£47.33	
Sands/Swifts	£52.00	£54.54	

Note: The transaction fee is paid, at cost, to an external contractor.
It is not additional income for the Council – helps to reduce costs of service.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 4.1 It is important to recognise that as soon as this error came to light, officers took swift and timely action to put it right, contacting the small number of customers affected immediately. Nevertheless, it is clear, that this was avoidable, and apologies are extended accordingly for this. Executive can be confident that appropriate measures will be implemented to avoid a future repeat with the full impact of any proposed

changes robustly assessed before being presented to elected members for consideration.

- 4.2 Executive is recommended to extend the 'freezing' of all car park charges at Talkin Tarn Country Park at the 2020 rates. The rates will be reviewed for 2022-23.
- 4.3 Executive is recommended to approve the uplift of the season ticket prices across all other car parks by 3% from the 2020-21 rate plus the transaction fee of £0.98p. Subject to formal notices, the new rates will come into effect from Monday 05 July 2021.
- 4.4 It is clear, that the pricing structure for car parking season tickets require further review for 2022 onwards. Options in this regard will be developed for future discussion.

5.0 Contribution to The Carlisle Plan Priorities

- 5.1 Car parking supports the local economy, providing access to shopping, leisure, hospitality, employment, training and education for local people, commuters and visitors. Income generated from car parking supports the delivery of key services for the people of Carlisle.

Contact Officer: Darren Crossley

Ext: 7120

Appendices attached to report:

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- **None**

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL - The changes set out in the report can be approved by Executive. Legal Services will thereafter prepare Notice of the changes for advertisement in line with statutory requirements.

FINANCE - The changes proposed to the existing charges detailed in this report will have little impact on the anticipated level of income for the service. Any impact will however need to be absorbed by the service.

EQUALITY - This report raises no explicit issues relating to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE – N/A

PROPERTY SERVICES - No property implications