

DECISION TAKER: Councillor Kelsie Learney, Cabinet Member for the Climate and Nature Emergency

REPORT TITLE: MANAGING WINCHESTER'S PARKING OFFER

14 JULY 2026

Contact Officer: Campbell Williams Tel No: 01962 848476
Email cawilliams@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): CENTRAL WINCHESTER WARD AND ALRESFORD WARD

PURPOSE

The Winchester City Council Movement and Access Strategy and the wider Council Plan set out an ambitious vision for the future of movement across Winchester creating a healthier, greener and better connected city that supports residents, businesses and visitors whilst protecting the historic environment and supporting sustainable growth.

Parking plays a fundamental role in delivering that vision. It is not simply a means of managing spaces, but a key tool in shaping how people move around the city, supporting cleaner air, encouraging healthier travel choices and helping to reduce unnecessary congestion within the city centre.

This report therefore brings forward proposals relating to parking tariffs, car park branding and signage across the council's parking estate. Collectively, the proposals aim to create a clearer and more consistent parking offer across the city, improve signage and wayfinding, support residents and visitors in understanding the different parking options available, and encourage greater use of Park & Ride and Park & Walk where appropriate for different types of journeys. The proposals also retain the council's commitment to the first hour free within Park & Walk car parks, recognising the importance of supporting convenient short stay visits into the city centre for residents and local businesses.

The proposals support delivery of the council's wider Council Plan priorities, including tackling the climate emergency, supporting vibrant local communities and businesses, improving health and wellbeing, and delivering a high-quality place that works for residents and visitors alike.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To note the positive impact of the existing parking zoning approach in supporting the objectives of the Winchester Movement Strategy, including encouraging greater use of outer parking locations whilst maintaining strong levels of visitor access to the city centre.
2. To approve the proposed measures to modernise and simplify the parking offer across Winchester, including improvements to car park branding, signage, customer information and tariff structures, to support a clearer and more customer-focused parking experience.
3. To approve the revised package of parking tariffs across the council's parking estate from November 2026, (subject to statutory consultation, advertisement and consideration of any objections).
4. To approve the introduction of a Coach Parking Tariff that is able to reflect seasonal demand (subject to statutory consultation, advertisement and consideration of any objections).
5. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director with responsibility for parking, to finalise the operational implementation of the approved changes, including signage, branding and customer communications, within the overall policy framework and tariff structure agreed by Cabinet.

IMPLICATIONS:

1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 Greener Faster
- 1.2 These recommendations set out improvements to how choices about transport into Winchester city centre can be communicated and managed in way which has less of an impact on the environment.
- 1.3 Thriving Places
- 1.4 Balancing the resident and visitor access to Winchester to support an accessible yet vibrant city centre is challenging. This paper sets out proposals to support the very popular city centre, but to continue to minimise the impact that occurs with journeys to city.
- 1.5 Healthy Communities
- 1.6 The air quality in Winchester city centre has improved to the extent that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has confirmed it no longer needs to be monitored as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA.) However, the recommendations in this paper support the continued improvement of air quality across central Winchester to improve the health of communities in the area.
- 1.7 Good Homes for All
- 1.8 Not relevant
- 1.9 Efficient and Effective
- 1.10 These recommendations set out ways to support behaviour changes which reflect the real cost of convenience parking on the local community, and the impact of VAT rises on park and ride operations.
- 1.11 Listening and Learning
- 1.12 These recommendations reflect feedback from our 2.8 million annual transactions.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The city council currently manages just over 2.8 million parking transactions each year in the three parking bands of Winchester (excluding season tickets). These transactions generate funding to allow the continued safe operation of the car park estate and the running of the park and ride bus services.

- 2.2 The changes are aimed at changing behaviours in line with the movement and access strategy. The only significant variation is an increase to the park and ride tariff following a change in HMRC's VAT treatment of park and ride income. The proposed increase reflects the revised VAT requirements.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Any changes to parking tariffs and systems are part of an overall objective around behaviour change and resident and visitor choice, and will be advertised and signed appropriately. There are currently no procurement implications however any future procurement will be carried out in accordance with legislation and council procedures.

4 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 4.1 This paper reflects discussions with the Cabinet members and reflects the experience of 2.8 million annual transactions. This volume of transactions allows an understanding of the useage of the car parking zones, and the length of parking stays, and therefore the likely impact of any changes.
- 4.2 The proposed changes to parking tariffs will be subject to the statutory consultation process required for amendments to the relevant Traffic Regulation Orders. This will include the advertisement of the proposals and the opportunity for residents, businesses and other interested parties to submit representations or objections.
- 4.3 Subject to approval, the Council will communicate the revised tariffs and the introduction of the seasonal coach parking tariff through its usual communication channels, including updates to the Council's website, parking signage, payment systems and direct engagement with relevant stakeholders where appropriate.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 DEFRA have recently removed an air quality improvement requirement, which reflects consecutive years of good practice. These recommendations reflect an ambition to continue to support an accessible city centre, but continuing to support increased parking further out from the town centre with more use of the two outer zoners.

5.2 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

- 5.3 This has no impact on equality as disabled parking and the ability to park for free in the city centre for short periods remain, so no equalities impact assessment is required.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The following areas of risk are identified

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Financial Exposure through changes to income from tariff changes	Tariffs are set at levels which should maintain or increase income	Above inflation rises in central areas, should see improved environmental outcomes.
Exposure to challenge from public or businesses	Proposals are consistent with the adopted Movement and Access Strategy, Parking Strategy and wider Council objectives relating to sustainable travel and city centre management. Changes to tariffs have been consulted upon and advertised in accordance with legislation to reduce the risk of challenge on legal grounds.	Demonstrates a clear strategic approach to parking management, with pricing used as one of several tools to support behavioural change and reduce unnecessary vehicle movements within the city centre.
Innovation within parking systems	Any introduction of new technology would be subject to appropriate procurement, governance and data protection requirements.	Opportunity to explore greater use of ANPR technology, digital wayfinding and customer information systems to improve compliance, customer experience and operational efficiency.
Reputation to the council	Changes are being introduced as part of a wider strategic approach rather than solely as a revenue-generating measure, with clear communication on the objectives and benefits.	Supports the Council's ambition to manage demand, improve visitor experience and encourage sustainable travel choices while maintaining the vitality of the city centre economy.
Achievement of movement and access strategy outcome	Previous tariff changes have successfully influenced parking behaviour and demand patterns. Ongoing monitoring will allow adjustments if required.	Opportunity to further support the Movement and Access Strategy by encouraging visitors to park once, walk more, use Park & Ride facilities and make greater use of outer parking zones, reducing

		congestion in the city centre.
Property	No direct property implications.	Improved utilisation of existing parking assets may reduce pressure for additional parking provision and maximise the value of current infrastructure.
Community Support for changes	Engagement with stakeholders on signage and branding and clear communication of the rationale for changes will be undertaken.	Improved signage, branding and wayfinding can make parking choices clearer for residents and visitors, helping people understand the different parking zones and encouraging use of the most appropriate facilities.
Timescales for implementation	Implementation programme will be managed through existing governance arrangements.	Aiming to change tariffs ahead of the 2026 Christmas market period bd after the summer holidays.
Project capacity for delivery	Delivery will be managed through existing Parking Services resources and Corporate Comms and budgets.	The programme provides an opportunity to align tariff implementation, signage improvements and communications activity into a single coordinated behavioural change campaign.
Local Government Reorganisation	The proposals support a financially sustainable parking model that can be readily understood and inherited by successor authorities.	Establishes a clearer self-financing zonal approach to parking management, creating a strong foundation for future parking policy within any successor authority arrangements.
Other	No additional significant risks identified.	

7 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

- 7.1 The proposals support a behaviour led development of the existing financially sustainable parking model that can be readily understood and inherited by successor authorities.

7.2 The direction of these recommendations reflect previously agreed strategies and policies, developed with partners including Hampshire County Council, so should mitigate from immediate change post LGR

7.3 Winchester has by far the largest off-street parking activity across the proposed LGR structure, so to some degree these decisions could well set the direction of travel for any future authority. These proposals reflect a direction of travel which does not limit further change or amendment should a future authority desire that.

8 OTHER KEY ISSUES

8.1 These recommendations reflect an ongoing and policy driven approach to parking and access activity across Central Winchester. It does not impact other parking operations which are underway in Winchester City Council's area.

9 Supporting information – the Movement and Access Strategy

9.1 The City Council operates 35 car parks, predominantly located in and around Winchester city centre. These are structured across three pricing tiers: central (premium pricing for convenience), Park & Walk (moderately priced within walking distance), and Park & Ride (lower cost, located further from the centre). Tariff adjustments are periodically introduced to support the Council's Movement and Access Strategy.

9.2 The Winchester Parking and Access Strategy aims to improve accessibility, enhance air quality, support carbon neutrality, and ensure fairness for residents, visitors, and businesses. Pricing remains a key tool in achieving these objectives, particularly by reducing city centre traffic and encouraging walking and cycling while maintaining economic vitality.

9.3 Revenue from parking has enabled targeted improvements to further achieve the aims of the movement strategy, including upgrades at Chesil car park (e.g. CCTV, toilets, safety barriers, and planned lift replacements) and investment in Park & Ride services, which have had over £200,000 worth of surfacing improvements, and the buses now operate using Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil. Further improvements are planned – the lifts at Chesil car park are scheduled to be fully replaced later this year as an example.

9.4 Annual usage is now over 2.8 million visitors, with overall transaction volumes increasing. While transactions in central car parks have recently remained broadly just above or in line with the inflationary tariff increases, transactions from Park & Walk and Park & Ride facilities has risen significantly in recent years and have not been subject to any tariff changes since at least 2020. This indicates that the tiered approach is effectively supporting both city centre activity and wider transport objectives.

10 Supporting information - Parking Zones and Behaviour change

- 10.1 In terms of influencing behaviour change, the current tiered charging system has maintained city centre stability while increasing usage in outer zones. However, over 800,000 annual short-duration car trips (under two hours) into the city centre each year contribute to congestion, pollution, and safety concerns. For the last five years prices in central parking zone have risen whilst low or free parking has been available in the two outer zones. It is proposed to keep the free and low-cost parking in the outer zones, and continue to increase prices in the central zones.
- 10.2 However, to support information driven choices by residents and visitors to the city it is proposed to significantly improve and update the signage across the city to ensure that resident and visitor choice is based upon informed decision making and awareness of cheaper and convenient options elsewhere.
- 10.3 The city council will utilise improved signage and wayfinding information, to support residents and visitors to understand the parking options. This will be funded by money from the most recent car parking and access funding paper with further funding to be identified in a planned autumn 2026 paper for the 27/28 budget

11 Supporting information - Parking tariffs

- 11.1 Ongoing review of tariff structures is required to ensure continued alignment with strategic objectives. Proposed changes fall into two categories: (1) strategic adjustments to influence travel behaviour, and (2) operational simplifications to improve usability and enforcement.
- 11.2 Firstly with regard to strategic adjustments, it is proposed to increase tariffs in central tariffs to further encourage behaviour change alongside improved signage, but to maintain competitiveness with comparable locations.

Proposed parking tariffs									
Central zone car parking	Charges in place 24 hours a day 7 days a week								
	Up to ½ hour (Now 50p)	Up to 1 hour (Now £2.00)	Up to 2 hours (Now £3.60)	Up to 3 hours (Now £5.50)	Up to 4 hours (Now £7.30)	Up to 6 hours (Sat and Sun only in Middle Brook and Brooks) (Now £7.80)	All Day (Now £18.60)	7pm to 8am (up to 1 hour) (Now £2.00)	7pm to 8 am (over 1 hour) (Now £3.60)
Colebrook street, Friarsgate, Jewry Street, Cossack Lane, St Peter's, Tower Street, Gladstone Street.	n/a	£2.20	£4.00	£6.00	£8.00	n/a	£20.00	£2.20	£4.00
St Peters	50p	£2.20	£4.00	£6.00	£8.00		£20.00	£2.20	£4.00
Middle Brook Street	n/a	£2.20	£4.00	£6.00	£8.00		£20.00	£2.20	£4.00
The Brooks	n/a	£2.20	£4.00	£6.00	£8.00		£20.00	t.b.c	

- 11.3 The table below shows the prices (£) in comparable central parking areas across the South-east region should the proposed tariffs be introduced.

Comparable central charges	number of spaces	1 hour	2 hour	4 hours	24 hours
Brighton (Trafalgar street)	275	£4.00	£10.50	£16.00	£24.00
Chichester (Central)	167	£2.50	£5.00	£10.00	21.20 (up to 12 hours only)
Oxford (Oxpens)	176	£5.10	£6.30	£9.80	£30.60
Salisbury (central car parks)	534	£1.60	£2.90	£6.00	£9.90
Winchester (central zone)		£2.20	£4.00	£8.00	£20.00

- 11.4 Adjustments to the price of the outer zones are also necessary. Changes to the treatment of VAT for park and ride schemes means that the whole charge is now subject to standard rated VAT at 20% (previously VAT only applied to the parking element leading to a much reduced overall “blended” rate).
- 11.5 To maintain current revenue levels an all-day ticket would need to rise to £4.25 from £3.50. Given that tariffs have not increased for at least five years and the service is subsidised by approximately £400,000 annually, a modest additional increase to £4.50 is proposed to support long-term sustainability.

Park and Ride Parking	Charges in place 8am to 6pm Monday to Saturday			
	Saturday 3 hour rate (Now £1.80)	Weekday after 10.30 rate (Now £3.00)	All Day (Now £3.50)	All Day Coach Parking
Barfield, Barfield phase II, St Catherines.	No change	Removed.	£4.50	n/a
Park and Ride parking		Weekday after 10.30 rate (Now £3.00)	All Day (Now £3.50)	All Day Coach Parking
South Winchester and Pitt	Not applicable	Removed.	£4.50	£10.00

- 11.6 Some examples of comparable Park & Ride service in the South East are set out in the table below, alongside the proposed tariff for Winchester. It is not proposed to change the existing park and ride system. A ticket would remain valid for up to 6 people parking and travelling by bus.
- 11.7 The price for those buying season tickets, which are available on an annual or a quarterly basis would be equivalent to £3.50 per day.

Park and Ride Comparable charges	Parking	bus ticket per person	cost for 1 person	cost for 5 people
Brighton	£3.00	£3.00	£6.00	£18.00
Oxford	£2.50	free	free	up to 11.50
Portsmouth	free	£5.00	£5.00	£5.00
Salisbury	free	£3.50	£3.50	£4.50
Winchester	£4.50	free	£4.50	£4.50

- 11.8 In Park & Walk car parks, shorter-stay Park & Walk tariffs and the existing shorter and free hour provision will remain unchanged as they have since at least 2020, recognising the importance of supporting convenient short stay visits into the city centre for residents and local businesses.
- 11.9 However high demand for all-day parking at peak times at the current £7.30 rate is reducing availability for short-stay users. As all-day parking demand can be accommodated at Park & Ride sites, it is proposed to increase the all-day rate in Park & Walk locations.

Park and Walk Parking	Charges in place 8am to 6pm Monday to Saturday. Free on Sundays					
	Up to 1 hour (FREE)	Up to 2 hours (Now £1.50)	Up to 3 hours (Now £2.20)	Up to 4 hours (now £2.90)	All Day (Now £7.30)	Evening Parking from 6pm (FREE)
Chesil, The Cattle Market, Worthy Lane, Coach Park.	No change	No change	No change	No change	£10.00	No change

Park and Walk Parking	Charges in place 9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday. Free on Sundays					
	Up to 1 hour (FREE)	Up to 2 hours (Now £1.50)	Up to 3 hours (Now £2.20)	Up to 4 hours (now £2.90)	All Day Mon to Fri (Now £15.50) Sat (now £7.30)	Evening Parking from 5pm (FREE)
River Park	No change	No change	No change	No change	All Day Mon - Fri £20.00 All Day Saturday £10.00	No change

Park and Walk Parking	Charges in place 8am to 7pm Monday to Sunday					
	Up to 1 hour (90p)	Up to 2 hours (Now £1.60)	Up to 3 hours (Now £2.30)	Up to 4 hours (Now £3.10)	All Day (Now £7.80)	Evening Parking from 7pm (FREE)
Winchester Sport and Leisure park	No change	No change	No change	No change	£10.00	No change

- 11.10 In all zones, season ticket prices would be modified to reflect these changes in proportion to the band where changes occur.
- 11.11 Secondly, the current system presents several opportunities for operational simplification to improve user understanding of parking arrangements, the following section sets out proposed amendments in parking conditions. These proposed and simplified tariffs are set out in appendix 1.

- 11.12 In 2023, the City Council introduced evening charging in central car parks, while maintaining free overnight parking in non-central locations. The operators of the Brooks Shopping Centre have expressed interest in trialling extended opening hours for the underground car park to align with the opening hours of other central facilities. They also support the introduction of a secure, premium overnight parking offer in an area that has recently benefited from improved lining, signage, upgraded CCTV, which would have enhanced security measures. As a result this paper proposes that the Brooks Car park opens later on a trial basis, in line with other central car parks, and offers a premium overnight secure tariff to be agreed with the operators of the shopping centre.
- 11.13 The Council is shortly to begin trialling Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology at Chesil Car Park. Local authorities cannot enforce parking solely through ANPR (unlike private operators), however this trial aims to inform improvements to parking services and enforcement processes. As a result this paper proposes the ability to extend ANPR across Winchester car parks to support accurate and targeted enforcement.
- 11.14 Usage data indicates that a minority of Park & Ride customers take advantage of the discounted rate available after 10:30am. As a result it is proposed that the current tiered Park & Ride tariff structure be replaced with a single, simplified all day rate, which is proposed elsewhere as £4.50. In addition, RingGo is discontinuing its E-wallet system, and the Council is notifying affected users. The service is expected to cease in November 2026. The three-hour rate on Saturdays would remain.
- 11.15 At Middle Brook Street and the Brooks car park, a six-hour tariff - originally introduced to support part-day weekend staff is now used by very few customers each week. Given its limited uptake, it is proposed that this tariff be removed to further streamline the overall parking system.
- 11.16 In the south Park & Ride there is a coach parking area, designed to cope with the influx of coaches parking during the period of the Christmas market, however the coaches are not currently charged at a different rate to cars. It is recommended that the ability to introduce a coach tariff in the Park and Ride car parks is approved, along with a seasonal rate during the Winchester Christmas market period should that support the travel and traffic plan for the Christmas market.
- 11.17 A new car park is being developed in Alresford at the Dean to support those wishing to access the town centre. It is proposed that the daily tariffs here match those in operation at the railway station.

The Dean Car Park Alresford	Charges in place 8am to 6pm Monday to Saturday. Free on Sundays				
	Up to 1 hour	Up to 2 hours	Up to 3 hours	4 hours and over	Evening Parking from 5pm
The Dean	£1	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00	No charge

11.18 Collectively, the proposals aim to create a clearer and more consistent parking offer across the city, and encourage greater use of Park & Ride and Park & Walk where appropriate for different types of journeys.

12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 Tariff bands and structures in the Winchester city area are well established and support a strong resident and visitor economy. Pricing reflects a balance between encouraging access to the city and managing the cost of that convenience. The Movement and Access Strategy aligns with the Council's overarching objective of reducing carbon emissions by limiting city centre traffic and promoting healthier travel choices, particularly walking and cycling, while supporting sustainable growth.

12.2 These proposals reflect a series of practical judgements. While lower-cost central parking may increase convenience, it risks encouraging additional city centre traffic and would conflict with the Council's strategic objectives. At the same time, the parking system must remain financially sustainable. Accordingly, the proposed approach places greater financial responsibility on users seeking central parking convenience, while limiting tariff increases in the outer zones to levels that remain sustainable, informed by local experience and benchmarking against comparable areas.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Cabinet/Committee Reports or Cabinet Member Decisions:-

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 21/01/2026 09:30](#)

Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES:

None