

DECISION TAKER: CABINET MEMBER FOR SERVICE QUALITY AND TRANSFORMATION – COUNCILLOR MARTIN TOD

REPORT TITLE: MID HAMPSHIRE RAILWAY CAR PARK

1 MARCH 2021

Contact Officer: Campbell Williams Tel No: Tel:01962 848276

Email cawilliams@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALRESFORD AND ITCHEN VALLEY

PURPOSE

For many years the council has managed the public car park at the end of station approach. Part of the site is owned by the Mid Hants Railway (MHR) whilst the remainder is owned by the council.

The lease on the area owned by the MHR came to an end in January and the council has taken the opportunity to enter into a new 3 year lease which will enable the land to continue to be managed as a single public car park, which helps support access to the town centre as well as the operation of the railway.

The MHR was under no obligation to offer the council another lease and could have taken back this part of the site and introduced whatever charges and restrictions they considered appropriate. However, it is better in the interest of those visiting or working in the town to have the site managed as a single public car park.

However, the MHR have revised the charges and restrictions in the part of the car park they own to better support the operation of the railway visitor attraction.

This report therefore recommends that changes are made to the whole station car park so that it caters for short stay parking only, including revised hourly tariffs, with the exception of railways patrons and season ticket holders that will be able to park all day in defined areas of the site.

This arrangement mirrors the approach adopted for parking charges in Winchester and no changes are proposed to the other public car parks in the town at Perins School and Arlebury Park, but would need to be reflected in amended traffic regulation orders.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Agree the pricing structure to match that of the MHR whilst allowing space in central Alresford for season ticket holders.
2. Note that new signage in Alresford is required to ensure visitors and residents are aware of location of short and long stay parking.
3. Agree to monitor and review these arrangements following implementation, including as part of the Park & Access Strategy.

IMPLICATIONS:

1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 On-going improvement in the Council's parking infrastructure is consistent with the Council Plan in relation to delivering against the priorities of a vibrant local economy and living well, tackling the climate emergency and creating a greener district with better air quality,
- 1.2 Managing our car parking offer, which includes investment in infrastructure, helps to influence customer choices and behaviour as well as supporting the local economy.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 Whilst there are uncertainties currently with COVID-19 affecting the parking income significantly, the cost of the agreed lease (£25,000 per annum) is expected to be covered by the income generated based on historical figures, which have exceeded £50,000 per annum for this car park.
- 2.2 The agreed lease allows all income from the car park to be collected and retained by the City Council. The new the car parking charges are set to reflect a figure which will allow the council to continue operating the car parking without losing money.
- 2.3 The MHR have set the charges under the new lease to suit their aspirations to enable visitors to their attraction find a space, and so the City Council needs to agree the pricing structure for its part of the car park, which supports its aspirations for a financially sound car park operation without limiting the operation of the MHR, or visitors, residents and business to and within Alresford.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no implications to maintaining fees at charges at current levels. Changes to the price of permits or to the fees would not require any changes to the car parking order itself, but would require the revised schedules to be published. These changes can be introduced by way of notice under section 35C of the Act, given and published in compliance with regulation 25 of the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996
- 3.2 Any procurement as a result of this proposal such as the purchase of new signage, will be carried out in accordance with the council's Contract Procedure Rules.

4 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 4.1 The council has undertaken consultation with the local councillors, business representatives and the town council on a range of parking and economy issues as it has done with many other district communities.
- 4.2 As part of this the city council has discussed the aspirations for parking in and around Alresford and also met with and discussed this specific proposal at a separate meeting with ward members, the town council and business groups from Alresford. The Cabinet member has been fully involved with these discussions.
- 4.3 The City Council as part of the work on the lease agreement has also undertaken discussions with the Mid Hampshire Railway to understand their ambitions for the land that it owns, and the changes they require in pricing and pricing structure on their land are driven by their ambition to support visitors to their facility.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 This proposal does not change the volume of parking that is available, however it aligns with a move to ensure that short stay parking is located in central locations to support the visitor economy.
- 5.2 As part of the councils move to promote the use of low emission vehicles the number of electric charging points at car parks around the district is being increased and the council is planning to install two electric vehicle charging points on the council's part of this car park.

6 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The current access arrangements and facilities meet the needs of the elderly, disabled, and mothers both expecting and with young children. During the lease discussions, the council has ensured that there is no change to the facilities on offer to those with a disabled parking permit, and these facilities will remain for those needing to access them.
- 6.2 New signage is being considered to support the proposals in this report and as part of a Parking and Access Plan for the Town.

7 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The key risks for the changes to the parking prices and pricing strategy are listed below

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
<i>Property Failure to complete a new lease for</i>	The council does not own all the railway station car	

<i>the MHR land would have resulted in the end of the historical arrangement of managing the whole site as single public car park.</i>	park, so has entered into this new lease in order to provide continuity of parking provision in the town and management of the facility.	
<i>Community Support Loss of the car park as single public facility would undermine confidence in the town's parking offer.</i>	The council has undertaken consultation and discussion with local businesses and elected members to ensure that proposals are in line with community requirements.	To agree to monitor and review these arrangements following implementation, including as part of the Park & Access Strategy.
<i>Timescales of implementation and recovery</i>	A sensible implementation period has been agreed with MHR.	Whilst COVID-19 is still having an effect on car park usage the intention is to implement a new signage system in time for the reopening of Alresford to visitors and local residents.
<i>Project capacity</i>	n/a	
<i>Financial / VfM End of the previous lease agreement resulted in the need to negotiate new terms with the MHR for a 3-year lease.</i>	We have reviewed previous operating costs and income from parking across Alresford and consider the cost of the new lease to be satisfactory and acceptable to secure its continuation as a single public car park in the interests of maintaining public parking to support the town centre.	To ensure that the visitors know the best place to park, we are proposing to introduce signage to identify the best location for short and long stay parking
<i>Legal A new lease not been entered into and parking charges not implemented correctly.</i>	<i>A new lease has been entered into for a period of 3 years mitigating any risk of the car park not being available for residents. Parking charges are readily amended through the correct statutory procedure.</i>	
<i>Innovation Failure to take the opportunity of a new</i>	The electric charging points in our car park	.

<i>lease to improve the parking officer in Alresford.</i>	should enable support to those electric vehicle owners who live in or are visiting the town	
<i>Reputation Failure to offer car parking in central Alresford</i>	Ensure that parking for short stay and season ticket holders is available in central Alresford following discussion with local stakeholders	
<i>Other</i>	n/a	

8 OTHER KEY ISSUES

8.1 None

9 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

9.1 The Mid Hampshire Railway own the part of the car park highlighted in red in appendix 3. They are changing the historical arrangements relating to parking charges and restrictions in order to have an improved car parking offer at the station for their operation which encourages users to visit the attraction and to have access to parking outside their premises.

9.2 As a result they require a change to the parking regulations in this area of the car park to increase the short stay price of the figures shown in appendix 2, and the removal of ability for season ticket holders to park in the part of the car park under their ownership. The MHR want to offer an all-day rate for their patrons which would not be available to anyone else using their section of the car park. This would involve visitors having a ticket validated in the ticket office of the railway, before being displayed in the car.

9.3 Given that the MHR owns this area of the car park the change is considered reasonable as if the council did not have a lease with the railway, and managed only its part of the car park, the MHR would be free to introduce whatever parking regime it considered appropriate on its land and this could be managed and enforced by a parking contractor. It is considered better for the car park to be managed as a single site and, to do this effectively, daily charges should remain consistent across the whole of the parking area.

9.4 All the income from the MHR owned part of the site along with the rest of the car park would be retained by the council. The parking enforcement of this area would be the responsibility of the council too, as well as the maintenance of the car park for the duration of the lease. The income from the whole station car park was £52,000 in 2019, so the value of the lease (£25,000 per annum) should be covered from the increased income from the MHR part which is over half of the car park in total (MHR has 84 spaces, the WCC part has 44 spaces plus 4 motorcycle bays). The Council, however, also has to maintain and manage the car park which incurs additional expenditure. This

may be fully or partly offset by the increases in charges depending upon the level of usage.

- 9.5 The council owns the parking area directly adjacent and only accessible through the MHR part of the car park. If the council doesn't change the parking charges in this area to align the prices of the MHR section, it will become very confusing for drivers. It is proposed therefore to have the same prices as the MHR part of the car park for short stay parking subject to two differences.
- 9.6 Firstly to enable those with season tickets to continue using the spaces on council's part of the car park. It should be noted that all day parking in the council part of the Station Car Park, except for season ticket holders, will not be allowed under these arrangements. Alternative cheaper parking and all day public parking is available at Perins School and Arlebury Park offering drivers a choice of parking in the town. It is considered that this arrangement will continue to support the businesses and local economy as both visitors and workers will still be able to use the car park albeit the restrictions and charges will be different to the current situation and alternative parking locations are available.
- 9.7 Secondly, there would be no charging on a Sunday within the Winchester section of the car park, as without a significant change to the Traffic Regulation Orders within Alresford this would not match charging across Alresford, and would affect Sunday access to the town.
- 9.8 This regime of charging would then mirror what happens in central Winchester with the short stay higher value charging in the town centre, and the longer stay car parking in outer areas which have lower charges.
- 9.9 There is capacity for season ticket holders as there are currently 83 in this class, which includes the station, and there is enough capacity to accommodate all of these in the three car parks around the town.
- 9.10 There is no proposal to change the pricing structure at this stage in the two outer car parks of Arlebury Park and Perins School, so that cheap long stay parking in the outer car parks is maintained. This will, however, be reviewed in consultation with local stakeholders as part of a wider parking and access plan currently being formulated.
- 9.11 To support visitors identifying the most appropriate car parks for their visit, signage will be reviewed and enhanced by the council around the Town and within station car park, so that the locations of long and short stay parking are clearly visible to visitors and residents.
- 9.12 It is also proposed that there are no changes to the number disabled parking spaces at the location, and that two electric vehicle charging points are added to support those living or visiting Alresford in an electric vehicle.

10 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 10.1 The council has considered keeping parking prices and regime unchanged in the part of the station car park it owns, and also matching exactly the regime to start in the MHR part of the car park in terms of all day parking.
- 10.2 However to leave the charging regime unchanged in part of the car park owned by the council would likely lead to confusion as it would be difficult to communicate effectively to customers as the car park is seen and used in effect as a single site. However, it is recognised that there are season ticket holders that may want to park here so to move exactly to the MHR area restrictions, which prohibit all day parking except for railway users, was discounted. Whilst this means there is a difference between the two areas of the car park in this regard it is unlikely to cause confusion as season ticket holders will soon become familiar with the change and park accordingly.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Cabinet/Committee Reports or Cabinet Member Decisions:-

None

Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 Current car park pricing in Alresford

Appendix 2 Proposed Car park prices in Alresford

Appendix 3 Map of Alresford indicating areas of ownership

Appendix 1

Current car park pricing within Alresford

Alresford car parks	Up to 1 Hour	Up to 2 Hours	Up to 3 Hours	Up to 4 Hours	Over 4 Hours	Season Ticket Group	Charging Hours
	£	£	£	£	£		
Alresford Station,	0.30	0.60	0.80	1.20	1.50	Group F	Mon – Sat 8am-6pm
Perins,	0.30	0.60	0.80	1.20	1.50	Group F	Mon – Sat 8am-6pm
Arlebury Park,	FREE	FREE	0.80	1.20	1.50	Group F	Mon – Fri 9am-5pm

SEASON TICKET PRICES

Annual (12 months)	£275
Quarterly (3 months)	£75

Appendix 2

Proposed Car park prices in Alresford

Alresford car parks	Up to 1 Hour	Up to 2 Hours	Up to 3 Hours	Over 3 hours	Over 4 Hours	Season Ticket Group	Charging Hours
	£	£	£	£	£		
Alresford Station, MHR	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00*	n/a	n/a	Mon – Sun**8am- 6pm
Alresford Station, WCC	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00*	n/a	Group F	Mon – Sat 8am-6pm
Perins,	0.30	0.60	0.80	1.20	1.50	Group F	Mon – Sat 8am-6pm
Arlebury Park,	FREE	FREE	0.80	1.20	1.50	Group F	Mon – Fri 9am-5pm

*for users of railway only

**Including Bank/Public holidays

SEASON TICKET PRICES

Annual (12 months)	£275
Quarterly (3 months)	£75

Appendix 3

Map of Alresford showing Area owned by Mid Hampshire Railway (in red)

Remainder of the station car park is owned by Winchester City Council (in black)



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LANDMARK INFORMATION

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