

Committee:	Cabinet	Date:	Thursday, 18th April 2024
Title:	Car Park Update		
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Neil Hargreaves, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economy		
Report Author:	Angela Knight, Director of Business Performance and People aknight@uttlesford.gov.uk	Key decision:	No

Summary

1. The Rose and Crown car park is owned by House Group Development Management Limited, and the council manage the running and maintenance of the car park under a management agreement.
2. The owners of the car park have requested to end the current management arrangement and manage the car park directly. As per the agreement they have provided the council with 6 months' notice, the maintenance and operation of the car park will transfer to them from 1st October 2024.
3. Following the approval of the new car park tariffs in February, Waitrose Head Office have contacted the council regarding the Sunday and Bank Holiday Parking charges.
4. The new tariffs state that all car parks in Saffron Walden will be charged at a flat rate of £1.50 for a whole day's parking (8am – 6pm). Waitrose has requested that Fairycroft is excluded from this tariff and remains a short stay car park with a maximum stay of three hours, as set out in the management agreement with a separate set of tariffs for Sundays and Bank Holidays.
5. It is proposed that the new tariffs for Fairycroft car park are.
 - 50p for 1 hour
 - £1 for 2 hours
 - £1.50 for 3 hours

Recommendations

6. Cabinet are requested to
 - I. Note the 6 months' notice period submitted by House Group Development Management Limited to end the management agreement for the Rose and Crown Car Park and that the Car Park will no longer be managed by the Council.
 - II. Approve the following amended tariffs for Sundays and Bank Holidays in Fairycroft Car Park only.
 - i. 50p for 1 hour
 - ii. £1 for 2 hours
 - iii. £1.50 for 3 hours

Financial Implications

7. The financial implications are set out in the body of this report.

Background Papers

8. None

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Consulted with Waitrose representatives. Notice of variation will be published for 21 days should Cabinet approve the new tariffs
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	Saffron Walden car parks only
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Background Information

Rose and Crown Car Park

9. The Rose and Crown car park has been managed and maintained by the council under a management agreement with the owners, currently House Group Development Management Limited.
10. The management agreement is based on a 50/50 profit share of the net income.
11. The council have been discussing the options with House Group Development Management Limited over several weeks and following this review House Group feel that from an investment perspective it makes better financial sense for them to run the car park in house.
12. They have stated that they will continue to operate this asset as a car park.
13. The net financial impact on the council for this change in car park management will be a loss of approximately £15,000 net direct income based on the 2024/25 budget estimates.

Fairycroft Car Park

14. Following the approval of the new tariffs for the council car parks at the February Cabinet and Council meetings, Waitrose head office property management department contacted the council regarding the Sunday and bank holiday flat fee charge of £1.50.
15. The Council has a management agreement with Waitrose as the leaseholder to manage the operational running of the car park and to maintain a majority of the areas (not all) within the car park.
16. The management agreement is on a profit share basis between Waitrose, the Council and the Pig Market Charity (for which the council are trustees).
 - Uttlesford District Council - 58.22%
 - Waitrose - 21.92%
 - Pig Market - 19.86%

17. During the formal car park consultation period a management company responded on behalf of Waitrose, their response related to both Fairycroft and Swan Meadow Car Park, stating they were opposed to the increase in charges and particularly to the Sunday and bank holiday charge. We received no representation relating to the length of stay in Fairycroft car park on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
18. A manager from the local Waitrose store also attended the Cabinet meeting, again referencing the generic response and level of tariffs submitted during the consultation period.
19. Prior to and during the consultation, Officers engaged informally with the manager/s of the local Waitrose store in Saffron Walden regarding the changes to the tariffs and getting feedback on the impact of changes and the updating of signage.
20. The management agreement states that

‘The Council shall charge for parking at the Car Park for up to three hours, but such charges shall be in line with the charges for parking in other short stay car parks in the town centre of Saffron Walden which are owned or operated by the Council from time to time’

21. Prior to the new car park tariffs all car parks were free on Sundays and Banks Holidays and by default meant that there were no time restrictions on length of stay, so users could effectively park for the whole day on a Sunday and Bank Holidays. This included the designated short stay car parks, where on Mondays to Saturdays the maximum parking duration is two or three hours (The Common, The Rose and Crown and Fairycroft). The introduction of the new tariffs has retained the ability for users to park for a whole day on Sundays and Bank Holidays in the short stay car parks but with a flat fee of £1.50.
22. Officers met with representatives from Waitrose head office to discuss their concerns around the Sunday and bank holiday charging. Waitrose requested the council adheres to the management agreement and maintains Fairycroft as a short stay car park with a maximum stay of three hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays, whilst acknowledging that this will not be in line with the other short stay car parks in Saffron Walden.
23. The management agreement does not require the council to obtain agreement for the level of tariffs set at Fairycroft car park, only that they align with the other short stay car parks in the town. In the spirit of partnership working officers discussed at length with Waitrose representatives’ options around setting a fair schedule of tariffs for Fairycroft on Sundays and Bank Holidays whilst retaining the maximum parking duration of three hours.
24. The proposed charges for Sundays and bank holiday are set out below.

Parking Duration	Tariff
Up to 1 hour	50p
Up to 2 hours	£1.00
Up to 3 hours	£1.50

25. It is difficult to fully estimate the impact of this new charging schedule, as previously the car park was free, and no data was available on usage and/or traffic churn. It is not expected to materially alter the current estimated income budgets.

26. These changes to tariffs at Fairycroft do not constitute the need for further consultation, but the council is required to publish a Notice of Variation in the local paper and to display the new charges in the car park for a period of 21 days prior to implementation.

27. Fairycroft car park will remain free to users on Sundays and Bank Holidays until the end of 21 day notification period.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Income estimates are incorrect	1 – the current income forecasts for Sunday and Bank Holidays are estimates due to no data being available for previous years	1 -. It is unlikely that this change will add any significant negative financial impact.	The income collected will be monitored as part of the budget monitoring cycle.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure