

Report to Leader

Subject: Off Street Parking Places Order

Date: October 2024

Author: Property Services Manager

Wards Affected:

All

Purpose

To seek approval to commence the statutory procedure to consult on amendments to the Council's current Civil Enforcement Off Street Parking Places Order 2020 which include charging for parking at Gedling Country Park and to permit electronic payments across the borough's car parks.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

1. Approval is given to commence the statutory procedure to consult on amendments to the Gedling Borough Council (Civil Enforcement Off Street Parking Places) Order 2020 in order to:
 - 1a. Introduce parking charges at Gedling Country Park
 - 1b. Introduce a cashless payment option across Gedling Borough Council's Car Parks.

1 Background

- 1.1 Pursuant to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ("1984 Act"), the Gedling Borough Council (Civil Enforcement Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2020

("the Order"), contains regulations relating to the use of and conditions on which the Council's car parks subject to the Order may be used and allows the enforcement of those conditions of use and parking restrictions.

- 1.2 The Council is required to consult on any amendments they wish to make to the Order. Statutory consultations must be carried out and the proposal must be publicised in accordance with the 1984 Act so that representations can be made on the proposal. The Council must consider any representations received within the published time period before it makes a decision to amend the Order.
- 1.3 The Council has recently reviewed the existing Order and now wishes to begin the consultation on some proposed changes to the existing parking order. These changes include introducing car parking charges at Gedling Country Park.
- 1.4 The Order does not currently permit the Council to charge users of the car park at Gedling Country Park, except on a donation basis. Parking has been free since 2014 when the park opened. In December 2017 voluntary donations were introduced and have generated circa £4,000-6,000 per annum since. In order to maximise income for the site going forward, the Council are seeking approval to introduce a daily parking charge of £2 per day. The charge of £2 per day is considered competitive with other Country Parks in the Nottinghamshire area and provides a figure for the public consultation required to amend the Order. The final charge for parking at Gedling Country Park will be approved by Cabinet following the outcome of the public consultation.
- 1.5 In addition to this, the Council are also looking to introduce a cashless payment option for GBC owned car parks across the borough. Currently the pay and display machines in GBC car parks only accept cash however in recent years the number of people using cash has significantly reduced and cashless payment options have been introduced in the majority of car parks nationwide.
- 1.6 The cashless option that the Council would seek to implement would be a pay by phone parking service. This would allow users to use an app to pay for parking or alternatively use a telephone number to ring and pay by card. The Council would also seek to upgrade a number of the existing machines with a card reader which would allow people not wanting to use the app to pay at the machine via card.
- 1.7 Introducing a cashless option would not only make it easier for users to pay for parking but it may also encourage users to stay longer as it would be possible to extend parking via the app remotely.
- 1.8 Adding an alternative payment option may also reduce the pressure on Council services in terms of maintenance of the machines. With the

introduction of cashless payments, it is anticipated that there will be a reduction in the use of the machines which in turn may see maintenance of the machines required less frequently. In addition to this, at present, when machines are out of order and not working the Council are unable to charge for parking and lose out on the income. With the introduction of cashless payments via App and/or phone the user has an alternative way to pay for parking and therefore ensures that the Council are maximising income and improving Council services.

2 Proposal

2.1 It is proposed that the Council commences the consultation on the proposal to revoke the Gedling Borough Council (Civil Enforcement Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2020 and make a new order which incorporates the following changes:

- To introduce parking charges at Gedling Country Park
- To introduce a cashless payment option across Gedling Borough Council Car Parks.

3 Alternative Options

3.1 An alternative option would be not to introduce parking charges at Gedling Country Park and continue to use existing revenue budget for ongoing maintenance of the current 250 car park spaces and other infrastructure at Gedling Country Park, but this would limit the extent of further developments and/or major repairs due to a need to borrow. For example, the upper car park is now experiencing major problems with potholes and resources are being switched from other repairs budgets to address the issue.

3.2 Another option would be to cease the grounds maintenance and infrastructure repairs at the park effectively letting it grow wild. The Council has an efficiency target of £3,558,900 to deliver (of which £2,225,200 is unidentified at the moment - budget report to Council dated 6 March 2024), and this option would save approximately £300,000

3.3 For the purpose of the consultation a parking charge of £2 at Gedling Country Park is proposed. A higher charge could be consulted on however £2 is considered competitive with other Country Parks in the Nottinghamshire area and would not deter people from using the park.

3.4 An alternative option would also be not to introduce the pay by app cashless option and instead install new card readers on all Pay and Display machines. This option is significantly more expensive in comparison and would still incur maintenance costs and cash collection costs.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Usage figures for vehicles entering the Car Park over the past 3 years are as follows:

Year	Number
2021/22	225,502
2022/23	213,289
2023/24	218,306

- 4.2 Based on the above figures, it is possible to make an assumption on projected income if parking was introduced at Gedling Country Park. Vehicle usage is likely to drop if charges are introduced and therefore assuming a 50% reduction in vehicle numbers, the likely income could be up to £200,000.
- 4.3 Introducing a cashless payment option through procuring a Pay by Phone system would incur a cost to the Council. The cost of this service would be 2.5% of the income received and this covers banking/merchant costs. Income from Pay and Display for 2023/24 was circa. £92,000. If we assume 50% of these users change to pay by phone moving forward, the cost to the Council would be £1,150.
- 4.4 There would also be a requirement to procure two new Pay and Display machines at Gedling Country Park for those still wanting to pay for parking using cash. The cost of these is £12,000. A budget is already established for this and no further budget is therefore required.
- 4.5 If parking charges are introduced, these will need to be enforced. The cost of enforcement is taken from the income received from the PCN so there is no direct cost implication for the Council.
- 4.6 Any costs incurred for installing card readers onto some of the existing car parking machines will be met from the car park income generated.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The procedure for making and amending traffic regulation orders ('TRO') made under the Act is set out in the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. Before making or amending a TRO the Council are required to consult with a number organisations/persons, Regulation 6.
- 5.2 In addition to the consultation requirement, at least 21 days before making the TRO the Council must publish a notice of its intention to make the TRO in a local newspaper. The Council must also have copies of the proposed order

- available for public inspection, Regulation 7.
- 5.3 Anyone can object to the proposed TRO within 21 days beginning with the date of the publication and the Council must consider all objections before making the TRO.
- 5.4 A TRO must be made between 21 days and two years following the publication date of the notice of proposals.

6 Equalities Implications

- 6.1 The Council's car parks include provision for disabled parking which will remain unchanged by the new Order.

7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 The proposed introduction of charging at Gedling Country Park provides an incentive to encourage active travel and public transport use supporting the Council's Net Zero 2030 ambitions.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 Equality Impact Assessment
- 8.2 Appendix 2 Carbon Impact Assessment

9 Background Papers

- 9.1 None

10 Reasons for Recommendations

- 10.1 The recommendations will enable the consultation to begin for a new Off-Street Parking Order taking into account the proposed changes.

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Monitoring Officer