

Surrey Heath Borough Council
Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee
17 February 2022

Call In – Review of Car Parking Fees and Charges

Portfolio: Business & Transformation
Strategic Director: Nick Steevens, Strategic Director: Environment & Community
Report Author: Katharine Simpson, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Key Decision: N/A
Wards Affected: All

Summary and purpose

To consider a Member Call-In in respect of a decision of the Executive taken on 25th January 2022 to approve changes to the fees and charges imposed at the Borough Council's car parks.

Recommendation

The Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the Executive's decision in light of the Call-In and to make recommendations in line with the options outlined in paragraph 3.1 of this report.

1. Background and Supporting Information

- 1.1 The Executive, at its meeting on 25th January 2022, considered a report seeking approval of recommendations to increase the fees charged at the Council's car parks to bring pricing back in line with cost of living increases as well as review the structure and provision of parking season tickets. The report considered by the Executive is attached as Annex B.
- 1.2 Having debated the issue, the Executive agreed the original recommendations and it was subsequently resolved (Minute 87/E, attached as Annex C) that:
- (i) car parking tariff changes, as set out in Annex 1 of the Executive Report, be agreed to come into effect as soon as the statutory Traffic Regulatory Order process is complete and after review and consideration of any feedback received;
 - (ii) pay and display parking tariffs be introduced at Wharf Road car park, Frimley Green once the statutory Traffic Regulatory Order process is complete and after review and consideration of any feedback received;
 - (iii) the temporary NHS/Carers permit be extended until 1 May 2022;

- (iv) the RingGo convenience fees be passed on to the customer;
- (v) Parking Services investigate incentives to encourage greater use of zero emission vehicles; and
- (vi) charging for the first two hours of parking in Knoll Road car park be reinstated as the public realm works in the High Street have now been completed. This will follow a statutory 3 week notice process, coming into effect on Monday 27 February 2022.
- (vii) The Parking Subsidy Season Ticket for low paid workers permit be retained as part of the revised tariffs.

2. Call-In

- 2.1 In accordance with Part 4, Section C of the Council's Constitution, following the publication of the summary of decisions of that meeting, two separate Call –In requests were received.
- 2.2 The first request, attached as Annexes A(i) and A(ii), was submitted by Councillors Rise and Tapper who called in the Executive decision at paragraph 1.2 above citing the following grounds for concern:
 - Increase in costs to residents
 - Impact on access to local amenities and greenspaces
 - Impact on businesses within the borough
 - Impact on rural and village life
 - Potential increase of on-street parking in residential areas
 - Under resourcing of civil enforcement officers
- 2.3 As part of their Call In Submission Councillors Rise and Tapper set out the following reasons for calling in the decision:
 - A lack of proper consultation with residents and businesses
 - An absence of any substantial consultation with ward councillors
 - A lack of detailed information as to where increased revenue would be spent
- 2.3 The second Call-in request, attached as Annexes A(iii) and A(iv), was received from Councillors Wheeler and Tedder seeking a specific review of the decision to remove the two hour free parking period at Chobham High Street car park citing the impacts that this would have on the nearby Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Chobham Common, the neighbouring Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) at Chobham Water Meadows and local schools.
- 2.4 A third representation, attached as Annex A(v), was received from Councillor Betton in which concerns were expressed specifically in relation to the impacts that removal of the two hours free parking allowance in Burrell Road and introducing charges at Wharf Road car parks would have not only on local businesses and those accessing services at neighbouring GP practices but also on residents in neighbouring streets as drivers sought free on-street parking.

3 Proposal and Alternative Options

3.1 Part 4, Section C, Annex A of the Council's Constitution sets out the following options that the Performance and Scrutiny Committee can consider when responding to the Call-In:

- (i) Agree with the decision which has been called in, in which case it will be implemented with immediate effect;
- (ii) Agree with the decision but add informatives to submit to the decision maker;
- (iii) Refer it to the decision maker for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of any concerns. The decision maker will consider the decision as soon as reasonably practicable (in the case of decisions made by the Executive as a whole this would normally be expected to be at its next meeting);

After re-consideration, the decision maker will either implement the original decision or amend it as appropriate;

- (iv) If it considers that the decision is contrary to the Budget or Policy Framework, refer the matter to the Council;
- (v) Refer it to the Council if it is considered that the consequences will be significant. Where a decision is within the purview of the Leader, individual Portfolio Holder or the Executive, the Council must refer the decision back to the decision maker, where appropriate, with any recommendations; or
- (vi) Under certain circumstances, scrutiny committees can require the Leader, individual Portfolio Holder or the Executive to submit a report to Council where it thinks a key decision has been taken which was not included in the Forward Plan. The detailed procedure is set out in the Access to Information Procedure Rules at Part 4.

3.2 Given the nature of the Call-in with three different representations received, the Committee is advised to consider recommendations in respect of each of the following three matters:

- i. More generalised concerns about the impacts the charges would have on residents and business across the Borough
- ii. The potential impacts on the Chobham SSSI and local schools
- iii. The potential impacts on businesses and residents in Frimley and Frimley Green

4 Contribution to the Council's Five Year Strategy

4.1 These are detailed in the body of the Executive Report attached at Annex B

5 Resource Implications

5.1 These are detailed in the body of the Executive Report attached at Annex B

6 Section 151 Officer Comments:

6.1 These are detailed in the body of the Executive Report attached at Annex B

7 Legal and Governance Issues

7.1 These are detailed in the body of the Executive Report attached at Annex B

8 Monitoring Officer Comments:

8.1 These are detailed in the body of the Executive Report attached at Annex B

9 Other Considerations and Impacts

9.1 These are detailed in the body of the Executive Report attached at Annex B

Annexes

Annex A – Call in Requests

Annex B – Executive Report

Annex C – Executive Decision Minute

Background Papers

None