

## **Trusts and Charities Committee**

### **Update on the introduction of car parking charges to Cannon Hill Park**

**27th February 2019**

#### **Background**

The decision to introduce car parking charges was part of the public consultation on the council's budgets in 2015-16 and again in 2016-17.

The introduction of car parking charges to Cannon Hill Park in October 2017 is part of an overall strategy to introduce charges across parks (approved by the Trusts & Charities Committee in February 2017 across 7 major city parks), in order to facilitate a programme of ongoing improvement works and to protect and safeguard services in parks.

The Cabinet Member Decision report for Cannon Hill was submitted to the Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment in April 2017 and made reference to the overall programme of roll-out across the aforementioned parks i.e. Cannon Hill, Sutton, Lickey Hills, Victoria Common, Perry Park, Edgbaston Reservoir and Rectory Parks. The report was called in, and was later approved at Cabinet in July 2017 following a more extensive consultation process with members of the public and stakeholders. Overall, the roll-out of charging was agreed in principle, although individual parks will need a separate Cabinet Member's decision for the capital spend; delegated authority may apply for some of the smaller parks listed.

#### **Consultation**

Consultation included all stakeholders that had an interest in the decision to introduce car parking charges and how the revenue generated from car parking income could support an ongoing programme of investment in the car parking facilities at Cannon Hill Park (e.g. the implementation of appropriate lighting, CCTV) alongside supporting and investing in the facilities and services with the parks.

Internally, the Cabinet Member for Clean Streets and Environment and the Cabinet Member for Value for Money and Efficiency were consulted along with the Acting Strategic Director for Place and the Council's Commercialism Board, who supported the proposal. The Chairman of the Trusts and Charities Committee was consulted, together with Local Members were also advised of the proposals and meetings were offered to discuss any concerns prior to finalising the schemes.

## Compliance

The approach to introduce car parking charges in City Parks has been very carefully considered since it was first proposed to ensure its introduction is better understood and also to mitigate any impact on park users and other vulnerable groups.

The Cannon Hill scheme specifically supports a number of the Council's strategies, which are:

- Promotion of public transport and green travel options – the implementation of car parking charges has incentivised the use of green travel and public transport options. As part of the introduction of the scheme alternative forms of travel to parks were promoted and reinforced
- Commercialisation – the Council is embarking on a Commercialisation approach that seeks to maximise the financial value of every asset that the Council holds, including seeking to generate new revenue for the Council. The implementation of this scheme supports the Commercialisation approach and the scheme has been endorsed by the Commercialism Board while improving facilities and the availability of car park spaces for park users.

## Financial implications

Capital investment of £450k was required to facilitate the infrastructure improvements associated with the project, namely:

- Surface improvements at the Birmingham Wildlife Conservation Centre car park which was a significant health and safety risk in its previous state
- Improved and additional lighting across the car parks
- Car parking infrastructure e.g. pay & display machines, signage, Traffic Regulation Orders.

The capital investment is funded through prudential borrowing over a 10 year period, repaid using revenue surpluses generated from the introduction of car parking charges.

The implementation of the car parking scheme at Cannon Hill Park was initially forecast to generate an ongoing revenue surplus of £31k. From October 2017 to end of March 2018 the scheme generated revenue to BCC of £41k. Revenue to BCC for 2018-19 is projected to

be £59k after capital repayments and operating costs have been deducted. The revenue is used to offset the ongoing operational and maintenance costs of Cannon Hill Park.

The 20% reduction in visitor numbers that was estimated has not been evidenced, and regular visitors to the park and MAC have reported they find it easier to find parking spaces

### Benefits of scheme

Income from the car park charging scheme at Cannon Hill has contributed to the savings for the Parks Service.

The scheme has also enabled the Parks Service to make significant improvements to the health and safety of park, Wildlife Centre and MAC visitors through the improvement of car park surfaces, improved and additional lighting as well as the introduction of a CCTV scheme for the car parks.

Worked in close partnership with MAC on the day-to-day management of the car park, we have agreed an income-sharing arrangement for MAC providing these services.

Residents of surrounding roads, who historically have experienced inconsiderate/illegal parking because of their proximity to the park, have been protected through the traffic restrictions that were put in place as part of the project. Based on residents' feedback we implemented a Traffic Regulation Order to protect residents and then worked with the Enforcement Team to ensure the area was policed effectively.

### Next steps

Given the success of the introduction of parking charges to Cannon Hill, it is felt it is in BCC's interest to pursue the roll-out of car parking charges to other parks, as it has enabled the Parks Service to invest in car park infrastructure as well as contribute to the department's savings targets – this would have been impossible without the revenue generated from the car park scheme.

The next report to be presented to the Committee on 20th March will be for the introduction of parking charges at Victoria Common.

## Trusts and Charities Committee

### Update on the proposed introduction of car parking charges to Victoria Common

27th February 2019

#### Update - Trusts & Charities Committee Report January 2019

Following submission of a report to the Committee on 23 January, the Committee requested further information on the items listed below:

- What consultation has taken place with the Friends Group for the park?
  - Informal discussions took place with the Victoria Common Friends Group when car parking charges was formally agreed by Cabinet. A stakeholder note was passed to the Friends Group w.c. 4th February
  - The District Parks Manager met with the Friends Group on 12th Feb where the matter was discussed. The Friends don't have an issue with charging because of the problematic nature of parking at the site currently. They have made the following suggestions:
    - Consultation around potential for traffic restrictions on local roads to include Heath Road South (currently problematic due to hospital displacement and conflict at peak times for school pick up and drop off)
    - Would prefer first hour of parking to be free (e.g. charging from 8am) but a reduced rate is acceptable i.e. 50p for first hour, £2 for 2-4 hours, £3 for 4 hours plus
    - Any signage should reflect the following statement, "Income from this car park is spent on maintaining Victoria Common" or similar, as people will be more accepting of the scheme
    - An all-day rate should be in place to capture staff of local businesses and to guarantee income level.
- What has been the extent of ward member consultation?
  - A members briefing note detailing the proposals and timescales was sent to respective local members (see below) on 9th November 2018:
    - Northfield
    - Kings Norton South
    - Kings Norton North
    - Longbridge & West Heath
    - Rubery & Rednal
    - Frankley & Great Park
    - Allens Cross
    - Weoley & Selly Oak
  - The members briefing note will be updated and recirculated to the members for the above wards.

- What will be the extent of consultation on surrounding roads?
  - The project team will widen the radius for potential traffic restrictions following feedback from the Committee and Friends of Victoria Common
  - Snapshot visits will take place to establish the impact that school parking has on the area and the potential impact of displacement as a result of the scheme
  - The public consultation will ask residents/consultees to suggest traffic restrictions for surrounding roads
  - Public consultation will begin once stakeholder consultation has been completed and will consist of questionnaires, face-to-face clipboard exercise, BeHeard survey, and email mailbox.
  
- What will be the enforcement arrangements?
  - Birmingham City Council has procured a citywide contract with NSL for parking enforcement. The Parks Service successfully use NSL for enforcement at Cannon Hill Park and propose to continue this arrangement as charges are rolled out to other sites including Victoria Common. Income from Penalty Charge Notices is retained by BCC; BCC pay for the cost of the deployment of their officers. To be clear, Parks will receive the income from the car park charges and the net income from any Penalty Charge Notices will be retained by us as this helps to offset the cost of enforcement.
  
- What arrangements can be put in place to protect regular park visitors?
  - Following feedback from the Committee it is proposed that visitors will benefit from a reduced rate for the first hour. The proposed rates will be:
    - 50p for first hour
    - £2 for 2-4 hours
    - £3 for 4 hours+
  - Chargeable rates will be captured as part of the public consultation.
  
- What are the details of the finances for the scheme?
  - Please see attached appendix I for:
    - projected income figures
    - project costs (NB. Discussions are ongoing to reduce project costs)
  - The project team confirms that all income from Victoria Common will go back into a Victoria Common budget (account) to be used for Victoria Common only. The same will apply for Cannon Hill car park income
  - Funding for the scheme will come from the revenue budget for the site and be refunded from the income generated from parking fees.

- What are the details of the proposed works to the car park?
  - Please see attached appendix I
  - As the carriageway is not Trust land and is an ongoing road safety issue for park visitors, improvement works (in the form of a pedestrian walkway) will form part of Phase 1 works – we have received written approval to proceed from the landowners (Friends of Society). These works are regarded as essential health and safety improvements and business as usual for the Parks Service
  - Phase 2 works for the car park will begin following consultation and improve the car park surface to a suitable standard to enable charging – with the inclusion of disabled bays, surface levelling/potholing etc.

### Next steps

The Introduction of Car Parking Charges in Major Parks – Victoria Common report that was submitted to Trusts & Charities Committee in January will be updated with the information the Committee has requested and resubmitted for the next meeting, 20th March.