

Report to Cabinet

20 July 2022

Subject:	Review of Parking Charges Policy
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Zahoor Ahmed - Cabinet Member for Environment Services
Director:	Alice Davey - Director of Borough Economy
Key Decision:	<p>Yes;</p> <p>Type (b) - an executive decision which is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure, the making of savings or the generation of income amounting to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - £250,000 or more where the service area budget exceeds £10m; - £100,000 or more where the service area budget is less than £10m; <p>Type (c) - an executive decision which is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards of the Borough.</p>
Contact Officer:	<p>Robin Weare Service Manager, Highways Robin_weare@sandwell.gov.uk</p>

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That approval be given to the realignment of parking charges to support the objectives of Climate Change Policy, Carbon Reduction, Air Quality, sustainable transport choices, balancing available parking with demand and to meet the cost of providing and maintaining car parks, parking related services and highway projects.



- 1.2 That future reviews of the appropriate documents that make up the Sandwell Local Plan consider the appropriate level of parking provision in centres for the future taking into account the level of redevelopment planned and implemented since the last review, climate change policy and facilitating modal shift through parking management.
- 1.3 That approval be given to authorise the Director Borough Economy to implement the revised scales of parking charges set out in the recommendations subject to statutory public consultation for the changes to Traffic Regulation Orders.
- 1.4 That the Cabinet Member for Environment be authorised to consider and determine any unresolved objections in relation to Traffic Regulation Order concerning parking charges, arising from the statutory public consultation; and that they be delegated to make any adjustments to the proposals as part of their determination.
- 1.5 That the proposed scales of charges in this report are not applied to Sandwell Valley car parks.
- 1.6 That for all other off-street car parking, the scale of charges outside West Bromwich be reset from the start of 2023 including a new low cost 30 minute charge to assist small businesses. The scale of charges then to increase at the start of each year until the start of 2027 as follows :-

Up to No. of Hours	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
30 mins	20p	30p	40p	50p	50p
1 hr	50p	60p	70p	70p	70p
2 hrs	£1.00	£1.10	£1.20	£1.20	£1.20
3 hrs	£1.50	£1.60	£1.70	£1.70	£1.70
4 hrs	£2.00	£2.10	£2.20	£2.30	£2.40
Day	£4.00	£4.50	£5.00	£5.50	£6.00

- 1.7 That for off-street car parking, the scale of charges within West Bromwich be reset at the start of 2023 including a new low cost 30 minute charge to assist small businesses. The scale of charges then to increase at the start of each year until the start of 2027 as follows:-



Up to No. of Hours	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
30 mins	40p	60p	80p	80p	80p
1 hr	£1.00	£1.20	£1.40	£1.60	£1.80
2 hrs	£2.00	£2.20	£2.40	£2.40	£2.40
3 hrs	£3.00	£3.20	£3.40	£3.40	£3.40
4 hrs	£4.00	£4.20	£4.40	£4.60	£4.80
Day	£8.00	£8.50	£9.00	£9.50	£10.00

1.8 That parking shall be free of charge at the following times to assist small businesses.

- On Sundays,
- Overnight between the hours of 18.00 and 08.00.
- For Blue badge holders and
- For two Saturdays before Christmas
- Every Saturday for season ticket holders

1.9 That short stay on-street parking charges will remain unchanged to assist small businesses.

1.10 That, to support flexible working, encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives and free up short stay parking to assist small businesses, the annual charges for long stay season tickets that operate on nominated days of the week be set as follows, on the basis of one season ticket per vehicle, also valid for use at Sandwell Valley car parks on the nominated days. West Bromwich long stay Season Tickets are valid for all Council long stay car parking on the nominated days.

Outside West Bromwich

No of Days per Wk	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
1	£40	£45	£50	£55	£60
2	£100	£115	£125	£140	£155
3	£200	£225	£250	£275	£300
4	£300	£330	£350	£380	£410
5	£400	£450	£500	£550	£600



Within West Bromwich (also valid outside West Bromwich for the same nominated days)

No of Days per Wk	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
1	£80	£90	£100	£110	£120
2	£200	£230	£250	£280	£310
3	£400	£450	£500	£550	£600
4	£600	£660	£700	£760	£820
5	£800	£900	£1000	£1100	£1200

- 1.11 That to support Climate Change and air quality objectives the following concessionary reduction will apply.
- For all zero emission electric vehicles a 50% reduction in season ticket prices will apply
- 1.12 That the monthly scales of season ticket charges will be levied at 10% of the annual scales of season ticket charges for car parks either within West Bromwich or outside west Bromwich as appropriate.
- 1.13 That at the few locations where long stay on-street parking charges are necessary, charges will be set to correspond with the off-street scale of hourly parking charges.
- 1.14 That the Off-Street Parking Places order is also updated with the following changes for public consultation.
- Remove Bull Street Multi Storey, West Bromwich and Morrisons car park and Market Place car park, Wednesbury.
 - Include wording for paying by other means advertised where there is no functioning ticket machine, no refunds for season tickets and spaces marked for electric vehicle recharging to only be used when actively recharging a vehicle.
 - Include West Bromwich Street and Causeway Green Road car parks in the main Off Street Order and revoke the two individual orders.
 - Change the operating times for New Street Disabled car park, West Bromwich. At present it is Monday to Saturday 8am to 6pm. New time 7 days a week at any time. This is to keep spaces available for blue badge holders in the evening.
 - Include Roway Lane car park, Oldbury.



- Include wording so that bays marked for recharging electric vehicles, disabled badge holders and motorcycles operate at all times. This is to prevent others parking in these bays after 6pm.
- 1.15 That, subject to public consultation and the consideration of objections, new traffic regulation orders are implemented around town centres to prevent the displacement of parking to the streets through the introduction of resident parking schemes supplemented by yellow and red line restrictions where appropriate.
 - 1.16 That the Director of Borough Economy be authorised to undertake the necessary public and statutory consultation required to introduce and amend the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's);
 - 1.17 That the Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to undertake the necessary statutory procedures to bring the approved recommendations into effect.
 - 1.18 That the revised charges be implemented on completion of statutory processes for the changes to the scales of charges;

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The purpose of this report is to review Sandwell Parking Policy to ensure that Sandwell Council can continue to provide suitable, adequate, safe and well-maintained public parking to secure the following objectives.

- To support the response to the Climate Change Emergency by reducing congestion in and around our town centres and reducing carbon emissions.
- To facilitate more working from home, walking and cycling for short journeys and journeys to work.
- To secure the health benefits associated with more active transport choices and improved air quality.
- To free up more parking spaces on town centre car parks for short stay shoppers and visitors who contribute to the local economy.
- To fund the post pandemic costs of the parking service, the provision, operation, maintenance (schedule in Appendix A), enforcement of car parks, Highway Maintenance and traffic management on the network.



- 2.2 The proposed introduction of new parking charges following completion of statutory processes, is a consequence of increased working from home following the pandemic together with the effects of inflation on the cost of the services. These revised charges are also set to enhance and scale up the usage and benefits of active travel infrastructure being provided to help encourage more people to choose alternatives ways to travel, making healthier habits easier and making sure the road networks are ready to respond to future increases in demand.

Existing Regional Policy Adopted by Sandwell

- 2.3 The UK is legally committed to an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050 (relative to 1990 levels) and Parliament declared a climate change emergency in May 2019. Sandwell Council declared a climate change emergency in March 2020. This parking policy change is designed to alleviate congestion, encourage modal shift to cycling and walking, reduce short journeys by car to town centres and encourage working from home. This will support the strategic response to the Climate Change Emergency, reducing our carbon footprint and improving air quality.
- 2.4 Sandwell is one of seven constituent authorities in the West Midlands Combined Authority. The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan: Movement for Growth provides the following policy direction, “there is a need to balance the role of car access to centres to support economic vitality, whilst promoting the use of public transport, cycling and walking. This is to ensure that private car volumes are not at such levels where the dominance of the car detracts from the quality of the environment of our centres”.
- 2.5 The Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) is a planning and regeneration plan for the whole of the Black Country and comprises the upper tier of the adopted Sandwell Local Plan. The BCCS sets out the vision, objectives and strategy for future development in the Black Country up to 2026 and beyond. The BCCS (adopted February 2011) states that “demand management and the promotion of sustainable transport will play a key part in achieving a shift in favour of these modes of transport”. The BCCS supports this priority which will assist in reducing congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, improve road safety, promote social cohesion and improve the attractiveness of centres as places to visit and invest in”.



- 2.6 The Sandwell Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document (SADDPD) is a key part of the Sandwell Local Plan and builds on the Black Country Core Strategy, providing much greater detail for Sandwell. The SADDPD notes that car parking provision has an effect on travel choices, the quantity of road traffic and congestion”.
- 2.7 The West Bromwich Area Action Plan (WBAAP) forms part of Sandwell's Local Plan. The Plan concentrates on developing a strategy to capture the growth required to make this a strategic town centre within the Black Country Sub-Region, as well as looking at the wider area to support the housing needs for the town. The WBAAP (adopted in December 2012) requires the Council to make provision “for an appropriate level of convenient and suitably managed car parking to facilitate the regeneration and viability of the town centre”.

The Reasons for a Review of Parking Policy in Sandwell

- 2.8 This parking policy change is designed to alleviate congestion, encourage modal shift to cycling and walking, reduce short journeys by car to town centres and facilitate the trend towards more working from home all of which have recently assisted in reducing carbon emissions globally during the pandemic. This will support Sandwell’s strategic response to the Climate Change Emergency, reducing our carbon footprint and improving air quality.
- 2.9 Through the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) system local authorities are required to assess air quality in their area and designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) if improvements are necessary. The objectives of the LAQM system have been put in place to protect people's health and the environment. The whole of Sandwell has been declared as an Air Quality Management Area due to likely exceedances of the Air Quality Objective for Nitrogen Dioxide of 40 micrograms per cubic metre (ug/m3). An action plan has been developed and we are working on initiatives to improve the situation. Initiatives that support air quality improvements include demand management that promotes the use of sustainable transport such as walking and cycling and reduced congestion through traffic management. The efficient management of town centre parking is an important contributor to these objectives. Priority areas for air quality improvement in Sandwell include town centre locations such as parts of Blackheath, Bearwood, Oldbury and West Bromwich.



- 2.10 As a result of the COVID19 pandemic, multiple sources indicate that we experienced an unrivalled drop in carbon output with the reduction in road transport being the principal factor. A reduction in travel, such as commuting due to working from home policies, has played its part in reducing carbon emissions. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA) global average road transport activity fell to 50% of the 2019 level during the COVID 19 lockdowns. This was certainly reflected across Sandwell, with traffic levels through town centres significantly reduced, assisting in the boroughs air quality and climate change objectives. However, with the lifting of lockdown restrictions, there has been a return to previous patterns of behaviour without lessons being learned and consequently, the high risks of climate change are once again exacerbated. The challenge now for Sandwell is to ensure that the economic recovery and the transition to a sustainable and climate-neutral local economy go hand in hand.
- 2.11 In 2019 there was increasing concern that parking demand in key town centres such as West Bromwich is exceeding the supply of available parking spaces. Without action one effect is a reduction on parking availability for customers on small businesses. This issue can also lead to competition for available parking spaces and indiscriminate parking and causing congestion and highway safety concerns. The council has a responsibility to manage these key issues. This is particularly important when also considering the strategic response to the Climate Change Emergency, reducing our carbon footprint, improving air quality and supporting the modal shift in transport use.
- 2.12 Increased parking demand is driven by population growth and increased levels of car ownership. Sandwell trend statistics illustrate that population in Sandwell has been growing at around 2% per year for several years and these population growth forecasts are regularly revised upwards. One feature of population growth in Sandwell has been significant increases in population between the ages of 25 to 35.
- 2.13 Department for Transport statistics on vehicle mileage per year have also shown an increase of around 2% annually for several years, excluding the periods affected by the pandemic. These national trends together with the pattern of local population growth imply that car use in Sandwell (and hence parking) has been increasing at more than 2% per year for several years.



- 2.14 In 2018 and 2019 the Council had received complaints from town centre workers, particularly in West Bromwich, experiencing difficulty finding parking spaces after 8am. There have been reports of spending up to an hour driving around the town centre car parks looking for parking spaces after 10am. This is not only a hidden cost to small businesses and services in the town but also contributes to congestion and poor air quality. This could also have an adverse impact on town centre trade and would be contrary to the car parking policy in the West Bromwich Area Action Plan. Urgent action is needed to ensure these circumstances do not become re-established and to secure the associated benefits to support the Council response to the Climate Change Emergency.
- 2.15 The proposed charging regime associated with the Birmingham Clean Air Zone (CAZ) is likely to increase demand for public transport services in Sandwell as both commuters and those making leisure journeys into Birmingham City Centre seek to avoid the CAZ charges and choose less expensive travel modes. The outcome is likely to be an increase in parking outside the zone and around key interchanges such as bus, train and tram stations in Sandwell. There are likely to be key impacts at town centre locations where low-cost car parks can be used for transfer to metro, train and bus station interchanges. Increasing parking charges for season tickets will ensure that parking spaces are retained for short stay customers of small businesses rather than being used by commuters to park and ride into Birmingham.
- 2.16 National government funding to support the implementation of a CAZ is only available for the authority implementing the scheme. Sandwell Council will have to fund measures to mitigate the future impacts of Birmingham's CAZ within Sandwell from existing budgets.
- 2.17 The pre-lockdown demand pressure on local car parks illustrates that the availability of low-cost parking presents a significant risk of encouraging car travel in preference to using sustainable travel options to our town centres. This adds pressure to the local transport network, increasing congestion, impacting on air quality and reducing the through flow of visitors to the area. Should this continue, the increase in costs for car park maintenance, enforcement, traffic regulation orders (to control overflow parking on-street) and the implementation of road safety measures is likely to place further pressure on Council budgets. These consequential effects and mitigation measures are a regular feature on the highway network when localised demand for



parking exceeds supply. Examples that will be familiar to many, are parking around the General Hospital, around Providence Place, around Sandwell College and around expanded schools, etc.

The Current Provision of Parking in Sandwell

- 2.18 The town centres of Sandwell have the greatest demand for parking throughout the day together with many constraints on the supply of spaces. The Council operates 48 car parks across the borough and 40 of these are in town centres where charges provide an appropriate means of demand management. Similar management of on-street parking in town centres includes pay and display parking bays and appropriate parking restrictions.
- 2.19 There are 3,059 council operated car parking spaces in the borough and charges are applied on 2,798 of this total. Out of the 2,798 spaces where charges apply there are only 161 dedicated for short stay use. The remaining 2,637 spaces can be used for both short and long stays.
- 2.20 Parking charges are applied to car parks where demand would otherwise exceed available spaces. In recent years West Bromwich has suffered most from demand exceeding supply. This imbalance increased when parking charges in West Bromwich were reduced in 2016 and is likely to have had a negative effect on small businesses. West Bromwich is well served by public transport, residential parking schemes, an extensive 20 mph zone, cycling and walking routes. Consequently from 2000 until 2016 West Bromwich sustained parking charges at twice the level charged in other towns in the borough. The higher charges for the West Bromwich zone served to restrain demand and encourage sustainable transport choices.
- 2.21 Allocated on-street parking in Sandwell is predominantly short-stay and for limited permissible durations that match the requirements of adjacent trade and service outlets ensuring optimum turnover. Charges apply in the busiest on street locations to manage demand. There are locations in Sandwell where long stay demand has exceeded the capacity of car parks and parking capacity is available on adjacent streets. In these circumstances adjacent streets provide for the overflow long stay demand. These on-street parking bays are provided at a scale of charges to match the long stay public car parks.

Policy Conclusions



- 2.22 An analysis of supply and demand before COVID 19 lockdown concluded that public long stay parking shortages can best be addressed by reducing long stay demand rather than increasing supply. This would be the most effective near-term measure and would also benefit short stay supply for localised short stay users. This approach would mitigate the risk of returning to the demand pressures experienced before the pandemic by incentivising modal shift, plus a continuation of home working and would provide urgent support to the Councils strategy for mitigating the Climate Change Emergency.
- 2.23 Charging for parking fulfils statutory purposes including, but not limited to, recovering the cost of car park maintenance, parking management, operation and enforcement, implementation of Traffic Regulation Orders, enforcement, demand management and statutory road safety duties. Price inflation has also significantly increased the cost of providing services beyond the limits of the currently available budgets and consequently increased income is needed to ensure statutory duties and functions can be delivered. The associated long-term investment in the quality of the car parks should also be considered (schedule in Appendix A).
- 2.24 The realignment of parking charges to around the highest levels charged by neighbouring Black Country authorities would restrain and alleviate long stay demand for the benefit of essential long and short stay users. This would encourage more use of cycling and walking, also creating space on town centre car parks for additional cycle parking and support the strategic response to the declared Climate Change Emergency. Some local authorities such as Nottingham City Council have gone further and adopted the workplace parking levy to manage congestion and provide an income stream that helps to deliver better sustainable transport infrastructure.
- 2.25 One outcome of the COVID 19 pandemic is the much greater use of home working. Consequently, the proposed scale of parking charges introduces new season ticket options at reduced rates for parking on 1 to 4 nominated days of the week. The proposed scale of charges is set at rates that escalate moderately with the number of days each week that parking is used.
- 2.26 The proposals represent a policy that is expected to align Sandwell Parking Policy with emerging policies resulting from the ongoing review



of Black Country Core Strategy known as the Black Country Plan which is expected to be adopted in 2024.

- 2.27 The proposals do not constrain the development of further parking policy opportunities to meet the requirements of regional policy initiatives. Regional initiatives expected over the next few years include cashless payment, consistent regional policy for disabled drivers and other policy drivers that establish joined up sustainable regional transport networks.
- 2.28 The greatest need for realignment of charges is to restrain and alleviate long stay demand, free up more spaces for customers of small businesses, reduce congestion, encourage cycling and walking and support the strategic response to the declared Climate Change Emergency. It is recommended that this can be achieved through a significant increase in season ticket prices mitigated by reduced rates for parking on 1 to 4 nominated days of the week. The consequential restraint of long stay demand would alleviate the long stay shortage and accommodate any suppressed short stay demand which is more important to the economic vitality of town centres. Space should be created on town centre car parks so that they become green hubs that could be used for cycle parking or bike hire, as well as electric vehicles.
- 2.29 In addition, a more modest increase in short stay charges would align Sandwell charges at levels consistent with levels charged in the Black Country and would set charges to be consistent with regional policy

3. DELIVERING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CORPORATE PLAN

	<p>People live well and age well: The Local Transport Settlement contributes to safe and efficient roads for local people and visitors, and to the health benefits of sustainable active travel.</p>
	<p>Strong resilient communities: Successful communities needs access to jobs, services and facilities to enable them to remain healthy and vibrant. The highway network and sustainable transport measures are an important enabler of this.</p>
	<p>Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods: Both new and existing residential developments rely on good quality access and links to shops, services and leisure facilities in order for them to be successful. Balancing the demand and supply of parking spaces facilitates this.</p>



	A strong and inclusive economy: The provision of a high quality, well maintained highway network will reduce journey times and improve journey reliability for Sandwell business who rely on it to connect to their suppliers and customers.
	A connected and accessible Sandwell: The provision of a high quality, well maintained highway network and parking is vital to enable Sandwell residents to access jobs, education and services both within and beyond the Borough's boundaries.

4 CONTEXT AND KEY ISSUES

Parking Costs and Revised Charging Proposals

- 4.1 Increased parking demand continuously places pressure on the highway network. The increase in charges proposed below are the most practical and achievable way to assist in restraining demand with associated benefits set out earlier in this report including supporting the strategic response to the Council's declared Climate Change Emergency.
- 4.2 The Council's off-street car parking service has in recent years recovered income from charges that are sufficient to meet the costs for car park maintenance, cleaning, lighting, equipment, enforcement, traffic regulation orders, business rates, water rates etc. The exact budget balance between zero net cost and a surplus varies in parallel with the long-term economic cycle. In the past any surplus on the parking account have been allocated in accordance with statutory requirements. However, the sustained increase in working from home following the pandemic has reduced parking income well below the levels needed to fund this service. A deficit of more than £300,000 on the parking account was experienced in 2021/22 and is likely to continue at similar levels without action. In these circumstances available service budgets are not sufficient to maintain normal levels of statutory services also because of the increased costs arising from post pandemic price inflation.
- 4.3 The future economic outlook is less positive than in recent years with the expectation of significant post pandemic realignment of Government spending and taxation policies together with the impact of inflation. The associated restraint in economic growth could increase the deficit on the parking account further. The recovery from the pandemic and the transition to a sustainable and climate-neutral economy must go hand in hand.



Historic Parking Charges and Review Period

4.4 Parking charges were last reviewed in December 2015. The approved parking charges were implemented in November 2016. Before the last review of parking charges, annual season tickets for West Bromwich cost £390 and had been in place for several years. In real terms the annual season ticket prices for West Bromwich that were in place 12 years ago would be equivalent to a cost of around £500 per year today. The following proposals to increase parking charges would be implemented early in 2023 following seven years without change. Since the last review the experiences of the COVID19 pandemic and the Climate Change Emergency make increasing parking charges at this time more crucial than in previous reviews.

Schedules of Proposed Charges

Short Stay Car Parking Charges

4.5 It is proposed to maintain the current free parking concessions that work best in Sandwell for benefit the public and small businesses in a sustainable way as follows.

- Free parking for blue badge holders and powered two wheelers.
- Free parking between 6pm in the evening and overnight until 8am the next morning on all car parks (except Sandwell Valley Car Parks where charges are proposed to remain unchanged).
- Free parking for two Saturdays before Christmas on all car parks (Except Sandwell Valley Car Parks where charges are proposed to remain unchanged),
- Free parking every Saturday for Season Ticket Holders

4.6 In addition, concessionary rates are proposed to mitigate the season ticket price increases where appropriate as follows.

- The proposed scale of charges include a 50% reduction in season ticket prices for towns outside West Bromwich to acknowledge that other towns are less well served by public transport, central car parks, and cycle routes



- A 50% reduction in season ticket prices would apply for all zero emission electric cars to encourage the use of low emission vehicles.

4.7 A statutory 10-minute grace period applies in all pay and display parking bays before enforcement action.

4.8 This report proposes that borough wide off-street car parking charges for short stay parking (up to 4 hours) should be increased. The exception would be the scale of charges for Sandwell Valley car park that would remain unchanged. A new low cost 30-minute charge is also proposed to accommodate short visits to town centres and support small businesses.

4.9 At the time of writing hourly parking charges are £1.80 to £2.10 for 3hrs in Dudley, £1.20 for 2hrs in Walsall and vary from 70p to £1.50 in central Wolverhampton. However other Black Country councils have not yet used parking charges as part of the response to recent Government policy and requirements such as the Climate Change Emergency, air quality improvement and modal shift and working from home associated with the emergence from the COVID 19 pandemic.

4.10 Current Sandwell borough wide short stay charges are:

- Up to 1 hour 40p
- Up to 2 hours 80p
- Up to 3 hours £1.20
- Up to 4 hours £1.60

The proposed borough wide short stay charges are as shown in the recommendations:

Long Stay Car Parking Charges

4.11 The Council's long stay (over 4 hours) off-street car parking is provided at a current rate of £4.00 per day.

4.12 The proposed scales of charges are set out in the recommendations.

Annual and Monthly Season Ticket Charges

4.13 In 2018 and 2019 there was a shortage of long Stay parking availability in the main town centres of Sandwell and consequently increasing parking charges would also encourage more sustainable modes of transport and sustain the increase in home working and free us spaces for customers of



small businesses. The revised charges would make the most of changes in travel behaviour as experienced during the pandemic which can lead to the introduction of long-lasting sustainable habits and avoid a return to the pre-lockdown demand pressures as the economy recovers.

- 4.14 The current annual rates for a season ticket are Dudley £460, Walsall, £660 and vary in Wolverhampton from £227 to £1080. However other Black Country councils have not yet used parking charges as part of the response to recent Government policy and requirements such as the Climate Change Emergency, air quality improvement, modal shift and home working associated with the emergence from the pandemic whereas many towns and cities are encouraging car free streets.
- 4.15 Sandwell season ticket charges are proposed to be increased to support our strategic response to the declared climate change emergency, encourage modal shift and free up more spaces for passing trade to small businesses. This increase is proposed to be mitigated by reduced rates for parking on 1 to 4 nominated days of the week and by allowing season ticket holders to park without charge on Saturdays.
- 4.16 Annual and monthly off-street parking season tickets are currently set at £240 per year and £24 per month. Before the last review in West Bromwich season tickets were set at £390 per year and £39 per month. The current value of season tickets prices that operated 12 years ago would now be around £500 per annum and £50 per month in real terms.
- 4.17 This report proposes that the season ticket charge for unrestricted use all week is increased significantly over 5 years to encourage working from home, walking and cycling and reduce congestion to support the Climate Change Emergency. Charges have been stable for some time in other Black Country Authorities and might increase in response to evolving recommendations and policy.
- 4.18 The higher demand for parking in West Bromwich together with a shortage of supply and good sustainable transport alternatives justifies returning to the differential charges that applied between 2000 and 2016. Within West Bromwich the proposed season ticket charges for unrestricted use all week are increased significantly as set out in the recommendations. This increased cost would be mitigated by reduced rates for parking on 1 to 4 nominated days of the week and by allowing season ticket holders to park without charge to shop on Saturdays.



- 4.19 It is proposed that season tickets valid for all paid for Council car parks across the Borough would in future be valid in Sandwell Valley car parks (Except Event Days). It is proposed that charges remain unchanged at Sandwell Valley.
- 4.20 The reduced charges for part time workers are currently £144 per year for three nominated days each week. To encourage working from home, car sharing, cycling and walking and free up more short stay spaces for small businesses it is proposed to extend this scale of charges to provide reduced cost season tickets for one, two, three and four nominated days per week as set out in the recommendations. Only one season ticket to be issued to each vehicle.

On-Street Parking Charges

- 4.21 Short stay on-street parking charges are proposed to remain unchanged to maintain passing trade for shopkeepers and assist public access to retail, financial, commercial and local community facilities. A statutory 10 minute grace period applies in pay and display parking bays before enforcement action.
- 4.22 At the few locations where on-street long stay parking charges are necessary, charges will be set to correspond with the off-street scale of parking charges to avoid a relocation of parking from adjacent car parks to the streets.

The Current Position.

- 4.23 See section 3. Background and Main Considerations.

Consultation with Stakeholders

- 4.24 Statutory public consultations would be undertaken in the late Summer with the consideration of objections and a decision on the proposals in the Autumn. This would allow for statutory processes to be completed, signs to be manufactured and processes to be updated ready for the implementation of new charges early in 2023.



5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1 To leave parking charges unchanged would miss the opportunity to support the strategic response to the declared Climate Change Emergency, would miss the opportunity to make the most of changes in travel behaviour as experienced during the pandemic, would fail to address the existing supply and demand problems, would miss the opportunity to mitigate against the expected exacerbation of demand and associated impacts on safety, the environment, trade for small businesses and local economy and would fail to take the opportunity to encourage working from home and modal shift in transport choice.
- 5.2 Highway Services would require subsidising with additional revenue funding as income would no longer be sufficient to fund the costs. Highway Services provide the maintenance, operation and enforcement of car parks, enforcement on street, including around hospitals and schools gate parking, meeting request for new traffic regulation orders, resident parking schemes and other costs permitted by the legislation.

6 IMPLICATIONS

Resources:	<p>The rates to be applied to Council controlled off-street parking are detailed in the recommendations. The response to the climate change emergency, impact of COVID 19, greater levels of home working and the modal shift objective for short journeys have reduced parking incomes to levels well below the costs of providing the services.</p> <p>The forecast deficit in 2022/23 is expected to be £300,000 to £500,000. There are many variables that will influence future income levels such as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the potential for future virus-related restrictions• future trends for working from home• the extent to which travel choices change• the future viability of town centres• the changing nature of town centre use• the future economic outlook• inflation in the costs of operation and maintenance• comparative cost of car use and public transport
-------------------	--



	<p>Using mid-range estimates the proposed scale of charges is expected to eliminate the current income deficit to the revenue account that is used to fund these essential parking services. As a consequence it is also anticipated that sufficient income would be generated to undertake the maintenance work scheduled in Appendix A. It is not expected that a surplus of income over cost would be generated. Without an increase in charges the Highway Service would require subsidising with additional revenue funding as parking income would no longer be sufficient to fund the many associated costs of the parking services</p> <p>Parking services income provides for the maintenance (schedule in Appendix A), operation and enforcement of car parks, enforcement on street, including around hospitals and schools gate parking, meeting requests for new traffic regulation orders, resident parking schemes, business and water rates.</p> <p>The future economic outlook is less positive than in recent years with the expectation of significant post pandemic realignment of Government spending and taxation policies together with the effects of post pandemic inflation. The associated restraint in economic growth could offset benefits near term.</p>
<p>Legal and Governance:</p>	<p>Legal and Governance: Traffic Regulation Orders are made by the Highway Authority under the provisions of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 that includes the permitted uses of income.</p> <p>The Council has powers under the Road Traffic (Permitted Parking Area and Special Parking Area) (Metropolitan Borough of Sandwell) order 2000, to carry out enforcement activities relating to parking contraventions within the Borough.</p>



	<p>The Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 and the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, applies for parking in car parks and on street parking.</p> <p>Sections 35C and 46A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 has been amended by the Parking Places (Variation of Charges) Act 2017. The Parking Places (Variation of Charges) Act 2017 requires the Highway Authority to undertake public consultation in addition to publishing and issuing a Notice of Variation under regulation 25 Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.</p>
Risk:	<p>There are no direct risk implications resulting from the course of action recommended in this report that seek to provide a sustainable solution to parking demand and funding for the service in a way that promotes sustainable transport, active travel and mitigates the climate change emergency.</p>
Equality:	<p>By initial inspection it is not believed that this decision discriminates against the protected characteristics. The requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are included in Policy to draw attention to the detail of, and the need to comply with, the Act</p>
Health and Wellbeing:	<p>It is increasingly recognised that an appropriately managed and maintained and up to date sustainable transport provision is needed to support significant economic growth and the associated social well-being benefits. To maximise the benefits of economic investment programmes requires balancing parking demand with supply in a way that encourage active travel and deliver 2030 ambitions. The greater activity levels associated with using sustainable transport options promote healthy lifestyles. The air quality benefits of sustainable transport and reductions in congestion also have health benefits</p>



Social Value	There are no implications for social value directly arising from this report.
---------------------	---

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Car Park Improvement & Maintenance Plan (attached - follows below)

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The documents referenced in the report are published and accessible on the internet.



Car Park Improvement & Maintenance Plan

Car Park	Town	Work Required
41 Pay and Display Car Parks	All	New tariff signs when parking charges change.
41 Pay and Display Car Parks	All	New software for ticket machines to allow for tariff changes.
John Street	West Bromwich	Paint lighting columns
Temple St/Frederick St	West Bromwich	Paint lighting columns
Thomas St/George St	West Bromwich	Paint lighting columns
Victoria Street	West Bromwich	Paint lighting columns
Corngreaves Road	Rowley	Paint lighting columns
Highgate Street North (Opp. 127)	Rowley	Paint lighting columns
Northgate/Prince St	Rowley	Paint lighting columns
Short Street	Rowley	Paint lighting columns
Hawkes Lane	Wednesbury	Paint lighting columns
Hill Top	Wednesbury	Paint lighting columns
Ridding Lane	Wednesbury	Paint lighting columns
Spring Head	Wednesbury	Paint lighting columns
Upper High Street	Wednesbury	Paint lighting columns
Gilbert Road (adj. 112) East	Smethwick	Paint lighting columns
Gilbert Road (adj. 108) West	Smethwick	Paint lighting columns
Shireland Road	Smethwick	Paint lighting columns
Stony Lane	Smethwick	Paint lighting columns
High St (Princes End) North	Tipton	Paint lighting columns
High St (Princes End) South	Tipton	Paint lighting columns
Market Place, Great Bridge	Tipton	Paint lighting columns
Whitehall Road, Great Bridge	Tipton	Paint lighting columns
Arden Grove	Oldbury	Paint lighting columns
Causeway Green Road	Oldbury	Paint lighting columns
Langley High Street	Oldbury	Paint lighting columns
Low Town	Oldbury	Paint lighting columns
Victoria Street	West Bromwich	Remark and alter layout to provide wider bays and improve space to access disabled bays. Repair fencing.
Arden Grove	Oldbury	Paint fencing
Langley High Street	Oldbury	Paint fencing
Roway Lane	Oldbury	New height barrier, fencing/bollards and lining bays. Cut back vegetation/remove weeds, new information sign.
West Bromwich Street	Oldbury	Repair triprail fence, possible speed humps, ongoing treatment of weeds damaging surfacing.
High Street (South) Princes End	Tipton	Repair fencing or replace with hoop barriers.
Market Place, Great Bridge	Tipton	Full resurface or patch repair with micro asphalt and remark with slight amendment to bays.
Corngreaves Road	Rowley	Repair triprail fence.
Graingers Lane	Rowley	Paint bollards
Lower High Street (East)	Rowley	Remark lining. Consider speed humps as car park used as 'short cut' to avoid queues at junction.
Park Street	Rowly	Patch repair and micro asphalt.
High Bullen	Wednesbury	Patch repairs and micro asphalt. Paint perimeter fence.
Ridding Lane	Wednesbury	Micro asphalt.
Spring Head	Wednesbury	Paint perimeter fence.
St Pauls Road	Smethwick	Remark

