

Report to: Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change

Date of meeting: 28 April 2022

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Ashdown Forest Parking Charges

Purpose: To consider the parking charges proposed by the Board of Conservators following their decision to introduce parking charges in car parks across the Ashdown Forest

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change is recommended to:

- (1) Grant the approval required by Section 18 of The Ashdown Forest Act 1974 to the parking charges proposed by the Conservators of the Ashdown Forest**
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1 Background

- 1.1 The Conservators of Ashdown Forest are bound to manage the Forest under The Ashdown Forest Act 1974.
- 1.2 The Board of Conservators of the Ashdown Forest have identified significant budget pressures in managing the Forest. Consequently, the Board of Conservators sought alternative means of raising revenue and agreed in July 2021 to explore the potential and feasibility of charging for the use of Forest car parks. The Conservators then undertook a six-week consultation from October to December 2021 to seek views on the proposal to introduce parking charges.
- 1.3 On 31 January 2022, following the conclusion of the consultation, the Board of Conservators voted unanimously to introduce charges for parking in the car parks located on Ashdown Forest and operated by the Conservators.
- 1.4 The power for the Conservators to introduce parking charges is set out in Section 18(1)(e) of the Ashdown Forest Act 1974, which states:

“The Conservators shall have power to make reasonable charges for the parking of vehicles on the forest.”
- 1.5 However, this power is subject to the requirements of Sections 18(2)(a) and 18(2)(b), which provide as follows:

“(a) Before exercising the power conferred by paragraph (e) of subsection (1) of this section the Conservators shall submit details of their proposed charges to the County Council for approval and shall at the same time send a copy of such details to Wealden Council, the Royal Automobile Club and the Automobile Association.”

“(b) Before approving the proposed charges, the County Council shall have regard to any written representations made to the County Council by Wealden District Council, the Royal Automobile Club and the Automobile Association or any of them within one month of the date of the sending to them of details of the proposed charges.”

2 Supporting information

- 2.1 The proposed parking tariffs are yet to be finalised pending a tendering process to procure a parking management contractor. However, the Conservators have indicated that parking charges will be in the following range:
- £1.50 to £2.00 for up to 1 hour;
 - £2.50 for up to 2 hours;
 - £4.00 for up to 4 hours;
 - £5.00 to £6.00 for an all-day pass (16 hours) – no overnight parking;
 - £80 to £100 for an annual parking pass.
- 2.2 East Sussex County Council has no jurisdiction or responsibility for the enforcement of parking related matters across the Ashdown Forest. On-street parking enforcement across Wealden District remains a criminal matter and responsibility of Sussex Police.
- 2.3 No comments have been received from Wealden District Council, the Royal Automobile Club or the Automobile Association.

3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 County Council Officers have been supporting the Conservators in drawing up their plans to introduce parking charges across the Forest and made no representation to their consultation in 2021.
- 3.2 The Board of Conservators have undertaken a great deal of work to explore the potential for introducing parking charges and have deemed that these charges are necessary for the long-term preservation, use and enjoyment of the Ashdown Forest as an amenity space for the public. The Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change is therefore recommended to grant the approval of the proposed parking charges, as required under the Ashdown Forest Act 1974.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Contact Officer: Karl Taylor

Tel. No. 01273 482207

Email: karl.taylor@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

All members whose electoral Divisions are within areas covered by the Ashdown Forest

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None