

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

THURSDAY 25 APRIL, 2024

Report Title	Visitors' Car Park Ebley Mill			
Purpose of Report	To consider a proposed change from a visitors only car park at Ebley Mill to a public (charging) car park in response to requests from local residents and businesses to access the car park.			
Decision(s)	Council RESOLVES to add to the capital budget the required sums for completion of the works to change the visitors' car park to a charging car park with Electric Vehicle charging points; subject to a decision to amend the Stroud District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) (Consolidation) Order 2010 by adding the Ebley Mill car park. As recommended by the Strategy and Resources Committee.			
Consultation and Feedback	Local residents, businesses , Ward Councillors, the County Councillor and the Town Council have asked this council to consider making the visitors car park available for use by the wider community. Responses to the proposed tariffs will be considered as part of the legal process that has to be followed to add a car park to the Off-Street Parking Paces Order Consultation has also taken place with the Community Services Manager who is responsible for the management of the Council's public car parks.			
Report Author	Alison Fisk, Head of Property Services Tel: 01453 754430 Email: alison.fisk@stroud.gov.uk			
Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering permits to residents has been considered but is onerous in terms of administration and would not allow wider access for the general public using the canal or local business or other potential casual users. The council could decide to retain the car park for visitors to Ebley Mill only. The council could decide not to charge for parking but it would be difficult to prevent the car park from being filled by long-term parking, to the detriment of other users and the operation of Ebley Mill. 			
Background Papers	None			
Appendices	Appendix A – Location plan Appendix B – Proposed Tariffs and Time Limits, Ebley Wharf Car Park Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

1. Background

- 1.1 The main visitors' car park at Ebley Mill has 52 spaces and is operated by a security barrier with a code. This is not linked to the Mill and users have to be given the code on request to exit the car park or call at reception if there are any problems with the barrier during office hours. The car park has been used in the evenings and weekends by a neighbouring commercial business subject to a licence since 2012, but this has now been terminated by the company.
- 1.2 The council received a request from the Greenaways Residents' Association to use the Ebley Mill visitors' car park to ease parking problems on its estate, towards the end of the pandemic. It was deemed too early to establish what the future demand for the car park would be at that time.
- 1.3 Subsequently further requests were received and a potential question submitted to Council as Gloucestershire County Council Highways considered the implementation of double yellow lines along Westward Road and the entrance to the Greenaways Estate. A resident on Westward Road and one of the businesses at Ebley Wharf have also requested the car park be opened up to use for local residents and customers. The car park is also used occasionally for canal events held nearby.
- 1.4 The County Council has finished its consultation and confirmed its decision to implement waiting restrictions on Greenaways, Ebley Wharf and Westward Road through a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). It is understood that the double yellow lines are likely to be in place by the end of March this year.
- 1.5 A planning application/ Listed Building Consent application has been submitted to change the use of the commercial buildings at Fifth Dimension to a residential use, potentially adding to car parking pressures (Planning Ref/; S22/2745/FUL) this application is under consideration.
- 1.6 Ward Councillors, the Town Council and County Councillor have all advocated for the use of the car park by local residents.
- 1.7 Since the pandemic the number of in-person visits to Ebley Mill has dropped significantly (>60%) as the public access and pay for services on-line and meetings are held virtually. Staff numbers have also dropped with hybrid working, the pressure on parking has reduced and it is anticipated that normal levels of demand can be contained within the staff car park for the foreseeable future, with the visitors/public car park still available for overflow.
- 1.8 There is accessible and visitor parking (15 spaces) directly outside of Ebley Mill which will continue to provide free, convenient parking for drop-in visits.
- 1.9 This report was presented to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 7 March 2024. The Committee agreed to recommend to Council as per the decision box.

2. Main Points

- 2.1 In response to the requests for residents parking and the reduced use of the car park, officers have considered providing residents permits as an option but this would be onerous to administer, would have to be on a 'first come/first served' basis and there is benefit to allowing wider use of the car park in terms of opening it up for canal visitors, customers of the businesses on Ebley Wharf and the wider public who may also need parking but have not yet approached the council.
- 2.2 The most efficient way to manage car park use, encourage 'turnover' of spaces and enforce time limits is through charging and it is therefore proposed that the car park is changed to a charging public car park. The proposed charges are set out in Appendix B

and match charges in Stroud Town Centre (short stay) car parks during office hours, but with a low charge outside of office hours (e.g. evenings and weekends). The limited stay and higher charges during office hours are aimed at ensuring turnover, as this is likely to be when demand is highest and this, along with overnight and weekend charges, also reflects the location of the car park and its ongoing importance to the council's main offices at Ebley Mill, where it may still be required as overflow parking.

- 2.3 Visitors to Ebley Mill will be signposted to park outside the front of the Mill (which will remain free of charge) and this is the most convenient area for the public to park and for the majority of the time has sufficient spaces to accommodate demand for drop-in visits. Additional demand can still be met by the visitors' car park (e.g. for meetings at the Mill) and free parking can be provided e.g. via a tablet in Ebley Mill reception for those visiting the Mill, as required.
- 2.4 Staff and at least one resident have also requested Electric Vehicle (EV) charging which has been included in the costs. The most significant element of this is bringing upgraded cabling from the rear of the Mill round to the car park. Any rollout of EV chargers will reflect the infrastructure being introduced to car parks throughout the district and for which Council has already allocated capital.
- 2.5 Lastly, there is also an opportunity to pilot contactless payments as well as cash and MiPermit options with a new Pay and Display machine, this offers more choice, only adds a capital cost of £600 to the scheme and is familiar to most drivers.

3. Estimated Costs

3.1 Table 1

Capital	Contactless option £
Machine Costs	5,554
Installation P&D (contactless)	630
Signage	1,000
Works/Lining	2,000
EV Charger heads * 22KW 4 no. charging points	9,000
Electricity supply for EV chargers	20,000
Total	£38,000
Revenue Costs	Per annum £
Machine maintenance, MiPermit fees, cash collections, tickets, sundries	2,000
Maintenance (increase from current costs)	500

Contactless fees range from 8p to 11p per transaction, therefore, revenue costs would also include these transaction costs , but it is difficult to estimate gross and net revenue income with demand unknown at present.

4. Proposed Charges and Time limits

- 4.1 These can be seen at Appendix B to this report and are in-line with charges proposed for Stroud Town Centre. The aim of the charges is to provide residents parking but limit long-

stay to overnight and weekends for non- season ticket holders. Season ticket numbers will also be limited to a maximum of 50% of spaces.

- 4.2 The number of general spaces will reduce from 52 spaces to approx. 42 spaces to allow for wider spaces for EV charging and accessible & parent/child spaces.

5. Funding

- 5.1 Costs can be met from within existing budgets but it is not possible to estimate demand, with no similar car parks to compare to in terms of size, location and charges. As the County Council will be proceeding with parking restrictions this will force some car owners to find parking elsewhere and some Greenaways residents have confirmed that they are willing to pay for permits to use this car park.
- 5.2 Enforcement would be through the current establishment of Car Park Enforcement Officers. No increase in staffing is proposed.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 It is recommended that the underused visitors car park is used more productively by changing it to a charging public car park supporting the Council Plan Objective ER1 Economic Recovery – Support our High Streets and Businesses) as well as CW3 (Strengthen Local Democracy). Demand from Ebley Mill has changed over time and the local community and stakeholders have asked the council to respond to these changes and make the car park more accessible to the local community.
- 6.2 The car park also provides an opportunity to install EV chargers which can be used by the public without compromising the security of the staff car park. The use of contactless payments will also be monitored to inform future procurement of pay and display equipment.
- 6.3 The provision of a public car park will increase capital and revenue costs to the council. It is important to recoup these costs and to manage the use and demand for the car park (which may also change in the future) through charges; to balance the demands for residents parking with the need to provide sufficient parking for visitors, staff and tenants at Ebley Mill. The use of the car park will, therefore, be kept under review and season tickets will be limited to ensure the availability of short-stay spaces.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial Implications

Revenue and capital costs of implementation are clearly shown in Section 3.1.

The capital cost of installation will be likely be contained within existing maintenance budgets, with any additional cost being funded being funded from income created by parking revenue.

The ongoing maintenance and any future capital works relating to the car park will be met through the income from the parking tariff. Future income is difficult to estimate at this early stage and will be reported to this Committee through the budget monitoring process.

Andrew Cummings, Strategic Director of Resources
Tel: 01453 754115 Email: andrew.cummings@stroud.gov.uk

7.2 Legal Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Under section 32 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, a local authority may provide off street parking places.
- If the proposed changes set out within this report are approved, the statutory consultation, as required by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, with Gloucestershire County Council, the Chief Officer of Police and other stakeholders, will be required. There are notification and publicity requirements in relation to new Orders relating to off street parking places.
- Responses received as part of the consultation period should be carefully assessed prior to any further action to amend the existing It is proposed that the existing Stroud District Council (Off Street Parking Places) (Consolidation) Order 2010 ('the Order').
- Any amendments to the existing Order, following the consultation period and compliance with the notification and publicity requirements, will be made in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
- There may be insurance implications if the Council's car park is available to members of the public for a charge.
- There may be additional, including legal, resource required for new, or updating existing, contractual arrangements in relation to EV charging points or parking enforcement arrangements.

One Legal

Tel: 01684 272012 Email: legalservices@onelegal.org.uk

7.3 Equality Implications

An EIA has been carried out by officers in relation to the decision made in this report and due regard will be given to any implications identified in it.

7.4 Environmental Implications

The introduction of Electric Vehicle Charging Points supports the rollout in the council's public car parks across the district and has the potential to contribute towards saving the amount of carbon being released in the district each year. Whilst use is expected to be low in the early years, a strong network of charge points will offer surety of supply; an essential step for residents that don't have access to their own electricity supply via off street parking. A network of charge points also allows vehicle 'top up' in market town and other locations, increasing confidence and reducing range anxiety.