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| Board/Committee: | Full Council |
| Date of meeting: | 19th May 2021 |
| Title: | Park and Float Trial |
| Author: | Head of Streetscene/Head of Planning & Regeneration & Assistant to the Chief Executive |
| Status: | FOR DECISION |

Purpose

This report sets out details of a proposed 6 month trial for an enhanced Park and Float joint car parking/ferry ticketing initiative and seeks approval for an amendment to the Council's current Fees & Charges to facilitate this.

Recommendation

That the Council approves:-

- i) the necessary amendments to the Council's current Fees and Charges to facilitate an enhanced Park and Float joint car parking / ferry ticketing initiative with the Gosport Ferry Ltd for a 6 month trial period commencing in June 2021.**
- ii) a contracts waiver in order to procure the services of MiPermit to enable the paperless ticketing systems to be amended to facilitate the trial.**
- iii) delegated authority to the Head of Streetscene to cease the Trial and amend back to the current Monthly only (£102) Park and Float ticket if the 2-monthly reviews show it not to be successful.**

1.0 Background

1.1 The Borough Council currently works in conjunction with Gosport Ferry Ltd (GFL) to provide combined parking and ferry tickets which are valid for one calendar month. The current Park and Float permit is valid in all long-stay car parks in Gosport (with the exception of the Mumby Road bus station car park and with date restrictions applying in the No. 2 Battery East car park). The cost of the existing Park and Float monthly ticket is £102.00. Currently tickets are available from the Gosport Ferry ticket office.

1.2 During the Covid-19 Pandemic, patronage on the Gosport Ferry dropped significantly and GFL approached the Borough Council to see if any options were available to enhance and promote the existing Park and Float scheme as restrictions were lifted. As with general ferry ticket sales, the sale of the current Park and Float ticket has also fallen sharply.

1.3 It is considered that by encouraging increased usage of the Park and Float facility in Gosport that there will be less need for commuters and other travellers to drive around the harbour, through Fareham (and Air Quality

Management Areas) to Portsmouth, therefore helping to reduce congestion on routes out of the Borough and improving air quality.

1.4 With more people visiting/parking within the Gosport town centre area and travelling across the harbour by ferry there is also potential for more visits and spending within the High Street. This fits well with the re-opening of the High Street, encouraging people to “Go Local” and High Street Heritage Action Zone initiatives and general focus on the town centre and waterfront area as part of Gosport’s Recovery and wider regeneration

1.5 The proposed trial also aligns well with the emerging proposals as part of the Transforming Cities Fund to provide a modern, integrated public transport interchange.

2.0 **Proposed Enhanced Park and Float trial**

2.1 Following a series of meetings between GFL and officers of the Borough Council, Portsmouth City Council and Hampshire County Council, an enhanced ‘Park and Float’ proposal with associated promotion and signage has been put together. To facilitate this, it is proposed to amend the Borough Council’s Fees and Charges to enable a reduced price car parking and ferry ticket for a 6 month trial period.

2.2 During “normal” pre-Covid times GFL reports that an average of 40 monthly Park and Float tickets were sold. GFL report that in October 2020 just 9 Park and Float tickets were sold, reflecting a significant fall in Ferry patronage generally.

2.3 The existing single user Park and Float monthly ticket costs £102.00, with the income split between the Borough Council and GFL - £50 and £52 respectively.

2.4 Four types of ticket are proposed through the Trial to increase flexibility and therefore encourage a wider mix of users and overall increase take-up:-

- a reduced cost Monthly ticket for regular commuters
- a daily ticket for occasional users
- a family ticket and
- a Carnet (10 trip) ticket, offering flexibility in use

2.5 The costs / income split as suggested by GFL are set out here:-

- Monthly Ticket (single user) - £70.00 (£35.00 to GBC / £35.00 to GFL) – a reduction of £15 per ticket for GBC parking / £17 per ticket for GFL over the current arrangement. The proposed costs equate to approximately £1.13 per day for parking / £1.13 per day for the ferry if used 31 days per month. For comparison, the current charges

equate to approximately £1.61 per day for parking / £1.68 for the ferry if used 31 days per month

- Daily Ticket (single user) - £7.00 (£3.50 to GBC / £3.50 to GFL) - a reduction of £2.50 per ticket for GBC parking / £0.30 per standard open ended return ticket for GFL.
- Family Ticket (2 adults and up to 3 children) - £9.90 (£3.00 to GBC / £6.90 to GFL) - a reduction of £3.00 per ticket for GBC parking / £4.10 per Family Saver Ticket for GFL.

2.6 The initial scope of the Trial focused around the promotion of Monthly, Daily and Family tickets, however, more recent discussions have also led to the consideration of a “Carnet” 10 day ticket for the Trial. This type of ticket would give flexibility in use in that it would not be time-limited, be less of an initial financial outlay for the user than a monthly ticket and give savings to the users over buying multiples of daily tickets. This type of ticket may be of particular interest to those who work flexibly, and use the ferry on a semi-regular basis. The proposed cost / income split for this ticket type as suggested by GFL is as follows for a Carnet ticket (single user)

- £40.00 (£20 to GBC / 20 to GFL) This equates to £2.00 per day for parking / £2.00 per day for the ferry for 10 days use

2.7 In order to ensure legibility and ease of understanding of the parking arrangements, it is proposed that Walpole Park long-stay car park be used as the sole car park where Park and Float tickets would be valid.

2.8 With regards to projected up-take of the proposed scheme, an accurate assessment of numbers and the associated financial impact for GBC is extremely difficult to estimate at the current time as the restrictions are lifted and we evolve into a new business as usual. Revenue and costs per vehicle are known and, to assist, GFL have prepared some figures on projected impact on parking revenue.

2.9 It is worth noting that the figures of projected users provided by GFL could be optimistic as they are linked to increased use by Military and BAE staff (through the Naval base potentially restricting parking on site within the Dockyard) and Gunwharf encouraging staff to use the Park and Float which is outside both GBC and GFL’s control. Furthermore, it is also unknown how much full-price parking would be lost to motorists swapping to the discounted scheme.

2.10 There is the possibility that revenue could reduce from what would normally be achieved if existing car park users switch from paying standard GBC car park charges or there is no increase in uptake of the Park and Float ticket. However, the purpose of the Trial which will be supported by new signage and the subject of wider marketing campaign linked to the Council’s existing

initiatives is to introduce wider and more flexible transport choice and as such new users, and, based on GFL's projections, overall income to GBC would likely increase.

2.11 Recognising that bus travel is also a vital part of the cross harbour link and that we should be encouraging use public transport for the reasons set out above, First Bus have been party to the discussions and have agreed to provide free travel between Walpole Car Park and the interchange as part of the initial Trial for customers not wishing or able to make the short walk to the interchange.

2.12 The purpose of the Trial is, of course, to try these arrangements out and regular monitoring of ferry and bus use and income for all parties will be critical in understanding the financial implications and travel choices being made. It is proposed that reports be provided by all parties every two months throughout the trial to keep things under review and highlight any areas of concern or unintended consequences that need to be addressed.

2.13 Based on GFL's projections, the following income per month for the Borough Council and GFL is anticipated (a mixture of Monthly, Daily and Family ticket sales):-

Low Case = £5,275 per month to GBC / £5,763 to GFL (total £11,038)
based on 90 monthly permits + 625 daily tickets (500 single / 125 family)

Mid Case = £8,088 per month to GBC / £8,819 to GFL (total £16,907)
based on 140 monthly permits + 938 daily tickets (750 single / 188 family)

Upper Case = £13,700 per month to GBC / £14,675 to GFL (total £28,375)
based on 270 monthly permits + 1,250 daily tickets (1000 single / 250 family)

2.14 The above projections do not include the "Carnet" ticket option. This additional ticket type may alter the overall ratio of ticket types sold / income generated over the original projections. However, at this stage it is not possible to make any firm assumptions, and regular reviews throughout the trial period will highlight patterns of ticket type sales and income generation.

2.15 In order to provide a comparison, GFL detail Pre-Covid average sales of 40 Park and Float tickets per month. This figure would have generated an income of £2,000 per month for GBC and an income of £2,080 for GFL (total 4,080).

2.16 There are clear benefits from the parties working together collaboratively to deliver more sustainable travel choices, including, importantly, a positive contribution towards our climate change aims and objectives. If successful, there would also be a likely increase in footfall within Gosport's Town Centre area which will be of benefit to businesses located here.

3.0 Initial / Start-up costs

- 3.1** Administration costs incurred by MiPermit to amend their website/app would be four day's administrative work @ £250 per day, therefore, a total of £1,000 +VAT. A scanner to be used by GFL in order to validate tickets would ordinarily cost £800 but MiPermit have agreed to supply one free of charge.
- 3.2** There is a requirement of the Council to agree a Waiver in respect of using MiPermit to administer the scheme. This is necessary as the company were instructed by the Council to manage paperless parking in 2015. The Council is unable to locate the details of the exercise that was carried out to enable the original instruction to MiPermit so a waiver is required to acknowledge the possibility that this was either not carried out, or was not compliant with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, and also that the Council wishes to vary the scope of MiPermit's existing instruction to include the necessary work to support the park and float initiative. The present Streetscene Enforcement Manager has begun a fresh procurement exercise for a new contract with a cashless parking solution provider. In the meantime, a contract waiver should acknowledge that it is logistically impractical to use any other method for payment, and impossible to appoint any other provider within the set time-scales for the Trial.
- 3.3** The costs of directional signage for the scheme to the Walpole Park car park will be dependent on the size and number of signs deployed. Options for directional "AA" type signage to the Walpole Park car park are currently being investigated by Hampshire County Council, as the Local Highway Authority, for a number of key highway routes. It is expected that HCC will cover the costs of such signage as their contribution towards the Trial, however, this has yet to be confirmed.
- 3.4** Dedicated signage will be displayed within Walpole car park to advertise the tickets and the associated costs to users, which could also detail routes on foot between the car park and ferry. Such signage would be instructed / undertaken by GBC Streetscene.
- 4.0** **On-going costs**
- 4.1** As payment would be via MiPermit, the present software provider for paperless parking, the Council would be liable for an administrative cost of 10p per transaction for cashless daily and family tickets / £1.00 per digital 10 Trip Carnet and Season ticket sale.
- 4.2** Based on the Low/Mid/Upper GFL projections of monthly permits, this would cost GBC £90, £140 and £270 per month respectively. Additionally, based on the same projections for daily/family trips, this would cost GBC £75, £113 and £150 per month. Therefore, total projected monthly costs for GBC for MiPermit fees would be £165, £253 and £420.
- 4.3** Additionally, GBC is charged banking/credit card fees. These vary between providers but an average fee of about 1% can be assumed. Based again on

the GFL projection of total monthly revenue (GBC + GFL income) of £11,038, £16,907 and £28,375, these fees would be £110, £169 and £284 respectively.

- 4.4** The totals of MiPermit fees and transaction fees based on the GFL low/med/high projections would be £275, £532 and £704 respectively.

5.0 Car park capacity

- 5.1** For the Walpole Park car park, based on averages, there were around 230 paying visits per day prior to Lockdown. It can be assumed the vast majority were for the working day with a small percentage (estimated 25%) for short-stay. This equates to daytime occupancy of around 180 bays. GBC staff permits number roughly 100-200, so, after Lockdown and when the Town Hall is open, along with Long Stay permits, another 150 bays could be occupied. In August 2019, we also sold 34 park and float permits. This totals approximately 350 occupied bays. The present usage is far below this level due to Covid with a significant number of people working from home and who may continue to do so as part of more flexible working arrangements.

- 5.2** There are 571 parking spaces in Walpole Park, with the Local Test Site (LTS) and pods for homeless persons currently occupying 145, giving a total of 426 useable bays currently. It is believed the LTS will be in-situ for at least another six months. The number of pods will continue to reduce as alternative accommodation is identified but some are likely to remain during the Trial period.

- 5.3** Given the above, demand for spaces within Walpole car park will need to be carefully monitored GFL have been made aware of this and the possibility that sales of Park & Float tickets may need to be capped. Initially, the car park would have ample capacity, and adequate for what we consider would be a gradual take-up. It is not proposed to include any other town centre car parks during the Trial but options could be looked at afterwards linked to the development of the Borough Council's Car Parking Strategy.

6.0 Marketing / Publicity

- 6.1** The Borough Council's Marketing and Communications Officer is working pro-actively with GFL's Marketing team regarding opportunities for publicity on GFL and GBC's websites and Social medial platforms, and is currently exploring options that do not have an associated cost.

- 6.2** It is considered that effective marketing and publicity will be an important determining factor of the success of the scheme with clear linkages to relevant areas of the Borough Council's website (e.g. Sustainable Travel, Streetscene and the High Street "Go Local" pages) and the Discover Gosport website being put in place.

- 6.3** Park & Float promotional messages will be included in relevant business bulletins, press releases and publications (and Coastline if publication dates are compatible).

6.4 Additional paid social media campaigns *could* be explored with Discover Gosport / Tourist Information and also specific Park and Float lamppost banners. Such additional items would have an associated cost, which at this stage have not been costed.

6.5 In order to increase the opportunity to influence more sustainable travel choices GBC have also approached GFL to seek the removal of the existing additional bicycle carriage fees on the ferry as part of the Trial, which could be included within any marketing and promotional materials in order to attract additional passengers. Unfortunately at the present time GFL do not wish to take this suggestion further, however GBC would be keen to revisit this suggestion at a later time, as it is considered key to the overall promotion of sustainable transport choices.

7.0 Use of Buses:-

7.1 First Bus have indicated their support for the trial and have agreed to allowing holders of Park and Float tickets (e.g. single users and also those travelling on a family ticket) to travel free between the Walpole Park car park and the interchange.

7.2 Passengers using the one stop 'hop' will need to show the driver their virtual ticket in order to validate their purchase and entitlement to ride. During the trial, validation by the bus driver would need to be done manually, however, should the trial be successful and the Park and Float scheme continue, the means of validating tickets on the buses may need to be considered further.

7.3 The one stop hop will be subject to a review every two months. First Bus have indicated that they would continue allowing free travel for the remainder of the pilot but have flagged that they may request consideration be given to financial compensation if the Park and Float scheme continues after the pilot period is over and usage/income is detrimentally impacted from bus passengers choosing to travel by car to take advantage of the park and float initiative.

8.0 Monitoring

8.1 The purpose of the trial is to ascertain whether sustainable transport choice and behaviours can be positively influenced by amended pricing and is a first, exploratory step, linked to the wider work being undertaken under the Transforming Cities Fund banner with regards single ticketing arrangements to encompass all modes of transport.

8.2 It is not anticipated that there will be any lost income from GBC's normal car parking income, both income and usage will be carefully monitored and

customer feedback sought to help inform future decisions on whether to continue/amend the scheme.

8.3 It will be important to understand if the Trial has influenced directional journeys and travel choices and attracted new ferry travellers but also whether this has diverted travel away from other sustainable modes (e.g. if people are switching from using the bus or cycling in order to use the scheme).

8.4 A further report will be presented following the trial reviewing the findings and advising on future action.

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| Financial Services comments: | Contained within the report |
| Legal Services comments: | Contained within the report |
| Equality and Diversity: | Please see attached Equality Impact Assessment |
| Climate Change implications: | <p>Based on GFL usage projections, potential direct emissions reductions are likely to be ~0.2% to 1% of current transport emissions in Gosport. These savings may be reduced or cancelled out by induced travel and modal shifts; monitoring during the trial can evaluate these effects. There are possible larger indirect emissions reductions from overall reduction of travel to Portsmouth due to the opportunity to promote Gosport High Street, but these are very hard to quantify. If GFL was to go out of business, the increase in car trips between Gosport and Portsmouth would be significant with the potential to increase emissions by ~10% of current transport emissions in Gosport.</p> <p>There is potential to induce travel between Gosport and Portsmouth, and modal shift from public transport to car for journeys to the ferry terminal. However no definite projections can be given. This will be relevant to greenhouse gas emissions but possibly not so relevant for air quality and congestion given likely routes of additional car journeys.</p> |
| Crime and Disorder: | None |
| Service Improvement Plan implications: | If successful the proposed enhanced Park and Float scheme will increase the use of the |

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| | Gosport Ferry, a key Public Transport link between Gosport and Portsmouth, and potential increase footfall within the High Street. |
| Corporate Plan: | <p>With regards to Developing the economy and improving infrastructure the enhanced Park and Float scheme will assist in improving transport to / from the Borough and contribute to the regeneration objectives focussed on the waterfront and town centre area.</p> <p>Increased use of the Gosport Ferry as a key public transport link will build upon the Borough Council's aspirations for the regeneration of the area and also align well with the proposed improvements to the Transport Interchange through the Transforming Cities Fund scheme.</p> <p>If successful the scheme could generate additional income for the Borough Council</p> |
| Risk Assessment: | <p>There is an element of financial risk with the trial but the limited time period and ongoing monitoring are considered to be adequate management.</p> <p>It is proposed that the Trial would be up and running from the beginning of June in order to coincide with the opening of the High Street, the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions and people returning to work and normal activities generally.</p> <p>There is a risk that if the Trial is not started as planned that the influencing of travel choices will be diminished as people would more likely revert to Pre-Covid habits / travel choices.</p> |
| Background Papers: | None |
| Appendices: | Park and Float Financial Projections summary |
| Report Author/Lead Officer: | Wayne Voller/Andrew Broster |