

PROPOSED INTRODUCTION OF CAR PARKING CHARGES AT LICKEY HILL COUNTRY PARK

Questions and Answers from online Webinar Session – 19th August 2025

Q) Where are you spending £261k within the park?

A) The annual cost of maintaining the park is £261k excluding staffing costs. The figure includes grounds maintenance work across the park but excludes any improvement works.

Q) How much money do you think these changes will generate?

A) The scheme is projected to generate £330k gross income per annum.

Q) How are the proposed parking charges index linked for future increases, inflation etc.?

A) The proposed scheme is not index linked for future/inflationary increases; however the scheme may be subject to Fees & Charges increases in future.

Q) Are card payments now possible, it wasn't sorted at Cannon Hill, or is it?

A) The intention is to retrofit the machines at Cannon Hill Park with card payment options once the Lickey Hills scheme is in place. In addition to card/cash payments, RingGo will be utilised for the scheme which offers payment by app and phone.

Q) Resident survey results are they available - can they be published?

A) Upon completion of the consultation BeHeard will be updated with the results via the "We Asked, You Said, We Did" page. An objection report listing the objections received (under common headings) will be submitted for consideration.

In addition, a report will be presented to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport with the outcomes of the consultations (including an analysis and breakdown of the survey questions) for consideration and final decision. The report will be publicly available via the Council's CMIS (Council Management Information System).

Q) Displacement parking at hotspots? what is being done?

A) We are mindful of the impact of potential displacement parking. Subject to the outcome of this consultation, a separate consultation will take place for proposed parking restrictions. Parking restrictions are proposed in two phases – the first phase will focus on existing displacement parking hotspots, and we aim to have these in place prior to implementation; the second phase of restrictions will follow post-implementation and will be based on resident feedback. The consultation will be triggered by the advertisement of an experimental Traffic Regulation Order and will run for 4 weeks (dates TBD).

Q) How will these parking restrictions be managed?

A) A proposal has been put forward to Worcestershire County Council for BCC to fund enforcement officer time to manage/enforce the parking restrictions. Subject to outcome of this consultation, a procurement process will be completed to appoint an operator to manage the scheme and enforce the car parks.

Q) How can you introduce parking restrictions on Worcestershire council roads without their permission? Do you have authority to paint yellow lines?

A) In their capacity as the respective traffic authority, we are working in partnership with colleagues from Worcestershire County Council Highways Team to identify roads and progress the required papers for proposed parking restrictions. Any associated costs will be captured within the project budget.

Q) Who is the cabinet member who considers this consultation?

A) The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor Majid Mahmood, will consider the consultation findings and make the final decision.

Q) If and when the parking charges are implemented why have you not made the same arrangements to have Monument Lane and surrounding roads to have proper parking restrictions?

A) Subject to the outcome of this consultation, a separate consultation will take place for any proposed parking restrictions. Parking restrictions are proposed in two phases – the first phase will focus on existing displacement parking hotspots, and we aim to have these in place prior to implementation; the second phase of restrictions will follow post-implementation and will be based on resident feedback. The consultation will be triggered by the advertisement of an experimental Traffic Regulation Order and will run

for 4 weeks (dates TBD). The roads identified for the first phase of restrictions are Beacon Lane, Monument Lane, Rose Hill (section of), Twatling Road (section of).

Q) Please tell us what the costs will be for the proposed hardware and monitoring/management by the 3rd party for the parking fees

A) The procurement process is subject to the outcome of the consultation. Therefore discussions with the third party operator regarding costs for hardware/monitoring/management are yet to be confirmed and any details concerning costs are considered commercially sensitive.

Q) Why are you not charging for overnight parking ? This is when all the ASB takes place. The car that was set alight three weeks ago was at 2.45 am not 2.45 pm. The amount of ASB when the car park is not locked is out of control. The police are either not willing or not able to attend when there is trouble. The drug taking etc takes place at night in the car park. Can you ensure that there is some control over the Beacon Hill car park?

A) Parks are not kept open overnight for obvious reasons. We have a contract with a gate locking contractor who should be locking the gates to the park as close to the park closing time as possible. This has not been happening recently however, so the contractor has been issued with a Notification of Concern and the position monitored to ensure the contractor completes what is been asked of them.

We work closely with West Mercia Police to manage the ASB issue and the police attend to reports of ASB. They have queried the charging time (up to 6pm) and have suggested the charging time for Beacon Hill car park is extended to mirror the park's gate locking. The suggestion is currently being considered.

Q) Will you now need to pay business rates?

A) As Lickey Hills Country Park sits within Worcestershire, Bromsgrove Business Rates Team have been contacted for assistance in securing confirmation of the business rates valuation for this park. However, Bromsgrove will only complete the request to the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) once the charging scheme is implemented. The matter has been queried with BCC's Business Rates Team who have advised that given the nil value ruling for the Birmingham's parks programme is highly unlikely that any rates will be payable for Lickey Hills Country Park. This is based on advice from the Valuation Office Agency which has been provided to the Rating Teams within the two Local Authorities.

Q) Where has £330k come from and how have you come to this number? Residents will not pay to walk their dog or for their own health and wellbeing. It should be free at the point

of entry. There are no real facilities available to the public in these locations so how can you justify charging residents for a poor service?

- A)** Visitor number projections have been developed collaboratively with park managers, using a combination of local observational data and historical usage patterns. These have been further validated with test data from the previous parking charge trial at Sutton Park (Sundays and Bank Holidays up to 2019) and benchmarked against existing paid parking data from Cannon Hill Park.

The projected financial modelling for the scheme considers seasonal attendance and a possible 10% decrease in visitor numbers. It is felt the combination of reduced parking rates and effective parking restrictions (across two phases) will help minimise reduced car park usage.

Experience from the Cannon Hill car parking project has shown no obvious decrease in visitor numbers as result of the implementation of charging, however a conservative approach to forecasting has been taken noting the profile of visitors to the park, and the parks' offerings, are different.

The financial modelling has been cross-referenced with visitor footfall data (a platform which tracks mobile phones) and the data tallies.

Surplus income from the scheme, once operational costs have been considered, will be reinvested into the park to improve biodiversity, natural and built infrastructure (including car parks and carriageways). In addition a new play area is proposed and a new operator for the café is being sought.

- Q)** What are BCC's policy to remove Travellers when they take up residence in the Beacon Hill car park once they are aware it is left open? I know Cofton have had problems with this happening
- A)** Birmingham City Council makes every effort to protect its land from unauthorised access while making sure that access is allowed by all. BCC will follow its current guidance when faces an unauthorized access by Travellers. Once notified of a traveller incursion, the travellers are issued a 7 days' notice to vacate the site by the Police.
- Q)** Have you considered an initial lower charge for the first hour to cater for dog walkers who otherwise might park on the road?
- A)** The proposals within this consultation consider the feedback from the informal consultation and include reduced parking rates e.g. £1 per hour for up to 4 hours, in addition to a 30 minute grace period. The chargeable period (9am to 6pm) means access to the park remains free outside the chargeable hours.

Q) What are the operating costs? How many years before we see improvements?

A) The operating costs will include P&D machine monitoring and maintenance, signage update costs, a sinking fund (to cover repairs) and third party operator fees. In addition a provisional sum has been allowed for to cover business rates (if the decision is made that they apply – a decision will only be made once the scheme is implemented). A two year borrowing period will mean the borrowing is repaid by April 2028, however it is hoped improvements to the site will be completed before this date using surplus income from the scheme.

Q) When does the consultation finish?

A) The consultation will end on 29th August 2025. An objections report will then be submitted for consideration and a report detailing the findings of the consultation shared with the Cabinet Member for final decision.

Q) Are you saying that surplus income will be ring fenced for park upgrades?

A) All surplus revenues, once operational costs have been considered, will be reinvested into the park to enhance biodiversity and improve the overall visitor experience.

Q) How many parking officers will police these no parking zones? Are you implying that our Bromsgrove/Worcestershire CEOs police the no parking zone? Are you not supplying the enforcement officers as Bromsgrove don't have enough CEOs to cover what we already expect of them never mind adding their workload?

A) A proposal has been put forward to Worcestershire County Council for BCC to fund enforcement officer time to manage/enforce the parking restrictions. We are awaiting a decision, and the matter will be pursued subject to the outcome of this consultation.

Q) What will be the timeframe from start to finish?

A) Subject to the outcome of this consultation and the required governance and procurement processes, the proposed charging scheme will be implemented around Christmas/New Year.

Q) Your comparison of other local authority that charge is not a comparison. It is more for iconic parks, stately manners and top quality facilities. The Councils you list offer free car parking to more similar parks and open spaces to Lickey Hills.

A) The comparison of local authorities that charge for parking (within the consultation pack) is of similar sized and Country Parks.

- Q)** You want to introduce car parking charges at Lickey Hills yet most of the park such as Duck Pond at municipal golf course is so dilapidated as is Warren Lane. Potholes leading to Visitor Centre has not been maintained for years. These should be maintained before introducing charges to local residents
- A)** The operational budget for the park is not sufficient enough to maintain the site to the standard visitors expect. However, the surplus revenue generated from the proposed car parking charges can be used to make these much needed improvements.