
Sheldon Country Park – proposed parking charges consultation pack



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1. Introduction

In order to provide an income stream to both protect services and facilities within parks, as well as improving parks where we can, BCC is proposing the introduction of parking charges at selected parks.

The proposed scheme at Sheldon Country Park will result in a number of key benefits, namely:

- Improve accessibility to the park e.g. installation of formal disabled parking bays (pre-implementation)
- Manage the impact of displacement parking for residents who live in close proximity to the park through parking restrictions (pre- and post-implementation)
- Improve the car park surfaces (using car park revenue).

Surplus revenue from the proposed scheme will be used to:

- Fund investment opportunities to improve the park e.g. renewable energy projects, improvements in biodiversity
- Provide reinvestment funds for parks infrastructure
- Make improvements to the park and overall visitor experience e.g. pothole and fence repairs.

The decision to explore parking charges is not something the council has done lightly – in fact we've held off whilst many other councils throughout the country have introduced charging (see appendix B). As such, BCC is one of the last local authorities in the country to introduce charging on a daily basis and any surplus income generated will be reinvested into the respective park to improve infrastructure and maintain the park to the standards visitors expect. Crucially, access to Sheldon Country Park remains free – **the charges are not to use the park** but only to park a vehicle.

Birmingham City Council is facing an increasingly challenging budget position. As part of the City Council budget for 2025/26, the Parks Service has been asked to make a significant contribution to the saving. To mitigate the impact of the budget position, we are looking for visitors to contribute to the ongoing upkeep of (and future improvements to) Sheldon Country Park.

Sheldon Country Park is one of 3 parks included in the proposals; the other parks within programme are:

- Lickey Hills Country Park
- Sutton Park.

2. Why Sheldon Country Park?

Sheldon Country Park is a popular leisure destination, attracting visitors from the local area and further afield who come to the Old Rectory Farm or to see the aeroplanes from the airport viewing area. The park has proved so popular in fact that the existing car park area has recently been extended to accommodate visitors.

The Parks Ranger Service is also based at Old Rectory Farm, a 17th Century dairy farm based at the main entrance to the park., which has been fully restored and operates as a demonstration farm, showing traditional methods of farming.

The annual expenditure required for the upkeep and maintenance of the 3 parks within the proposals is significant however – approximately £1.75 million per annum. The expenditure required to maintain Sheldon Country Park alone each year is approximately £500k, but it should be noted this annual expenditure offers no scope for improvements within the park. The revenue generated from the proposed parking scheme will contribute to the ongoing upkeep and maintenance of Sheldon Country Park and provide scope for future improvements to the park.

It is appreciated the introduction of parking charges is often controversial and unpopular as users are asked to pay for something that has previously been free. However, the projected income from parking charges still falls short of the cost of maintaining the 3 parks in question and therefore it is deemed reasonable to ask park users to contribute financially to the upkeep and maintenance of these parks. Despite the introduction of parking charges, there will still be a requirement for financial support from the Council's General Fund to maintain and manage these parks.

Parking charges across destination sites throughout the UK has become common practice and in the vast majority of cases parking charges for these sites have been in place for several years. Introducing charges on Birmingham's sites will be in line with national best practice to offset the cost of maintaining these destination sites.

From 2028-29 onwards, it is estimated the proposed parking schemes will contribute:

- Sheldon Country Park – £48k per annum gross
- Lickey Hills Country Park – £330k per annum gross
- Sutton Park – £683k per annum gross.

3. Sheldon Country Park – background

Sheldon Country Park covers an area of just over 300 acres and is a valuable local asset and leisure destination. The park is made up of open grassland, wetlands, old hedgerows and some mature woodland. The Old Rectory Farm is open to visitors throughout the year with free admission.

A section of the park is held in trust and as such work is underway to determine the extent and boundaries of trust land, in cooperation with BCC's Trust & Charities Committee.

4. Selected parks for the proposed introduction of parking charges

Cabinet approved the Cabinet Member Report for the introduction of car parking charges at Cannon Hill Park, in June 2017. The Full Business Case that accompanied the report drew reference to the further roll-out of the parking charges scheme to other parks on a scheme-by-scheme basis subject to a business case for each project.

The proposed roll out of parking charges for 3 schemes formed part of the budget proposals, which was approved by Council on 5th March 2024. Budgeted net income from parking charges is £381k in 2025-26 – this relates to 2.6% of the overall budget for parks in 2025-26.

This consultation is for the proposed parking scheme at Sheldon Country Park only (see Section 10, Traffic Restriction Orders, for details of further consultations). We therefore seek feedback from park visitors, nearby residents, businesses, stakeholders and ward members on the proposals which have been updated following feedback from the informal consultation.

This consultation is a legislative requirement and is triggered by the advertisement of the Parking Places Order to introduce parking charges. During this consultation, visitors, stakeholders and residents can lodge their objection to the proposals as indicated in the Notice of Intent (or via the BeHeard Online Survey link or the contact/consultation email inbox), citing the reason/s for their objection. An objection report listing the objections received will then be presented for consideration and final decision. No decision has therefore been made at this point.

5. Stakeholder consultation

Consultation with stakeholders will continue throughout the project. Below is the list of key stakeholders, businesses and groups within the park that the project team will be consulting with as part of the project.

- Friends of Sheldon Country Park
- St Giles church
- 1st Sheldon Scouts Group
- Hatchford Brook Waterside Care Group
- The Old Rectory Farm tea room
- RAFA Sheldon
- Residents of Ragley Drive
- Councillors Colin Green & Paul Tilsley (Sheldon)

6. Public consultation around the proposals

This formal stage of consultation begins on 1st August and will run for 4 weeks (until 29th August 2025).

We will be advertising the public consultation in the following ways:

- Posters in the park and visitor centre
- Social media
- Via local ward members.

As part of this informal consultation we will be seeking views on:

- The proposed parking charges
- Proposed pricing structure
- Proposed annual season ticket
- Proposed parking times.

Ways to register views regarding the proposals:

- BeHeard – the Council online survey system – (click the link below)

<https://www.birminghambeheard.org.uk/bcc/proposed-car-parking-charges-sheldon-country-park>

- Email sheldoncountryparkconsultation@birmingham.gov.uk

- Online public engagement session:

21st August, 6pm to 7.30pm

Microsoft Teams

[Please email the consultation mailbox for details of how to join the session]

7. Project scope

Car park resurfacing and extension works (in EcoGrid) was completed in July 2019 with added accessibility in the form of 9 disabled parking bays. This works was funded through Section 106 monies – area-specific compensation paid by property developers to BCC for loss of public open space and to improve the other public spaces in the area.

The proposed car park scheme does not include any plans to increase car parking land. We will, however, formalise the existing disabled parking spaces, and propose the introduction of enforceable No Waiting restrictions on Ragley Drive (carriageway access to the park).

Subject to the outcomes of this consultation and subsequent decision, the implementation of charging at Sheldon Country Park and ongoing management of car parking charges will remain the responsibility of Birmingham City Council.

8. Proposed pricing structure

The proposed chargeable hours will be from 9am – 6pm, 365 days of the year. The park will remain free to access outside of the chargeable hours.

Following feedback from the recent informal consultation, the proposed pricing structure we are consulting on is as follows:

Pricing Structure	Cost
Hourly rate (per hour, for up to 3 hours)	£0.75
All day (3 hours+)	£3.50
Season ticket (annual)	£52.00
Blue Badge holder **	Free

****Parking for visitors who display their Blue Badge will remain free in line with the Council's citywide policy on disabled parking.**

Parking for registered park volunteers will be free, via a volunteer annual season parking ticket issued by the Park Ranger Service.

9. Proposed payment methods

Pay and Display machines –

In order to reduce the impact on the natural environment the machines will be solar powered.

The machines will be a combination of coin and card and also contactless payments.



Pay by Mobile (RingGo) – There will also be an option to pay via your mobile phone.

A user-friendly RingGo app that can be downloaded which is well used citywide. Once individuals have registered, the app will store your previous parking location details making future payments a few clicks of a button.

The app also has the added functionality of enabling vehicle owners to extend their parking session remotely rather than returning to their vehicle.



There is a 5p transaction fee for parking via the RingGo app and via the RingGo landline. There is a 25p charge for each optional text reminder.

10. Traffic Restriction Orders (TROs) for roads surrounding the park

The project team is mindful of the potential impact of displacement parking on residents that live near the park. Following discussions with our BCC Highways colleagues, we propose the introduction of parking restrictions in two phases – pre- and post-implementation.

The first phase of parking restrictions (pre-implementation) will focus on existing parking ‘hot spots’ and junctions in line with BCC Highways’ determination of suitability. The second phase of parking restrictions will be explored using resident feedback received post-implementation.

Subject to the outcome of this consultation and subsequent decision, we will undertake a statutory consultation on the proposed restrictions, at which point any objections can be registered.

The consultations on proposed parking restrictions will be conducted separately from this consultation on the proposed parking charges, therefore.

It should be noted, the proposals for the charging scheme include No Waiting restrictions along Ragley Drive (carriageway to the park) and as such we seek your views on the proposed restrictions.

11. Enforcement

Birmingham City Council has procured a citywide contract with NSL for parking enforcement. The Parks Service successfully uses NSL for enforcement of the charging scheme (and surrounding sties) at another site and proposes to continue this arrangement for the scheme at Sheldon Country Park. Income from Penalty Charge Notices is retained by BCC; BCC pay for the cost of the deployment of NSL’s enforcement officers. For reference, Parks will receive the income from the car park charges and the net income from any Penalty Charge Notices will be retained by BCC Highways team as this helps to offset the cost of enforcement, with net surplus income from Penalty Charge Notices to be used for Highways related matters only in line with legislative requirements.



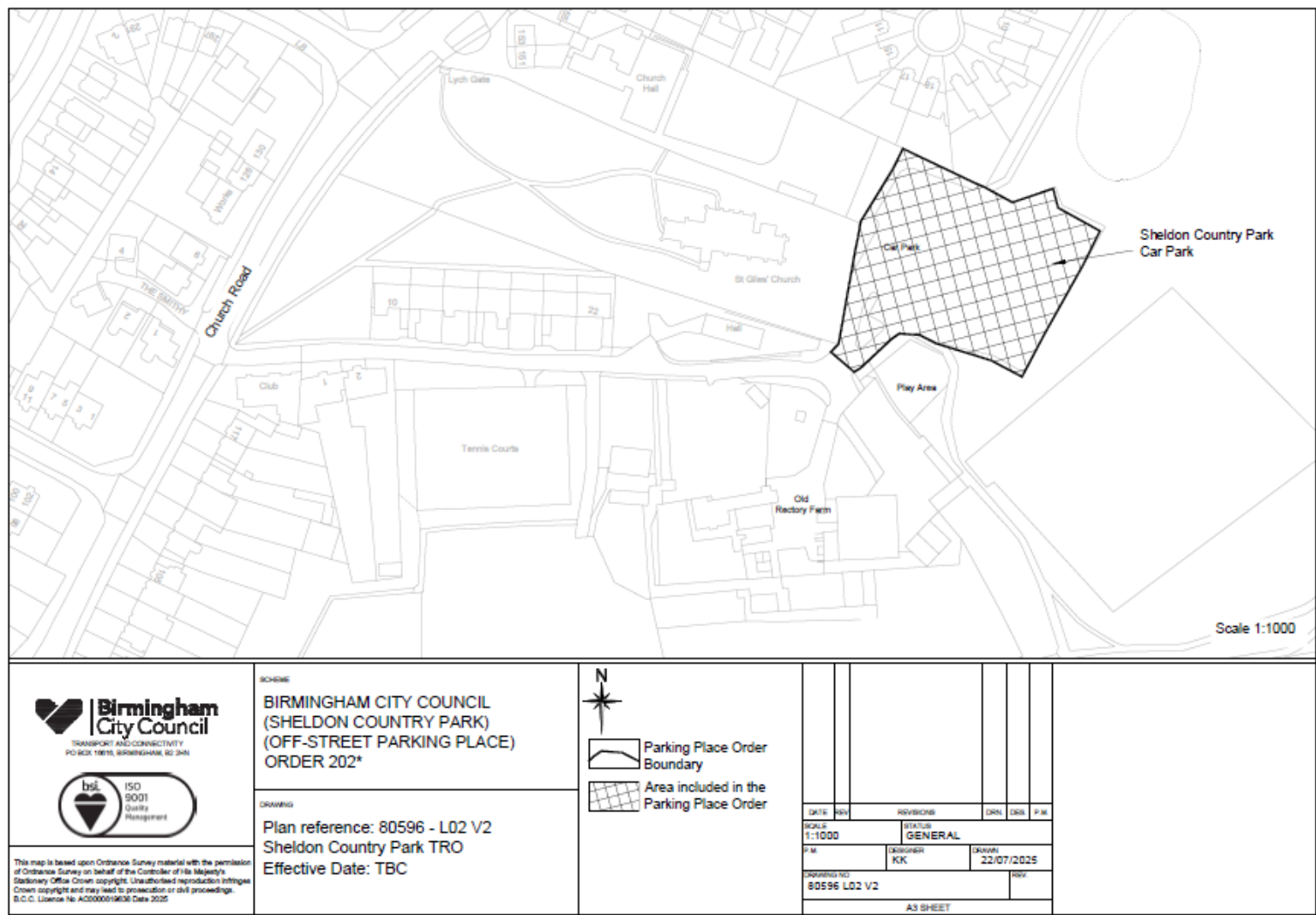
12. Next steps

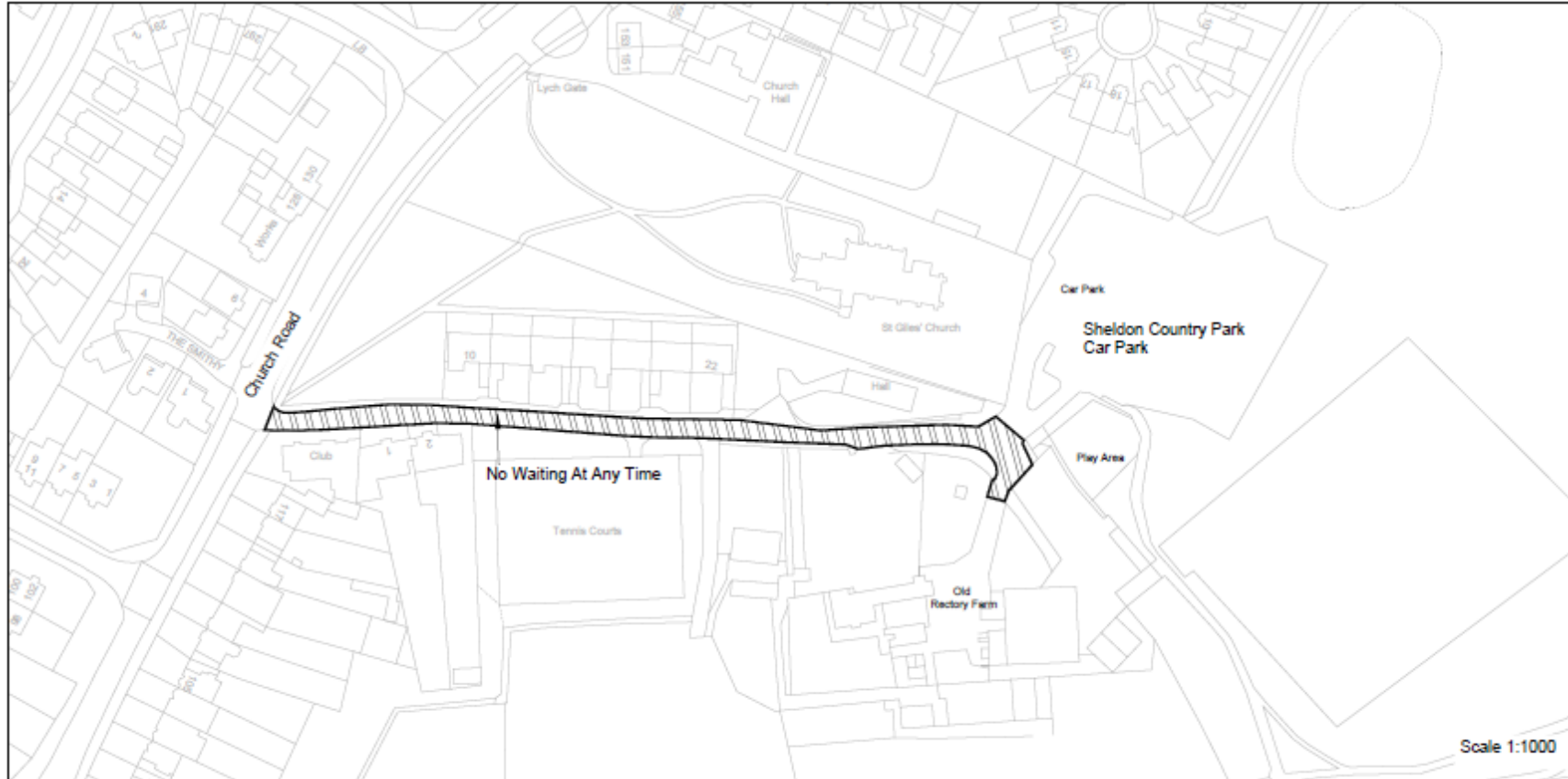
This 4-week consultation is a legislative requirement and is triggered by the advertisement of the Parking Places Order to introduce parking charges. During this consultation, visitors, stakeholders and residents can lodge their objection to the proposals as indicated in the Notice of Intent (or via the BeHeard Online Survey link or the contact/consultation email inbox), citing the reason/s for their objection. An objection report listing the objections received will then be presented for consideration and final decision.






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Appendix A – Sheldon Country Park





 <p>Birmingham City Council TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY PO BOX 18815, BIRMINGHAM, B2 2PH</p>  <p><small>This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. B.C.C. Licence No AC0000019636 Date 2025</small></p>	<p>SCHEME</p> <p>BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL (RAGLEY DRIVE, Sheldon) (TRAFFIC REGULATION) ORDER 202*</p>	 <p> Traffic Regulation Order Boundary</p> <p> No waiting at any time</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>DATE</td> <td>REV</td> <td>REVISIONS</td> <td>DRN</td> <td>DSR</td> <td>P.M.</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">SCALE 1:1000</td> <td colspan="4">STATUS GENERAL</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">P.M.</td> <td>DESIGNER KK</td> <td colspan="3">DRAWN 22/07/2025</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">SCHEMATIC NO 80596 L02 V3</td> <td colspan="4">REV</td> </tr> </table>				DATE	REV	REVISIONS	DRN	DSR	P.M.	SCALE 1:1000		STATUS GENERAL				P.M.		DESIGNER KK	DRAWN 22/07/2025			SCHEMATIC NO 80596 L02 V3		REV			
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<p>DRAWING</p> <p>Plan reference: 80596 - L02 V3 Sheldon Country Park TRO Effective Date: TBC</p>	<p align="center">A3 SHEET</p>																													

Appendix B – Other local authorities that charge

Lichfield District Council	• Beacon Park	£10.00 all day
Staffordshire County Council	• Cannock Chase Country Park	£3.50 all day

West Midlands Combined Authority:

Warwickshire County Council (constituent member)	• Kingsbury Water Park	£5.00 all day
	• Ryton Pools Country Park	£6.60 all day
	• Stratford Greenway	£5.00 all day
Coventry City Council (constituent member)	• Coombe Country Park	£5.00 all day
Dudley MBC (constituent member)	• Himley Hall and Park	£4.00 all day
Stratford on Avon District Council (non-constituent member)	• Recreation Ground	£11 all day

Other core cities:

Nottingham City Council	• Wollaton Park	£6 all day
Bristol City Council	• Ashton Court Estate	£4 all day
Manchester City Council	• Heaton Park	£3.50 all day
Sheffield City Council	• Graves Park	£4 all day
	• Millhouses Park	£4 all day
	• Hillsborough Park	£4 all day

Prices correct as of December 2024