

# Sutton Park – proposed parking charges consultation pack



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# 1. Introduction

In order to provide an income stream to protect both 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 Sutton 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 consider 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 Sutton 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) Sutton Park.

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

- Sheldon Country Park
- Lickey Hills Country Park.

## 2. Why Sutton Park?

Sutton Park is an extremely popular leisure destination, with approximately 1 million visits per year. The park attracts visitors from the whole of Birmingham and also further afield. This level of use puts significant strain on the park infrastructure and especially the car parks and carriageways.

The park is served by 25 public car parks which have capacity for approx. 1,100 vehicles. Car parks are located throughout the park (but primarily around the park's perimeter), and each is heavily used. The proposed charging scheme will mean car park revenue can be invested to improve the car park surfaces and infrastructure for the benefit of park visitors.

The annual expenditure required for the upkeep and maintenance of the 3 parks within the proposals is significant – approximately £1.75 million per annum. The expenditure required to maintain Sutton Park alone each year is approximately £990k, but it should be noted this 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 Sutton 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:

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

### **3. Sutton Park – background**

Sutton Park is one of Birmingham City Council's most varied and treasured parks. It covers over 2,100 acres and is located 7 miles north of central Birmingham. It is one of the largest urban parks in Europe and has several designations i.e. Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserve and Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Given the site's designations, we are consulting with the statutory bodies (Natural England and Historic England) regarding the proposals.

Natural England have advised that as landowner the Council would need to determine if the proposals would directly affect the designated features. The Council has concluded that SSSI consent is not required due to the limited impact on the SSSI.

We will submit a Scheduled Monument consent to Historic England for the delivery and installation of the proposed scheme for the site as a whole.

### **4. Selected parks for the proposed introduction of parking charges**

Following call-in, 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 Sutton 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.

- Statutory bodies (Natural England and Historic England)
- Friends of Sutton Park Association
- Sutton Coldfield Civic Society
- Residents of roads surrounding the gate
- Miller & Carter
- Blackroot Bistro
- Town Gate café
- Donkey Sanctuary
- Greenspace Leisure Limited
- Sutton Park Model Aero Club
- Mobile catering concession licence holders
- ESB Energy
- Mytime Active (Boldmere Golf Course)
- Sutton Coldfield Golf Club
- Sutton Park Advisory Committee
- Sutton Coldfield Natural History Society
- Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council
- Brown's
- Café Prem (Banners Gate)
- The Bracebridge
- Sutton Coldfield & North Birmingham Beekeepers
- Outdoor Pre-school (Boldmere Gate)
- 1st Sutton Coldfield Sea Scouts
- Powells Pool User Group
- Midland Mencap (Clifton Road Youth Centre)
- Serco (Wyndley Leisure Centre)
- Royal Sutton Coldfield Canoe Club
- Parkrun

## 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 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-sutton-park>
- Email [suttonparkconsultation@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:suttonparkconsultation@birmingham.gov.uk)
- Online public engagement session:  
Tuesday 26th August, 6pm to 8pm  
Microsoft Teams  
[Please email the consultation mailbox for details of how to join the session]

## 7. Project scope

The proposed car park scheme does not include any plans to increase car parking provision/land. We will, however, improve accessibility through formal disabled parking spaces and improve existing pothole issues where possible.

The proposed scheme designs strive to minimise the possible urbanisation of the park whilst balancing the requirements for an enforceable parking scheme. Hence, the use of double yellow lines will be minimised, and signage will be installed on wooden posts where possible.

Further car park improvement works including pothole repairs, levelling (and resurfacing where needed) alongside effective car park design, will be completed post-implementation using car park revenue. All surface work completed will use approved materials sympathetic to the site e.g. EcoGrid (a low maintenance substitution for tarmacking and lining).

Subject to the outcome of this consultation and subsequent decision, the implementation of charging across Sutton 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 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 4 hours)	£1.00
All day (4 hours+)	£5.00
Season ticket (annual)	£52
Blue Badge holder**	Free

\* A 30 minute grace period is proposed to allow for pick-up/drop-off at the various groups that operate within the park

\*\* 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 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’ 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 statutory consultations 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.

## 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 roads) at another site and proposes to continue this arrangement for the scheme at Sutton 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, BCC Parks Service 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 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.

## Appendix A – Sutton Park map



## Appendix B – Other local authorities that charge

### Nearby authorities

Lichfield District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beacon Park</li></ul>	£10.00 all day
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### West Midlands Combined Authority:

Warwickshire County Council (constituent member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ryton Pools Country Park</li></ul>	£6.60 all day
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stratford Greenway</li></ul>	£5.00 all day
Coventry City Council (constituent member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coombe Country Park</li></ul>	£5.00 all day
Stratford on Avon District Council (non-constituent member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recreation Ground</li></ul>	£11 all day

### Other core cities:

Nottingham City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wollaton Park</li></ul>	£5 all day weekdays £6 all day weekends
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Prices correct as of December 2024