

Pay and Conserve Car Park Charging on the Countryside Estate

**E&I Select Committee 29th November
2017**

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Countryside Vision – Protect Enhance and Improve

Giving access to our countryside to support recreation, health and wellbeing now and in the future in a way that will enhance biodiversity, our landscape and is financially self-sufficient

Countryside Function

Overall the County Councils funding for Countryside has reduced from £2.6m in 2014/15 to £1.6m net budget in 2017/18 due to reduce to £1.0m net budget in 2020/21

- Maintain and improve 3,400 KM of Public Rights of Way
- Manage the Basingstoke Canal in partnership with HCC
- Manage the agreement with SWT to manage the Countryside Estate, 6,500 acres owned by SCC and 3,500 acres manage under access agreements.
- Work with the SWT to identify other income streams
- Host the AONB unit and the Surrey Countryside Partnerships
- Support the local economy by promoting the rural economy, training and skills development



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Pay and Conserve Consultation



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- The Pay and Conserve consultation ran for a six-week period between September and November 2017 with a total of 1,257 respondents
- The survey aimed to understand more about how people currently use sites and their views on how car park charging could be implemented on the Estate.

Pay and Conserve Consultation



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- Car park charging was generally not supported but if charging is introduced, cash payment was the most popular, with 59% of respondents, followed by card payment with 46% prepared to pay via this method. Only 33% of respondents were supportive of payment by phone.
- Some of the key concerns identified included the impact on:
 - Volunteers
 - People on a low income
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Clubs using the car parks
 - Displacement parking
- Respondents were more accepting of the introduction of charging if the income was ring-fenced to Countryside
- How do SCC enforce car park charging

Pay and Conserve Consultation



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- The consultation focused on the most visited sites within the Countryside Estate that are owned by SCC and managed by SWT under a lease agreement. The five sites are:
 - **Chobham Common** (6 car parks)
 - **Whitmoor Common** (2 car parks)
 - **Norbury Park** (3 car parks)
 - **Ockham Common** (3 car parks)
 - **Rodborough Common** (1 car park)(Habitat Regulations Assessments are currently being carried out at the sites included in the consultation)
- 446,000 cars visit the sites annually.
- Largest car park accommodates 20,000 vehicles per month
- Smallest accommodating less than 1,000 a month.
- Based on usage data and assumed parking charges, a number of options have been explored which seek to balance value for money with public acceptability.

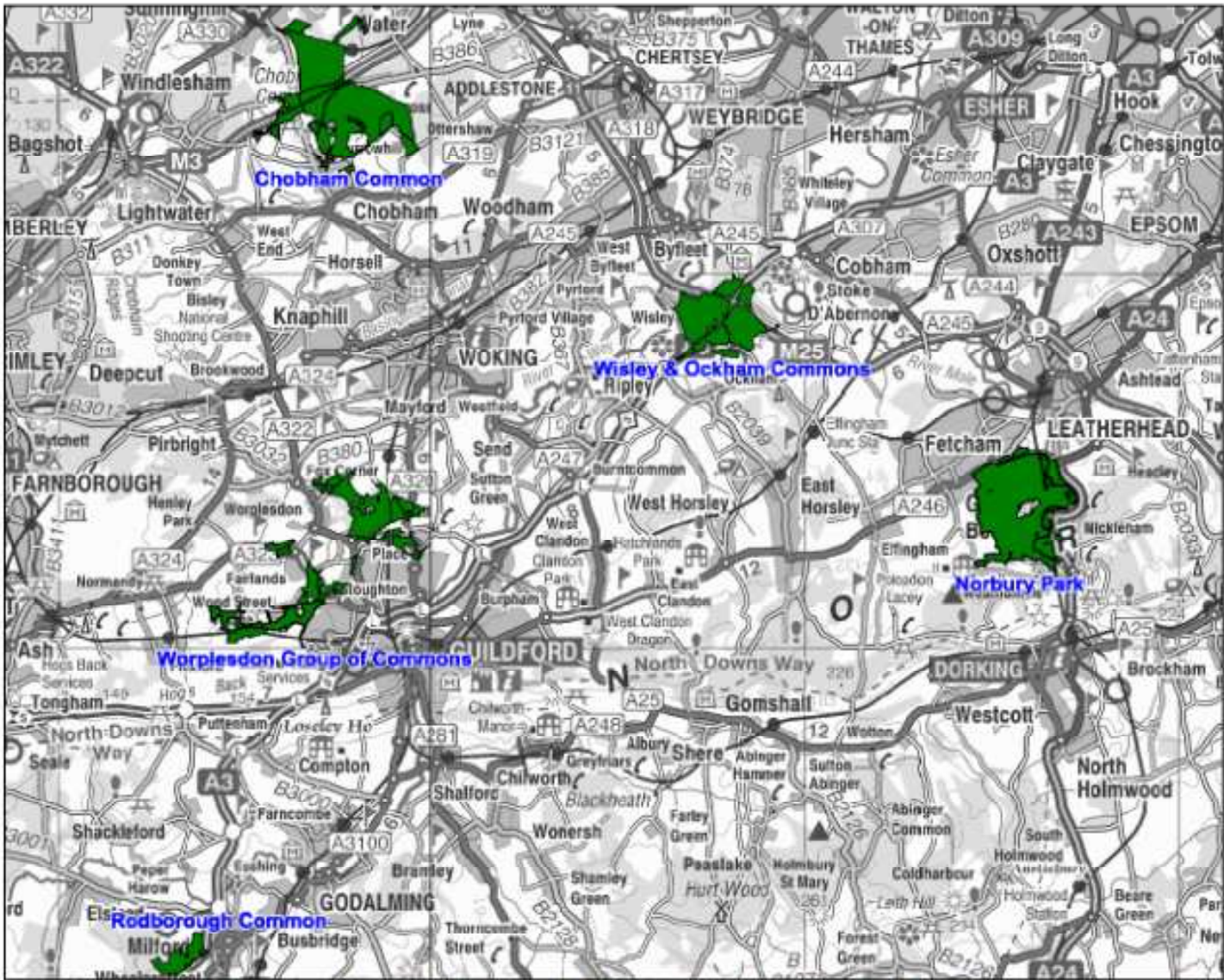
Car Park Locations: SCC Overview



Scale: 1: 15 000 (A4)

Key

 Site boundary



Prepared by: Surrey Wildlife Trust
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 Surrey Wildlife Trust AL 100031669, 2017



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Options Considered

In order to develop the business case, five options were modelled as follows:

Option 1: Do nothing – no charges are introduced at any of the sites

Option 2: Voluntary Donation – a voluntary donation scheme is introduced at the sites

Option 3: Cash payment – charging is introduced with the option to pay by cash, card or phone. Annual permit also available.

Option 4: Phone payment – charging is introduced with the option to pay by phone only. Annual permit also available.

Option 5: Card payment – charging is introduced with the option to pay by card or phone. Annual permit also available.

Investment and Return



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	Option 3: cash, card & phone	Option 4: phone only	Option 5: card & phone
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Capital investment required in year 1 ²	382	229	362
Total revenue ³	6,816	6,830	6,816
Expenditure (including debt repayments)	5,633	3,074	3,675
Net revenue	1,183	3,756	3,141
Average per annum net revenue	79	250	209
Project NPV at 5.5%	546	2,057	1,693
Project IRR	19%	80%	48%
Project payback period	6 years	2 years	3 years

Tariffs

In developing the options, comparable sites were considered. The table below sets out details of a number of local sites that charge for parking and the current tariffs in place:

Length of stay	Box Hill (National Trust)	Frensham Little Pond (National Trust)	Alice Holt Forest (Forestry Commission)	The Lookout (Bracknell Forest Council)	Queen Elizabeth CP (Hants CC)
Up to 1 hr	£1.50	£1.50	£1.80	£2	£1.80
Up to 2 hrs	£1.50	£1.50	£3	£2	£1.80
Up to 3 hrs	£4	£4	£4.50	£2	£3.50
Up to 4 hrs	£4	£4	£6	£2	£3.50
Up to 5 hrs	£4	£4	£8	£4	£3.50
>5 hours	£6	£6	£8	£4	£3.50

For the Surrey Countryside Estate, we are proposing a tariff as set out below, with an annual permit available at a proposed cost of £60 which would be valid at all car parks at the five sites:

- Up to 1 hour - £1.30
- Up to 2 hours - £2.60
- Up to 3 hours - £3.90
- Over 3 hours - £5.00



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Options Appraisal

In order to assess the options to develop a preferred option the following criteria were considered:

- The Contribution to the financial sustainability of the countryside – the extent to which the option could support the vision to protect and enhance the countryside for current and future generations
- Public acceptability – the extent to which the option was likely to be acceptable to the public, based on the feedback from the consultation and experience from elsewhere



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Preferred Option

- Option 5 (card & phone payment plus annual permit) offers a system that balances financial return and public acceptability.
- Whilst in purely financial terms, option 4 would be preferable, the consultation made clear that many people would not be happy with a scheme where payment by phone or permit were the only options.
- Option 5 offers the additional option to pay using a card (around 95% of adults in the UK have a debit or credit card), but removes the very significant risks and costs associated with a scheme that includes cash payments.



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Recommendations

The Select Committee are asked to:

- consider the output from the consultation
- comment on the proposed options
- provide a view on the preferred option



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Next Steps

- Cabinet 14th December 17
- Develop:
 - Implementation communication plan
 - Displacement parking and enforcement measures
- Approval of the SWT Business Plan for Income Generation – Early 2018