

**Agenda for Car Parking Task and Finish Forum
Thursday, 19th November, 2020, 2.00 pm**



Members of Car Parking Task and Finish Forum

Councillors K Bloxham, C Brown, M Chapman, A Colman,
O Davey, M Howe, B Ingham, V Ranger,
E Rylance and J Whibley

East Devon District Council
Blackdown House
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Venue: Online via the Zoom App

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Important - this meeting will be conducted online and recorded by Zoom only.

Please do not attend Blackdown House.

Members are asked to follow the [Protocol for Remote Meetings](#)

This meeting is being recorded by EDDC for subsequent publication on the Council's website and will be streamed live to the Council's Youtube Channel at

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmNHQruge3LVI4hcgRnbwBw>

Public speakers are now required to register to speak – for more information please use the following link: <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/have-your-say-at-meetings/all-other-virtual-public-meetings/#article-content>

- 1 Public speaking
- 2 Minutes of previous meeting (Pages 3 - 6)
- 3 Apologies
- 4 Declarations of interest
- 5 Matters of urgency

Information on [matters of urgency](#) is available online

- 6 Confidential/exempt items

To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded.

- 7 Review of Terms of Reference (Pages 7 - 8)
- 8 Topics for discussion (Pages 9 - 11)

1. Climate emergency
2. Asset Management & Revenue Generation
Please see the link to the [Car Parking Tariff Review](#) which was taken to Cabinet on 2 October 2019.
3. Visitor economy, well-being and poverty considerations
4. Campervans and motorhomes
5. Other matters for consideration

9 Dates for future meetings and report back to Scrutiny Committee

The following date is proposed in order to complete the work of the TAFF and enable the Chair to report back on progress and recommendations to the next Scrutiny Committee meeting on 10 December 2020.

Thursday 26 November at 10am

[Decision making and equalities](#)

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EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**Minutes of the meeting of Car Parking Task and Finish Forum held at Blackdown House on 9 January 2020****Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.50 pm

21 Public speaking

There were no public speakers at the meeting.

22 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 December 2019 were agreed as a true record, subject to Tony Woodward replacing Tony McCollum in the list of declarations of interest.

Councillor Val Ranger expressed a concern about minute 19 (12) regarding School Lane car park, Newton Poppleford and whether the discussion on all similar village car parks should include comments on whether running costs should be met from elsewhere.

It was noted that members had made comments at the 19 December meeting regarding Newton Poppleford, Broadclyst, Sidbury and Jarvis Close car parks that all these car parks had a great community benefit and that the cost of each of these car parks does not actually reflect the money spent on them, but a nominal cost spread across all car parks, pro-rata with the number of spaces

It was accepted that there was a need to be even-handed amongst all villages. Cllr Howe suggested that the possibility of giving smaller EDDC car parks to the parish councils should be investigated, as several larger villages already were responsible for car parks in their parish and precepted their parishioners accordingly.

23 Declarations of interest

Minute 26 Review of Council's Car Parking Operations - .
Councillor Andrew Colman, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 26 Review of Council's Car Parking Operations - .
Councillor Bruce De Saram, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 26 Review of Council's Car Parking Operations - .
Councillor Maddy Chapman, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 26 Review of Council's Car Parking Operations - .
Councillor Paul Millar, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 26 Review of Council's Car Parking Operations - .
Councillor Tony Woodward, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor

Minutes 26 Review of Council's Car Parking Operations –
Councillor Kim Bloxham, Personal, Cranbrook Town Councillor

Minute 26 Review of Council's Car Parking Operations –
Councillor Jack Rowland, Personal, Seaton Town Council

24 **Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

25 **Confidential/exempt items**

There were no matters which the officers recommended be dealt with in this way.

26 **Review of Councils Car Parking Operations**

The Chairman gave a summary to the work of the Car Parking Task and Finish Forum (TAFF) which was set up following the item being called-in. The first meeting established the facts and that the issue was essential part of the council's budget to increase its income from car parks. The second meeting highlighted detailed costings per car park with 15 of these being cost-negative costing the council £100k. The third discussed the financially negative car parks. This meeting would discuss the effect of raising the hourly rate to £1.10 and the £2 winter offer.

Andrew Ennis, Service Lead Environmental Health & Car Parks highlighted the income generated by a few car parks with the total gross income from car parks being £3.2m, reserved parking £43k and penalty charges £40k as an example. The costs reductions included business rates, VAT, maintenance charges, management costs, Streetscene and customer services to name a few.

Discussions on the effect of raising the hourly rate to £1.10 were as follows:

- Raising the hourly rate by an extra £0.10 to £1.10 (£0.55 for half an hour) would result in an estimated £277,000 of extra revenue, providing it did not deter existing customers.
- Concern expressed about the fiddly nature of increasing the charges by £0.05 and £0.10.
- Suggestion to instead of increasing by £0.10, raise the half hourly rate from £0.50 to £0.70.
- Working towards card and phone payment in every car park. Collecting money by phone was the cheapest way.
- Need to investigate possibility of all car parks going cash less in the future.
- Concerns that making payments by mobile phone only would disadvantage some, but it was acknowledged that most people had a payment card of some kind.
- Concern of how a blanket charge was going to work on the different sizes of car park in the district. Effect of this on the smaller car parks.
- Encourage customers to use a cashless method of paying by charging more for transactions made by cash.
- Need to phase out cash payments over time and move to phone and card.
- There was a significant cost to the cash machines used in car parks and the collection of cash.
- Importance of ensuring the viability of town centres.
- Suggestion to reduce the stay in short stay car parks from 3 to 2 hours to encourage turnover as the council's car parks were very busy.

RECOMMENDED 1. that £1 be the minimum charge in a car park, except in those car parks that are seen as an exception. This would include the transferability of car park tickets between car parks, using unspent time purchased on a ticket. Andrew Ennis, Service Lead – Environment and Car Parks would provide an estimate of the additional income created by this increase.

2. that over time the Council would wish to encourage customers to move away from cash payments to card and phone, but that the phasing out of cash payments be deferred to await a report on the consequences from Andrew Ennis – Service Lead – Environment and Car Parks and provide information on the possibility of making an additional charge for cash payments.

Discussions on the £2 Winter Offer were as follows:

- This offer had been established since December 2013 in response to a request from towns and chambers of commerce, had been a great success and revenue earner for the council.
- Concern that the £2 Winter Offer over filled the council's car parks and provided cheap car parking for town centre workers.
- The £2 Winter Offer brought people into town and promoted a community feel.
- In response to a suggestion that we compare our charges with other similar councils, it was noted that this exercise was undertaken in 2012 and that we were roughly in the middle of the level of charges for car parks.

RECOMMENDED that the £2 Winter Offer remains all day for long stay car parks and for 4 hours in short stay car parks and that permit holders be allowed the same offer for 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

27 **Date of next meeting**

Thursday 13 February 2020 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber

Attendance List

Councillors present:

K Bloxham
M Chapman
A Colman
B De Saram
A Dent (Chairman)
M Howe
P Millar
V Ranger
J Rowland
E Rylance
T Woodward

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

B Ingham

V Johns
G Jung
T McCollum
G Pook

Officers in attendance:

Andrew Ennis, Service Lead Environmental Health and Car Parks
Christopher Lane

Councillor apologies:

J Whibley

Chairman

Date:

Car Parking TAFF Terms of Reference as agreed at the meeting held on 7 November 2019

1. Asset management

To consider the prudent management of the Council's assets (viewed at this stage through a district-wide lens) and to balance local sensitivities including an expectation (or desire for) free car parks alongside their potential. For example, if we sold some or all of our assets what would a private sector provider do with them?

- Issues include the level and cost of maintenance, landscaping
- Investment in new technology – payment options, EV charging
- Tariffs – what is appropriate – market rates, benchmarking
- Business Model – we pay substantial VAT and Business Rates – are there alternative models worthy of consideration? Asset transfers? Private sector operators?
- Could our car parks generate other income – advertising revenue, event spaces in their own right – or parking to support other events?

2. Communities

To consider the value of our concessions, free parking offers and inexpensive permits for regular customers.

- Support for local and charitable events
- Free parking for Volunteers engaged in beach cleans and other activities
- Should we continue to provide “Special dispensations” – e.g. RNLI, Exmouth Beach surf lifesaving, LED Exmouth Pavilion, LED staff, LED Exmouth members
- Boat storage
- Car boot sales
- Implications of charges for the less well off
- Local sensitivities – expectations of free car parks

3. Economy

- Reasonable tariffs
- Perception that other councils don't charge
- Should we promote / provide park and ride
- practical issues – our towns are all different – our local high streets need to be supported
- Parking availability in good locations is a valuable commodity and people will pay
- Good management of short stay turnover is important
- Winter offer - £2 all day. A success?
- Campervans and motorhomes – policy? Supporting tourism? Revenue generation opportunity for EDDC.
- Boat storage

4. Statutory

- Class of vehicle
- Maximum stay
- Tariff
- Onstreet congestion
- Onstreet parking stress
- Road safety
- Relationship with on-street availability, maximum stay and tariff

5. Climate Change Emergency

6. Equality and Health and Well Being issues

Proposed Car Parks TAFF Discussion Paper – Thursday 19 November 2020

1. Introduction

This Council currently owns and manages 57* public car park sites across the district.

**There are a number of other areas that are used for parking in connection with other sites and buildings that the Council owns and manages (these include car parking for certain parks and playing fields, local nature reserves, housing estates, Council depots and industrial estates). These are not currently managed by the car parks team and have not been included within the scope of this discussion paper.*

We operate 45 of these public car park sites on a pay and display tariff. One of these (Mill Street in Sidmouth also offers some reserved parking spaces on short term leases).

Of the remaining 12 sites:

1. Holmdale (in Sidmouth town centre) and Helena Place (in Exmouth) are currently available exclusively for reserved parking on short term leases,
2. Exmouth lorry park is currently in use free of charge as the main compound for the Exmouth tidal defence contract works (part of this council's contribution to the scheme),
3. Upper Station car park is currently being leased to Budleigh Salterton Town Council for £500 per annum and is then made available for unrestricted parking free of charge at the point of use,
4. Blackmore Gardens in Sidmouth is currently leased to NHS Property Services for £126 per annum and is then made available for unrestricted parking free of charge at the point of use,
5. Seaton Jurassic Coach Park is currently available for coach and bus parking free of charge to help promote Seaton as a Coach friendly town,
6. Temple Street in Sidmouth offers a combination of short term free of charge parking and reserved parking spaces on short term leases and
7. the remaining 5 sites (The Green in Broadclyst, Brook Road in Budleigh Salterton, Jarvis Close in Littleham, School Land in Newton Poppleford and Manor Farm Estate in Sidbury) continue to offer public car parking free of charge and therefore the council incurs a net cost including maintenance and business rates in operating them.

2. Task and Finish Forum Discussion Topics:

2.1 Climate Emergency

As I see it, one of the major challenges facing this Council is that for many, the provision of plentiful affordable car parking is still important for supporting our town centre economies and local communities. However the present climate emergency has to recognise the significant contribution that the exhaust emissions from petrol, diesel and LPG fuelled private motor cars add to our carbon footprint.

I am suggesting that one of the major challenges facing this Council (and therefore this TAFF) is to consider whether certain interventions, incentives and initiatives might now influence matters in favour of our becoming a greener East Devon through (for example) encouraging greener travel choices and perhaps introducing sanctions via a differential charging tariff to discourage the parking of some or all private fossil fuel driven motor cars within our town centre car parks at some stage. An interim measure could include investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure to (a) welcome visiting motorists who have already made their commitment to driving an all-electric or

plug in hybrid vehicle, (b) service our own growing fleet of electric vans as well as (c) giving confidence to the general public that it is now viable to consider an ultra low emission car as their main or sole option when they next change their vehicle.

2.2 Asset Management and Revenue Generation

It remains a reality that our car parks property portfolio currently turns over around £4m annually contributing a net surplus of £2.4m to the Council's general fund. This is clearly a significant amount of money and we have previously calculated that in order to replace it with for example council tax revenue would amount to around a 40% increase for an average band D resident in East Devon. An expectation has been outlined in our Budget Strategy for the coming year that car parking revenue could deliver a further £425,000 revenue in 2021/22 with some adjustments to our current charging tariffs. This expectation has been based in part on the expectations raised by my 2019 Cabinet Report that was called in to Scrutiny and lead to the formation of the original TAFF in the autumn of 2019. That report is available [here at agenda item 17](#) for ease of reference and I am certain that the likely impact of these proposals could now be usefully considered in more detail by the TAFF including consideration of whether charging tariffs should be introduced or reviewed and whether certain assets might instead be considered as appropriate for asset transfers (subject of course to our usual policies and procedures in this respect).

2.3 Visitor economy, wellbeing and poverty considerations

I recognise that the prospect of an increase in car parking tariffs during and immediately following the pandemic will be seen by many as either high risk or even wholly inappropriate. However, with the prospect of increasing visitor numbers choosing UK and southwest holiday destinations, there may well be scope for maximising the income potential of our well located car parking assets and at the same time looking carefully at a range of concessions and affordable parking permit options for local residents, businesses and workers to retain a balanced economy.

2.4 Campervans and Motorhomes

We continue to see increasing numbers of campervans and motorhomes on our highways and in our public car parks. Our policy is, in my view in need of a revision to recognise both the demand for short term overnight pitches for campervans and motorhomes – and to acknowledge that measures to carefully and sensitively fulfil this demand (rather than continuing to treat overnight parking as a “parking contravention” or some form of “anti-social behaviour”) may well have benefits for both our town economies and for our own revenue. It is also the case that our own residents are choosing small and medium sized camper vans as either their main or second vehicle and in some cases our own policy currently prevents them from parking overnight in public car parks close to their own homes.

Some years ago we used to have simple rule in our Parking Places Order that specified “no overnight sleeping”, and that has widely been acknowledged in the industry as being almost impossible to enforce. In more recent years we have seen a new problem emerge – with our inexpensive permit tariffs (just £100 per year) we were inadvertently encouraging local motorhome and campervan owners to use some of our car parks as a cheap storage facility for their vehicles – with consequent lack of parking availability for visitors and town centre shoppers. Accordingly Cabinet considered papers that I had prepared and made decisions that this Council:

- (a) wished to encourage day visitors in motorhomes and campervans – so these vehicles are currently allowed to use any car park on any day but only between 08:00h and 22:00h daily)
- (b) was interested in a pilot scheme whereby we would consider the impact of allowing overnight “camping” for up to 3 consecutive nights in specified car parks in Exmouth (this pilot is about to enter its third season at the request of Exmouth Town Council) and
- (c) that overnight parking of any campervan or motorhome would not be allowed in any other car park (to prevent both storage and overnight camping).

The Exmouth pilot has been interesting and I would be happy to work with Members on a further review of this policy.

2.5 Other matters for consideration

It has been noted that in common with many pay and display car parks, from time to time customers leaving our car parks will offer another driver free use of unexpired time that they have purchased by handing over their pay and display ticket. Whilst this may well result in EDDC losing some revenue that would otherwise have been earned from that “lucky” motorist, there is perhaps also a “feel good” factor in that unlike some other Councils, EDDC recognises that the parking space has technically been paid for anyway – so a common argument would be why would the Council require another motorist to pay for it again?

Officers’ views are that there is clearly a simple option that you may wish to debate – ie. to make our tickets non-transferable by requiring the motorist to input their vehicle registration number into the pay machine at the time of purchase – that number then being printed on the ticket itself. This is now reasonably common in some pay and display car parks and would effectively prevent this practice. We would however need to consider a significant short term investment in modifying our ticket machines with a key pad and reprogramming them to achieve this. And the introduction of this change could of course be viewed cynically in some quarters.