

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Car Parking Task and Finish Forum held at Online via the Zoom App on 2 February 2021

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.30 pm

41 Public speaking

Liza McLean, who along with her husband runs a small a pet shop in Temple Street, Sidmouth, spoke about the Temple Street Car Park and emphasised to Members the importance that this out of town car park had with the community. She advised that the limited free for a limited time car park was used to safely drop and collect children from Sidmouth Primary School and to pop into the handful of businesses in Temple Street. She raised concerns that if charges were made these businesses would be hugely impacted as customers would turn to other alternatives rather than pay for parking such as buying on-line or to clog up residential roads.

42 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 November 2020 were agreed as a true record.

43 Declarations of interest

46-49. A review of options (including possible asset transfer) for managing all car parks that do not generate any revenue income or operate at a net cost to EDDC..
Councillor Andrew Colman, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor.

46-49. A review of options (including possible asset transfer) for managing all car parks that do not generate any revenue income or operate at a net cost to EDDC.
Councillor Maddy Chapman, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor.

46-49. A review of options (including possible asset transfer) for managing all car parks that do not generate any revenue income or operate at a net cost to EDDC.
Councillor Olly Davey, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor.

46-49. A review of options (including possible asset transfer) for managing all car parks that do not generate any revenue income or operate at a net cost to EDDC.
Councillor Eleanor Rylance, Personal, Broadclyst Parish Councillor and a user of The Green Car Park, Broadclyst.

44 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

45 Confidential/exempt items

There were no items which officers recommended should be dealt with in this way.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

46 **A revised policy for motorhomes and campervans in EDDC pay and display car parks**

Andrew Ennis, Service Lead - Environmental Health and Car Parks updated Members on the progress made so far on the discussions for a revised policy for motorhomes and campervans as a result of an increased number of motorhomes and campervans using the car parks in East Devon. Members noted the current policy, that had been agreed, approximately 5 years ago, did not permit motorhomes and campervans in car parks between 10pm and 8am in order to help protect existing campsite businesses.

The Service Lead - Environmental Health and Car Parks updated Members on the Exmouth Pilot Scheme that had been introduced 2 years ago for motorhomes and campervans to stay overnight at two dedicated car parks in Exmouth which proved the demand was there. Members were asked to consider a number of issues including the management of domestic refuse and effluent, whether to consider offering better facilities and whether to offer the opportunity to store larger motorhomes in car parks over the winter at a cost of an annual permit of £100.

Detailed discussion took place on the proposal for a revised policy and included the following points from Non-Forum members and Forum Members:

- There was a need to attract tourism to help the economy but not at the cost of other businesses;
- France offers good facilities for overnight camping;
- There was a need to offer good sanitation if people stay overnight;
- There was a need to consider fire safety;
- How will the car parks be policed and fees collected?
- There was a need to offer storage of larger campervans for residents over winter;
- Clarification sought on the costings in East Devon compared to other districts;
- Concerns raised about brown waste being emptied in drains along the seafront and ending up on the beach;
- There was a need to consider chemical and waste disposal and to offer recycling;
- Prices should be increased for staying in town centres;
- There was a need for campervans to park inland with a permit to encourage off-road parking;
- The need to consider installing a height barrier along the seafront to stop vehicles camping overnight;
- Concerns raised about not increasing the charges too much and the need to make it value for money to encourage visitors to come back year after year;

In response to some of the points raised the Service Lead - Environmental Health and Car Parks replied:

- If done sensibly there was room in the market for self-contained campervans and motorhomes to stay up to 3 nights without impacting on local businesses;
- Some good points were made about providing proper toilet facilities including using existing public toilets;
- EDDC would need to consider proper fire safety regulations which would require vehicles to be between 4m – 5m apart;

- The collection of fees would rely on customer honesty with the potential of a 7am inspection of car parks when the Civil Enforcement Officers start work;
- Further debate was needed for the storage of motorhomes as appropriate sites would be needed;
- An effective regime was required for the enforcement of vehicles;
- Further debate was needed on an appropriate fee;
- The consideration of using existing toilets was welcomed but needed to be further explored;

RECOMMENDED:

That the Service Lead - Environmental Health and Car Parks prepare a report with recommendations for consideration by the Car Park Task and Finish Forum Members at a future meeting in March 2021.

47 **A review of options (including possible asset transfer) for managing all car parks that do not generate any revenue income or operate at a net cost to EDDC.**

Consideration was given to the Service Lead - Environmental Health and Car Parks report which sets out a category 2 list of car parks which required further scrutiny including consideration of an asset transfer due to their range of direct and other costs associated including business rates and maintenance.

Detailed discussion took place which included:

- Clarification sought on the category for the Church Street Car Park, Sidford;
- Temple Street Car Park is a convenience car park and is necessary for customers using the local businesses;
- Concerns raised that increased prices would have a negative impact on businesses;
- There was a need for imaginative thinking to help businesses;
- Supported the need to consider car parks with limited revenue;
- The Green Car Park, Broadclyst was well used by villagers;
- Beer Head Car Park keeps traffic away from the village;
- Clarification sought on actual figures on running costs and business rates;
- Clarification sought on how much each car park in category 2 was paying on maintenance;
- The need to be mindful of deprived areas;
- Concerns raised that the council making money would not go down well with the public especially in the middle of a pandemic when people are losing their jobs;
- The council needs to be seen as treating each village and town equally and fairly;
- The need to consider that car parks cost the council money;
- Annual permits cost £100 which amounts to about £2 per week;
- A suggestion was made to introduce up to 30 minutes free charge in car parks;
- Concerns raised for the need for accurate information that was itemised to help consider whether car parks can be offered as asset transfer to town and parish councils;

In response to some of the points raised the Service Lead - Environmental Health and Car Parks replied:

- In response to the need for accurate information Members were reminded that data had previously been provided which including details of business rates;
- To introduce a 30 minute free charge in car parks would be a risk to revenue that the council rely on.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Service Lead - Environmental Health and Car Parks prepare a report detailing the costings for each car park on the category 2 list and which do not currently generate any revenue, with a range of possible options for each one, which may include introducing charges or asset transfer amongst others, for the Task and Finish Forum Members to consider at a future meeting.

48 **Consideration of the introduction of evening charges in car parks where we currently do not charge for parking between 18:00 and 08:00 on the following day.**

Consideration was given to the Service Lead - Environmental Health and Car Parks report which set out a proposal to introduce an nominal evening charge of £1.00 to the following car parks to help with maintenance and to give a small budget to provide staff overtime to oversee the car parks:

- Lace Walk, Honiton, short stay car park
- West Street, Axminster, short stay car park
- Orchard car park, Seaton
- Central car park, Beer
- Ham East / West / Roxburgh and Mill Street car parks, Sidmouth
- Rolle Mews car park, Budleigh Salterton
- London Inn car park / Imperial Road car park, Exmouth
- Exmouth Pavilion car park, Exmouth

Discussion from Forum Members included:

- Would like to see an improvement in bus services if an evening charge was to be introduced;
- Members were supportive in general;
- Concerns raised about how easy would it be to purchase another ticket if people were doing shift work;

RECOMMENDED:

To propose the introduction of an evening parking charge of £1 to be reviewed after 1 year.

49 **Consideration of the introduction of Sunday charges for car parking in our inland car parks. (We already charge for car parking on Sundays in the car parks in our coastal towns).**

Consideration was given to the Service Lead - Environmental Health and Car Parks report which set out a proposal to introduce a Sunday tariff in car parks which would help towards maintenance and management of the car parks. Members noted that a Sunday car parking tariff had already been introduced to all coastal towns along with Colyton and Lympstone.

Comments received from Non-Forum Members included:

- Concerns raised that the introduction of a Sunday tariff would not be appreciated by the public;
- In small towns it would be very detrimental to people going to church and people using pubs and restaurants for Sunday lunch;
- The need to be mindful of the impact on the public and how to introduce new charges when non have existed before;
- Concerns raised about the lack of data and a suggestion was made to have a nominal charge to gather data to see how the machines were used or to introduce a free 30 minutes charging period;

Comments received from Forum-Members included:

- A suggestion was made to propose a trial it to see if it works and the effect it would have;
- The need to avoid creating anomalies and the need for parity across the district. It is unfair that some areas have to pay for parking on a Sunday when other areas do not;
- The need to publicise the annual permit as this may prove popular and generate a good income stream;
- Concerns raised about going from no charges on a Sunday to charges on a Sunday especially in the current climate;
- There is a need to make is easy and understanding across the district;

RECOMMENDED:

To propose the introduction of a Sunday car parking charge to be reviewed after 1 year.

50 **The EDDC climate emergency declaration and action plan and the role of our car parking strategy in tackling this (with specific reference to investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure and appropriate charging tariffs).**

This item was deferred until the next meeting on Thursday, 11 February 2021.

51 **The use of cash and incentives to use alternative payment methods**

This item was deferred until the next meeting on Thursday, 11 February 2021.

52 **Alternative sources of revenue (events, advertising, private sector management options)**

This item was deferred until the next meeting on Thursday, 11 February 2021.

53 **Any other matters**

This item was deferred until the next meeting on Thursday, 11 February 2021.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

C Brown (Chair)

V Ranger (Vice-Chair)
M Chapman
A Colman
M Howe
E Rylance
B Ingham
O Davey

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Arnott
P Faithfull
P Hayward
P Jarvis
G Jung
T McCollum
A Moulding
M Rixson
J Rowland

Officers in attendance:

Andrew Ennis, Service Lead Environmental Health and Car Parks
Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer
Susan Howl, Democratic Services Manager
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
Jacqueline Collins, Civil Enforcement Officer

Councillor apologies:

K Bloxham
J Whibley

Chairman

Date: