

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Car Parking Task and Finish Forum held at Online via the Zoom App on 26 November 2020

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.25 am

35 Public speaking

There were no public speakers at the meeting.

36 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 November 2020 were agreed as a true record.

37 Declarations of interest

Declarations of interest.

Councillor Andrew Colman, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Declarations of interest.

Councillor Eleanor Rylance, Personal, Resident and member Broadclyst Parish Council.

Declarations of interest.

Councillor Joe Whibley, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Declarations of interest.

Councillor Maddy Chapman, Personal, Resident and user of car parks in Exmouth..

Declarations of interest.

Councillor Olly Davey, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor.

38 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

39 Confidential/exempt items

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

40 Car parks tariff review

Consideration was given to the Service Lead – Environmental Health and Car Parks' report which set out proposals to introduce changes to the car parking tariffs in some of the Council's car parks. It provided recommendations for more efficient operational management options for the busiest car parks, including revised tariffs in the context of a strategic objective to maximise the value of the Council's car parking assets, whilst also introducing a revised pricing structure for car parking permit to support communities and local economies.

Detailed discussion took place over the proposals in the report and included the following points:

- Car parking charges had not increased for 10 years, despite VAT rising from 15% to 20% during this time, with EDDC absorbing this increase.
- The Council needed to raise extra revenue. If parking charges were not increased then there was likely to be a rise in Council Tax.
- Increasing parking charges could gravely risk the future of local high street businesses.
- People needed to be encouraged to come and shop/spend in the town centres. Charges should not be increased, but the length of time available for parking should be reduced.
- There should be 'shoppers only' car parks for a limited period of parking time, to discourage people from using these car parks as long stays.
- Residents parking permits would not increase the footfall to businesses.
- In order to maximise revenue there was merit in increasing charges for beach car parks – raise more funds from coastal locations and ensure good facilities were provided in these areas to attract visitors.
- Some beach car parks were very close to town centre car parks, therefore there was the danger that if the 'shopping' car parks were cheaper beach users might fill these up.
- There was a need to support retail and protect the car parks.
- Prices could be frozen for residents and increased for non-residents of East Devon.
- Had there been consultation with Devon County Council over the cost of their on street parking charges.
- There were large variances in on street parking charges across the district.
- Concern that there could be a negative impact on disabled people if parking charges were raised at the most conveniently located car parks – was there an equalities impact assessment on this.
- If parking charges were not raised then people would continue to drive into town centres and contribute to pollution. A small increase would not deter people from using car parks.
- Town centres would need to change in the future and function differently, but people would still need to access them.
- There was a need to increase income for the Council, but also the need to be aware that the public could have a lack of funds. Offering a permit would help compensate for a larger increase in fees.
- The motor home spaces along Exmouth seafront were often taken up by vans used for watersports. There was also the problem that no facilities for motorhomes were provided at the Maer, resulting in people disposing of their grey water there as the regulations were not being enforced.
- Green travel should be considered, with greater investment in electric charging infrastructure in car parks.
- The future of green travel was important, but how vehicles would be fuelled in the future was unclear.
- Ideally in the future people would be travelling less by car. Town centres should be car and pollution free, instead being open green clean spaces. In which case car parks could even become redundant.

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

- Equalities was an important point and he believed that the impact was low. Disabled drivers had a number of options and would have the option of very affordable permits (which worked out at approximately £2/week). Disabled blue badge holders could park on street with no charge and therefore the number of disabled drivers using paying car parks was low in comparison to free on-street car parking.
- EDDC provided a means tested hardship scheme for local residents, who through this could get a parking permit for free.
- £10/month for a parking permit was excellent value and would be of great help to residents and businesses. If agreed, this could be carefully and sensitively promoted. Any harm to local businesses by increasing car parking tariffs would be mitigated by offering a permit for £10/month.
- EDDC had an ongoing dialogue with DCC about charges for off street car parking, which tended to be higher and for a shorter time. Consultation would ensure that the two authorities remained in line.
- When previously consulted about reducing the length of stay in short stay car parks, the Chamber of Commerce had expressed concern about the time constraints.
- The report contained a recommendation that a revised policy for campervans and motorhomes be introduced.

RECOMMENDED:

1. to propose the introduction of a 20p per hour tariff increase in East Devon District Council's category 1 (prime location) car parks effective from April 2021.
2. to propose the introduction of a revised parking structure for car park permits with a £120 per annum for a single town (and an additional £24 per each town added) up to a maximum annual permit charge of £240 to cover all towns. This would provide a 'pay monthly' scheme for all regular customers starting with a single town permit for just £10 per month.
3. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive and relevant Portfolio Holders to introduce a revised policy for campervans and motorhomes, with the policy first coming back to the Car Parking Task and Finish Forum for consideration.
4. To repurpose the Car Parking Task and Finish Forum to report back to the Scrutiny Committee in Spring 2021 to:
 - a. Consider in more detail the options for supporting the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.
 - b. Develop a range of options for the future management for the Council's category 2 car parks.
 - c. Consider any other measures including the possibility of introducing evening charges in certain car parks.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

C Brown (Chair)

F Caygill

M Chapman

A Colman

O Davey

M Howe

E Rylance

J Whibley

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Arnott
G Jung
D Ledger
T McCollum
A Moulding
M Rixson
J Rowland
E Wragg

Officers in attendance:

Ashley Burnett, Acting Business Support Team Leader, Car Parks
Bhavna Chandra, Business Support Officer, Car Parks
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
Andrew Ennis, Service Lead Environmental Health and Car Parks
Susan Howl, Democratic Services Manager
Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

Councillor apologies:

K Bloxham
B Ingham
V Ranger

Chairman

Date: