

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting: 7 September 2022

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release: N/A

Motorhome & Campervan Framework Policy

Report summary:

A report considering the draft framework policy for overnight motorhome and campervan parking within East Devon car parks

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

1. That the framework policy for campervans, vans and motorhomes using East Devon District Council pay and display car parks be approved.
2. That the Council charge a variable tariff for overnight stopovers in car parks with a tariff that includes 24 hour parking at that location to support the local visitor economy. The tariff at each location should be determined in accordance with each local Tripartite TAFF with delegated authority to the Deputy S151 Officer in consultation with the Chair of the TAFF, the Portfolio Holder and Strategic Lead for Finance.
3. That an additional seasonal Civil Enforcement Officer post be approved to enable effective management and enforcement of overnight stopovers during the peak summer period.

Reason for recommendation:

The recommendations are based on the continued popularity of the motorhome pilot scheme in Exmouth and the potential to expand and develop this offer in other locations within the District

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
- A greener East Devon
- A resilient economy

Report in full

1 Framework Policy

The attached policy document has been drafted following a Member workshop where a number of issues were debated in some detail. The outcome of that workshop was that this draft policy should now be considered by Cabinet.

The policy sets out a framework that now requires local decisions to be made about specific sites across the district. Appendix A includes some suggestions for further debate locally and the policy document itself sets out the outline constitution of a local Tripartite Task and Finish Forum as the relevant body to make these local site specific decisions.

2 Overnight Stopover Tariffs

The question of an appropriate overnight stopover tariff is a sensitive one and Members may wish to allow an element of local and seasonal variation to ensure that the market for local licensed campsites does not become distorted. Members may also consider whether it is preferable to offer a 24-hour tariff to encourage visitors to stay locally following their overnight stopover, although other local authorities have opted for a simple “overnight” premium for the stopover on top of the usual daily parking charge. See example options below.

	Example charging options for an overnight stopover (based on a 12pm arrival)	
	Option A - Standard charge + overnight fee	Option B - Stopover (24hr inclusive)
Parking charge until 10pm	£6	£21
Overnight fee - (10pm - 8am)	£11	
Parking charge – (8am - 12pm)	£4	
24hr charge	£21	£21

The recommendation is that the overnight stopover fee for each car park should be determined by the local Tripartite TAFF but that the charge should be based on an inclusive 24 hour packaged charge to encourage visitors to spend longer in the local area, with an easy to use single charge (Option B). Option A currently requires visitors to purchase 3 separate paid sessions for the same 24hr stay, meaning they may be inclined to arrive later on day 1, or leave earlier on day 2.

Our current tariff of £11 per night in the Exmouth pilot is deliberately inexpensive (bearing in mind that it also includes 24 hours parking in a prime location). It was based on the previously charged on-street tariff, so that the pilot did not act as a deterrent and sought to encourage existing visitors

to relocate from the desirable seafront highway parking spaces into a less intrusive location within an off-street car park.

Motorhome & campervan pitch prices vary significantly throughout Devon and Dorset based on factors including; electric hook-ups, waste and sanitary provision, proximity to points of interest and the availability of on-site facilities. Many of our car parks are unique in that they are located within walking distance of shops, restaurants, beaches and beauty spots, which is likely to be the main attraction for those wishing to stay overnight. Prices for pitches are subject to a high level of seasonality, with summer (school holiday) prices at least double those found earlier in the season.

A charge of somewhere between £20 and £35 for 24 hours (to include an overnight stay) is attractive on the face of it, however we do need to carefully balance this with the risk that higher charges will either drive-away visitors to other areas – or will displace them back to other on-street locations where a range of unintended consequences might arise. A charge of £15 - £20 per night (no facilities) or £20 - £25 per night including sea views, access to drinking water, refuse disposal, toilet and shower facilities* (*where an additional or perhaps per-use charge could apply) is suggested as a starting point, with seasonal considerations made by the relevant Tripartite TAFF.

3. Resourcing effective management and enforcement

The proposal to adopt a framework policy for campervans and motorhomes will not only increase revenue but it will also require additional staffing resource to provide effective management, enforcement and administration of the future changes. It is therefore proposed that an additional seasonal Civil Enforcement Officer is recruited to support the parking team in managing these changes during the summer charging period (April – October). This will be supplementary to the additional Civil Enforcement Officer that was approved by Members on the 4th May 2022, which enabled the Council to bring its car parks' cash collection arrangements "in-house". This additional seasonal post will be cost neutral.

The costs of this second new seasonal officer role now needs to be considered alongside the potential to generate additional revenue from a properly managed and enforced offer for overnight stays (for campervans and motorhomes) in some of our public car parks. Revenue will depend (at least in part) on the overnight charge agreed by the local Tripartite TAFF's should the Cabinet committee be minded to approve the draft policy, and also on the extent to which Ward Members feel comfortable with permitting overnight stays in their local car parks.

I would suggest that our experience from Exmouth alone very roughly indicates a potential income based on 30 overnight stays each day from 1 June to 30 September of 30 van x 120 nights x (say) £20 per night gets us to something around £72,000 of extra income, more than enough to cover the employment costs of an additional seasonal officer.

At the local Tripartite TAFF stage Members may also want to include provision for dedicated sites exclusively for use by campervan and motorhome customers and the framework policy allows for this. The clarity of the rules in a dedicated motorhome / campervan site would enable more effective management avoiding some of the inevitable confusion and conflict that arises around dual use bays within an existing car park. The Council could then commit to providing appropriate facilities on site or nearby. This policy could be seen as an alternative to allowing overnight stays more casually within our other car parks and we may see a business opportunity to then charge a premium overnight rate comparable with commercial campsites. Such a change of use would require consultation with communities, local businesses and of course planning consent so I would suggest that such sites will of necessity need to be longer terms projects.

Financial implications:

The request for additional staffing resource to help support the implementation of the Campervan Policy, although covered by income, is a new budget and will require Council approval.

Legal implications:

There is no direct comment to be made in relation to this report, each and any individual issue will need to be considered as it arises