

Report to: Overview Committee



Date of Meeting 21st March 2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release n/a

East Devon Parking Strategy 2024 - 2031

Report summary:

As requested by this committee - the draft East Devon Parking Strategy 2024 – 2031 has been produced and sets out the principles and objectives that could guide the delivery of the EDDC's car parking provision over the next 7 years.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

- (1) That Overview review the guiding principles, objectives and supporting rationale of the draft East Devon Parking Strategy 2024 – 2031
- (2) That Overview determine whether public consultation should be sought on the draft East Devon Parking Strategy 2024 – 2031.
- (3) That Overview identify an appropriate decision-making format that could support the delivery of key elements of the EDDC Parking Strategy.

Reason for recommendation:

The draft Parking Strategy has been produced through internal consultation as well as being the subject of an elected member workshop, to which all members were invited. It is designed to be flexible enough to support the aspirations of the Council Plan, as well as the strategies of other EDDC service areas. If the East Devon Parking Strategy is to be adopted and delivered, it will need to be underpinned by a clear decision-making format, that allows the flexibility to deliver some elements quickly and succinctly, but thorough and robust on divisive elements such as tariff changes to ensure that the proposed proactive consultation and due consideration of the parking data can be achieved.

Officer: Richard Easthope, Parking Services Manager – reasthope@eastdevon.gov.uk

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

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

Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

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

Draft Car Parking Strategy 2024 - 2031

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The East Devon District Parking Strategy represents a commitment to defining and delivering the right balance between financial and non-fiscal priorities, and setting a framework that guides future policy and decision making as well as the underpinning the day-to-day operational work of the Parking team.
- 1.2 Car parking provision is fundamental to reducing road network congestion, influencing travel habits, facilitating economic prosperity, and supporting the delivery of Council services through income generated by car parking charges.
- 1.3 East Devon District Council provide nearly 5,000 off-street spaces across 53 pay and display car parks, including 40 EV charging and 147 disabled bays.
- 1.4 Car parking land is in consistently high demand, whether that be for its primary purpose, or for alternative proposed uses, including development, commercial or to meet other Council priorities. The availability of safe and accessible parking is imperative in supporting tourism, employment and economic vitality; however, this must be balanced against the need to reduce the reliance on car travel, and encourage more sustainable forms of transport.
- 1.5 The rural nature of the Devon does naturally lead to a reliance on car travel across the County, with over 86% of East Devon residents having at least one vehicle in their household. The East Devon resident permit scheme offers cost-effective parking for those who make regular journeys or rely on our car parks as their primary parking solution.
- 1.6 Tourism is a significant part of the East Devon economy, with 100,000's of visitors each year. We are fortunate that two thirds of the District is designated as National Landscape and the Jurassic Coast world heritage site encourages year round tourism, with an increasing number of motorhome visitors who wish to stay in their own vehicle overnight.
- 1.7 The Covid-19 pandemic and the increase in home-working, combined with the growth and ease in online shopping and deliveries, has reduced high-street footfall, and the frequency of visits to town centres.
- 1.8 The necessity for car parks to offer more than just car parking will become more even more prevalent as the global shift towards more sustainable travel and Electric Vehicles gathers pace.
- 1.9 2023 figures reaffirm that summer coastal tourism is very much weather dependant, with 20% less visitors across Devon due to inclement weather across the Country.
- 1.10 East Devon District Council only has direct responsibility for off-street parking provision, with on-street parking managed and enforced by Devon County Council. Although separately managed, both elements are intrinsically linked in their ability to meet the overarching objectives of this strategy.
- 1.11 This strategy will cover a period of 7 years, running from 2024 - 2031, and will be subject to annual review.

2 Strategic Principles

- 2.1 The East Devon District Council Parking Strategy is based on 7 strategic principles which will form the basis of our approach to managing car parking provision over the strategy period. These will be supported by individual objectives for each principle heading.
- 2.2 The strategy principles were formed through internal consultation and based on current and future priorities and challenges both in the direct locality and in the wider parking industry.

These are as follows.

1. To provide safe, suitable, and accessible parking for East Devon residents and visitors
 2. To set parking charges that are cohesive and reflective of the location and use of our car parks.
 3. To embrace new technology and changes in legislation to the benefit of all car park users
 4. To actively encourage tourism and ensure the long-term economic sustainability of our towns, coastline, and shopping areas.
 5. To play our part in encouraging and supporting the transition to Electric Vehicles, whilst considering the non-fiscal potential of our car parks in achieving Net-Zero by 2040
 6. Proactively explore commercial ventures and opportunities that will provide additional value to our car parking offer.
 7. Provide an efficient, responsive, and flexible car parking service that actively enhances the reputation of the Council as a whole.
- 2.3 For continuity the guiding principles are designed to stay relevant throughout the strategy period, and it is the objectives that may change evolve throughout time.

3 Principle - To provide safe, suitable, and accessible parking for East Devon residents and visitors.

3.1 Objectives

3.2 Ensure our car parks and perimeters are well maintained.

Our car parks are often the first place that visitors see when they arrive at one of our towns, and therefore offer an opportunity to showcase the level of cleanliness and maintenance that can be expected in the wider area. As car parking income is partially used to subsidise the additional cost of providing services in popular destinations, the standard of car park maintenance and cleanliness should represent good value for money for car park users. This is especially important as litter, overgrowth, and areas of neglect have the ability to negatively affect the visitor experience and are often associated with areas of crime, potentially leaving car park users feeling unsafe.

3.3 Provide clear signage and easy to operate machines.

Much of the car parking signage has been consolidated and simplified in recent years, however there are still signs due to be updated across the district. User feedback is incredibly important in ensuring that there is sufficient signage in key points throughout our car park, and the presence of larger vehicles can sometimes make pay machines difficult to locate. Consistency in messaging is especially important and it isn't always necessary to provide a sign for every eventuality as they then tend to lose their impact, but carefully considered and relevant signage will assist users in understanding the parking conditions and how to get the best value for money from their parking requirements. Bespoke signage to tackle repeat/new issues will always be considered where there is a demonstrable need.

Parking machine technology is evolving, and large colour touch screens are becoming more commonplace across the parking industry. Such technology will be explored at the time of upgrading our machine stock, with the priorities being ease of use and resistance to damage from vandalism and the elements. As a motorist's parking experience is primarily guided by convenience, finding a space where they want to be, understanding the terms and conditions and being able to easily pay for a parking session are the 3 main factors in achieving a seamless and hassle-free end to a car journey.

3.4 Offer multiple car park payment options that consider the needs of all users.

There are numerous costs associated with collecting car parking revenue, whether that be from card transaction fees, third party supplier charges or the hardware, staff time and processing costs of accepting cash payments. Convenience and accessibility is the balancing factor here, and EDDC want the payment process to be as easy as possible for our car park users, regardless of how they choose to pay. Online and app purchases are becoming the norm across most service industries, however there are sections of society that do not own the technology that enables them to make purchases in this way, and therefore there is still the requirement for us to offer the traditional parking payment method of cash. Until the Covid-19 pandemic, cash use in society was declining at approximately 15% a year, this has since stabilised with Bank of England figures indicating that 73% of consumers made a cash purchase in January 2022. There may come a time at which it is no longer financially or logistically viable to accept cash payments for parking sessions, and only at this point will the alternatives be considered. In the meantime, increasing consumer choice and responsibly encouraging the shift to digital payment methods will be the priority focus for East Devon.

3.5 Offer sufficient dedicated disabled spaces where they are needed most

There are currently 147 disabled bays in East Devon District Council car parks and these provide blue badge motorists with the convenience of larger spaces, and these are often located close to car park entry points to allow easy access out of the car park. In some locations these spaces are well used and are invaluable for blue badge holders, however Devon County Council also offer a blue badge scheme, allowing motorists to park in limited waiting bays without the time constraint, on single and double yellow lines for up to 3 hours (unless loading/waiting is prohibited) and also in resident permit scheme zones. As East Devon charge for use of disabled bays, the Devon County Council regulations ordinarily present the better option for blue badge holders, leaving some disabled bays within certain car parks underutilised. As part of this strategy, East Devon commit to providing the right number of disabled bays where they are most needed, as opposed to a rudimentary number in each car park, where the space may be better utilised for an alternative parking provision. This is a primary example where Devon County and East Devon parking restrictions can complement each other to the benefit of the entire parking ecosystem.

3.6 Ensure car park markings and directional arrows are clear concise.

Bay markings are an important way of maximising the usable space within the car parks, and our directional arrows and “keep clear” markings ensure the free movement of vehicles and reduce the risk of tight manoeuvres and accidents. These markings fade over time, expedited by poor surface conditions, and are often expensive to re-line in isolation due to the cost of heating the paint to apply to the surface. The most economical way of completing these works is to use contractors already completing other lining projects or to package a selection of locations that make best use of the machinery and materials. Using this methodology may not always obtain the quickest outcomes, which are required in some circumstances, but they do reduce the cost of such works over-time. Regular reviews and good working relationships with 3rd party contractors will ensure that we are able to plan ahead and stay on-top of fading markings across all of our car parks.

3.7 Be vigilant and responsive to unauthorised use of Council car parks.

Unauthorised use of car parking land can range from regular flouting of the terms and conditions, to abandoned vehicles and even large encampments consisting of multiple vehicles. Prompt communication and action is often the most effective deterrent and mitigates against the risk of escalation and minimises the disruption to other car park users. The way in which East Devon manages unauthorised use of its land is a public barometer of the efficiency of the organisation, and a low tolerance approach is an extremely important tool in protecting revenue and ensuring ongoing compliance with the parking terms and conditions. There are legislative elements to the way in which EDDC manage unauthorised occupation by Gypsy and Travellers, which is covered separately by the East Devon Gypsy & Traveller protocol.

3.8 Provide larger parking bays as standard whenever a car park surface is renewed.

The industry guidance that dictated the size of the parking bays within our car parks was initially set in the 1970's. Since then, cars have increased significantly in width and length, however our bays have remained the same size, making for a tight fit when large vehicles park in adjoining spaces. Increasing the size of our bays could lead to a loss of 1 for every 24 parking spaces, but it will provide a more accessible and enjoyable parking experience that better caters for the expanding waistline of modern-day vehicles. The new standard size that we will adopt for all future car park lining will be 5.00m (L) x 2.60m (W), it is currently 4.80m (L) by 2.40m (W).

4. Principle - To set parking charges that are cohesive and reflective of the location and use of our car parks.

4.1 Objectives

4.2 Regularly review car park usage and capacity to ensure the suitability of parking tariffs.

East Devon Parking tariffs currently vary by season, location, and duration, which is generally reflective of demand across the district. The winter parking offer currently applies across the entirety of East Devon, between November and March, and allows motorists to pay a flat fee of £2.00 for all day parking. Improvements in technology now mean that we have a greater depth of management information that can be used to analyse parking trends and better understand the usage of individual car parks. This data will be used to recommend future tariff changes and guide the implementation of seasonal offers and other discount schemes. Tariffs do play a part in controlling car park usage; however, the British Parking association has reported through research, that convenience is the main deciding factor for motorists when choosing where to park.

4.3 Consider local need and actively consult when considering tariff amendments.

It is extremely rare that tariff increases are popular with car park users, however active consultation and a shared understanding of the issues and pressures that exist from both EDDC's and the car park users' perspective is essential in setting the right tariffs and finding compromise in proposed plans. Such consultation also makes it more likely that stakeholders will be supportive of the implementation of any changes, knowing that they have had the opportunity to contribute through transparent process.

4.4 Adapt to changes in car park usage over time to ensure they continue to best meet local need.

In the short term, demand for car parking spaces is influenced by many factors, including the weather, holiday periods and local attractions and events. In the longer term, factors affecting routine, and actions of third parties can also influence car park use, this may include new parking restrictions in local streets, a new housing development or the opening of a new attraction or car park. Such changes have the ability to affect the whole local parking ecosystem, causing considerable changes to car park use over time. In these circumstances EDDC will be proactive in responding to the changes, whilst considering the wider impact of any changes we may propose on other nearby car parks and the on-street parking provision. There are many interdependencies where car parking is concerned, and changes in isolation will often have undesired consequences that are difficult to rectify without taking a holistic approach.

4.5 Ensure EDDC car parks support third party/concessionary arrangements in achieving their intended purpose.

The right type of car parking provision is essential for any third party or concessionary operator when considering the viability of their business/event. Additional and repeat visitors to East Devon are an important factor when considering economic prosperity, and our car parks have an important role to play in facilitating the success of new and existing arrangements that add vitality to our towns. Providing a considered and flexible approach these will help create an environment where new arrangements can flourish, and town and car parking usage will increase in a controlled and measured way.

5 Principle - To embrace new technology and changes in legislation to the benefit of all car park users.

5.1 Objectives

5.2 Openly explore new payment and management technologies, whilst considering the rural nature of demographics of East Devon

There has been a considerable increase in the use of cashless payment methods across the parking industry, with many Councils and private operators now choosing to only accept these types of payments. Some of the advantages of cashless payments are that they are less resource intensive to manage, cheaper to administer and eliminate the risk of physical theft from parking machines. That said, East Devon currently still register 51,000 cash transactions (2023 average) per month from customers who either prefer to pay in this way or are digitally excluded from using apps or mobile technology. Parts of East Devon also suffer from poor mobile connectivity making digital payments either difficult or impossible. New ways of paying for parking will continuously be explored as cash payments in society naturally decline, however thorough consideration will be given to the rural and technological exclusions of the district when assessing the viability of new payment options. Use of ANPR and barrier-controlled entry will be explored in some car parks, where there is the opportunity to maximise compliance and better manage car park capacity.

5.3 Work closely with nearby local authorities to maintain a level of consistency across Devon and facilitate the sharing of best practice.

Most Devon authorities have similar parking models, with a mixture of town and coastal car parks and seasonal parking demand. Sharing best practice, challenges and technologies are an effective way of aligning policies, providing consistency and reducing duplication. Learning from the successes and failures of nearby districts are an essential part of evolving our own car park offering and providing the best possible experience to our car park users.

5.4 Seek to trial new products and services as opportunities arise.

The parking sector is rife with competitive innovation, resulting in intriguing and occasionally game-changing new services and technologies that make the parking experience easier and more convenient for end users and operators alike. Seeking to proactively trial, assess and evaluate new products and services are a risk-free way of establishing the best products for our car park users, and helps the technology evolve to best meet our own specific needs. Opportunities may arise to use our car parks to help “solve” other issues, such as paying for third party services and recreational activities at our pay and display machines, and these will also be considered if they offer tangible benefits to other areas of the Council.

6 Principle - To actively encourage tourism and ensure the long-term economic sustainability of our towns, coastline, and shopping areas.

6.1 Objectives

6.2 Operate a clear events pricing structure, that encourages car park use to support local events.

Community, leisure, and entertainment events attract visitors to East Devon, improve wellbeing and help build local connections. Often EDDC Car Parks are considered an important asset for organisers when planning their event, either as they require exclusive use of some of a car park or will rely on the availability of parking for participants/visitors. Events that cause local travel chaos are unlikely to be well received, and EDDC have a duty to consider this when considering requests for car park usage. A fair, proportionate, and variable events pricing structure that accounts for loss of parking income in each car park, but also considers the extended benefit of events will be operated to provide the right balance between supporting event organisers, considering traffic implications and protecting the Council's revenue.

6.3 Explore seasonal and car park specific discounts and concessions to boost local shopping trips.

Research suggests that convenience is king as far as consumer parking choice is concerned, however price is also an important consideration for motorists. As a general rule, pricing that is too expensive or restrictions that do not match the desired use of a car park will push drivers elsewhere, whereas pricing that is too cheap for the amenities on offer, will create unmanageable demand and cause wider traffic network issues. The middle ground has to be found for the majority of the time, and parking data can help achieve this, however there are also times at which car parking pricing could be variable or discounted to support other initiatives. This flexibility can be offered but is reliant on suitable payment infrastructure to support this aspiration. Management information can help indicate times at which car parks could be discounted to encourage more visitors and help balance demand at peak times.

6.4 Facilitate overnight stopovers where appropriate, providing the necessary facilities to protect our natural environment.

There are almost 400,000 Motorcaravans registered with the DVLA in the UK and Motorhome tourism is valued at over £1billion. Touring in motorcaravans is a year-round activity, and this type of tourism is well-catered for in EU countries through a network of Aire's. Such a network is not yet established in the UK, however East Devon currently offers two car parks where visitors are welcomed to park and sleep in their vehicle overnight. This has proved extremely popular with around 3,500 overnight stopovers per year. There are many dedicated campsites that provide the full camping experience; however, our car parks are unique in that they provide direct sea views and easy access to the beachfront. Effectively managing this distinctive type of tourism is especially important as it also has the ability to negatively impact residents and the environment through anti-social behaviour and damage and pollution through the incorrect disposal of wastewater and materials. Ensuring responsible tourism will be a future priority for the car parking team, and this will include providing waste disposal facilities to be used by touring vehicles. Those who do not abide by the rules, or outstay their welcome, will not be welcome or permitted to return.

6.5 Ensure the availability of car parking spaces through an appropriate pricing and residents permit offer.

Car parking demand and use changes seasonally and is dependent upon many factors. A core pricing and permit structure that encourages visitors and meets the need of businesses and residents by ensuring the availability of spaces is crucial for offering the best possible experience to car park users. With a finite number of spaces, flexibility can be achieved through bespoke discounts and offers, however the underlying pricing and permit structure must be well-balanced and subject to regular review. This approach will allow our car parks to support businesses and tourism, whilst also taking into consideration user feedback to help meet residential car parking need.

6.6 Encourage Coach Tourism through preferential parking arrangements.

Arranged coach tours are popular amongst day-trippers and short break tourists and bring large numbers of visitors to our towns and coastline. These visitors then invariably visit local attractions and bring money into the economy through shops, cafés and restaurants. Large coaches can transport 60-80 passengers at a time and are relatively easy to cater for where space allows. Coaches bring visitors from across the country who may not have otherwise come to East Devon, and take up less parking space than the equivalent journeys by car. Actively encouraging coach tourism through preferential parking rates will likely be of notable benefit to the economy, and establish East Devon as a coach friendly destination, which will in turn entice even more visits to our District.

7 Principle - To play our part in encouraging and supporting the transition to Electric Vehicles, whilst considering the non-fiscal potential of our car parks in achieving Net-Zero by 2040

7.1 Objectives

7.2 Use available space within our car parks to help meet local and visitor electric charging (EV) need.

EDDC has already facilitated the provision of 40 EV chargers within its car parks and has plans to deliver up to an additional 73 in partnership with Devon County through the Government's LEVI (Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure) fund in 2024/25. The delivery of EV bays through lease agreements comes at the direct expense of parking availability within our car parks, as the bays can then no longer be used to meet ordinary parking need, and in fact the bays are required to be vacated once a charging session has ended to allow for continuous use. Recharging in car parks is not top of the EV charging hierarchy, but it can offer an essential and convenient service provision to residents without the capability to charge at home. Installing the right type of chargers in the most suitable car parks will be the future priority for EDDC, and this will be balanced with the need to cater for standard parking sessions too. The need for EV infrastructure will evolve over the coming years, as more private operators enter the market, therefore EDDC will be cautious not to over-commit valuable car parking assets that are also required to meet other priorities. In a classic case of the chicken and egg, motorists are hesitant to invest in expensive EV's, whereas charger providers do not have the quantitative evidence to justify their need. A measured and County wide approach to EV charging provision will offer consistency in service provision, as well as a holistic approach to ensuring sufficient EV charging capacity across the entire travel network.

7.3 Consider proposals for shared mobility and sustainable travel where car parks are the best option to deliver this.

Electric Vehicles represent the immediate future of passenger and cargo transport, however the overarching priority is to reduce the overall reliance on car use in favour of more sustainable forms of travel. East Devon can support and influence this transition through design, and car parks can be a key part of the sustainable travel network, either by representing change through a reduced focus on car parking provision, or as a start point for sustainable onward travel. Car parking land is fiscally valuable and in a finite resource in EDDC ownership, however seemingly counter intuitively it may also be an important asset in reducing reliance on motor vehicle use. The balance remains that car parking space is in high demand, and the loss of car parking land before the public and wider travel network are set up to embrace alternative forms of travel may represent a backwards step as far as perception and engagement are concerned. Car Parking locations will likely represent an important jigsaw piece in the wider sustainable travel network and will be best considered as part of highway and place improvement projects that have sustainable travel as a key theme.

7.4 Fully transition the Civil Enforcement Officer fleet to Electric Vehicles

Our team of 5 Civil Enforcement Officers travel thousands of miles each year and are already partly transitioned to Electric Vehicle's. Depot charging capacity and vehicle range are two key considerations when choosing the right vehicles, although many of our car parks will soon have EV chargers for a quick electric top-up during the day. EDDC EV vehicles that carry out daily trips around the district are an important visual representation of EDDC's commitment to becoming Net Zero by 2040 and may help encourage public transition towards this type of vehicle. Using these vehicles will also help our team be of better assistance at the charge points throughout our car parks.

7.5 Consider emissions-based charging and permits to encourage EV use.

Emissions based charging is growing throughout the UK in the form of low-emission zones in large cities that levy a charge on non-compliant vehicles. This approach is more likely to negatively impact those who cannot afford to transition to a more environmentally friendly vehicle, than it will benefit those who already have. The transition to EV's can be encouraged without being of detriment to those who are unable, although we are aware that East Devon's influence on this will be limited by the number of available parking spaces. We are also aware that parking discounts are unlikely to be a significant deciding factor in a motorist's choice to buy an EV, however bespoke offers and additional benefits for low emission vehicle owners may help encourage this change in the long term. Emissions based charging options will be an ongoing consideration for any future permit and tariff increases, without placing an increased pressure household finances that may make this change even more difficult in the future.

7.6 Replace car parking lighting with low energy alternatives.

Lower energy costs, brighter bulbs and increased community safety within our car parks are three compelling reasons to upgrade old lighting infrastructure. Work has already started on this, and we will continue to prioritise the installation of new lighting technology, over the maintenance of our dated and less efficient lighting units. LED bulbs last longer and are easier to replace, so the ongoing maintenance of these type of bulbs will reduce once the initial outlay of installation has been met. This will be a gradual process, and sites with greatest need will receive priority.

7.7 Consider alternative usage for "dead" spaces and verges within our car parks.

Where space is at a premium, it is important that we maximise usable land for car parking bays and suitable access, however there are often sections of verge, or oddly shaped areas that cannot be used for parking. These areas may not seem like much, but they have the potential to help meet other priorities, such as sustainable travel, or support community projects such as planting initiatives. These opportunities will be actively explored to ensure that we are making best use of our parking land, with a particular focus on initiatives that can enhance the appearance of our car parks or encourage commercial opportunities, such as concessionary units, advertisement and information stands.

8 Principle - Proactively explore commercial ventures and opportunities that will provide additional value to our car parking offer.

8.1 Objectives

8.2 Encourage proposals for alternative use of Council car parks that will provide local & public benefit.

East Devon Car Parks provides an essential service to residents, businesses and visitors and invariably become a fixed part of a location's infrastructure. As towns, coasts and inland communities change, or as opportunities arise, it may transpire that car park sites can be better used for alternative purposes in the public interest, and East Devon will openly consider any such proposals, providing that car parking demand can still be adequately met.

8.3 Identify available EDDC land that could be used for additional car parking.

In the same way that settled car park locations may be identified for other uses, alternative land in EDDC ownership may also become available to provide additional parking, or to facilitate a change in the way in which car parking is managed. Proactively identifying such opportunities will help achieve the right balance of car parking provision in each location and may provide scope to deliver bespoke parking solutions that meet local need.

8.4 Offer EDDC car parking enforcement and management services to third-parties when introducing new car parks/enforcement schemes.

East Devon currently manages 3 car parks on behalf of private landowners, charging either a management fee for our services, or sharing an agreed percentage of the revenue from the car park. This arrangement represents a source of income for EDDC and offers the landowner our well established administrative and operational services. This type of management arrangement works best with landowners whose priorities align with our own, and this will be carefully considered when assessing the appropriateness of providing our services to third parties. The financial viability of any such arrangement will also be carefully considered, as any additional workload will need to be balanced with the management of our own car park assets.

8.5 Actively engage in wider projects that will impact on car park usage and demand.

EDDC car parking involvement in the planning stage of new projects and initiatives will ensure that parking is given the necessary consideration, and that the service is able to provide the required advice, support and information that will ultimately lead to better outcomes. Being aware of new projects and schemes, will also assist with the future planning for car park provision. This holistic awareness is essential when determining the

best use of Council assets, and ensuring they are available to meet competing demands and priorities.

9 Principle - Provide an efficient, responsive, and flexible car parking service that actively enhances the reputation of the Council as a whole.

9.1 Objective summary

The manner and the timeliness in which we respond to our customers can impact the perception of the entire Council, especially as many visitors to the district will have limited direct contact with EDDC, and one of their few interactions they will have will be whilst paying for their Parking or meeting one of our officers whilst out on patrol. These small interactions help create a substantial lasting impression of the parking service, the wider Council and the place they are visiting, which all helps create, build and sustain places that people want to return to.

It is therefore that we have the following principles that underpin the way in which we work, and that provide the foundations for the success of the Parking Strategy.

9.2 Our Civil Enforcement Officers are Council ambassadors and will be helpful and approachable at all times.

Our team of CEO's may be the first person a visitor meet's when they arrive in a car park, and it therefore imperative that they are friendly, recognisable, and well informed on any topical issues that may be of interest to our car park users. Whether asking for help with buying a ticket, charging an Electric Vehicle or information on the nearest WC facilities, our team will be available to provide some friendly advice. The management and administrative support teams also have an important role to play in ensuring that the operational team are fully aware of any changes or imminent plans that may help answer any frequently any asked questions.

9.3 Provide an excellent level of customer service to all customers, regardless of how they choose to contact us.

Whether it is a chance encounter in a car park, a telephone call or through our formal PCN appeals process, each customer will receive a consistent level of service when they contact us. This will constitute fair, transparent, and considered information, provided with a reasonable timeframe, and supported by any relevant legislation. Feedback will always be acknowledged and appreciated and used to help shape and instigate future policy decisions. Our internal customers are of equal important, and this commitment will incorporate meeting all statutory deadlines for returns, requests for information and parking correspondence.

9.4 Provide online information and systems that are accessible and intuitive.

Our car park signage will be clear and categorical for car park users, but for those that haven't arrived yet, or would like supplementary information, our web pages will provide clear, accessible, and up-to-date information relating to our car parks. Where we use 3rd parties to provide web services on our behalf, these will be equally as informative, and will provide information consistent with that provided on the main EDDC webpages.

9.5 Be a point of support and referral for those seeking debt or other assistance from Council services

Noncompliance with the EDDC car parking regulations will invariably result in the issue of a Penalty Charge Notice, and this is supported by a transparent and formal process for appeal, as well as the opportunity for independent adjudication. Contacting Parking Services may represent an important gateway for an individual in accessing and claiming support from other Council services, particularly around finances and entitlement to benefits. It is therefore imperative that our staff are well trained in signposting to relevant support services and dealing with such matters with the necessary empathy and sensitivity.

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications contained within this report

Legal implications:

There are no substantive legal issues to be added to this report