

## Summary Report of the Consultation on the draft District of Rother (Off-Street) Parking Places Order Held 17 May to 26 July 2019

### Executive Summary

1. We received 302 responses between 17 May and 26 July 2019.
2. 65% of respondents agreed to some extent on including all parking places in the order. Those that disagreed had concerns about:
  - a. Using the order to charge on more or all car parks and the effect charging might have on a) tourism, retail and other businesses b) residents using it for residential parking, c) on-street parking and congestions on roads.
  - b. The capacity of the Council to enforce the order.
  - c. There was no need to change current arrangements.
  - d. Using the order to stop motorhomes from using newly included parking areas and thereby further reducing where they can park, especially in reference to the impact on tourism, retail and catering businesses.
3. 71% of respondents agreed to some extent with reducing the 'waiting time' to 23 hours for all car parks and parking areas. Those that disagreed had concerns about:
  - a. Residents would not be able to use the car park for residential parking and leave their car in place when sick, when on holiday, over weekends, when working at home, in order to reduce road congestion. Of particular mention were Burwash, where recently added double yellow lines reduced on-street parking and the Manor Barn car park in Bexhill.
  - b. The ability of the Council to enforce the order.
  - c. Reducing waiting time would impact on tourism.
  - d. There was no need to change current arrangements.
  - e. Using the 23 hour limit to reduce use by motorhome/camper van owners.
4. Specific car parks that received the most comments were the two Burwash car parks, Little Common, Old Town (Bexhill) and the Battle car parks.
5. We received a few suggestions that the Council was asked to consider at the same time as reviewing the parking order. These were:
  - a. Regulations for electric vehicle charging points for if and when such points were made available and reviewing placing solar panels over car parks.
  - b. Reviewing allowing blue badge holders to park for free in bays for the disabled.
  - c. Improving the definition of 'unladen weight'.
  - d. Co-ordinating car park enforcement with on-street enforcement.
  - e. Providing short term free-use for parking to use public conveniences located in car parks with charges.
  - f. Considering offering permits to NHS workers visiting patients.
  - g. Providing one motorhome space in each of the village car parks, with a one night stay limit.

## Background and Introduction

1. The current Parking Places Order (PPO) covers the management of all Rother District Council owned car parks listed within the PPO. It was created in 1983. The PPO gives the Council the authority to enforce against any breaches to the PPO's regulations on any of its land included in the PPO. Since 1983, the council had created a further 20 variations to the PPO.
2. The PPO needed to be brought up to date to accommodate changes in how customers use our car parks. As an example, the current (1983) Parking Places Order does not make reference to new electronic and online methods of payment that are now available for customers to use in some of our car parks. Some amenity car parks and parking areas are not currently covered by the PPO. It makes enforcement more difficult and slower, which affects other users. Some examples of problems that can happen in car parks and parking areas are vehicles parked over multiple bays, parking over a long period of time and not leaving, living in a vehicle and trading or running a business in the parking area without permission. This affects access to parking for other users. The changes the Council proposed would require another five variations to the existing PPO. Cabinet decided the best way to proceed was to create a new PPO; Cabinet Minute CB18/45 refers.
3. Car park users, nearby businesses or organisations, other services and residents might be affected by proposed changes so the decision was taken by the Council to consult; Cabinet minute CB18/45 refers. The purpose of the consultation was to find out any other information that Members should take into account before making a decision about the content of a new PPO. This would include evidence of unintended consequences or if a change to the order might be unfair or discriminatory.
4. We consulted on the proposed changes to the PPO. The consultation started on Friday, 17 May and closed on Friday, 26 July and was open for 10 weeks. The main two changes and therefore the focus of the consultation questions were:
  - a. All car parks and parking areas under Rother District Council will be brought under the new Parking Places Order.
  - b. Most of the car parks and parking areas will have the maximum waiting period changed from 24 hours to 23 hours.
5. In addition, we drew to the attention of participants our proposals on access for campervans or motorhomes. There was an opportunity to comment on how the proposed PPO and schedules applied to specific car parks and parking areas.
6. It was made clear on the website that we were not consulting on charges in car parks. We also stated the consultation was about off-street parking on land owned and managed by Rother District Council and not about on-street parking because on-street parking was not this Council's responsibility, either now or in the future. Nowhere in this consultation was it proposed to add charges to all or some car parks or parking areas. However, statements on the webpage and in the online questionnaire pointed out the consequence that extending the PPO to the remainder of the car parks or parking areas meant the Council could apply the powers given in the PPO to them. That included the power to

bring in charges to some of the free car parks or parking areas, once they are included in the PPO.

## **Who We Invited to Consult and How They Were Invited**

7. We identified the following groups might be affected, positively or negatively by proposed changes to the PPO or who might wish to propose other changes. They are:
  - a. Businesses, organisations representing groups of businesses, local groups and organisations because they may be affected by customers, users or members using nearby car parks.
  - b. East Sussex County Council as the highways authority because car parks can have an effect on on-street car parking.
  - c. Car park users themselves because they are directly affected.
  - d. Camper van/motor home owners who use parking areas or are excluded from parking areas newly included in the PPO.
  - e. Town and parish councils, especially those with RDC owned car parks in their villages, and residents and neighbourhood associations because their residents will be directly affected.
  - f. Groups and organisations that represent or work with people who may have difficulties accessing services and need to use local car parks, for example using disabled parking bays.
  
8. We made a general invitation to consult to users, residents and visitors via –
  - a. My Alerts email to 16,384 residents (approximately just over a third of all Rother households) on week commencing 10 June and a reminder My Alerts notice at one week before the closing date.
  - b. Media release on launch.
  - c. Social media notifications on the Council's Facebook account and Twitter accounts for Rother District Council @RotherDC and Rother's consultation Twitter account @RDCconsult. Our tweets from the consultation account were read over 6,000 times (total of 6,041 impressions). We asked Councillors with social media accounts to remind residents that there was one week left to consult.
  - d. Website article on the consultation page on the Council's website.
  - e. Laminated notices displayed at all suitable car parks and parking areas and included information on where to find the consultation website.
  
9. We gave personal invitations to consult by emailing the following groups and individuals. Those who had not responded received a reminder shortly before the closing date. Three organisations responded and their full response is provided as appendices at the end of this report. This is the invitation list:
  1. 1066 Cycle Club
  2. Action in Rural Sussex
  3. Age UK – East Sussex
  4. All parish and town councils in Rother
  5. Association of Carers
  6. Battle and District Chamber of Commerce
  7. Battle and District Riding Club
  8. Battle Area Community Transport
  9. Beautiful Battle
  10. Bexhill 100

11. Bexhill Caring Community
12. Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism
13. Bexhill Community Bus
14. Bexhill Environmental Group
15. Bexhill Heritage
16. Bexhill Old Town Preservation Society
17. Bexhill Ramblers Association
18. Bexhill Talking Newspaper
19. Bexhill Town Team/Bexhill Forward
20. Disabled Motoring UK
21. East Sussex Association of the Blind
22. Friends, Families, Travellers
23. Guestling & Pett Community Friends
24. Hastings and East Sussex Natural History Society
25. Hastings and Rother Disability Forum
26. Hastings and Rother Transport Action
27. Homeworks
28. Iden Field Trotters
29. Little Common and Cooden Business Association
30. Little Common and Old Town (Bexhill) GP Surgeries
31. Northiam Conservation Society
32. Northiam Footpaths Group
33. Optivo (housing association)
34. Orbit Homes (housing association)
35. Rother Association of Local Councils
36. Rother Citizens Panel membership
37. Rother Neighbourhood Watch
38. Rother Ramblers
39. Rother Seniors Forum
40. Rye Chamber of Commerce
41. Rye Conservation Society
42. Rye Partnership
43. Rye Runners
44. Sidley Community Association
45. Sussex Business Board
46. Tilling Green Residents Association

### **Responders to the Consultation**

10. We received 287 responses from local residents and car park users through our online survey. A further 12 respondents submitted their response by email. This means we had a total of 299 responses from the public. We also received two questions for more information by email from members of the public.
11. The following organisations made a written response –
  - Bexhill Old Town Preservation Society
  - Rye Conservation Society
  - Ticehurst Parish Council
12. In total we received 299 individual responses and from three local organisations (representing a number of individuals), which is 302 responses in total. Our target was to get at least 300 responses. Therefore, we achieved our target participation rate.