

Rother District Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 24 May 2021

Title: Recommendations of the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group

Report of: Head of Service – Neighbourhood Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor Field

Ward(s): All

Purpose of Report: To consider the recommendations arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26 April 2021, regarding the Recommendations of the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group. The minutes arising are reproduced below.

Decision Type: Key

Officer

Recommendation(s): It be **RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) Wainwright Road – Bexhill Gibbets Marsh – Rye and Lower Market – Battle be designated as ‘long stay’ car parks. The daily parking charge for Wainwright Road and Gibbets Marsh be reduced from £5 to £2 per day and for Lower Market to £3 per day, for both summer and winter as soon as reasonably practicable to encourage usage of these less used ‘out of town’ car parks;
- 2) the chargeable hours be brought into line across all car parks as soon as reasonably practicable, with charging starting at 8:00am and finishing at 7:00pm;
- 3) signage be installed to promote parking at Gibbets Marsh – Rye, Little Common – Bexhill, Lower Market – Battle and Wainwright Road – Bexhill car parks to improve visibility of the facility as ‘long stay’; and
- 4) a cash and card payment machine be installed at Manor Gardens car park.

Reasons for

Recommendations: To encourage increased useage of Rother District Council’s off-street car parks.

OSC20/57. **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFF-STREET CAR PARKS TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

Members received and considered the report of the Head of Service Neighbourhood Services which detailed the recommendations of the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group (OSCPT&FG). Councillor

Cook, Chairman of the OSCPT&FG, thanked Members of the Group for their hard work and paid tribute to the officers involved for their support.

The OSCPT&FG was established in October 2020 to monitor the impact of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) on the level of use of Council owned off-street car parks and consider any changes to charges, hours of operation and permits, whilst taking into account the need to generate sufficient revenue to maintain the car parks.

The OSCPT&FG had met on four occasions during the six months since it was established in October 2020, received a number of presentations from officers advising on monthly car park income data and the current car park usage compared to previous years. Further information was gathered from Parish and Town Councils (P&TCs), local businesses, community groups and sports clubs most likely to be impacted by CPE and the use of car parks, via a written 'call for evidence'.

The 'call for evidence' from P&TCs, local businesses, community groups and sports clubs most likely to be impacted by CPE and the use of car parks, elicited a total of 40 responses up to the closing date of 12 March 2021. The report summarised the main findings, but it was noted by Members that this information together with car park usage data did not provide an accurate base on which to make decisions due to the third COVID-19 lockdown being in place from December 2020 to April 2021, which had severely restricted people's movements and therefore the level of use of car parks. It was therefore suggested in the report that the monitoring of car parks usage should continue throughout the summer until October 2021.

Members of the OSCPT&FG felt that some immediate benefit may be derived from designating some less used 'out of town' car parks for 'long stay' and encouraging all day workers to use them by improving signage and bringing the parking charges more in line with nearby on-road charges. Car parks for consideration were Wainwright Road – Bexhill, Gibbets Marsh – Rye and Lower Market – Battle.

Users of the Manor Gardens car park in Bexhill could only pay for parking using RingGo. Despite introducing payment facilities into a nearby shop, evidence collected to date showed strong demand for the ability to pay by cash or card using a payment machine in this car park; the OSCPT&FG recommended a machine be installed. The cost of purchasing and installing a pay and display terminal in a car park was approximately £6,000. The OSCPT&FG also recommended a thorough review of the usage of Manor Garden car park be conducted and consideration be given to the appropriate level of charges.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and the following points were noted during the discussions:

- Members were pleased to note that the Camber Sands car parks showed an increase in usage when compared with the previous years;

- the recommended decrease in charges for those car parks to be designated as 'long stay' was to encourage users to park a little further out of town if visiting for longer, providing more opportunity in the centre for those users wishing to park for a short time;
- Members were pleased to see the recommendations in respect of Manor Gardens car park, which had been highlighted as having particular problems for users; and
- those car parks to be designated as 'long stay' were severely underused. Members agreed that a decrease in charges would increase income by encouraging usage and improve the street scene in the surrounding areas.

Members of the Committee were supportive of all the OSCPT&FG's recommendations and thanked the Members for their work to date.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group continue beyond April 2021 to encompass the Civil Parking Enforcement review and that the revised Terms of Reference attached at Appendix 1 be agreed to reflect the group's wider remit;
- 2) the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group continue its monitoring work under the revised Terms of Reference to both inform the East Sussex County Council led review of Civil Parking Enforcement and to recommend changes to off-street parking to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2022;
- 3) the monitoring work of the impact of Civil Parking Enforcement on off-street parking be continued until October 2021 to allow for further evidence gathering and data analysis over a 12 month period to provide a more accurate reflection on car park usage but will be dependent on the COVID-19 situation in the next six months;
- 4) the installation of improved signage in relevant car parks detailing the availability of Council car parking permits to encourage uptake, be noted; and
- 5) a thorough review of the usage and appropriate level of charges for Manor Garden car park be conducted.

(Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda Item 5).

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	No	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
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Appendices:	N/A

Relevant previous Minutes:	OSC17/51 CB20/45
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Background Papers: Reference Documents:	Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee N/A
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