

Rother District Council

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	27 March 2023
Title:	Recommendations of the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group
Report of:	Deborah Kenneally, Head of 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 13 March 2023, regarding the recommendations of the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group. The report and recommendations arising are reproduced below and the Minutes of that meeting (Appendix D) should be read in conjunction with this report.
Decision Type:	Non-Key

Overview and Scrutiny

Recommendation(s): It be **RESOLVED:** That Cabinet be requested to consider that:

- 1) the formal response to East Sussex County Council, attached at Appendix A to the report, regarding the proposed changes to Civil Parking Enforcement across the district following their annual 'informal' consultation, be approved;
- 2) increased directional signage at the De La Warr Pavilion car park, signposting users to Wainwright Road car park, and the installation of additional signage for Gibbet Marsh, Rye and Lower Market Battle car parks promoting use as 'all day/long stay' parking, with final wording and location to be approved by East Sussex Council; and
- 3) officers investigate the issue of shared Houses of Multiple Occupation and whether there is anything that can be done to increase the number of parking permits permissible in these circumstances.

Introduction

1. This report summarises the work of the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group (OSCPT&FG) since previously reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 24 January 2022 (Minute OSC21/45 refers).

Background

2. Since the introduction of CPE in October 2020, the OSCPT&FG, which was established in October 2020, has reported twice to OSC (26 April 2021 and 24

January 2022) regarding the impact of CPE on the level of use of Council owned off-street car parks, and recommended changes to charges, hours of operation and permits, whilst taking into account the need to generate sufficient revenue to maintain the car parks. Various changes were recommended to Cabinet and agreed (Minute CB21/06 and CB21/91 refer).

3. The OSCPT&FG, which was initially established for six months and then extended to 12 months to take into account the changing use in car parks across both the summer and winter seasons, was also asked to provide a formal written response on behalf of the Council to be considered as part of ESCC's first annual review of CPE, which closed on 30 September 2021. Members also submitted individual responses to the review and, through the use of MyAlerts and social media, residents were encouraged to do likewise. ESCC reported that a total of nearly 1000 responses were received compared to a usual level of response expected of c300.
4. At their meeting of 24 January 2022, OSC agreed that the OSCPT&FG's original Terms of Reference had been met, but that the Terms of Reference be amended to allow OSCPT&FG to be reconvened at a later date to review usage of Manor Gardens car park and ESCC's response to the CPE annual review. This was subsequently agreed by Cabinet on 28 Feb 2022
5. Since February 2022, offices have met monthly on an informal basis with the Chair of the OSCPT&FG to review progress, and then with the OSCPT&FG on 26 September 2022.

Review of Manor Gardens car park

6. The group reviewed Manor Gardens car park data and general update on revenue collected since the payment machine was installed in November 2021. Prior to the machine's installation, visitors were able to pay at site using RingGo or by walking to the nearby convenience store to use cash or card. The new payment machine enables users of the car park to pay on site by contactless, card or cash in addition to the RingGo App.
7. Income from customers paying to park from October 2020 to August 2022 inclusive was £41,908.
 - Income from permit sales during the same period was £8,113.
 - Income from fines to date is £860.
8. It was agreed that the payment machine has improved service and will prove a popular method of payment.
9. A moratorium remains in place for school 'drop offs' and 'pick ups' and local Doctors' surgery flu clinics.
10. It was agreed that further encouragement would be given to residents and the locally employed to apply for parking permits, including the Doctors' Surgery. The Council has a duty to its council tax payers to ensure that assets pay for themselves and that users of services pay for them.

Assessment of ESCC's proposed changes to CPE first annual review

11. Rother District Council wrote to ESCC CPE Team on 1 March 2022 in response to ESCC's on-street CPE first year public consultation. The letter set out the OSCPT&FG's observations on the first year's parking restrictions for ESCC's consideration as part of the annual review as shown in the letter attached at Appendix B.
12. The letter concluded that CPE was felt to have been well received in the town centres and feedback from the Police was positive. It was noted anecdotally that reduced levels of town centre congestion and parking issues were evident, with improved availability of short-term parking on central urban streets due to restricted waiting times. On-street tariffs were felt to be fair and reasonable.
13. Following the public consultation process above and having considered members of the public and Councillors' submissions, ESCC completed an informal public consultation (which ran from 22 July 2022 until 12 August 2022) on their proposed changes to the existing parking restrictions and the introduction of additional measures, such as double yellow lines where appropriate.
14. Members of the OSCPT&FG were encouraged to submit their responses to the proposed changes directly to the ESCC Rother Parking Review, and to the OSCPT&FG for discussion at their meeting on 26 September 2022.
15. Taking each of the points raised in the letter dated 1 March 2022 in turn, it was agreed by the OSCPT&FG that many of the items raised in the letter had been addressed and included in the proposed changes.
16. Concerns were raised by Councillors on some aspects- items 1 to 6 listed below - and which they referred individually to ESCC as part of the consultation process. (Officers have sought clarity from ESCC on items 1, 3 and 6 as shown in italics):
 1. Extending on-street parking restrictions from 6pm to 8pm might have an impact on the evening economy and catering businesses in the town centre— *ESCC state that feedback from residents suggests they are struggling to park when they return home from work. It is proposed to change the new and existing areas of zones C, W, N and the extension to zone E to 8pm. The section of zone E above Magdalen Road remains unchanged.*

It was noted that the charging period for Rother District Council charged car parks was from 8am until 7pm and this had been standardised across the three main towns (Battle, Bexhill and Rye) when the Parking Places Order was varied in September 2021.
 2. Belle Hill may experience displacement parking as not included in restrictions.

Zone E becoming Zone C – concerns raised regarding overspill from existing Zone C residents. *It is felt by ESCC that the changes to Zone C boundary, including extending the hours from 6pm to 8pm and changing*

some bays to permit holders only, will increase available spaces for residents.

4. Request for more double yellow lines in various locations including Old Town.
5. Request to increase restrictions in Beeching Road.
6. Permits restricted to only two cars in each House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) resulting in some residents unable to obtain a permit. *ESCC use the Council Tax Register for permit eligibility, with a maximum of two permits per property. In an HMO, for each 'room' to be eligible for a permit each person would need to be registered on the council tax register.*
17. A letter has been drafted, as attached at Appendix A, in response to the ESCC changes and includes reference to the above areas of concern for their further consideration.
18. ESCC has confirmed that they received an overwhelming response of some 1300 submissions to the informal consultation which are being reviewed and these will then form the proposals for the formal consultation, and any unresolved objections will go to planning committee. ESCC confirm that the formal consultation process went live on 24 February 2023 for 21 days; objections, if any, will be addressed; planning committee submission is planned for June 2023, followed by implementation of the changes as soon as possible thereafter, allowing for legal processes, clear roads, weather conditions etc. It should be noted that the timescales are dependant largely on the nature and number of objections received to the proposed changes.

Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference

19. Members considered their Terms of Reference and agreed that these had been fulfilled, with one further report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in early 2023. No further meetings were considered necessary and it is recommended that the OFCPT&FG be disbanded.
20. All other issues relating to the day-to-day operational management of car parks would be dealt with as "business as usual", liaising with and responding to concerns of local Ward Members. The annual 'fees and charges report' that goes to cabinet in December each year provides a mechanism for the review of car park charges.

Conclusion

21. Manor Garden car park payment machine has improved accessibility for contactless, card and cash payments in the car park.
22. The OSCPT&FG concluded that the majority of the changes proposed by ESCC to CPE have been well received by most residents and Councillors. Individuals have raised their concerns on certain aspects in 1 to 6 above through the consultation process and await further confirmation from ESCC as to the final outcome.

Legal Implications

23. There is no impact on Rother District Council (Off -Street) Parking Places Order 2020 (PPO) but the proposed name change of Manor Barn Gardens car park to Manor Gardens car park will need to form part of a future variation to the PPO.

Environment

24. Local congestion is reduced, and the environment improved by a reduction in noise and air pollution in urban areas.

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

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
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Appendices:	Appendix A – Letter to ESCC Appendix B – Letter to ESCC dated 1 March 2022 Appendix C – Terms of Reference Appendix D – Minute Extract OSC 13 March 2023
Relevant previous Minutes:	OSC21/45 CB21/06 CB21/91
Background Papers:	N/A
Reference Documents:	N/A

Your ref:
Our ref: DK
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Date: 14 March 2023



East Sussex County Council
Civil Parking Enforcement

Malcolm Johnston MBA MSc
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Chief Executive

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Bexhill-on-Sea
East Sussex TN39 3JX

Dear Sir/Madam

RESPONSE TO PROPOSED CHANGES INCLUDED IN CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT REVIEW JULY/AUGUST 2022

I write to you as the Head of Service Neighbourhood Services for Rother District Council (RDC) and as lead officer for RDC Off-Street Car Parks Task & Finish Group (OSCP T&FG). The OSCP T&FG was established in October 2020 to review the impact of the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) on Council owned car parks across the district, and to inform the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) CPE annual review on general issues that have been raised directly to the group by stakeholders regarding on-street parking.

Since its inception, the OSCP T&FG has met on more than ten occasions throughout the last twenty-four months to consider car park data, including levels of revenue, visitor numbers, and most popular hours of use. In addition, two 'calls for evidence' have been completed, inviting parish and town councils, local businesses, community groups and sports clubs to comment on if and how off-street car parking used by their community, stakeholders and staff may have been impacted by the introduction of on-street CPE.

In my previous letter to you, dated 1 March 2022, RDC set out the following observations on a formal basis for your consideration during the first annual review conducted in October 2021 as follows:

1. Overall, CPE has been well received in the town centres and feedback from the Police is positive.
2. It was noted that reduced levels of town centre congestion and parking issues are evident anecdotally, with improved availability of short-term parking on central urban streets due to restricted waiting times.
3. On-street tariffs are felt to be fair and reasonable.
4. Consideration be given to increasing the number of enforcement officers on peak visitor days, particularly in Camber.
5. Hours of enforcement be flexible to cover special events later into the evenings.
6. Seasonal enforcement be considered for Herbrand Walk Bexhill, Camber and Military Road Rye.
7. Streets with time-limited bays were inefficient and costly to enforce, as officers must note time of parking and return to monitor. Therefore, consideration be

given to extending the number of resident permit bays and decreasing number of time limited bays.

8. Consideration be given to resolving inappropriate and displacement parking both within and outside the restricted zones in particular Brockley Road; Wickham Avenue, Millfield Rise, Belle Hill, Amherst Road, Cantelupe Road, Woodville Road, and Lionel Road, Bexhill; Military Road, Rye.
9. Make 'time limited' free parking bays all two hours across the district.
10. Consideration be given to roads surrounding Egerton Park, Bexhill being given restricted parking, and a coach drop-off point and disabled parking near to the drop kerb area outside Bexhill museum.
11. Ticehurst Village and Hurst Green be considered for future extension to the CPE scheme.
12. Enforcement of inappropriate parking on 'yellow lines' be increased in villages, in particular Etchingham and Burwash where commuter parking at railway stations causes frequent congestion.
13. Extend double yellow lines from Camber Sands village along Camber Road on both sides to the A259.

RDC has discussed and collated feedback from their individual submissions to the informal consultation held by ESCC in July/August 2022, and also direct feedback from residents regarding in particular the items raised above and RDC wish to add their response as follows, taking each of the above points in number sequence:

1. The OSCP T&FG feel that most changes suggested in ESCC informal consultation are warmly received, with the possible one exception of extending the restrictions in Bexhill town streets from 6pm to 8pm.
2. Levels of congestion remain reduced from pre-CPE levels and should be further supported by the proposed changes.
3. Parking tariffs remain at the same level and are felt to be fair and reasonable.
4. Enforcement officers can be redirected to areas of concern by direct contact with ESCC enforcement team.
5. As in point 4 above, ESCC enforcement officers can be directed to cover special events.
6. As in point 4 above, ESCC enforcement officers can be directed to cover peak season issues.
7. Residents permit only parking bays have been extended in many areas, and time limited bays have been reduced proportionately.
8. Previous displacement parking now addressed by the extending of parking restrictions to many areas mentioned.
9. Time limited free parking mostly 2 hours except for Buckhurst Road (between Amherst Road and New Park Avenue) which is 4 hours.
10. Coach drop off point now included, as with disabled parking and other restrictions.
11. This request has been noted by ESCC for future consideration.
12. The request for more enforcement against parking on double yellow lines has been noted by ESCC.
13. Double yellow lines have been extended at Camber along A259.

RDC acknowledges that many of the items raised in the letter have been addressed and included in the proposed changes.

However, RDC wishes to raise concerns on certain aspects. These concerns have been referred individually by members of the OSCPT&FG to ESCC as part of the July/August 2022 consultation process and includes items i. to vi. below.

Note: Clarification has been provided by ESCC on some changes and this is included in italics where relevant.

- i. **Extending parking restrictions from 6pm to 8pm** -in order to be consistent across the district RDC changed the chargeable hours in its Off-street car parks from 8pm to 7pm in October 2020 to match the on-street parking restrictions. Members are concerned that restricting parking to 8pm may deter people from coming into the town in the evenings. -ESCC state that feedback from residents suggests they are struggling to park when they return home from work. It is proposed to change the new and existing areas of zones C, W, N and the extension to zone E to 8pm. The section of zone E above Magdalen Road remains unchanged.
- ii. **Belle Hill** may experience displacement parking as not included in the parking restrictions.
- iii. **Zone E becoming Zone C** - concerns raised regarding overspill from existing Zone C residents. It is felt by ESCC that the changes to Zone C boundary, including extending the hours from 6pm to 8pm and changing some bays to 'permit holders only', will increase available spaces for residents.
- iv. **Request for more double yellow** lines in various locations including Old Town. Congestion has increased noticeably as drivers look for free parking on-road.
- v. **Request to increase restrictions** in Beeching Road.
- vi. **Permits restricted to only two cars** in each House in Multiple Occupation resulting in some residents unable to obtain a permit. *ESCC use the council tax register for permit eligibility, with a maximum of two permits per property. In an HMO, for each 'room' to be eligible for a permit each person would need to be registered on the council tax register.*

Most changes proposed by ESCC have been well received by RDC and anecdotally by many residents. However, we trust that the above comments will be noted and considered for future action, along with the feedback gained from the informal consultation.

RDC understands that ESCC received some 1300 responses to the informal consultation and that these will inform the final proposals for the formal consultation, and any unresolved objections will then go to planning committee.

We understand that the final changes to the CPE scheme will be implemented following the formal consultation process in February/March 2023, and we look forward to seeing the results during the summer.

Yours faithfully



Deborah Kenneally
Head of Services Neighbourhood Services

Rother District Council

OFF-STREET CAR PARKS TASK AND FINISH GROUP



Terms of Reference

Aims and Origin

- To review the level of use of Manor Gardens car park since a payment machine was installed in October 2021.

To review East Sussex County Council's (ESCC) response to the Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) first annual review which ended on 30 September 2021. On behalf of Rother District Council provide a draft written response to ESCC's improvements to the CPE scheme for approval.

In September 2020 ESCC introduced Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE). CPE introduced charging to certain on-street parking locations throughout Bexhill, Rye and Battle, along with restrictions to residents and visitors parking in other streets without charges. On-street charging will not apply to other areas of the district, but other restrictions such as yellow lines may apply.

The introduction of CPE was felt likely to increase the use off-street car parks under the Council's ownership. Increased usage would have an impact on the accessibility of car parks for local businesses and residents as well as increase the maintenance and enforcement costs to the Council.

The Off-Street Car Parks Task & Finish Group (OSCP T&FG) reviewed data regarding levels of car park use and consumer feedback over the last 12 months and made various recommendations which have been implemented following agreement by Overview and Scrutiny Committee and approval by Cabinet. It is considered that this work is now complete other than monitoring the level of use at Manor Gardens car park following the installation of the payment machine.

It was also felt likely that on-street parking restrictions introduced as part of CPE scheme would result in displacement parking and increased congestion of roads without parking restrictions.

Residents, businesses and the community at large were invited to submit feedback to ESCC on suggested changes to the scheme. Following the first 12 months

since implementation of CPE and ESCC's subsequent review of the feedback, it is appropriate for OSCP T& FG to review ESCC's proposed changes to engender improvements to the current scheme.

Scope

- a) Review data regarding levels of use of Manor Gardens car park before and after the payment machine was installed in October 2021.
- b) Review ESCC's response to the CPE annual review and consider their proposed changes to improve the scheme.

Desired Outcome

- Evidence of the effective and appropriate levels of use in Manor Gardens car park.
- Improved use of 'charged for' on street parking
- Reduced congestion on unrestricted roads to support delivery of services such as waste collections and community buses.
- Improved parking availability for residents on unrestricted roads.
- Local environment improved by a reduction in noise and air pollution.

Timescale

- OSCP T&FG to reconvene in October 2022
- Report back to OSC – February 2023

Membership

Minimum of 6 Members - TBC

Officer Lead

Deborah Kenneally

Quorum

Two

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Meeting – 13 March 2023**OSC22/57. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFF-STREET CAR PARKS TASK
(8) AND FINISH GROUP**

Members considered the report of the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group (OSCPT&FG) which summarised the work since the last report in January 2022 and final recommendations of the Group in reviewing usage of Manor Gardens car park and East Sussex County Council's (ESCC) response to the Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) annual review. Since February 2022, officers had met monthly on an informal basis with the Chair of the OSCPT&FG to review progress, and then with the OSCPT&FG on 26 September 2022.

The Group had reviewed Manor Gardens car park data and received a general update on revenue collected since the payment machine was installed in November 2021. The Group agreed that the payment machine had improved service and would prove a popular method of payment. A moratorium remained in place for school 'drop offs' and 'pick ups' and local Doctors' surgery flu clinics, which worked well.

In March 2022 the Council had responded to ESCC's on-street CPE first year public consultation that had concluded that CPE was felt to have been well received in the town centres and feedback from the Police was positive.

Following the public consultation process ESCC completed an informal public consultation (which ran from 22 July until 12 August 2022) on their proposed changes to the existing parking restrictions and the introduction of additional measures, such as double yellow lines where appropriate. Members of the OSCPT&FG were encouraged to submit their responses to the proposed changes directly to the ESCC Rother Parking Review, and to the OSCPT&FG for discussion at their meeting on 26 September 2022.

The Group agreed that many points raised had been addressed and included in the proposed changes but concerns were raised by some Members, as detailed in the report. Clarity had since been sought from ESCC on three of the points raised and ESCC's response was shown in the report.

Attached at Appendix A to the report was Rother's proposed formal response to the ESCC changes and includes reference to the areas of concern for their further consideration.

ESCC had received an overwhelming response (some 1,300 submissions) to the informal consultation, which following review, would form the proposals for the formal consultation; any unresolved objections would go to ESCC Planning Committee, scheduled to take place in June 2023.

As the Group's Terms of Reference had been fulfilled it was agreed to recommend that the OFCPT&FG be disbanded. All other issues relating to the day-to-day operational management of car parks would be dealt

with as “business as usual”, liaising with and responding to concerns of local Ward Members. The annual ‘fees and charges report’ submitted to Cabinet in December each year would provide the mechanism for the review of car park charges.

The Chair of the Group, Councillor Cook thanked the Members and officers for the excellent work carried out by this Member-led Group; a minor amendment to recommendation 2) concerning signage was proposed and agreed. It was also requested by the local Members present that improved signage be provided for Little Common Car Park and directional signage at Canada Way to the Sidley car park, which was noted.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet be requested to consider that:

- 1) the formal response to East Sussex County Council, attached at Appendix A to the report, regarding the proposed changes to Civil Parking Enforcement across the district following their annual ‘informal’ consultation, be approved;
- 2) increased directional signage at the De La Warr Pavilion car park, signposting users to Wainwright Road car park, and the installation of additional signage for Gibbet Marsh, Rye and Lower Market Battle car parks promoting use as ‘all day/long stay’ parking, with final wording and location to be approved by East Sussex Council;
- 3) officers investigate the issue of shared Houses of Multiple Occupation and whether there is anything that can be done to increase the number of parking permits permissible in these circumstances;

AND

It be **RESOLVED:** That:

- 4) the outcome of the East Sussex County Council Parking Review and implementation date be confirmed to all Members as soon as possible; and
- 5) the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group be disbanded as the Terms of Reference have been met.

(Councillor Field declared a Personal Interest in this matter as an elected Member of East Sussex County Council and a member of the Planning Committee that considers Road Traffic Orders and in accordance with the Members’ Code of Conduct remained in the meeting during the consideration thereof).