

Policy & Resources Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	20 March 2024
Report Title	Parking Policy Report
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins – Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell – Head of Leisure & Environment Philip Sutcliffe – Communications & Policy Manager
Lead Officer	Janet Dart – Policy & Engagement Officer
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To adopt the Parking Policy at Appendix I. 2. To note the £38k shortfall in income following the decision by Community Committee not to implement pay and display charges at the Library, Queenborough and Park Road, Queenborough, and Little Oyster in Minster, Isle of Sheppey car parks. 3. To identify how the shortfall of £38k in revenue income should be addressed in order to balance the budget for 2024-2025. 4. To balance any shortfall that cannot be recovered in other ways by the use of reserves.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report recommends the final Parking Policy to Policy & Resources Committee for adoption. The Policy was endorsed by the Community Committee on 6 March 2024.
- 1.2 Members are asked to note the £38k shortfall in income following the decision by Community Committee not to implement pay and display charges at the Library, Queenborough and Park Road, Queenborough, and Little Oyster in Minster Isle of Sheppey car parks. The Committee are also asked to identify how the £38k shortfall in revenue income, should be addressed in order to balance the budget for 2024-2025, and agree that officers dedicate time to investigating options.
- 1.3 To agree that any shortfall that cannot be recovered through increases in income or other savings be funded by a contribution from reserves, up to the value of £38k.

2 Background

- 2.1 At the Community Committee meeting on 27 June 2023, the Committee agreed that a Parking Policy Member Working Group (PPMWG) be set up. The PPMWG discussed and agreed the proposed scope of the Parking Policy and worked with officers to carry out a review of parking with a view to develop a draft policy to go out to public consultation.
- 2.2 The Community Committee agreed that the membership of the Working Group should be drawn from the Community Committee with one representative from each political group, plus the Chair. Following nominations from group leaders, the Working Group is made up of the following Members:
- Councillor Richard Palmer - Chair
 - Councillor Elliott Jayes
 - Councillor Pete Neal
 - Councillor Hannah Perkin
 - Councillor Terry Thompson
 - Councillor Tony Winckless
- 2.3 The Parking Policy Working Group met to agree the scope of the review and officers took a report to Community Committee on 6 September 2023 when the following scope was agreed:
- Review of our existing tariff compared to others in Kent;
 - Consider differential town centre and out of town centre parking charges;
 - Consider if we should be charging in all car parks;
 - Review evening parking – different models and tariffs;
 - Consider if we should be charging for motorcycle parking;
 - Consider if we should increase the times of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) to protect residential areas;
 - Set policy for use of range of payment types – cash/card/telephone/Apps;
 - Set out the principles we will follow for Enforcement and;
 - Consider links to climate emergency (cleaner vehicles/active travel).
- 2.4 The PPMWG met to consider the following data to assist with reviewing the parking service with a view to making recommendations for the draft policy:
- Income from evening charges;
 - the usage of all Swale Borough Council (SBC) car parks;
 - a list of all free and chargeable car parks in Swale;
 - benchmarking of non-SBC car parks in Swale; and
 - the charging times and charges of car parks in other Kent districts.
- 2.5 The Chair of the PPMWG attended each of the four Area Committee meetings in September 2023 and presented the scope of the review and asked if the scope was right and if anything was missing. The PPMWG met to review the feedback before making their recommendations for the draft Parking Policy.

- 2.6 Members of the Working Group met with their political groups to seek their feedback on options for evening charges, motorcycle charging, differential charging and links to the climate emergency.
- 2.7 The PPMWG met on 2 October 2023 to review all feedback and make final decisions for recommendations to be included in the draft Parking Policy.
- 2.8 The Community Committee agreed on 31 October 2023 that the draft Parking Policy should go out to public consultation for 8 weeks. The consultation was publicised using a variety of methods. There were regular posts on social media. Business and voluntary organisations newsletters included items on the consultation and details about how to view and respond. Parish/town council clerks were emailed direct with a link to the consultation. Partner organisations were also emailed direct.
- 2.9 The PPMWG met on Monday 15 January 2024 to consider the responses to the public consultation and recommended the following changes to the draft Parking Policy:
- Under the Active Travel and Environmental issues, bullet 2 should be amended to read “*civil enforcement officers have a low carbon footprint*”;
 - The section on Motorcycle parking will be amended to state that “*there will be no charge for motorcycles to use the dedicated bays in some car parks.*”
 - The typing error on page 8, under Controlled parking zones, will be corrected to read “*This process can take around 12 months.*”; and
 - The typing error on page 13, under Appeals will be corrected to read “*Although discretion cannot be considered by a CEO upon an observation of illegal parking, ...*”
- 2.10 As a large number of the responses to the public consultation were concerning charges, these were fed into the PPMWG.
- 2.11 The PPMWG were concerned how people using the car parks for short periods in the evenings could be worse off with the proposal that went out to consultation for the 2024/25 budget which was for a fixed charge of £3 between 7 pm and 7 am. There was also a view of wanting to resolve the need for people parking in a short stay car park in early evening needing to return and move their car due to the maximum stay period of 4 hours.
- 2.12 To solve both of these issues, an alternative proposal was put forward to keep the current system of hourly charges but instead of ending at midnight, the charging period should end at 10 pm. This proposal was agreed at the Community Committee meeting on 6 March 2024.
- 2.13 The PPMWG reviewed the list of free car parks as part of their work. Three car parks were recommended by the PPMWG to have pay and display charges added. Library, Queenborough and Park Road Queenborough to operate on the standard tariff set out in fees and charges and the time periods mentioned earlier. Little Oyster in Minster was proposed to start charging the standard tariff, in the time period discussed above but between 1st March and 31st October each year.

- 2.14 Once Members agreed the three free car parks listed in 2.13 to become pay and display, SBC went to consult on them between 2 February 2024 and 26 February 2024, as per the statutory off-street parking orders. This led to various responses and petitions which were presented at Community Committee on 6 March 2024. In addition, there were representations at the Sheppey Area Committee meeting on 20 February 2024.
- 2.15 An amendment to the proposal set out in para 2.13 was submitted at the Community Committee on 6 March 2024 as follows: *“Remove the charges proposed at the Little Oyster (Minster), Park Road and the Library (Queenborough). This income would be replaced with: £24k saved by not purchasing 3 parking machines; charging at Swale House during week days and evening as we only charge at weekends currently; charge for Motorhomes on the Shingle Bank and Shellness Road. Ideally there would be chargeable space at Barton’s point as it has most the facilities; charge from coach parking at the new coach parking facility agreed to be installed opposite the shingle bank by the community committee on 1st March 2023; use the money that would be saved from connecting Barton’s point to mains drainage and now not having to pay to empty the cesspit to fund this shortfall; and use any income from Barton’s point this year to fund the shortfall.”* The amendment was voted on by the Community Committee and it was agreed not to proceed with the proposal to implement charges at the three car parks.
- 2.16 Some of the proposals relate to projects that are not underway at the moment or need further exploratory work so officers would need to develop a business case on each of the points and therefore cannot quantify accurately the options set out in the amendment at this point.
- 2.17 The proposal not to purchase 3 parking machines would not produce an ongoing revenue saving, as these would be a one-off capital cost, and would be funded from the Civil Enforcement reserve.
- 2.18 The Community Committee noted the shortfall of £38k in revenue income and recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee identify how the shortfall should be addressed in order to balance the budget for 2024-2025.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 To adopt the Parking Policy at Appendix I.
- 3.2 To note the £38k shortfall in income following the decision by Community Committee not to implement pay and display charges at the Library, Queenborough and Park Road, Queenborough, and Little Oyster in Minster Isle of Sheppey car parks.

- 3.3 To identify how the shortfall of £38k revenue income should be addressed in order to balance the budget for 2024-2025.
- 3.4 To balance any shortfall that cannot be recovered in other ways by the use of reserves.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 No alternative options were considered other than the ‘do nothing’ option. This was rejected because currently there is no Parking Policy and Members have requested that a review takes place, within the agreed scope, and a Policy agreed to give residents the reassurance that Swale Borough Council operate a fair parking service.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 SBC Members, Town and Parish Councillors and Members of the public were consulted at the September 2023 round of Area Committee meetings to seek feedback on what should be looked at as part of the Parking Policy review.
- 5.2 The PPMWG consulted with their political groups to seek their views on the options that were being considered.
- 5.3 An 8-week public consultation on the final draft of the Parking Policy was launched on 1 November 2023 and closed on 2 January 2024.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	None identified at this stage. The Corporate Plan is currently being updated and if any implications are identified, the Community Committee will be advised.
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>The income received from car parking is a key element of the Council’s budget and any decisions need to consider the Council’s medium term financial strategy. Any implications will need to be reported to Policy and Resources followed by Full Council.</p> <p>The decision by the Community Committee on 6 March 2024 not to proceed with the proposal to charge at the three car parks listed in paragraph 2.13 will impact the revenue budget by an estimated £38k in 2024/25. Work is being carried out to identify potential alternative income streams.</p>

	Any shortfall in income not able to recovered by additional income or alternative savings will be met from reserves up to the value of £38k.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Decisions will need to ensure we meet statutory legislation and guidance as set out in the Road Traffic Act 1984 and Traffic Management Act 2004.
Crime and Disorder	<p>During the policy development stage, due consideration was given to the community safety of residents.</p> <p>This year's changes to parking charges have resulted in some cases of displacement and concerns were raised by the Community Safety Partnership.</p> <p>The proposal in paragraph 2.12 gives residents the choice of more car parks, providing safer options for evening parking.</p>
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Decisions will need to support the climate emergency agenda aiming to improve air quality by reducing congestion.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Consideration was given to parking outside schools to ensure the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out during the Policy Development stage (see Appendix II).
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

Appendix I – Draft Parking Policy

Appendix II – Parking Policy Equality Impact Assessment

8 Background Papers

None.