

Report title	Parking Services Overview
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Department	Parking Services
Exempt?	No
Exemption type	Not Applicable
Reasons for exemption	Not Applicable

Purpose of report:

- **For information**

Synopsis of report:

This comprehensive overview of Parking services presents a data-driven roadmap to transform parking services in Runnymede Borough Council.

By utilising real-time usage analysis, we aim to:

- **To become a leader in sustainable and accessible parking.**
- **To offer a network of car parks with diverse options, including electric vehicle charging points and improved cycle parking.**
- **To promote a variety of transportation modes and prioritise sustainable options.**

Through these initiatives, Runnymede Borough Council can position itself as a leader in modern parking management, benefiting both residents and visitors alike.

Recommendation(s):

- **To note the contents of the Parking Overview Report**

1. Context and background of report

1.1 Runnymede Borough Council manages 27 off-street car parks, ensuring accessibility with free motor cycle parking as well as designated disabled parking spaces at each location.

- 1.2 There are 7 free open space car parks perfect for parkgoers, with an additional 6 car parks conveniently located near Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG). Homewood Park whilst being located near a SANG is fee paying due to the car park not being used solely for access to the SANG.
- 1.3 12 of the 14 remaining car parks are currently chargeable with Murray Road which is owned by Surrey County Council and Egham Library continuing to offer free parking.
- 1.4 Public car parks are an amenity provided by the Council for the convenience of the public. In shopping areas, they also encourage and maintain the viability of businesses but the income from the car parking charges is expected to, at least, cover the cost of providing and maintaining the car parks.
- 1.5 While income from only 45% of council-owned car parks currently covers the entire operational cost of all car parks, a balance must be struck between providing accessible open spaces and the financial burden of fully subsidising free parking.
- 1.6 To this end, a comprehensive Parking Services Overview report has been developed to provide a detailed understanding of off-street parking availability, management responsibilities, costs, and potential improvements.
- 1.7 This includes assessing how parking services can contribute to strategic objectives such as climate change mitigation and health and well-being promotion. The report and roadmap also explore innovative solutions for underutilised car parks, such as flexible parking permits and alternative uses, as well as investigating ways to achieve a more consistent approach to parking operations through a review of existing parking orders.

2. Report and, where applicable, options considered and recommended

- 2.1 The Council reviews its parking fees and charges each year and as part of that report, data on parking occupancy and revenue generated is included.
- 2.2 This year, the Council has undertaken an additional comprehensive review of its parking activities to complement the annual fees and charges report. This in-depth analysis focuses on key areas such as revenue generation, customer satisfaction, compliance with regulations, pricing strategies, capacity needs, infrastructure, development, and sustainable transport solutions. By providing a transparent and detailed report, the Council aims to demonstrate its commitment to effective parking management and accountability to the public. The findings of this review will inform a two-year roadmap of key considerations to improve the management and enforcement of publicly available parking within Runnymede Borough Council.
- 2.3 Due to the decentralised management of car parks across various Council directorates, it has been challenging to determine both the total operational cost accurately and why some car parks are contained within the Council's Off-Street Parking Orders and others are not. Furthermore, Business Rates have not been consistently applied to all fee-paying car parks, resulting in some free car parks being charged. A comprehensive review of all car parks will help establish a more equitable approach to these fees and provide a clearer understanding of overall operational costs and assist with aligning the operational management of each car park.
- 2.4 During 2024/25, the Council has invested heavily in upgrading and implementing new pay and display machines and Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) to improve customer experience and protect Council income. Fees were increased from 1

April 2024 for the first time in five years to ensure parking services remained self-financing.

2.5 Currently, only two of the seven open space car parks are included in the Council's Off-Street Parking Orders. To ensure consistency and effective management, all seven should be incorporated.

2.6 The Council currently supports four annual community events where parking charges are temporarily waived. While two of these waivers are formally recognised within the Council's constitution, the other two are approved by the Corporate Head under delegated authority. To streamline the process for future events and ensure consistency, it is recommended that a new section be added to the Off-Street Parking Orders to accommodate temporary waivers for specific annual community events. This waiver should be granted at the discretion of the Council and subject to the following conditions:

- Budget Constraints:
 - The cost of the waiver must be contained within the allocated budget for parking services
- Community Benefit:
 - The event must be deemed to provide a significant benefit to the local community.
- Prior Approval:
 - The event organizer must obtain prior approval from the Council for the waiver in sufficient time to allow the administrative actions to be undertaken.
- Specific Criteria:
 - The Council may establish specific criteria for determining eligibility for the waiver, such as the size of the event, the expected number of attendees, and the event's alignment with the Council's objectives

2.7 As part of the Parking Services key considerations, parking permits should be evaluated to enhance flexibility, affordability, and choice.

2.8 To ensure clarity and consistency within the Off-Street Parking Orders, it is recommended that:

- All return periods should be standardised to align with current practices, such as prohibiting returns for a specific duration (e.g. eight hours).
- Consistent maximum waiting periods should be established across all car parks, regardless of permit holder status or time of day.
- The definition and application of "all-day charges" should be standardised to avoid confusion and ensure fairness.

By standardising these elements, the Off-Street Parking Orders will be easier to understand and enforce, promoting fair and equitable use of parking spaces.

3. Policy framework implications

3.1 A data-driven approach to parking services can help the Council achieve its strategic goals of economic development, health and wellbeing, and climate change mitigation. By analysing parking usage patterns and implementing evidence-based solutions, we can optimize parking resources and improve the overall parking experience.

4 Resource implications/Value for Money

- 4.1 To monitor car park use, the Council would need to instal a further 7 pay and display machines at the various locations as well as new signage which could cost in the region of £25k. This cost could be funded from the Parking Reserve fund as a one-off cost and would be subject to a separate business case and committee report.

5 Legal implications

- 5.1 Section 35 of the Road Traffic Act 1984 allows Local Authorities to impose charges for parking, with Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) to enforce by designating car parks under the Act. These charges are contained within the Off-Street Parking Places Order 2008 (as amended).
- 5.2 Increases or variations in charges and other terms introduced by the Order can be made by issuing a Notice. The notice of any new charges or terms that are varied must be given in a local newspaper and in the affected car parks at least 21 days before they are implemented.

6 Equality implications

- 6.1 While the proposed parking reforms, including modest fee increases, evening and weekend charges, a recreational fee structure, and more flexible permits, aim to ensure the sustainability of public parking services, we are committed to maintaining accessibility for disabled users. There will be no reduction in the number of designated parking bays for disabled individuals, and we have no intention of charging disabled users for parking. These reforms are designed to be equitable and inclusive, ensuring that everyone can benefit from our public parking services.

7 Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 The Parking Services roadmap will focus on implementing data-driven decisions to improve parking management, including exploring the feasibility of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, introducing flexible parking permits, and implementing evening and overnight parking charges. These initiatives aim to enhance sustainability, reduce congestion, and provide more convenient parking options for residents and visitors alike.

8 Risk Implications

- 8.1 **Reduced Parking Usage:** Increasing parking charges, especially at recreational venues, could lead to a decrease in usage as people seek alternative activities or locations.
- 8.2 **Reduced Permit Take-Up:** Higher permit costs might deter some residents from purchasing them, leading to a loss of income.
- 8.3 **Loss of Income:** If the overall impact of the fee increases is negative, it could result in a net loss of income for the Council.
- 8.4 These risks can be mitigated by clear communication as to the reasons for the increases and the potential benefits to the community, such as improved parking facilities and continual investment in parking services.

8.5 Continuously monitor the impact of fee increases and align with neighbouring authorities to demonstrate equity of fees across the county.

8.6 Increased fee structure will not be implemented until 1 April 2025, giving residents plenty of notice of fee increases.

9 Other implications

9.1 Members should consider the long-term sustainability of the parking system and whether increased charges will generate sufficient revenue to maintain and improve parking facilities over time. By carefully considering these additional implications, councillors can make informed decisions about parking charge increases that balance the need for revenue with the broader goals of creating a sustainable, equitable, and vibrant community.

10 Timetable for Implementation

10.1 1 April 2025.

11 Conclusions

11.1 This report outlines a comprehensive roadmap to address the challenges facing the Council's parking services and ensure their long-term sustainability.

11.2 By implementing these measures, the Council can ensure that parking remains accessible and affordable for residents and visitors while also supporting the broader goals of economic development, health and wellbeing, and climate change mitigation.

12 Background papers

12.1 None

13 Appendices

Appendix A - Parking Overview Report