

# PARKING MODERNISATION & ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN

Briefing Report



## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I.1. On 7th July 2022 Cabinet approved for consultation on the Parking Modernisation and Environmental Plan containing a wide range of proposals set out to:

- Improve customer experience, the customer journey and access to services;
- Demonstrate our values as a Responsible Council in responding to the climate emergency.
- Support the Councils £9.8M investment in mobility hubs as part of a wider £58.8M Transforming Cities investment to encourage modal shift and a step change in our sustainable transport offer.
- Support the wider strategy for economic recovery and the city's recovery from COVID-19;
- Respond to the Councils potential £15m shortfall in our in-year 2022/23 budget and the substantial shortfall in resources needed to set a balanced budget for 2023/4, currently projected at £37.6m

I.2. This report summarises the outcome of the consultation (with detailed information found in appendix 1 and 2) and, in considering representations received during the consultation, recommendations for implementing proposals within the Parking Modernisation and Environmental Plan.

I.3. The Parking Modernisation and Environment Plan supports the Councils values, specifically: -

- **Democratic** – Plymouth is a place where people can have their say about what is important to them and where they are empowered to make change happen;
- **Responsible** – We are responsible for our actions; we are accountable for their impact on others and the environment and expect others to do the same;
- **Fair** – We will be honest and open in how we act. We will treat everyone with respect, champion fairness and create opportunities;
- **Collaborative** – We will provide strong community leadership, working with residents, communities, and businesses to deliver our common ambition.

I.4. The Parking Modernisation and Environment Plan supports the Councils values, specifically:

- Support a green, sustainable city that cares about the environment;
- Create a vibrant economy, developing quality jobs and skills;
- Create a varied, efficient, sustainable transport network;
- Create a friendly welcoming city.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. On the 07 July 2022 Cabinet considered a report which included benchmarking of current service fees and charge alongside a range of proposals ([\*Parking Modernisation and Environment Plan Proposals\*](#)). Cabinet approved the undertaking of statutory Road Traffic Act (2001) consultation on these proposals. This required proposals to be advertised, for a period of 21 days, via public notices in the local media and displayed locally where any changes were proposed to traffic orders. The statutory consultation commenced on Friday 19 August 2022 and concluded Saturday 10 September 2022, the notices provided details of where people could send any representations to any of the proposals.
- 2.2. Beyond the statutory requirements the Council also contacted a number of stakeholders, organisations and representative groups directly, raising awareness and understanding of the proposals. These included:
- Plymouth Area Disability Network
  - Plymouth Hospitality Association
  - Plymouth City Centre Company
  - Plymouth Waterfront Partnership
  - Access Plymouth
  - Age UK (Plymouth)
  - Alzheimer's Society (Plymouth)
  - Devon and Cornwall Police
  - Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service
  - Harbour Drug & Alcohol Services
  - Livewell Southwest
  - Parkinson's UK (Plymouth)
  - Plymouth Community Healthcare
  - Plymouth Councillors
  - Plymouth Dementia Action Alliance
  - Plymouth Hospital NHS Trust
  - South West Ambulance Service NHS
  - Stroke Association (Plymouth)

## 3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1. 294 responses were received during the consultation period, equating to 0.0012% of Plymouth's population, 7 responses were received outside of the statutory consultation period.
- 3.2. Representations often contained a number of, or a combination of, objections, expressions of support, suggestions and/or general comments. Representations which were not objecting, expressing support or making a suggestion were recorded as comments. Each objection, expression of support, suggestion and/or comment was assigned to the specific proposal/s which they related (**Appendix 1**).
- 3.3. The 294 responses contained 118 references of support, 415 objections, 40 suggestions and 90 comments in relation to proposals within the Parking Modernisation and Environment Plan. A number of the responses related to similar points and these have been collated together. A summary of objections to any of the proposals is set out within figure 1 (*the full text of each response is shown at **Appendix 2***).

Figure I – Summary of responses to representations objecting to any aspects of the proposals

Headline	Officer Response
<p><i>Objecting to these proposals as they don't help the environment.</i></p>	<p>The primary principle of these proposals is about tackling our climate emergency and supports the Councils £9.8M investment in mobility hubs as part of a wider £58.8M Transforming Cities investment to encourage modal shift and a step change in our sustainable transport offer.</p> <p>These proposals intend to improve air quality through encouraging the use of public transport, walking and cycling. They also aim to provide incentives for reducing the use of private vehicles, which will secure safer movement of pedestrian traffic on the highway and reducing the public health risks posed to them by air pollution.</p> <p>The objective of any charging structure is to encourage private vehicle users, where appropriate, to choose sustainable modes of transport (cycling, walking, Park and Ride or public transport), rather than driving into the city or districts to park.</p> <p>The removal of cash payments removes the requirement for cash to be collected, counted and transferred to banking facilities. Based on current activities, this alone will reduce our carbon footprint by 8000kg per annum.</p> <p>The Council has also expanding the roll out of 'ticketless' parking, removing the requirement for motorists to display tickets (and risk of fines for not displaying correctly) and reducing the use of paper.</p>
<p><i>Objecting to price increases on economic grounds and the cost of living increase</i></p>	<p>We understand that no one welcomes increases in the charges for goods and services, even more so during a period where we understand there are additional pressures around the cost of living. Whilst understanding of this, parking costs represent a very small percentage of the annual costs of running a motor vehicle, where we also have to consider encouraging the use of more sustainable options, such as cycling, walking, Park and Ride or public transport.</p> <p>Parking fees have not increased in Plymouth since 2017, whereas other Councils have increased fees over this time; benchmarking has shown Plymouth to be one of the cheapest cities to park in the Country. Whilst not increasing our parking fees or charges we have not been immune to increased costs and inflation.</p>
<p><i>Objecting to price increases on grounds that public transport is too expensive, unreliable and/or unavailable</i></p>	<p>Plymouth City Council currently supports thirteen bus services that operate within the city, these services are operated by Plymouth Citybus, Stagecoach Southwest and Oakleys Coaches. The rest and therefore the vast majority of the services that operate within the City are entirely commercial. These services receive no funding by Plymouth</p>

	<p>City Council and as a result of this we have no influence over timetables, routes or fare prices.</p> <p>In regards to the services which we do support we have a set timetable which we expect the operators to follow and in regards to fares these should be charged in line with other operators services operating along a similar corridor.</p>
<p><i>Objecting to removing cash as a payment option on the grounds it discriminates e.g. the elderly and disabled who may not have a debit or credit card or smart phone.</i></p>	<p>Plymouth City Council has long offered and encourage cashless payments for many of its services and has consequently seen the number of cash payments steadily decline. Since 5 June 2020, parking machines in our car parks have no longer took cash, with customers required to pay by credit and debit card or pay by RingGo, via the app, website or by phone (call or text).</p> <p>The Council does agree that removal of cash payment would be discriminatory. The removal of cash does not exclude anyone from accessing our services on the basis of a protected characteristic, though we accept that it will impact upon customer choice with the removal of cash payment options. There is nothing to prohibit the movement to purely cashless payment options. A full Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) <b>Appendix 3</b> has been carried out on the intention to remove payment by cash. The EIA considers potential impact on certain sections of the community such as the elderly and disabled; and where applicable details mitigation against the potential impact.</p> <p>The opposition to going completely cashless in our off-street parking facilities was minimal and the adaptation to cashless was achieved over night through a successful strategic communication plan making sure users understood the change and the mitigations available. There is therefore no significant reason to suggest that similar acceptance would not occur if introduced on-street.</p> <p>In August 2022 payments made by cash accounted for only 17% of all car parking transactions, 26% paid at a machine with a credit or debit card and 56% by RingGo, demonstrating growing acceptance from the public of cashless payment options.</p> <p>Disabled badge holders will continue to be able to park for free at pay and display parking places on-street.</p> <p>It should be remembered that payments can be made via text or phone call. A smartphone is not required.</p> <p>Parking machines will still be available for credit or debit card payments under the proposals and most car owners pay insurance and tax through bank accounts.</p> <p>Those wishing to still pay by cash may consider a prepaid card to pay for parking. A prepaid card is essentially a pay-as-you-go debit card. You load cash onto the card, which can then be used in most places where cards are accepted.</p>

	<p>The proposal to remove cash payments will not affect car parking provision in the City run by other operators.</p>
<p><i>Objecting to removing cash as alternatives are more expensive.</i></p>	<p>There is currently an alternative to cash payments, that will continue to be available in the future, which is RingGo. RingGo has been available for over 10 years allowing motorists to pay for their parking via an app, website or by phone (call or text). There is no charge for registering and no charge for using the system unless a customer specifically requests an additional service. If you use the system to simply pay for your parking, the fee you pay is the same as if you had paid cash at the machine. This is also the same for payments made at our current machines that accept cards.</p>
<p><i>Objection to the increase of residents parking permits on the grounds that it's not in line with inflation.</i></p>	<p>The charge for resident permits is, and should be, based on the costs of administering, delivering and maintaining the scheme, with fees set at a level which makes the permit scheme self-financing i.e. cost neutral.</p> <p>Resident permit fees have not changed since 2007/08 and over this period the costs of installation, maintenance, enforcement and reviews of schemes have significantly increased.</p> <p>The increase from £30 to £41 represents CPI increase dated back to when the permit fee was last increased, 15 year years ago.</p> <p>There is no requirement on the Council to run resident parking schemes. Failing to keep the fees for a scheme in line with the cost results in the Council subsidising the parking of those residents who have elected to have a parking scheme, to the detriment of the wider budget. Given the current financial position and rising costs, the Council cannot continue to subsidise the schemes</p>
<p><i>Objection to the increase to residents parking permits on the grounds of lack of enforcement.</i></p>	<p>The role of civil parking enforcement is about supporting the Council's management of the highway, specifically keeping traffic moving and road safety as a priority.</p> <p>Civil parking enforcement is provided from the Council's Parking Services, and resources are deployed as effectively as possible, whilst considering the safety of staff. The service is continually reviewed to ensure resources are suitable and sufficient.</p> <p>Requests for enforcement can be made online at <a href="https://new.plymouth.gov.uk/report-parking-issue">https://new.plymouth.gov.uk/report-parking-issue</a>. The information received is used to help ensure our patrols are covering the areas with the greatest need for parking enforcement.</p>
<p><i>Objection to the increase to residents parking permits on the grounds of being unable to park.</i></p>	<p>The process to implement a residents parking scheme has followed the legal consultation process required. Scheme are only implemented where the majority of residents are be in favour.</p>

	<p>Resident permit schemes are intended to help residents find somewhere to park during the days and times that the scheme is in operation. During those times only vehicles displaying a valid permit are allowed to park. This makes it more likely that permit holders will be able to find somewhere to park, although it cannot guarantee a parking space.</p> <p>Whilst nobody has the right to park on the highway outside their own home, we understand the inability to do so can be frustrating.</p> <p>Unfortunately a residents parking scheme will not solve parking problems caused by too many residents' vehicles and may likely cause further frustration for residents.</p>
<p><i>Objection to the proposals as the impact businesses and will reduce footfall</i></p>	<p>The Parking Modernisation and Environmental Plan recognises the importance of short stay parking capacity to support the economic viability of the city centre, districts and the tourism market.</p> <p>Through this consultation process we ensured we engaged with key stakeholders such as Plymouth City Centre Company and Plymouth Waterfront Partnership.</p>
<p><i>Opposed to introducing parking charges in Plympton District Car Parks</i></p>	<p>We are not introducing new charges at district car parks. To support shops and local businesses we are proposing to keep the concessionary free period of parking but introduce additional parking controls to ensure motorists do not overstay the given free parking periods, making it difficult for other shoppers to park to access local shops and businesses.</p> <p>Motorists would be required to enter their registration for a free session at a parking machine, as effectively operated in several other locations in the city such as in Crownhill and Mutley. This approach has the dual benefit of encouraging a faster turnover of spaces while increasing the total number of visitors to the area, which is good news for local businesses.</p>
<p><i>Opposed to introducing a maximum stay period in Plympton District Car Parks</i></p>	<p>We are not changing the maximum stay at district car parks, there are already maximum stay resections in place within Alexandra Road, The Broadway, Church Street, Deans Cross, Devils Point, Haye Road South, Marlborough Street, Morrice Street, Mudge Way North, Ridgeway and West Park. Likewise car parks that provide sections of free all day parking are to remain.</p>
<p><i>Objecting to the removal of Annual Visitor Permits on the grounds that Cross Park area of Crownhill is a small,</i></p>	<p>The basis of introducing permit controls is consistent across all residential schemes across the city, that being to seek to improve parking for local residents by deterring non-residential vehicle use. For an area to have a permit scheme</p>

<p><i>residential area, far from the City Centre and therefore does not compare with the other areas.</i></p>	<p>there would have to have been an issue with parking in the areas for permit controls to be introduced, otherwise a permit scheme would not be required.</p>
<p><i>Objecting to the removal of Annual Visitor Permits on the grounds of road safety if there are no visitor tickets available.</i></p>	<p>The current permit schemes operating across the city, with exception to some areas of Plympton, Plymstock and Crownhill, provide residents access to permits which enable their visitor parking. The Council has not had any complaints or representations from any of these areas citing the inability to accommodate guest parking.</p>
<p><i>Objecting to the removal of Annual Visitor Permits on the grounds that it's purely for financial reasons and will cause a substantial, additional financial burden on most residents.</i></p>	<p>The primary driver for these proposed changes, is to ensure consistency to residents parking schemes across the city and a fair approach to the 1000's of residents that use residential and guest parking permits. This is not just about the price of permits, but it is about the service that people can access, such as how permits work and entitlement; to move to a fair and consistent system city wide. Annual visitor permits represented only 4% of the type of resident visitor parking permits purchased in 21/22.</p> <p>The cost of permits should be set at a level which seeks to meet the core costs of administering and operating residential permit schemes. The reality is that the current fees, which have remained unchanged since 2007/08, do not meet the costs to the Council of administering and operating the schemes, including the roads and streets of our residents permit schemes. Over time we have reduced costs, such as moving to digital permits and online applications, however the reality is some costs, such as maintaining the streets and residents bays, has increased significantly. The proposed fees, which are in line with inflationary increases since 2007/08, alongside ensuring a consistent approach to residents parking, is not expected to meet the full cost associated with residents parking schemes; however, it is expected to reduce the subsidy of such services.</p> <p>The proposal to remove Annual Visitor Permits and extend the Zones eligible for Daily Resident Visitor Tickets to include Crownhill, Plympton and Plymstock is about ensuring a fair and consistent approach to residents across the whole city.</p>
<p><i>Objecting to the removal of Annual Visitor Permits on the grounds that many of the residents of Crownhill are older, elderly or disabled and look forward to, and in fact require, visits from family and friends.</i></p>	<p>Residential schemes have been in operational across the city for a number of years, operating under the existing allocation for Daily Resident Visitor Tickets where residents can purchase three books of 30 tickets a year. Each ticket is valid for one vehicle for one calendar day. These allocations have applied consistently to all residents of varying ages, disabilities, with exception to some areas of Plympton, Plymstock and Crownhill.</p>

	<p>The proposal to remove Annual Visitor Permits and extend the Zones eligible for Daily Resident Visitor Tickets to include Crownhill, Plympton and Plymstock is about ensuring a fair and consistent approach to residents across the whole city.</p> <p>Residents who are in need of essential daily care by relatives or carers can apply for an essential visitor permit. You must be in receipt of attendance allowance or the disability living allowance care component. A property is entitled to a maximum of one permit which is valid for 12 months. Essential visitor permits are free of charge.</p>
<p><i>Objecting to the removal of Annual Visitor Permits on the grounds that Small businesses in the area will be adversely affected.</i></p>	<p>The Council provides a range of business permits to support businesses across the city to undertake their business function, where the use of a car is required to do this within residential areas (i.e. trade persons, estate agents) for controlled periods.</p> <p>Businesses can apply for parking session to allow their visitors to park within their controlled parking zone whilst they are visiting their business address. A Business Visitor Permits allows visitors up to 2 hours parking in the zone of the registered business.</p> <p>Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, especially lockdown periods and growth in home working, we have seen increases and changes in the use of residential parking; such as residents working from home whereas they may have otherwise gone to a place of work. Whilst in some cases we have seen increases in resident's use of residents parking associated with this, we have also seen reductions in non-residential use, such as where persons who would otherwise commute to work, parking in and around residential streets, have stayed at home instead. We are continuing to monitor such emerging trends and behaviours associated with areas such as home working, however we do not agree that the these changes centred on adopting a fair and consistent approach to residents parking with adversely impact in the manner set out.</p>

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 4.1. Funding available to local government has been reducing steadily in recent years despite rising demand for services. As a council we have undergone huge changes in order to maintain good local services with fewer resources.
- 4.2. We have a history of delivering and in the past three years we have delivered over £26.2million of savings, in order to set a balanced budget. However, like all authorities we are now in a serious and unprecedented position due to additional national factors largely beyond our control, including rapidly rising energy costs and demand pressures and costs in social care. We have a legal duty to close our funding black hole.



- 4.3. To date, Plymouth City Council have identified a potential £15m shortfall in our in-year 2022/23 budgets. We immediately instigated urgent and decisive action to identify savings of £9m. But, these pressures mean we are also facing a substantial shortfall in resources needed to set a balanced budget for 2023/24 – where we are currently projecting a £37.6m shortfall.
- 4.4. The latest budget forecast for the parking trading accounts, as of October 22, is forecasting a £649k pressure against budget. Whilst it is not possible to accurately determine the financial impact of the proposals set out within this report, as it is not possible to accurately pre-determine customer behaviour, modelling based on current trends and data indicates these proposals will reduce the 2022/23 in year pressure by £306k.
- 4.5. Furthermore, modelling of the proposals in this report indicates that, in seeking to re-establish previous income levels and in response to rising service costs, the proposals are expected to generate £934k in 2023/24 through savings and income.
- 4.6. The savings and income are broken down as follows:

Proposal	Gross Benefit £k	
	2022/23	2023/24
Payment Systems	£0	£50
On Street Fees	£163	£489
Off Street Fees	£52	£125
Residents Parking Permits	£60	£140
Business & Health Care Permits	£42	£100
Hotelier and Guest House Permits	£13	£15
Disabled Parking	£6	£15
<b>Total</b>	<b>£336</b>	<b>£934</b>

- 4.7. There are costs associated with implementing these proposals. There is an existing capital allocation to fund the modernisation of payment systems; however, there are revenue costs of £30k associated with advertising, lines, signs, and reconfiguration of systems.
- 4.8. In addition to the proposals set out within this report, going forward, all parking fees and charges shall be subject to annual inflationary increases, in accordance with the Councils 'Fees, Charges and Concession' Policy.