

BRIEFING PAPER DISTRICT CAR PARKING (FEBRUARY 24 UPDATE)

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This briefing paper aims to update members on the changes implemented in the short-stay district car parks in Plympton as part of a broader initiative to enhance district parking across the city. These changes were designed to support local businesses that rely on a steady stream of customers through short-stay, high-turnover parking.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. On 28th September 2023 the Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a briefing report ([Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee 28 September 2023](#)) which set out changes that has been implemented to district car parks in the city. This briefing report was in response to concerns that had been expressed to the Council, including a petition, relating specifically to changes in Plympton.
- 2.2. Plympton provides free unrestricted long stay parking alongside short stay car parks for use of customers visiting local shops and businesses. Whilst the Council does not encourage commuting by car, the changes made by the Council only applied to short stay parking and were entirely consistent with changes made to other short stay district car parks in Plymouth.
- 2.3. The Scrutiny report from September 2023 summarised the changes and initial impact of these changes, headlines being:
 - 2.3.1. *Support for Local Businesses:* The changes were strategically implemented to provide increased support for local shops and businesses that depend on the continuous flow of customers through short-stay parking.
 - 2.3.2. *Free Parking:* While parking within the Plympton district car parks remains free, visitors are now required to register for their free parking sessions in a manner consistently applied in other areas of the city.
 - 2.3.3. *Extended Maximum Stay:* The previous maximum stay limit of two hours has been extended to three hours, allowing visitors more flexibility and convenience during their visits.
 - 2.3.4. *Reasonable Adjustment for Blue Badge Holders:* As a reasonable adjustment, blue badge holders are granted an additional hour of parking. For instance, in the case of Plympton Ridgeway, blue badge holders can now stay for up to four hours compared to the previous two-hour limit.
 - 2.3.5. *Consistent Usage and Growth:* The report highlighted that the number of visitors registering for free parking sessions remained consistent throughout the period covered (April 2023 to August 2023). There was no decline in the usage of the car parks, with a slight growth observed during this timeframe.

- 2.4. At the September Scrutiny session Members asked to have a further update in the new year and that this update included information relating to parking fines.

3. CURRENT POSITION

Visitor Numbers

- 3.1. The changes to the district car parks have been in effect for over 10 months since April 2023. To provide context, more than 25,000 people in Plymouth register for parking sessions using these systems each week, with over 10,000 of these relating to visitors parking in the Plympton short-stay car parks.
- 3.2. Appendix summarises the number of customers registering sessions within the Plympton short stay car parks for the period May 2023 to January 2024. Over this period there have been 411,826 visitors register free parking sessions, averaging 1540 visitors per day. The data show there has been no reduction in visitor numbers and that, aside from bank holidays, the number of people using the car parks has remained consistent.

Compliance

- 3.3. The changes in the district short-stay car parks ensure that visitors adhere to their allocated time, which was increased from two hours to three hours. To ensure the fair use of the car parks, vehicle without a valid parking session, either due to failure to register or exceeding the three-hour limit, are liable to receive a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN).
- 3.4. Entering a vehicle registration when registering a parking session is a common practice established in Plymouth for several years. The Council understands that people can make genuine mistakes where, in respect to ticketless parking, the Council operates a policy where an appeal for a Penalty Charge Notice will be accepted on the first occasion if a customer has entered an incorrect digit. The Council stores all vehicle registrations entered into the terminals allowing for verification during the appeal process. An appeal will be accepted if a similar registration with one incorrect digit is identified; however, this does not apply if no similar registration is found.
- 3.5. There have been 411,826 visitors register their free three-hour parking sessions over the period May 2023 to January 2024. Over this same period there has been 747 Parking Charge Notices (PCN's) issued, equating to 0.002% of people who have used the Plympton short stay car parks. The figure of 747 represents 0.02% of the total number of PCN's that the Council has issued, city wide, over this period. As a comparison to another car park, over this period 1,045 PCN's have been issued within the Theatre Royal car park. More visitors register parking sessions via the parking terminals in Plympton than customers book parking sessions via the parking terminals in Theatre Royal car park.

SUMMARY

- 3.6. The data available to the Council in terms of visitor numbers, fines and the conversations staff have had with users of the car parks support the view that the

changes at Plympton, as with the other district locations, are working to support local businesses by helping visitors and shoppers to park when visiting these locations. As part of the process to ensure the fair and correct use of the free parking facilities the Council has issued parking fines; however, the number of fines issued equate to 0.002% of the total number of visitors registering sessions at the car park. This indicates a high level of compliance and familiarisation with the parking systems.

Appendix A – Summary of Parking Sessions (May 2023 to January 2023)

Calendar Week	Average Daily Sessions			Total Weekly Sessions
	Ridgeway	Mudge Way	Total	
Week 18*	631	821	1,452	10,167
Week 19*	631	806	1,437	10,057
Week 20	640	829	1,470	10,287
Week 21	637	821	1,458	10,204
Week 22*	597	793	1,391	9,734
Week 23	665	872	1,538	10,763
Week 24	684	903	1,587	11,109
Week 25	638	832	1,470	10,291
Week 26	677	880	1,557	10,901
Week 27	642	840	1,483	10,378
Week 28	645	888	1,533	10,729
Week 29	674	858	1,532	10,725
Week 30	688	867	1,555	10,883
Week 31	675	873	1,548	12,381
Week 32	677	849	1,526	10,681
Week 33	655	838	1,493	10,449
Week 34	649	861	1,510	10,569
Week 35*	627	821	1,448	10,135
Week 36	682	855	1,537	10,757
Week 37	732	883	1,614	11,301
Week 38	730	873	1,603	11,219
Week 39	737	901	1,638	11,468
Week 40	815	480	1,295	9,064
Week 41	724	873	1,597	11,176
Week 42	715	861	1,576	11,031
Week 43	719	911	1,630	11,410
Week 44	724	906	1,630	11,408
Week 45	723	894	1,616	11,315
Week 46	575	895	1,470	10,287
Week 47	531	919	1,450	10,881
Week 48	685	917	1,602	11,215
Week 49	805	936	1,741	12,184
Week 50	852	1,012	1,863	13,042
Week 51*	963	1,122	2,086	14,599
Week 52*	441	615	1,056	7,392
Week 1	596	798	1,393	9,752
Week 2	673	878	1,550	10,853
Average	680	860	1540	Total 411,826

* Bank Holidays