

Report to: **Executive**
Date: **1st December 2022**
Title: **Motorhome Policy Review**
Portfolio Area: **Assets (Cllr Keith Baldry)**
Wards Affected: **All**
Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: implement immediately

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

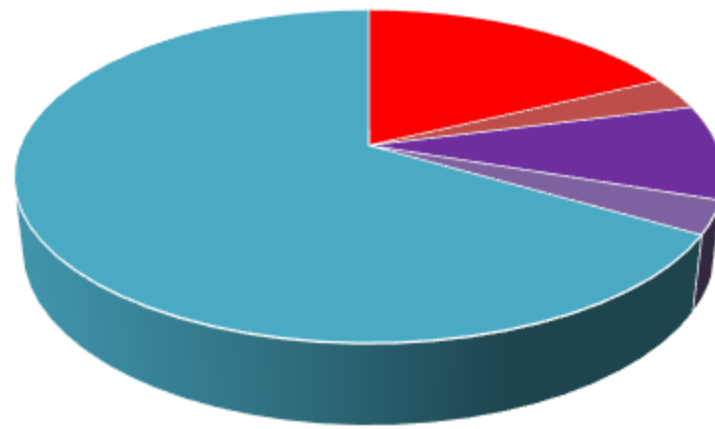
The Executive is RECOMMENDED to approve the permanent adoption of the Motorhome Policy in the following car parks only:

- **Longmarsh Car Park, Totnes;**
- **Leonards Road Car Park, Ivybridge;**
- **Poundwell Meadow Car Park, Modbury;**
- **Park & Ride Car Park, Dartmouth; and**
- **Cattlemarket Car Park, Kingsbridge.**

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Following the Recommendations of the Executive Report made on the 27th May 2021, a pilot scheme commenced which permitted overnight sleeping within the designated car parks from June 2021.
- 1.2 Since the commencement of the pilot scheme, regular monitoring of ticket sales and the scheme impacts for example any anti-social behaviour or waste issues, has been ongoing.
- 1.3 The number of overnight stays per car park is indicated in the pie chart below.

Number of Overnight Stays Per Car Park June 2021 to September 2022



■ Park & Ride ■ Leonards Road ■ Cattlemarket ■ Poundwell Meadow ■ Longmarsh

- 1.4 The majority of issues reported during the pilot period related to anti-social behaviour in Longmarsh car park, Totnes.
- 1.5 The pilot is therefore considered successful across most of the car parks included within the pilot scheme.

2. Background

- 2.1 Recognising the growing segment of the visitor economy represented by Motorhome users, at the meeting on 27th May 2021, the Executive (minutes E.6/21) approved the variation of the Off-Street Parking Order to allow motorhome parking overnight in the following car parks only:
 - Longmarsh car park, Totnes
 - Leonards Road car park, Ivybridge
 - Poundwell Meadow car park, Modbury
 - Park & Ride car park, Dartmouth
 - Cattlemarket car park, Kingsbridge
- 2.2 The pilot scheme has been in operation for over twelve months within the nominated car parks and commenced on the 1st June 2021.

- 2.3 The motorhome policy permits self-contained motorhomes to park for a maximum stay of two consecutive nights with no return within 48 hours with a tariff of £10.00 per night in operation between 6pm until 9am.
- 2.4 Following the implementation of the policy, alphanumeric keypads were installed on pay & display machines to manage the maximum stay of two consecutive night restriction and signage was erected stating the terms and conditions of overnight sleeping, including the maximum permitted stay and encouraging users to be respectful of their surroundings.

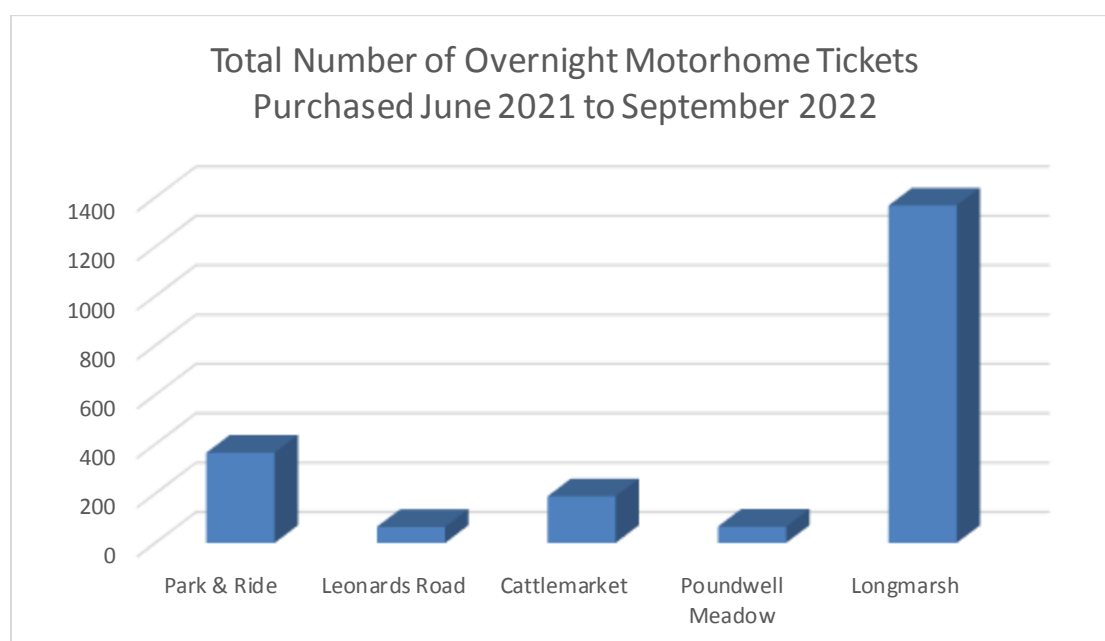


- 2.5 Enforcement visits have been carried out throughout the trial period which has included early morning and evening visits by the Civil Enforcement Officers and penalty charge notices have been issued for non-compliance.
- 2.6 Over 468 enforcement visits across all the car parks have been carried out outside of the normal enforcement times with 204 penalty charge notices issued.
- 2.7 The introduction of the policy has meant we have been able to manage overnight sleeping more effectively in our car parks and ensures we can regulate the parking of motorhomes more consistently throughout the district. It has also meant we have been able to minimise motorhomes parking in areas where access or parking may cause congestion.

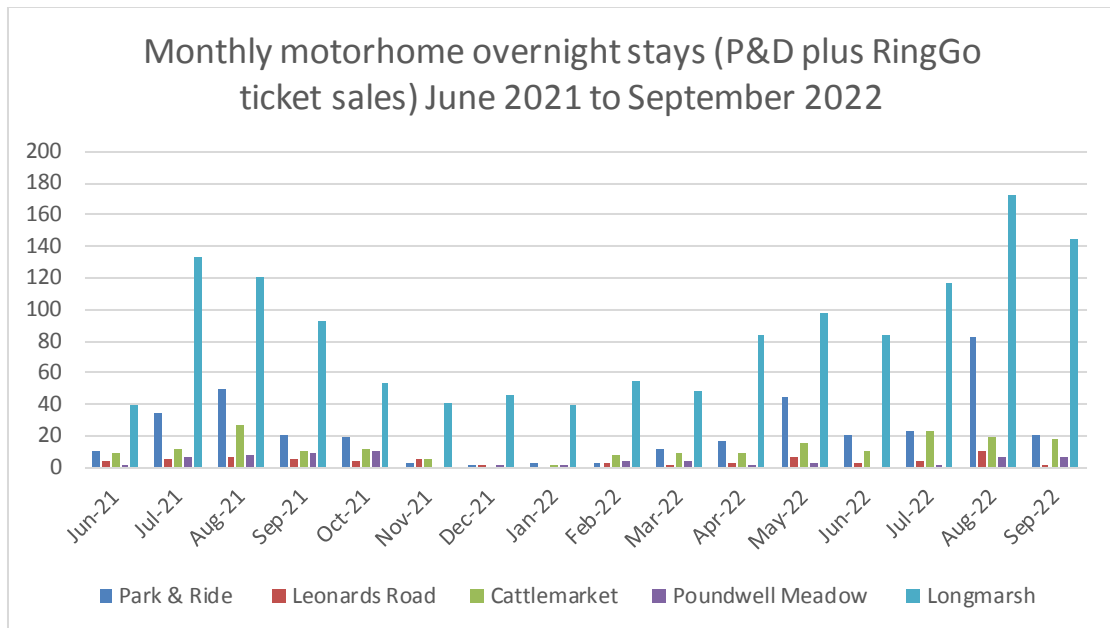
3. Outcomes/outputs

3.1 Since the pilot commenced there has been 2053 (June 2021-September 2022) overnight stays within the nominated car parks. The locations were ranked in popularity as follows:

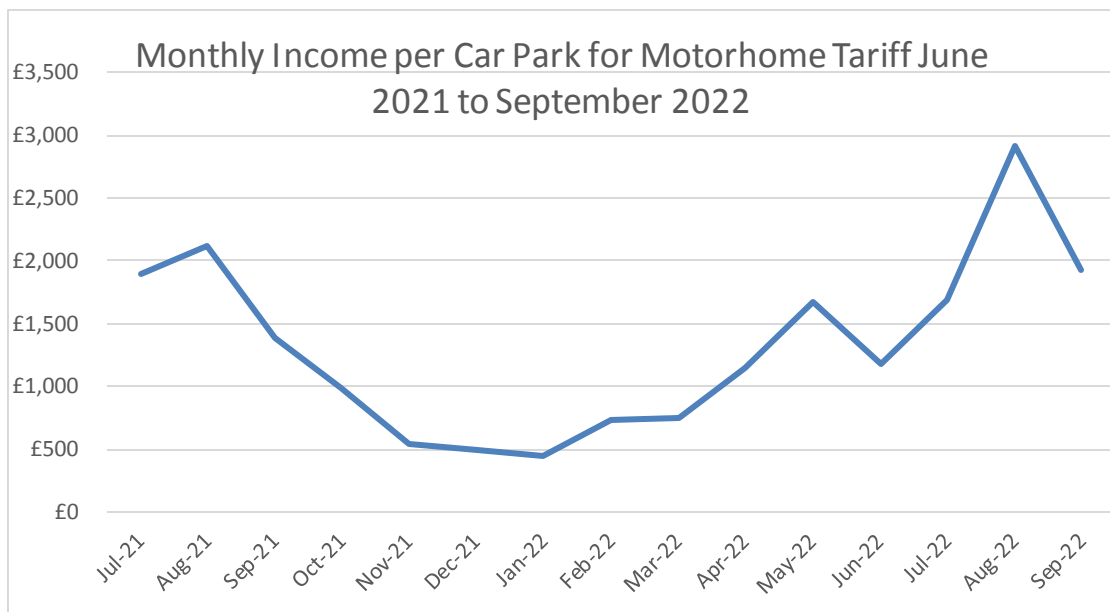
- Longmarsh car park, Totnes (1367 overnight stays)
- Park & Ride, Dartmouth (366 overnight stays)
- Cattlemarket car park, Kingsbridge (189 overnight stays)
- Poundwell Meadow car park, Modbury (66 overnight stays)
- Leonards Road car park, Ivybridge (65 overnight stays)



3.2 The pilot demonstrated that high season (June –September) saw peak usage with August 2021 seeing the maximum number of overnight stays of 291.



3.3 The monthly income generated from the policy is demonstrated in the graph below:



3.4 Throughout the pilot scheme the Civil Enforcement Officers have regularly conducted on site reports (over 1075 reports) recording the number of motorhomes parked, any waste issues, antisocial behaviour and compliance.

3.5 Officers have kept a log of all public feedback received. 51 contacts from members of the public have been received during the trial period. A summary of the feedback was as follows:

COMPLIMENTS	6
SUGGESTION POSITIVE	6
SUGGESTION NEGATIVE	19
COMPLAINTS	17
OTHER	3
TOTAL	51

3.6 Some of the advantages of the policy have been:

- Increased income for the wider visitor economy eg spending in shops, restaurants.
- Positive for tourism
- Effective management of motorhomes
- Positive news story for towns
- One user of Longmarsh stated 'they stayed 2 nights, did a litter pick around the car park, and had evening meals out as well as spending in your shops and café. I expect we spent between £150-£180 in total which your town would not have received had it not been for parking'

3.7 Some of the disadvantages of the policy have been:

- Increased antisocial behaviour and these have been predominantly at Longmarsh car park, Totnes
- Motorhomes not abiding by the terms and conditions of parking
- Some complaints from local residents regarding antisocial behaviour
- 'The idea that people with camper vans with toilets are going to use them is extremely naïve'

3.8 Longmarsh car park, Totnes has been the most popular car park for motorhome users. However, the most feedback and complaints received during the pilot has related to this location.

3.9 Throughout the pilot, Longmarsh has also been used by van dwellers as well as those legitimately utilising the car park in line with the motorhome policy. It is unclear how many of the complaints largely relating to anti-social behaviour are attributable to each group.

3.10 Work is ongoing with the Housing Team to address these issues and eviction notices have been served on those believed to be occupying the car park outside of the maximum two-night consecutive stay allowed under the Motorhome Policy.

- 3.11 Feedback from CAMpRA (Campaign for Real Aires) who has visited some of the locations has been as follows:

Longmarsh – reviews were generally positive but a few said it was expensive. Nobody mentioned that there were no waste facilities.

- 'Basic car park next to some really nice walks along the river. Toilets up the road and only a short walk into town. Very busy in the morning but it is a car park after all'.

Cattlemarket – Mostly positive responses although some people got tickets for not displaying them properly

- Stayed here 1 night just before Christmas and had no problem parking up. Toilets were not available but self-contained so no real issue. There is a bit of a hill but we parked at the bottom where its level. We'll definitely use it again (especially out of season).

Park & Ride – generally positive

- We would have stayed a 2nd night if the daytime charges did not make it expensive. We visited the castle and had cream tea in town plus spent in local shops. We topped up groceries from local store. There was noise overnight from engines being started and running, not sure if this was from the adjacent bus park or just a one off.

- 3.12 Feedback has been sought from affected Town and Parish Councils and comments received are as follows:

Dartmouth Town Council – Councillors supported the proposed recommendation to allow motorhome parking to continue permanently in the Park & Ride at Dartmouth.

Kingsbridge Town Council – Councillors reported that the trial encourage motorhomes to park along the Embankment and Quay car park and they felt we were not regularly enforcing the Quay car park which meant motorhome users arrive late in the evening and left early in the morning filling up the litter bins etc. They would prefer that the District Council supported local licence campsites in Kingsbridge rather than offering a cheaper alternative with a lack of facilities that encouraged abuse of the car parks and there was no direct economic benefit to the town from the income generated through the policy.

In response to Kingsbridge Town Councils comments, we have carried out regular enforcement of the Quay car park in conjunction with enforcing the motorhome policy at Cattlemarket. Parking of motorhomes along the Embankment is an on street enforcement function. However, by allowing permitted parking at Cattlemarket for motorhomes an active solution is provided for motorhome parking.

Modbury Parish Council – Councillors supported the proposed recommendation to allow motorhomes to continue permanently at Poundwell Meadow car park but, did express concern that if knowledge of the initiative grew there might be a possibility of unsociable behaviour.

Ivybridge Town Council – The Town Council supported the proposed recommendation and felt it was to become permanent they could actively promote it due to the lack of campsites within the area.

Totnes Town Council – The Town Council supports the continuation of overnight parking at Longmarsh car park on the basis that South Hams District Council makes longer term provision for water, toilets, showers and chemical toilet emptying at the site. This is to mitigate motorhome users emptying toilets into the hedges and river and defeciation in the area.

4. Options Available and Consideration of Risk

There are a number of options that can be consider with regards to the Motorhome Policy:

4.1 Withdraw the policy

As the policy has been considered broadly successful, is largely supported by affected Town/Parish Councils, this option is not recommended.

4.2 Continue the pilot period

The risks associated with the policy will continue to be monitored regardless. The parking order has already been implemented in order for the pilot scheme to commence and a formal process must be followed if the order is to be revoked in any event.

4.3 Permanently implement the existing policy and continue to manage the risks associated with the policy as follows:

- The enhanced team of seasonal locality officers as well as, the team of Civil Enforcement Officers will provide enforcement through penalty charge notices to those not complying with the rules and regulations. This will include out of hours visits.
- Monitor waste and any issues relating to full waste bins be reported for clearance. Litters picks will also be carried out.
- Regular monitoring to take place and be recorded for any issues reported at these car parks in relation to motorhome parking overnight.
- Signage will be reviewed and enhanced specifically at Longmarsh to emphasise the terms and conditions and code of conduct when using the car park. Additional signage will be placed at Longmarsh to enforce the rules.

4.4 **Extend the Scheme to additional car parks**

Consultation with Town Councils has not identified any sites where there is currently an appetite to include additional car parks within the policy. This will remain under review and further sites can be brought forward as appropriate in the future.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 Having reviewed the pilot, it is proposed to permanently permit overnight sleeping in the nominated car parks with no additional facilities provided.
- 5.2 The overnight tariff will be subject to review and linked with any future parking tariff reviews. The designation of motorhome car parks would also be reviewed during this process.
- 5.3 The policy will continue to be reviewed in terms of its success and designations of car parks. It should be noted if we wish to remove permission for overnight sleeping within any of the nominated car parks a further variation to the Off-Street Parking Places Order would be required, which would require further consultation and reports to the potential for further reports to Executive.
- 5.4 For daytime parking of motorhomes the existing restrictions will remain in place whereby motorhomes are permitted to park in Longmarsh, Cattlemarket, Leonards Road, Park & Ride and Poundwell Meadow overflow car park provided they purchase a pay & display ticket for each bay in which they are parked. Charges during the day apply from 8am-6pm.
- 5.5 With regards to the installation of additional facilities within our car parks, the scheme was introduced for stopover stays on route to existing campsites in the district. This policy is not intended to compete with those sites which provide services to facilitate long term stays.

Notwithstanding this, the installation of chemical waste disposal points is being investigated and this work will be ongoing. This will be limited to those sites where there is existing infrastructure due to the costs and disturbance which necessary drainage infrastructure would require.

This proposal fits with the following priorities: Council, Communities, Environment.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	<p>The Council's powers to provide car parks and to impose charges for their use derives from the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. As a matter of general principle, the Council must exercise a statutory power for the purpose for which the power was conferred by Parliament and not for any unauthorised purpose. The statutory purpose of providing car parks is relieving or preventing congestion of traffic. The Courts have recognised that authorities have "a discretion to set charges to reflect its parking policies...[and are] not restricted to levying a charge only to cover the base cost of running the scheme".</p>
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	<p>It is anticipated that allowing overnight sleeping within the nominated car parks could generate an additional £15500 per annum income</p> <p>The difference between the income and expenditure on off-street car parking is used to support costs associated with the operation and maintenance of parking services, its infrastructure and the maintenance of off-street car parks. It is also used to support and provide other Council services such as street cleansing, toilets, parks and open spaces and other lawfully incurred identified expenditure.</p>
risks		<p>Without a structured policy, the Council could risk the potential for maintaining and improving parking provisions, which could jeopardise town centre vitality.</p> <p>Risks of the policy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase waste generated within the car parks and not disposed of correctly. • With toilets with limited operational hours those that do not have self-contained units may choose to toilet outside • Chemical toilets may be disposed of through the public toilets blocking systems • Increased antisocial behaviour eg noise • Excessive number of motorhomes may create blind spots and fire hazards

		These risks will be monitored in all car parks throughout the pilot period.
Supporting Corporate Strategy		Council Communities Environment
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact	Y	Potential of increased emissions, waste and impact on flora and fauna
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		No implications.
Safeguarding		No implications.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		No implications.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		No implications.
Other implications		None at this stage.

Supporting Information

Appendices:

None

Background Papers:

None