

# Agenda

## Extraordinary Community and Leisure Committee Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 11 December 2024  
Time 7.00 pm  
Venue: Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT

Membership:

Councillors Shelley Cheesman, Elliott Jayes (Vice-Chair), Mark Last, Peter Macdonald, Charlie Miller, Lee-Anne Moore, Pete Neal, Tara Noe, Tom Nundy, Richard Palmer (Chair), Hannah Perkin, Ashley Shiel, Terry Thompson, Karen Watson and Tony Winckless.

Quorum = 5

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Pages

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Members who are in any doubt about interests, bias or predetermination should contact the monitoring officer for advice prior to the meeting.

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**Issued on Monday, 2 December 2024**

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**Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council,  
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT**

<b>Extraordinary Community Committee Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
<b>Report Title</b>	Civil Parking Enforcement Contract Extension
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Jeff Kitson, Parking Services Manager
<b>Classification</b>	Open
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. That Members agree to extend the Civil Parking Enforcement Contract with APCOA Parking (UK) in accordance with the contract terms for a period of three years from 1 June 2025 to 31 May 2028.

## **1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 1.1 To enable Officers in partnership with the legal team to extend the term in accordance with the contract for three years to enable continued civil parking enforcement and cash collection services from June 2025.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 On 1 June 2018 Swale Borough Council, entered into a seven year contract with APCOA Parking (UK) Limited to provide Civil Parking Enforcement Services within a joint agreement with Maidstone Borough Council. The contract facilitates:
- Good levels of driver compliance to parking regulations.
  - The levels of enforcement necessary to secure compliance.
  - Effective enforcement resources who are appropriately trained and equipped.
  - First line response and repair to the Councils Pay & Display units to decrease pay unit downtime
  - Cash collection, counting and banking services from pay and display car parks and council premises.
- 2.2 The current service contract expires on 31 May 2025; however section 2.2 of the agreement provides a provision to enable an extension of the contract of three years to 31 May 2028.
- 2.3 Since the start of the contract APCOA Parking (UK) Limited have consistently provided excellent services fully in accordance with the requirement of the contract specification. The supplier has also developed additional services including cash collection, counting and banking from pay and display car parks and council premises.

2.4 Service performance is closely monitored against key performance indicators.

<b>Key Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual 2018/19</b>	<b>Actual 2019/20</b>	<b>Actual 2020/21</b>	<b>Actual 2021/22</b>	<b>Actual 2022/23</b>	<b>Actual 2023/24</b>
Observed Contraventions	n/a	20,469	19,702	16,093	23,156	19,606	20,604
Deployed Hours	15,000	15,510	15,158	15,252	14,678	14,515	15,292
Observed Contraventions per hour	n/a	1.31	1.29	1.05	1.57	1.35	1.34
CEO accuracy rate	>99%	99.66%	99.59%	99.67%	99.53%	99.07%	99.07%
1st line P&D response (<20min)	>90%	96.19%	96.85%	96.46%	96.32%	97.29%	99.41%
Coastal P&D response (<60 min)	>90%	90.33%	90.55%	96.62%	94.70%	98.54%	99.07%
P&D call outs	n/a	1,478	2,016	1,619	1,931	1,209	644
School Visits Conducted	n/a	1,067	1,083	654	1,154	1,183	1,167

2.5 Swale Borough Council’s delegated Civil Parking Enforcement powers (dealing with on-street parking) are reliant on the agency agreement with Kent County Council. The APCOA Civil Parking Enforcement Contract will therefore be varied to allow a revision in terms of deployed hours or termination should the agency agreement be varied within its two year notice period.

### 3 Proposals

3.1 APCOA Parking (UK) Limited has indicated a desire to continue to provide services under contract and have committed to continued investment and development of services throughout any extended contract period.

3.2 The services provided by APCOA have enabled the Council to commit enforcement resources across a wide area and into areas where significant parking problems have been identified. Consistency in providing civil enforcement officer deployed hours under this contract directly impacts on driver behaviour leading to improved highway safety and traffic flow.

3.3 The excellent performance achieved in Pay & Display fault response times at over 90% has enabled the Council to maximise car park income by reducing pay unit downtime.

3.4 High accuracy rates achieved by APCOAs civil enforcement officers at over 99% has been achieved through good levels of officer training. Staff turnover also remains stable which has ensured that good local knowledge and experience has been retained.

3.5 A three year contract extension will therefore allow a continuation of good performance levels across both authorities and enable further development of the joint enforcement service until 2028, when the contract for service provision will be subject to an open tender.

- 3.6 It is therefore recommended that Members agree to extend the Civil Parking Enforcement Contract with APCOA Parking (UK) in accordance with the contract terms for a period of three years from 1 June 2025 to 31 May 2028.

#### **4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

- 4.1 Allow the contract to expire in May 2025 and retender services:  
This contract has delivered good performance, bringing effective enforcement. Market conditions will likely increase the cost of the service provision in an open market tender. Cash collection and banking services are also open to significant risk as Civil Parking Enforcement service providers rarely offer cash collection and banking services.
- 4.2 Allow the contact to expire and bring service in-house:  
This will require all current APCOA employees to be TUPE to Swale Borough Council and incorporated into Local Authority pension arrangements with all support equipment and vehicles purchased through open tender and activated ready to be in place by June 2025, whilst also increasing the cost of the service provision. Future service models/business case could be considered during the extension period.

#### **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

- 5.1 As a partner authority under the enforcement contract Maidstone Borough Council have been consulted. Maidstone Borough Council has confirmed that an extension to the Civil Parking Enforcement Contract with APCOA Parking (UK) Limited for three years until June 2028 is in the best interest of Maidstone Borough Council.

#### **6 Implications**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>
Corporate Plan	A well balanced parking service provides support to a range of the Council's existing Corporate Plan priorities with a focus on economic development - support for our businesses, residents and visitors, plus reducing the Council's reliance on government controlled funding sources.
Financial, Resource and Property	The current cost of the contracted enforcement service is: Civil Parking Enforcement £477,963.53 pa. Cash collection, counting and banking £34,741.85 pa. These costs are included within current budgets. These charges include all costs in delivering the services and continues to provide good value.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Civil Parking Enforcement legislation: Traffic Management Act 2004.

Crime and Disorder	Inappropriate parking is anti-social and can cause issues in the community. The use of our enforcement officers mean we are well positioned to report elements of crime and disorder.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Maintaining a regular flow of moving traffic is known to reduce emissions.
Health and Wellbeing	Ensuring a clear flow of traffic helps to reduce down air pollution.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Parking enforcement helps to protect young people such as those in and around schools.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Enforcement staff are required to regularly inspect our facilities and report risks to help protect the public.
Equality and Diversity	All members of the community of Swale have a right to expect good access to parking. We provide free parking for disabled customers and these locations are patrolled regularly to minimise inappropriate use by non-blue badge holders.
Privacy and Data Protection	None applicable.

**7 Appendices**

None.

**8 Background Papers**

None.

<b>Community and Leisure Committee Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	11 December 2024
<b>Report Title</b>	Overnight vehicle issues at Locations across Sheppey
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Permission is sort to go out to public consultation on the preferred option or range of options as set out in appendix I.</li> <li>2. Affected Parish Councils are included in the consultation.</li> <li>3. That officers explore the use of CCTV provision to protect these assets.</li> </ol>

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report details a range of issues of overnight parking at Shingle Bank, Minster and Shellness, Leysdown. It identifies potential solutions and requests permission to go out to formal public consultation. Members are asked to debate the issues and consider the options.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 In recent years, a number of complaints have been received from members of the public, Borough and Parish Councillors, regarding the presence of a large number of motorhomes, campervans and caravans parked along the Shingle Bank 'sea defence' in Minster and at Shellness in Leysdown.
- 2.2 The Shingle bank defence, owned and maintained by the Environment Agency, has become a popular location for visitors in large motorhomes/caravans, many of whom park for several days but some of which can be present for weeks if not months. This is contributed to further by those without permanent homes and effectively 'living' in these areas.
- 2.3 Enforcement of this long-term parking demands a considerable resource from Environment Wardens, who must balance this resource against other statutory service demands. Illegal encampment legislation is complicated and lengthy court

processes are required, which often deliver low level penalties that do not deter future breaches.

- 2.4 To date, a considerable amount of expenditure has been used on installing and maintaining physical measures to create a width restricted access to the main section of the Shingle Bank. This has reduced the number of vehicles at their peak, however regrettably all of these measures have been met with varying degrees of vandalism by those driving larger vehicles wishing to continue to gain access to this area. As an example, since the latest reinforcements consisting of metal posts were introduced to the width restrictions, they have been cut with an angle grinder to allow access by larger vehicles. Consideration would therefore be needed for temporary/permanent CCTV coverage of the site.
- 2.5 The complaints received vary in content (see appendix II) but include comments from other users of this area that they feel intimidated and threatened by some of the vehicle owners, complaints that the presence of a large number of vehicles impacts on the aesthetics to the area, and complaints around litter generated by some and concerns around the methods of disposing of toilet waste from these vehicles.
- 2.6 Conversely, owners of the vehicles who regularly enjoy the use of this area have complained that the width restrictions are unnecessary, that they are respectful of the area and other users, and that the Council are preventing them from the enjoyment of this publicly used area.
- 2.7 The preferred option to address the issues at Shingle Bank will depend on the desires and preferences of Members, therefore this report sets out a number of options, each with their own positive and negative impacts for consideration.
- 2.8 At Shellness, similar problems have occurred. There is a stretch of off-road informal parking located just past the coastal park and beach huts in Leysdown. The informal parking is directly next to the main road up to Shellness and sits in SBC ownership rather than KCC Highways, so is treated as off-street parking. It was historically a very poor, rough concrete surface but people used it for free parking directly next to the sea wall, with a good view. Over the years larger motorhomes and caravans have parked up there, taking up lots of space and staying for long periods. In its peak over 100 vehicles could be found there.
- 2.9 Similar to Shingle bank, a number of measures were also taken to try and resolve the problems at Shellness. Wooden bollards were placed on one side of the road to stop vehicles parking on the grass verge. Then a few years ago, roughly £30k was used to repair the surfacing, mark out informal parking bays and put further wooden bollards in areas where the width was too small to accommodate vehicles. These measures have improved the situation, but not solved it completely. We also need to consider other areas to effectively control overnight parking such as at Barton's Point and other locations.



## **Engineering Solution – Setting Blocks into Excavated Shingle**

- 2.10 This option would be to maintain the existing width restriction at the Shingle Bank and would consist of removing the existing concrete blocks and remaining stubs of the metal posts, excavating the shingle material to a depth of around 300mm, and then setting the blocks back in position before backfilling the material around them.
- 2.11 By sinking the blocks into the shingle material, this should make the displacing of the blocks to allow unauthorised access by wider vehicles far more difficult. Any impact on the integrity of the sea defence would need to be understood further and agreed with the Environment Agency.
- 2.12 It is estimated these works will cost around £5,000 as specialist plant will be required on site to lift the heavy blocks out of position prior to excavating.
- 2.13 The remaining sections of the metal posts that were cut off will also require excavating out as they were encased in concrete to prevent their removal.
- 2.14 As the concrete blocks on the road-side of Shingle Bank are in close proximity to the bank, there may also be a requirement to install a concrete base for these blocks to prevent them slipping down the bank.
- 2.15 The advantage of physically managing vehicle access and parking to the Shingle Bank is that this controls the size of vehicles using this site. However, a width restriction has limitations in terms of what it can and cannot achieve and will not address some of the other complaint issues around the long-term parking by smaller vehicles.

## **Reinstatement of Parking Charges for Shingle Bank and new charges at Shellness, Leysdown and Barton's Point Coastal Park**

- 2.16 An option that could be considered is to re-introduce parking charges for the Shingle Bank and place new restrictions at Shellness. This could either be all day charges or simply an overnight charge. Day time charges would impact the general usage of the area by residents for leisure pursuits and this use does not appear to be the concern of those reporting issues. If it is an 'overnight charge' only, then restrictions could be put in place at varying times as can be seen in the public consultation document.
- 2.17 It should be noted that charging in any location creates displacement of vehicles. Those not wishing to pay will move to other areas of the island in search of a free solution, therefore each of the locations mentioned (and some others likely to be impacted such as Bartons Point coastal park) need to be dealt with in tandem.
- 2.18 Many years ago, Shingle Bank was a paid parking location during the day and was subsequently removed from the Traffic Regulation Order due to several factors.

- 2.19 The pay unit was regularly vandalised which costed significantly more to repair/replace than the income the car park was generating. The constant attention required to manage the facility placed a significant burden on the efficiency of operational parking staff resources across Swale.
- 2.20 As vehicles were rarely unattended by the owners (unlike a traditional car park where people tend park their vehicle and walk somewhere else for a period of time), most visitors did not pay for parking until a Civil Enforcement Officer was seen on site. When charging was in place, a daily average of only 2.6 transactions were recorded throughout the 2014-15 financial year.
- 2.21 Due to the remote location, signage was regularly vandalised or removed and discarded into the sea, making parking enforcement challenging as signage setting out the terms of use is a requirement of Civil Parking Enforcement law.
- 2.22 To combat difficulties with pay unit vandalism and security, cashless only transactions has been suggested as an alternative. This would also allow greater control over any restrictions put in place around length of stay.
- 2.23 However, cashless parking operation and enforcement relies on good signage throughout the car park, so a cashless solution is unlikely to facilitate any improvement on the issues previously seen in the area. CCTV would need to be a consideration if charging was considered.
- 2.24 Due to the location, Civil Enforcement Officers faced significant levels of abuse and physical threat requiring police support and attendance to complete patrols even during the daytime. The council are unable to deploy resources into an unsafe location and the public abuse and physical threat to Council officers and its agents will likely remain a problem at this location going forward. As a result, enforcement is likely to mirror that seen previously, being irregular and inefficient with costs far outweighing any income received, and with limited impact seen on inconsiderate parking.
- 2.25 It must therefore be risk assessed and will likely result in the need for multiple officers to attend together, taking up more existing resource or costing more by the purchase of additional hours. It is important to consider that enforcement to Shingle Bank under the current Civil Parking Enforcement contract, will require additional deployment hours charged at £31.24 per deployed hour to ensure that other key areas of off-street and on-street enforcement are not reduced. A trial of enforcement would be recommended to allow a review of success after a suitable period of time.
- 2.26 As mentioned above, there is also a consideration on the types of vehicles that should be allowed. Caravans without suitable vehicles for towing tend to suggest longer term stays and vehicles without in-built toilet facilities could be questioned around the environmental impacts evidenced in the complaints.

- 2.27 The same issues apply at Shellness. Threats to pay unit security and people only paying when a CEO is seen, mean it is unlikely we will take enough income to cover the operational costs of enforcement. Any attempts of signage or markings on the sea wall have been vandalised previously, so it is unlikely we would be able to enforce consistently and get many successful Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs).
- 2.28 Members need to consider Barton's Point Car park as well which is currently free and may suffer from displacement. The car park does have a barrier to control access and it could be agreed with the café operator to close the barrier when they are not operating. Alternatively overnight charges could be considered there as well, although this would need further consideration due to the ecological impacts in that location not supporting overnight stays.
- 2.29 Finally, through consultation with many of the owners of the motorhomes/campervans over the years, their main motivation is a free location.
- 2.30 During the Area committee debate detailed in section 5, some users said they would pay, but only if the facilities were provided to warrant a charge e.g. toilets/showers/chemical toilet disposal etc. Each of these would require considerable capital investment as the main utilities are not known to be available in the two locations and investigations would be needed to see how close these were.
- 2.31 Based on all of the challenges mentioned above, we therefore do not expect this to generate a large income, certainly not enough to cover operational and capital costs. A decision to charge overnight would therefore likely increase the costs to the council's budget.

### **Use of Illegal Encampment Legislation**

- 2.32 A different enforcement mechanism to civil parking legislation is available. Vehicles which stay on land without permission can be dealt with by the Environmental Response Team under legislation designed for illegal encampments.
- 2.33 This option is very resource intensive and can only be enforced through the Magistrates court, so therefore it would not be suitable for those staying for short periods at either location. The Council does not have the resource to attend either location on a regular basis and the penalties handed out by the court are not a deterrent due to their low fines system. Therefore, the cost of taking offenders to court will outweigh the operational costs to recover.
- 2.34 It could be used for those that are effectively 'living' at the location and would need to be supported by the housing team. This is recommended so we can differentiate between these vehicles and the 'short term leisure stays'.
- 2.35 Based on the above, the following options for Members could be summarised as;

1. Keep the parking arrangements at one, two or three locations the same as now (free to use).
  2. Implement an overnight charge for all vehicles at some or all of the locations.
  3. Ban and restrict access to parking at locations permanently.
- 2.36 It is important to recognise that the primary purpose of the Shingle Bank is a coastal defence structure, owned and maintained by the Environment Agency, and whilst this provides a valuable leisure asset for the community, any final proposals agreed by this committee would need to be agreed by the Environment Agency.

### **3 Proposals**

- 3.1 Members are asked to debate the issues and consider the options.
- 3.2 Depending on the discussions, permission is sort to go out to public consultation on the preferred option or range of options as set out in appendix I.
- 3.3 Affected Parish Councils are included in the consultation.
- 3.4 That officers explore the use of CCTV provision to protect these assets.

### **4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

- 4.1 No options have been rejected at this point, however two could be considered but have not been developed fully.

#### **Third Party Management/Concession of Shingle Bank**

- 4.2 This is an unconventional option that has been suggested to tackle the issues at Shingle Bank. Detailed analysis on the practicalities and legalities of this option have not been explored to date, but it is nonetheless an option for consideration.
- 4.3 This option consists of leasing out the operational side of the Shingle Bank to a third party for a set period of time. The third party would take on the responsibility for managing the day-to-day use of the Shingle Bank and slipway, which could include but not limited to, the following functions:
  - Charging an agreed fee for parking at the Shingle Bank on a daily basis, managing this through the use of a physical barrier at the entrance to the site and on-site presence.
  - Controlling the use of the slipway and maintaining it through regular clearance of accumulated shingle.
  - Working with local sailing and water-sport clubs to promote and maximise the slipway facility.

- 4.4 Whilst the details of this arrangement would need to be determined and agreed, this option would allow for proactive management of the parking arrangements at the Shingle Bank, possibly including shorter term overnight parking at an agreed fee.
- 4.5 This option could also include provision of refreshments for visitors, subject to confirmation that this would not conflict with any nearby concessions, to promote the area as a positive amenity asset.

### **Third Party Enforcement of Shingle Bank**

- 4.6 The British Parking Association has a number of approved enforcement agents who are able to control private parking areas under contract law.
- 4.7 This approach is independent to Civil Parking Enforcement responsibilities delegated to Swale Borough Council and allows an approved agent to retain any income received from parking fines to fund their service.
- 4.8 With a private enforcement arrangement, the agent is required to maintain local signage and may elect to patrol and enforce the area by foot or through Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) systems placed at the entry/exit point.
- 4.9 Such an approach will allow controls over length of stay, however the issues identified around signage and equipment vandalism are likely to continue to be a problem for the agent due to the isolated location of the site, which may impact on the financial viability of private enforcement from an agent's perspective.

## **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

- 5.1 Members of the public have contacted the Council direct over the years. This has increased recently with concerns over the issues overnight parking is created, so these need to be considered in the overall decision (see a summary of reported issues in appendix II).
- 5.2 Resident comments have also been provided via Minster Parish Council, liaison with the Parish Clerk has been undertaken.
- 5.3 Social media and local news have reported both sides of the argument.
- 5.4 A petition (see full detail at appendix III) with 488 signatures on it has been received by the Council opposing any proposal to levy charges.
- 5.5 The Community and Leisure Chair attended Sheppey Area committee on 19 September 2024. The details of the discussions are provided in the link at the bottom of this report.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	This report cuts across a range of corporate plan priorities in Community, Environment and Running the Council.
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>The recommendations do not immediately impact the budget, but future decisions on this matter may do. The report details that Members need to weigh up the costs of maintaining the current position, implementing an overnight charging scheme (costs of maintaining signage/enforcement against likely income) or permanently restricting access.</p> <p>As detailed the officer view is that additional Civil enforcement hours would be needed. Members would need to agree the additional budget to cover this.</p> <p>There are staff resource implications for all options, the least impact long-term solution on staff resources would be the restriction of all vehicle access to the sites.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>Each option requires the support of legislation to implement whether that be Civil Enforcement Act, Environmental Protection Act</p> <p>Each option would also require on-going procurement of services or repairs and maintenance.</p>
Crime and Disorder	Reports of anti-social behaviour have contributed to the raising of this matter at committee.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Reports of inappropriate use of the locations such as littering, disposal of human waste need to be considered. Any plans to encourage overnight use of the locations need to be considered from a planning and ecological basis.
Health and Wellbeing	Those opposed to overnight charges state that they use the locations for leisure pursuits that improve their health and well-being. However, the congestion at the site may restrict others from enjoying the space.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Some of those located at the Shingle bank or Shellness may be vulnerable adults due to their housing situation.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The inappropriate use of the locations needs to be regular assessed for risk.

Equality and Diversity	The use of the locations is expected to be for everybody. Balancing the uses is a difficult decision for Members to consider.
Privacy and Data Protection	No issues recorded.

## 7 Appendices

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

- Appendix I: Public Consultation options
- Appendix II: Summary of complaints themes
- Appendix III: Copy of the Petition

## 8 Background Papers

8.1 [Sheppey Area Committee September 2024](#)

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## **Appendix I – Public Consultation Options**

Following varying views around the control of overnight parking of vehicles at Shingle Bank, Minster and Shellness Road, Leysdown, Cllrs wish to canvas the views of the public and local organisations in order to assist future decisions.

**Question 1 – What is your preferred outcome for the Shingle Bank** (please tick one only)

- a) Keep the parking arrangements the same as now (free to use all times of the day).
- b) Implement an overnight charge for all vehicles.
- c) Ban and restrict access to parking permanently (daytime and nighttime).

**Question 2 – What is your preferred outcome for the Shellness Road** (please tick one only)

- a) Keep the parking arrangements the same as now (free to use all times of the day).
- b) Implement an overnight charge for all vehicles.
- c) Ban and restrict access to parking permanently (daytime and nighttime).

**Question 3 – If charging was implemented, what time period would you prefer to see in place** (please tick one only)

- a) 8pm – 8am
- b) 9pm – 9am
- c) 10pm – 10am
- d) All day charging for all vehicles

**Question 4 – What would see as a sensible price for charging for an overnight stay?** (please tick one only)

- a) £10 per night
- b) £15 per night
- c) £20 per night

**Question 5 – If charging was implemented what vehicles should be permitted to stay?** (please tick as many as you wish)

- a) Individual Cars
- b) Only motorhomes and campervans built with internal toilet facilities
- c) Caravans (requiring another vehicle to tow them)

**Question 6 – If charging was implemented what length of stay do you think would be suitable to allow? (please tick one only)**

- a) 1 night
- b) 2 nights
- c) 3 nights
- d) 4 nights
- e) 7 nights
- f) Unlimited

**Question 7 – Given the above locations may displace vehicles elsewhere, what is your preferred outcome for the Barton's Point Coastal Park car parks (please tick one only)**

- a) Keep the parking arrangements the same as now (free to use all times of the day).
- b) Implement an overnight charge for all vehicles.
- c) Ban and restrict access to parking permanently (daytime and nighttime).

## **Appendix II – Summary of Complaints themes**

We have collated a summary of the complaints received.

‘The problem partly revolves around the static caravans and motorhomes that are now there permanently, and those that visit more intermittently or on a daily basis. It’s clear that concrete blocks have been placed at the entrance to the shingle bank to stop wide vehicles from entering, but I suspect that the Parish Council aren’t aware that the drivers of the Caravans and motorhomes have actually moved them wider apart to get their vehicles through.’

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‘Also, many of the people permanently stationed at the Shingle Bank leave a lot of rubbish and litter around, including bottles, metal objects and cans. I’ve seen people literally throw their rubbish onto the beach because they can’t be bothered to take it with them, or to walk up to the council bins provided near the entrance. It’s only a matter of time before a child is injured walking on glass or sharp metal.’

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‘If motorhomes and caravans are allowed to park permanently there, fine, but if not, then they need to be prevented from doing so as they are destroying the serenity of the area, and the pleasure that many families, children and walkers get from being there. A minority is destroying the area. I speak as a motorhome owner myself, but one who sticks to designated areas only.’

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‘My complaint is the amount of people that are now living along the shingle bank in caravans and mobile homes, I know that some people are not there for a few days as they are leaving and returning in work vans, there are gazebos erected along with washing lines. There must be in excess of 20 vehicles parked along the entire length. I presume these people do not have permission to be parked there permanently or for long periods and don’t pay? Its a mess. I know that in January and February the camp sites on the island close and some people who live on them are homeless and may stay there. Hopefully something will be done about it, the same issue happened along the sea wall in Shellness a few years ago and this has now been dealt with appropriately.’

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‘Swale Borough Council have the responsibility to control the use of the shingle bank. Why are they not carrying out these duties? At present it is an absolute mess that detracts from the enjoyment of the sea front for the vast majority of people

This morning there are 31 motorhomes AND caravans parked on the shingle bank. It will be worse at the weekend. Some people are living on the shingle bank

permanently. There are no facilities for disposal of waste or effluent. We now have a national caravan magazine saying the shingle bank is a good place to stop with a nice sea view and it is free!

As I see it SBC has three options

1. Ban vehicles from the shingle bank except for the boat launch (my choice)
2. Allow no overnight parking on the shingle bank with large fines
3. Charge £10 / night to stay there and an hourly rate for daytime use

When will the SBC take action and this problem be resolved? It has been going on for far too long with no effective action from SBC.

There are established motorhome and caravan sites available local to the shingle bank, with appropriate facilities available, such as Barton Point Coastal Park.'

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'I would like to know what is being done about the numerous caravans and motorhomes that are parked continually on the Minster beach. There are no facilities there for toilet waste disposal which must be causing a hygiene and environmental issue. Surely if these caravans are allowed to park there permanently, you should be providing facilities or, alternatively, they should not be allowed to park there permanently. '

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Thought I would let you know due to SBC not enforcing a no overnight stay at the Shingles the tally for caravans staying on the beach has now gone up to 16 ,when I first informed yourselves it was 3 positive proof not much room for others to enjoy this facility!!!!

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Customer is upset about the amount of vans parking overnight on the shingle and nothing being enforced also the people are having fires overnight and there are nails left in the timber and not clearing up. So other cars are in danger of driving over a load of nails. They are also opening their grey water tanks they are allowing this to run into the shingle and is an environmental worry. People using the beach as a public toilet.

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I was born on the Isle of Sheppey and lived there for many years until work took me further afield but I like to return regularly to visit family and friends and share the delights and beauty of the Island to my new family which I normally do in my campervan whilst staying at the amazing Shingle Beach. But on arrival last weekend I couldn't get through to use it due to barriers preventing access. When I stay for a

weekend I shop at small local stores, I eat in local restaurants or get takeaways and also share the experience with others that may not have visited before but usually return again. I find it sad that reading in the press only a few weeks back that Sheppey was disappointed to be less favourable a place to visit than the likes of Margate and Broadstairs etc only to arrive and be made to feel unwanted and treated as if I and other users of the Shingle Beach were 2nd class citizens. All motorhomes/campervans have bins and are normally owned by sensible and non-littering people. I personally have picked up McDonald wrappers and beer cans and disposed of them appropriately just so I can park up and rest assured nobody will blame me for littering. In my experience it has been young people who tend to discard their rubbish and abuse the parking facilities whilst wheel spinning up and down the roads flicking up stones. I have a stone chipped windscreen to verify this and have had to speak to groups of these people regarding both these matters. My visits will be becoming less frequent due to this decision to barrier it off as will a lot of people which will have a financial implication to the Island. I love Sheppey.....please don't make people feel unwelcome. Thank you.

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The installation of width restriction barriers on minster shingle bank, this is preventing many people with larger cars, Vans and motorhomes from enjoying the shingle bank and beach in the daytime, as a local resident with a motor home , that enjoyed parking there for walks, meeting friend that also own motorhomes and going for meals or simply watching the sun set over the estuary, this has now become impossible due to the width restriction, there is now nowhere to park a motorhome year round in minster. The camping site at Bartons point has limited facilities, and is only open between April and September weather permitting, there are now parking restrictions for motorhomes along the leas, there is nowhere in minster to park between September and April, I can't see how this can help promote tourism on the island, so many other seaside towns have designated parking bays for motorhomes, usually with a charge, which would bring in income for the council, and discourage people over staying, most respectable motor home owners would be more than happy to pay, why can something like this not be done on the island? Or maybe remove the width restriction out of season between September and April when most the touring campsites are closed?

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Today here are 18 caravans and at the weekend there was 32 using the shingle bank as home. There is no place for the people to place their waste and toilet waste. Also, there is no room for anyone else to use the beauty spot.

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I have lived on Sheppey my entire life, the last 11 years in Sheerness and walk my small dog morning and evening through Barton's Point access road and up onto the Shingle Bank. This for me is my only down time and I look forward to my quiet walks before and after my working day.

Recently, I am sure you are aware, there have been multiple caravans and campervans permanently parked on the Shingle Bank for weeks on end, one in particular has been there for years. I never considered this an issue initially as I can sympathise with peoples housing situations, but recently the sheer quantity has multiplied and unfortunately some of the individuals are turning it into their own community that they now think they own (or should I say Shanty Town).

On one evening as I walked past the last of the many campervans, I heard a dog barking and due to the campervan door being open, it ran out of the campervan towards my small dog and me. I managed to scoop up my dog to protect him, but the large black Alsatian ran and jumped at me in an attempt to attack my dog. I managed to stand my ground, then the owner appeared from his campervan only to start swearing at me and being very intimidating. Rather than try and help me he just shouted abuse at me, I couldn't believe it. Due to the nature of the incident and my concerns if the dog attempted to attack a child I reported it to the police.

I now feel too afraid to walk on that part of the beach that I have used all my life, which to me is unacceptable. Why should I be forced to walk elsewhere considering I am a hardworking, paying, long term resident.

The beach is a public area and there to be enjoyed by all. I would imagine that many of the regular weekend visitors who enjoy the water sports will start going elsewhere rather than deal with some of these permanent residents that think they now own the area and behave in such an unpleasant manner.

### **Appendix III – Copy of the Petition received**

A petition with 488 signatures on it was handed to officers at the Sheppey Area Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

#### **Title**

'Ensure the shingle bank stays free and open to anyone who wish to enjoy the peace being by the sea brings.'

#### **Petition Details**

Why this is important?

A minority of people do not like looking at some vehicles as it is not to their taste and are petitioning for anyone who enters the shingle bank to pay a fee or close it off completely to everyone. The fees that would be needed to maintain the area will cost thousands to the fees will be passed to the public.

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**Community and Leisure Committee Forward Decisions Plan**

<b>Report title, background information and recommendation(s)</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Open or exempt?</b>	<b>Lead Officer and report author</b>
Public Space CCTV Policy – Oversight Review	21 January 2025	Open	Lead Officer: Charlotte Hudson Report Author: Steph Curtis
Swale Community Safety Priority Setting Consultation	21 January 2025	Open	Lead Officer: Stephanie Curtis Report Author: Sarah-Jane Radley
To sign-off the Empowering You Strategy following the consultation	5 March 2025	Open	Lead Officer: Stephanie Curtis Report Author: Sarah-Jane Radley

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