

Community Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	7 September
Report Title	Coach parking in Sheerness
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
Lead Officer	Jeff Kitson, Parking Services Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agree to convert the Ship on Shore car park for coach parking. To undertake the Off-Street Parking Places Order process specifically to allow coach parking only between 8am and 8pm (all days).2. Agree to recommend the proposed tariff to Policy and Resources committee in order to add them to the Council's fees and charges.3. Delegate authority for the Head of Environment and Leisure to complete the relevant paperwork for the off-street parking order.4. To allocate funding of £35,000 from the Kent Pool Economic Development Business Rates Reserve for the resurfacing and preparation of the site for the coach park.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's intention to convert the Ship on Shore car park to a coach park and complete the required off-street parking order.
- 1.2 The car park is currently a free to use car park but is seldom used and is a draw for dumped vehicles and fly-tipping.
- 1.3 Sheerness has no formally advertised coach parking opportunities and therefore it is difficult to attract tourist groups to local venues. The project will help deliver priorities within the Visitor Economy Framework and support local industry.

2 Background

- 2.1 The location shown in appendix I, known as the Ship on Shore car park, has been a free to use car park for a long period of time. It is not well used by local residents, despite properties within the vicinity being without off-street parking. There is however ample on-street parking capacity close by.

- 2.2 The car park is not located near to the high street or main hotspots for tourists, so will not take up capacity needed by other private vehicles. Other pay and display car parks in Sheerness provide ample capacity for individual visitors/residents.
- 2.3 The Ship on Shore car parking area is currently under-utilised and over the years has been a draw for abandoned vehicles and fly-tipping.
- 2.4 In an effort to encourage further visitors to the area, it is considered that coach parking would be a good incentive for day trips. Addressing coach parking gaps is a priority in the Swale Visitor Economy Framework. Active targeting of group bookings (either directly or through travel trade/operators) is currently impossible so this would open up possibilities for individual attractions who can carry group bookings, to work and market collaboratively to pull together day packages.
- 2.5 In order to formalise coach parking and to allow restrictions to be put in place to stop other vehicles from being left in the parking area, an application for an Off-Street Parking order is required under section 35 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
- 2.6 Under the legislation, we are required to place notices in the parking area and in local newspapers informing the public of the intention to place an order on the area. If there are no objections, then the order can be completed. If there are objections, then these will be reported to the Joint Transportation Board for decision.
- 2.7 The final order will set out the tariff that will be charged and the restrictions on other vehicles. Restrictions are proposed to be in place between 8am and 8pm every day of the year, allowing overnight usage of the area by residents should it be needed.
- 2.8 Research has been undertaken on equivalent charges by other local authorities. Given that this is introducing a new service that will take time to build up business (the coach trade tend to work a season ahead), the tariff proposed for this location is set at the lower end of comparable Kent charges;
 - £8 per day (8am – 8pm)
 - £1.50 per hour
 - All year-round tariff – charging every day of the year
- 2.9 The proposal would see a cashless payment (RingGo only) process for coach drivers, to keep operating costs low and reduce the chance of vandalism of the pay unit.
- 2.10 Works will be required to improve the surfacing of the car park due to the expected high wear and tear of large coaches. Quotes have been obtained and the costs of resurfacing, lining and signage and are considered to be in the region of £35,000.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 To Agree to convert the Ship on Shore car park for coach parking. To undertake the Off-Street Parking Places Order process specifically to allow coach parking only between 8am and 8pm (all days).
- 3.2 Fees and charges are agreed annually via Full Council but the constitution allows in-year agreements for new services. Therefore, it proposed that the Committee agrees the proposed tariff and is passed to Policy and Resources committee for final approval following the off-street parking order consultation.
- 3.3 Delegate authority for Head of Environment and Leisure to complete the relevant paperwork for the off-street parking order.
- 3.4 Due to the project's links in supporting economic development and encouraging visitors, to allocate funding of £35,000 for the resurfacing and preparation of the site for the coach park from Kent Pool Economic Development Business Rates Reserve.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 The car park could be left as it is currently – a free car park. This would not solve the anti-social behaviour or provide future opportunities to boost visitor numbers. It would also fail to generate the Council additional income from the coach parking charges.
- 4.2 The site could remain as a car park but be converted into pay and display. It is considered that there would not be a high demand for paid parking in this location and therefore this option would not raise additional income. Options of having some car parking spaces as well as coach parking was also considered but rejected due to health and safety concerns.
- 4.3 Other locations could be looked at for coach parking. The Council does not have other large spaces suitable or free. Suggestions from local trade have been made about Bluetown parking bays but this area is controlled by KCC and not SBC.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the Chair of the Community committee and Chair of Regeneration and Property committee.
- 5.2 The Off-Street parking order process requires public consultation for a 21 day period, during which we will liaise with Ward Members and Town/Parish Councils.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	<p>This proposal meets a number of Corporate Plan priorities and objectives including 'Implement the visitor economy framework to increase investment, address new visitor demands and grow the value of the sector to the Swale economy' and to 'reduce dependence on government controlled funding sources'.</p>
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>The car park is currently free to use so does not generate any income but requires on-going maintenance. This proposal, whilst likely to be slow to build over a couple of years due to lead in times with tourism industry press, will generate some additional income each year and hopefully reduce the requirement for officers to attend to fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Civil enforcement officers will be required to attend regularly to ensure compliance with the new restrictions. This will not come at additional cost to the Council as the contract buys a set number of hours.</p> <p>Costs to prepare the site are estimated at £35,000. As it meets the criteria for use, funding is proposed from the Kent Pool Economic Development Business Rates Reserve.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>The Off street parking order process comes under the Road Traffic Act 1984, section 35. Swale Borough Council will require final consent from Kent County Council. The notices will read;</p> <p><i>'Notice is hereby given that SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL intend to make the above Order under section 35 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, having obtained the consent of the Kent County Council in accordance with Section 39(3) of the Act, and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 of the Act'.</i></p> <p>Checks have been made with HM Land Registry and the land is owned by the Council up to the highway. Legal state there are no covenants on the land that would restrict conversion into a coach park.</p>
Crime and Disorder	<p>The car park has been the subject of continued fly-tipping that we have successfully taken to court and is a draw for abandoned vehicles. Formalising the site and putting in restrictions will hopefully alleviate some of these issues.</p>

Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Encouraging coach travel parties will likely reduce the number of private vehicles coming to the town thus reducing potentially harmful emissions.
Health and Wellbeing	No implications at current time
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	No implications at current time
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Resurfacing the site will reduce the potential for accidents. Currently coaches that do visit the town have to choose often unsuitable spaces to drop off and park up.
Equality and Diversity	It is considered that this decision does not impact any of the protected characteristics negatively.
Privacy and Data Protection	No implications at current time

7 Appendices

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:
- Appendix I: Map of Ship on Shore car park

8 Background Papers

n/a