

Community Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	1 March 2023
Report Title	Car parking and Coach parking in Sheerness/Minster
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
Lead Officer	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To undertake the Off-Street Parking Places Order process, specifically to formalise parking in the Ship on Shore car park and to start operating as a pay and display car park.2. The Committee recommends, if the consultation is positive, that Policy and Resources committee and Council add the Ship on Shore car park into the fees and charges document.3. To agree that a two year trial is undertaken for providing paid coach parking in Minster at the location shown in appendix II and the off street parking places order process is followed.4. Due to the project's links in supporting economic development and encouraging visitors, to recommend to Policy and Resources committee to allocate funding of £35,000 for the preparation of the site for the coach park from Kent Pool Economic Development Business Rates Reserve.5. Delegate authority for the Head of Environment and Leisure to complete the relevant paperwork for the off-street parking orders.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's intention to consult on an off-street parking order for Ship on Shore car park, Sheerness and for plans to trial coach parking at a new site in Minster.
- 1.2 The car park is currently a free to use car park but is in poor condition and is a draw for dumped vehicles and fly-tipping.

- 1.3 Sheppey has no formally advertised coach parking opportunities and therefore it is difficult to attract tourist groups to local venues. The project to trial a coach parking area will help deliver priorities within the Visitor Economy Framework and support local industry.

2 Background

Ship on Shore car park

- 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. Initial plans were to change the use of the car park to a coach park, but informal consultation suggests it is well used at certain times by local residents/local organisations.
- 2.2 The site is an eyesore due to its condition and over the years has been a draw for abandoned vehicles and fly-tipping.
- 2.3 In order to formalise the parking area and to allow restrictions to be put in place, an application for an Off-Street Parking Places order is required under section 35 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The proposal is to install a pay and display machine in the car park and to levy our standard fees and charges for car parking across the Borough, operating to the same times as other car parks.
- 2.4 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 relevant committee for decision.
- 2.5 Works will be required to improve the surfacing of the car park. Quotes have been obtained and the costs of resurfacing, lining and signage and are considered to be in the region of £35,000. Installation of the pay and display machine which will offer cash and card payment is estimated at £8,000.

Coach Parking

- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 The grassed area opposite the Shingle bank at Minster is used in summer months as an overflow parking space for people visiting Barton's Point coastal park, Minster leas seafront or the Shingle bank. It is proposed that the smaller section of grass to the left of the windsurf compound (see appendix II) is used for a trial of coach parking. The trial period is suggested as two years, given the

coach trade book packages well in advance and it will take time for awareness of the offering to be undertaken. As the Improvements would be needed to strengthen the entrance and provide grass matting in the hard wear areas of the site. This is estimated at £35,000.

- 2.8 An off-street parking order would be required to control use of the area and keep it available for coach parking. 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.
- 2.9 Research has been undertaken on equivalent coach parking 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 in this remote area.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 To undertake the Off-Street Parking Places Order process, specifically to formalise parking in the Ship on Shore car park and to start operating as a pay and display car park.
- 3.2 The Committee recommends, if the consultation is positive, that Policy and Resources committee and Council add the Ship on Shore car park into the fees and charges document.
- 3.3 To agree that a two year trial is undertaken for providing paid coach parking in Minster at the location shown in appendix II and the off street parking places order process is followed.
- 3.4 Due to the project's links in supporting economic development and encouraging visitors, to recommend to Policy and Resources committee to allocate funding of £35,000 for the 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 new pay and display charges.

- 4.2 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	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'.
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>The car park is currently free to use, so does not generate any income but requires on-going maintenance which comes out of the same revenue budget as paid for car parks. The proposal for the Ship on Shore car park will generate some additional income each year and hopefully reduce the requirement for officers to attend to fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour. The £35k funding to resurface, line and sign the site would be taken from the Civil Enforcement Fund reserve that currently stands at £138,224.</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. There will be some additional costs of utilities and cash collection, but the additional income will offset these.</p> <p>The coach parking is not expected to make immediate impact on income as it will take a while to establish links with the coach trade. However, it will provide some income to contribute to upkeep and maintenance of the site in the future and bring wider economic benefits to Sheppey.</p> <p>Costs to prepare the coach 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>

<p>Legal, Statutory and Procurement</p>	<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>
<p>Crime and Disorder</p>	<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>
<p>Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency</p>	<p>Encouraging coach travel parties will likely reduce the number of private vehicles coming to the town thus reducing potentially harmful emissions.</p>
<p>Health and Wellbeing</p>	<p>No implications at current time</p>
<p>Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults</p>	<p>No implications at current time</p>
<p>Risk Management and Health and Safety</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Equality and Diversity</p>	<p>It is considered that this decision does not impact any of the protected characteristics negatively.</p>
<p>Privacy and Data Protection</p>	<p>No implications at current time</p>

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
- Appendix II: proposed location for coach park in Minster

8 Background Papers

n/a