

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name of activity:	Variation to the 2-hour free parking scheme (paper to virtual)	Date Completed:	07/07/2023
Directorate / Division responsible for activity:	Technical Services	Lead Officer:	Nat Slade
Existing Activity	Yes	New / Proposed Activity	No
		Changing / Updated Activity	Yes

What are the aims / main purposes of the activity?

The proposal is to progress the 2-hour free parking scheme in the Bognor Regis and Littlehampton town car parks from a cardboard disc to a virtual permit. Thus, continuing the 2-hour free parking scheme to continue supporting the needs of local businesses, shoppers and visitors, whilst creating a substantially more manageable and quantifiable system for monitoring the scheme.

What are the main actions and processes involved?

To progress from a cardboard disc to a virtual only permit. This will involve customers using the MiPermit app to register for the free parking time period and will also allow them to purchase additional parking if required.

Who is intended to benefit & who are the main stakeholders?

The main stakeholders for Bognor Regis are Bognor Regis Town Council, the Bognor Regis Business Improvement District (Bognor Regis BID) and users of our car parks (this includes shoppers and visitors to the area). The main stakeholders in Littlehampton are Littlehampton Town Council, the Littlehampton Traders Association and the users of our car parks.

Our town centre car parks support significant volumes of visitors and shoppers to the area, particularly during summer season and school holidays. Local businesses rely upon availability of car parking spaces for their customers and the 2-hour free parking scheme provides an incentive for people to visit the town centres.

The cardboard discs are currently available for a modest £2 fee in Bognor Regis and free in Littlehampton and provide users with 2 hours free parking within certain Bognor Regis and Littlehampton town car parks.

By transitioning to a virtual permit, shoppers and businesses will continue to benefit from the 2-hour free parking period and the cost to purchase a permit will remain unchanged at £2. This will involve a price increase for customers in Littlehampton. Permits will be valid for a year, commencing 1st January and will need to

be renewed at the end of the year.

Currently, customers are required to return to their vehicles at the end of the 2-hour parking period to move their vehicle to ensure they do not receive a Penalty Charge Notice. With a virtual permit system, customers can purchase additional parking using the same app they used to initiate the free parking period, thus eliminating any confusion for customers and ensuring they can spend additional time in our town centres without having to rush back to their vehicles.

Have you already consulted on / researched the activity?

Early informal consultation regarding the proposed changes was undertaken with Bognor Regis and Littlehampton Town Councils and the Bognor Regis Business Improvement District (BID). Early discussions with the Littlehampton Traders Association established they were not able to contribute to a new agreement after the current scheme expires at the end of 2023.

All stakeholders expressed an ongoing interest in the continuation of a scheme that supports footfall into the town centres, benefitting town centre businesses.

Impact on people with a protected characteristic (What is the potential impact of the activity? Are the impacts high, medium or low?)

Protected characteristics / groups	Is there an impact (Yes / No)	If Yes, what is it and identify whether it is positive or negative
Age (older / younger people, children)	Yes	<p>As the new permit system is virtual, some customers may not have access to remote services such as MiPermit. In order to accommodate all car park users and to ensure that all shoppers and visitors have access to the scheme, a helpline will be available to any customers unable to obtain their free parking via the MiPermit app. Once called, the operator will be able to enter the customers vehicle registration details and initiate the free parking period. Customers will still be able to purchase additional parking via the Pay and Display machines situated in the car park in cash or by bank card.</p> <p>Staff will be available at the Civic Centre in Littlehampton and the Bognor Regis Town Hall to assist customers experiencing any difficulties to set up a permit. Automatic renewals will be activated on these accounts to minimise stress and concerns moving forward.</p> <p>There will continue to be an option to purchase town centre and seasonal permits. All users of these permits will benefit for any length of stay in town centres or seasonal car park at a considerably reduced rate.</p>
Disability (people with physical / sensory impairment or mental disability)	Yes	<p>As the new permit system is virtual, some customers may not have access to remote services such as MiPermit. In order to accommodate all car park users and to ensure that all shoppers and visitors have access to the scheme, a helpline will be available to any customers unable to obtain their free parking via the MiPermit app. Once called, the operator will be able to enter the</p>

		<p>customers vehicle registration details and initiate the free parking period. Customers will still be able to purchase additional parking via the Pay and Display machines situated in the car park in cash or by bank card.</p> <p>Staff will be available at the Civic Centre in Littlehampton and the Bognor Regis Town Hall to assist customers experiencing any difficulties to set up a permit. Automatic renewals will be activated on these accounts to minimise stress and concerns moving forward.</p> <p>Holders of blue badges can continue to park for free all day in all our off-street car parks, in any car parking space, so do not need a 2-hour town centre virtual parking permit.</p> <p>There will continue to be an option to purchase town centre and seasonal permits. All users of these permits will benefit for any length of stay in town centres or seasonal car park at a considerably reduced rate.</p>
Gender reassignment (the process of transitioning from one gender to another.)	No	
Marriage & civil partnership (Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Civil partnerships are legally recognized for same-sex couples)	No	
Pregnancy & maternity (Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant & maternity refers to the period after the birth)	No	
Race (ethnicity, colour, nationality or national origins & including gypsies, travellers, refugees & asylum seekers)	No	
Religion & belief (religious faith or other group with a recognised belief system)	No	
Sex (male / female)	No	

Sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual)	No	
Whilst Socio economic disadvantage that people may face is not a protected characteristic; the potential impact on this group should be also considered	Yes	<p>Whilst there is no intended impact based on socio economically disadvantaged people, the 2-hour free parking scheme will only be available for use once a day. Currently, customers can park for 2 hours for free with a no return within 1 hour, meaning customers can return to the car park an hour later, or park in alternate participating car park for a further 2 hours of free parking. This could have an impact on those who are economically disadvantaged as customers will be required to pay for additional parking if required.</p> <p>Whilst the Bognor Regis parking disc currently costs £2 and is only valid for one calendar year, the Littlehampton permit is currently free and does not have an expiry date. While Bognor Regis customers will not see a change to either the cost, or the period of validity, of the permit, Littlehampton customers will. The introduction of admin charges in Littlehampton are designed to make the schemes equitable for both sides of the district and the charges are designed to be affordable for all. The current daily charges for 2-hour parking in all town centre car parks in Littlehampton is £2. The admin cost provides exceptional value for money and would continue to encourage customers into the town centre. Most users would only have to use their virtual permits once in a year to reap the benefits of the scheme in both Littlehampton and Bognor Regis.</p> <p>However, the costs of parking stays equate only to a small percentage of the annual costs of running a motor vehicle and therefore the impact is small. All car park users will still be able to park for 2 hours free in participating town centre car parks in Littlehampton & Bognor Regis once every day if the customer wishes.</p> <p>There will continue to be an option to purchase town centre and seasonal permits. All users of these permits will benefit for any length of stay in town centres or seasonal car park at a considerably reduced rate.</p>

What evidence has been used to assess the likely impacts?

The Government published information in December 2022 advising the cost of living has been increasing across the UK since early 2021. Higher inflation affects the affordability of goods and services for households. The Government Office of Budget expects the real post tax household income to fall in 2022/23.

Decision following initial assessment

Continue with existing or introduce new / planned activity	Yes	Amend activity based on identified actions	No
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Action Plan			
Impact identified	Action required	Lead Officer	Deadline
Yes	<p>To accommodate all car park users of all ages, and to ensure that all shoppers and visitors have access to the scheme, a helpline will be available to any customers unable to obtain their free parking via the MiPermit app. Once called, the operator will be able to enter the customers vehicle registration details and initiate the free parking period. Customers will still be able to purchase additional parking via the Pay and Display machines situated in the car park.</p> <p>There will continue to be an option to purchase town centre and seasonal permits. All users of these permits will benefit for any length of stay in town centres or seasonal car park at a considerably reduced rate.</p> <p>Signage will be erected in all affected car parks 2 months before the transition date to ensure all customers have time to adapt to the planned changes. Staff will be available at the Civic Centre and the Bognor Town Hall to answer any queries or concerns affected customers may have. Promotional leaflets will also be available to customers detailing important dates, how to obtain their free parking, the helpline number and how to download the app if they don't already have it.</p>		
Yes	<p>To accommodate all car park users, regardless of disability, and to ensure that all shoppers and visitors have access to the scheme, a helpline will be available to any customers unable to obtain their free parking via the MiPermit app. Once called, the operator will be able to enter the customers vehicle registration details and initiate the free parking period. Customers will still be able to purchase additional parking via the Pay and Display machines situated in the car park.</p>		

	<p>There will continue to be an option to purchase town centre and seasonal permits. All users of these permits will benefit for any length of stay in town centres or seasonal car park at a considerably reduced rate.</p> <p>Signage will be erected in all affected car parks 2 months before the transition date to ensure all customers have time to adapt to the planned changes. Staff will be available at the Civic Centre and the Bognor Town Hall to answer any queries or concerns affected customers may have. Promotional leaflets will also be available to customers detailing important dates, how to obtain their free parking, the helpline number and how to download the app if they don't already have it.</p>		
Yes	<p>To minimise the risk of having a socio-economic impact, the Council will continue to offer free parking in certain outlying car parks. The Council will also continue to offer annual/monthly permits at a reduced rate, which provides 24-hour parking in town center car parks along with an option to purchase seasonal permits.</p> <p>The 2-hour free parking scheme will continue to offer local businesses, shoppers and visitors heavily discounted parking as an incentive to support local businesses for a modest administrative fee.</p>		

Monitoring & Review

Date of last review or Impact Assessment:	n/a
Date of next 12 month review:	n/a
Date of next 3 year Impact Assessment (from the date of this EIA):	n/a

Date EIA completed:	07/07/2023
Signed by Person Completing:	Jasmine Gander – Principal Parking Services Officer