

Cabinet

1 March 2022

Proposed Blue Badge Car Park Charging Policy

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr R Bryan, Highways, Travel and Environment

Local Councillor(s): All Cllrs

Executive Director: J Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

Report Author: Elizabeth Murray

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Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

That the new pan-Dorset Blue Badge Car Park Charging Policy be approved.

Reason for Recommendation:

To align the former council policies to one to bring consistency and fairness to Blue Badge holders who park in Dorset Council car parks.

1. Executive Summary

Dorset Council Parking Services is currently working under the Parking Orders of the former Councils. This has meant that the offer for Blue Badge holders who park in Dorset Council car parks is different depending on the location that is visited. This has led to disparity of charges, with some areas giving free parking and others requiring payment (some with 1-hour free).

As part of the Parking Transformation project, it was recognised that along with other car parking charging alignment that this disparity needed to be addressed.

The proposed pan-Dorset policy offers Blue Badge holders:

- three-hours free parking for Blue Badge holders who also hold a Restricted Mobility Parking Permit.
- one-hour additional parking to all Blue Badge holders when a valid pay & display ticket is purchased.

1.1 Dorset Council Legal Duty

As per legal duty, Dorset Council has statutorily consulted with the chief officer of police for the area. Also, as per the former Councils' parking policies, consultation has taken place with Chambers of Commerce, Business Improvement Districts and Town Councils. Non-statutory consultation has also been undertaken with Parish Councils.

There were some questions raised via email which have been answered, full responses can be viewed in Appendix 1.

1.2 Public Engagement

To better understand what Blue Badge holders and their carers want and need a survey was undertaken. The survey also provided data and evidence on the potential impact of different charging options. The survey ran for six weeks; 1,513 responses were received.

Respondents were asked to rank four options in preference, as well as submit their own ideas for consideration. The highest-ranking option was for three-hours of free parking with 35%, followed by one-hours free parking when a pay & display ticket is purchased (25%). Free parking for higher exemption Blue Badge holders was also a popular option (20%).

The full survey report can be viewed in Appendix 2.

During December, the project team held virtual discussions with a range of Blue Badge holders, and carers of Blue Badge holders, from across the Dorset Council area to gain further feedback and shape the proposals.

Feedback from the discussion groups proved that the proposed policy is generally considered to be fair and does meet the needs of Blue Badge holders. There was a suggestion to change the name and the eligibility criteria for the 'Restricted Mobility Parking Permit', this was altered for the final proposal sent out to stakeholders for comment.

1.3 Overview Committee on 10th February 2022

The Place and Resources Overview Committee received and considered a report which set out the details of the Proposed Blue Badge Car Park Charging Policy. Councillors considered the issues arising from the report and discussions were had. The recommended changes were proposed by Cllr Val Potheary seconded by Cllr Sherry Jespersen. Overview 'Minded to' recommend to Cabinet:

To align the former council policies to one to bring consistency and fairness to Blue Badge holders who park in Dorset Council car parks.

The proposed pan-Dorset policy offers Blue Badge holders:

- three-hours free parking for Blue Badge holders who also hold a Restricted Mobility Parking Permit.
- one-hour additional parking to all Blue Badge holders when a valid pay & display ticket is purchased.

The Executive Director of Place confirmed the 'minded to' Recommendation to Cabinet, under delegated powers on behalf of the informal meeting of the Place and Resources Overview Committee. Full minutes from the Overview Committee can be seen in Appendix 4.

2. Financial Implications

Savings may be gained through the efficiency of having one pan-Dorset policy. It is not thought that this scheme will lose revenue for Dorset Council as the 3-hour free parking scheme is already available in most of the authority.

3. Well-being and Health Implications

The proposed policy should improve the well-being of Blue Badge holders in Dorset by giving two 'free' parking options. Due to the policy being the same across the authority, it removes the confusion that Blue Badge holders currently experience when parking in Dorset Council car parks in different locations, which may also increase well-being. Those visiting from other areas of the UK will also benefit from the scheme as they will be eligible for 1-hour additional parking.

4. Climate implications

The officer has not identified any Climate implications from the recommendations in this report.

5. Other Implications

The officer has not identified any other implications from the recommendations in this report.

6. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the Council's approved risk management methodology, it is the officer's opinion that there are no high risks that need to be reported.

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

A full Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and this is shown in Appendix 3. The assessment found that there were no negative impacts on Dorset Council residents' protected characteristics.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Comments from Statutory Consultees and Parish Councils

Appendix 2 – Blue Badge Survey Report

Appendix 3 – Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix 4 – Place and Resources Overview Committee Minutes

9. Background Papers - Dorset Council Proposed Blue Badge Car Park Charging Policy

9.1 Executive Summary

The purpose of this policy is to align the offer that Dorset Council gives to Blue Badge holders within Dorset Council car parks. The policy should be easy to understand and consistent across Dorset Council.

The objectives are to:

- have one pan-Dorset Council scheme for Blue Badge holders
- have a policy that meets the needs of Blue Badge holders

The policy does not include applying for a Blue Badge and on-street parking restrictions as these are national arrangements, thus do not fall under the remit of local authorities.

9.2 Proposed scheme for Dorset Council car parks

Dorset Council will offer two concessions:

- i. Provide 3-hours free parking for Blue Badge holders who receive certain allowances, through the purchase of a Restricted Mobility Parking Permit
- ii. Provide an additional 1-hour parking to all Blue Badge holders when a valid pay & display ticket is purchased

The proposed scheme fulfils the needs of Blue Badge holders, by giving free parking to those who receive certain allowances due to having higher mobility needs. Besides this, it acknowledges the extra time that it may take Blue Badge holders to transition to and from their vehicle and destination, and that they may need more time at their destination.

9.3 Proposed Criteria for Restricted Mobility Parking Permit

Blue Badge holders who receive specified allowances will be entitled to apply for a Restricted Mobility Parking Permit (RMPP). Applicants must have a Blue Badge and be in receipt of one of the following:

- Higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- 10 points or more on the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Higher rate mobility component of Child Disability Payment
- War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement
- Armed Forces Independence Payment

Or evidence that the vehicle registered in the disabled person's name or their nominated driver's name is tax exempt.

It must only be used when the disabled person is present in the vehicle at some point during the trip. It cannot be used by a driver of a Blue Badge holder for their own personal use. The permit holder can only have one Restricted Mobility Parking Permit at any one time, and it cannot be used with the Dorset Council Short Stay Permit.

The cost of the permit is £15 (which covers the administration costs only) and will expire when the holder's Blue Badge expires. The RMPP cannot be transferred to other Blue Badge holders. The Blue Badge must be displayed with the RMPP to receive 3-hours free parking. The Blue Badge parking clock must be set at time of arrival. The RMPP is valid for use by Blue Badge holders in any parking bay including disabled bays (except those as stated in Section 9.5).

9.4 Proposed Criteria for 1-hour Free Parking

Blue Badge holders will qualify for 1-hour additional parking when a valid minimum tariff pay & display ticket or when a Dorset Council Short Stay Permit is displayed with the Blue Badge. The Blue Badge parking clock must be set at time of arrival. The 1-hour additional parking is valid for use by Blue Badge holders in any parking bay including disabled bays (except those as stated below).

9.5 Proposed Car Park Restrictions

- i. Vehicles must be parked within the bay markings. The pay and display charges apply to each space which is fully or partly occupied by a vehicle.
- ii. Some of our car parks have extra-wide designated 'disabled' parking spaces. Vehicles parked in 'disabled' spaces must have a valid blue badge clearly displayed, as well as a valid pay and display ticket/RMPP.
- iii. Parking is not permitted on double yellow lines or on yellow hatched areas within car parks.
- iv. Parking is not permitted in spaces designated for use by other users (such as permit holders) unless the Blue Badge holder also has the relevant permit.
- v. Parking is not permitted in spaces designated for use by specific types of vehicle (such as solo motorcycles) unless the Blue Badge holder's vehicle is of the type for which that space has been reserved.

9.6 Proposed Enforcement

As well as standard enforcement, Blue Badge holders may have their badge withdrawn/receive a Penalty Charge Notice for:

- not displaying the badge clearly
- not displaying the time clock set at time of arrival
- use of a badge that is no longer valid
- use of a badge that has been reported as lost or stolen
- letting a friend or relative use the badge
- use of a copied badge
- altering the details on the badge, for example, the expiry date
- making a fraudulent application (for example, providing false information on the application form) or using a badge obtained fraudulently

Misuse by a third party:

- using someone else's badge (with or without the badge holder's knowledge) without the badge holder being present in the vehicle at some point during the trip
- using a badge belonging to someone who has died
- copying, altering or faking badges
- using a stolen badge
- using a fake badge

9.7 Blue Badge Car Park Charging Policy Review

The Blue Badge Policy will be reviewed annually. When reviewing parking charges Dorset Council will consider:

- national changes to the Blue Badge scheme
- the effectiveness of the policy for Blue Badge holders
- the effectiveness of the policy for keeping highways clear
- the policy of neighbouring authorities and by private sector car parks within the local area, as well as comparing it with Dorset's Town Councils

Any change in policy will be subject to the usual legal procedure for consultation and advertisement.

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

Comments from Statutory Consultees and Parish Councils

Pamphill and Shapwick Parish Council

I write on behalf of in relation to the above.

1. We welcome a consistent approach to this issue pan-Dorset
2. We welcome the proposed 3 hr free parking provision for those eligible
3. We agree that the conditions applied to the 3 hr free parking are fair (ie - Higher Rate Motability/PIP etc)
4. We welcome the second proposal (1 hr parking for all Badge Holders).

However, in closing, we do query if an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken in relation to this proposal, as the Government have just extended the Blue Badge scheme to those who are mentally ill, with no physical disability. We are surprised to see no mention of this group in the proposal.

Verwood Town Council

Members of the Verwood Town Council read the policy and discussed it at their last Full Town Council meeting. The members do not agree with offering the two concession under 3.1 of the policy.

They resolved that the Town Council believe that there should only be one concession for all Blue Badge Holders which would provide three hours free parking through the purchase of a Restricted Mobility Parking Permit.

Cranborne & Edmondsham Parish Council

The licence fee was once free and it is a great shame that residents will have to pay for their licence.

Symondsbury Parish Council

Symondsbury Parish Council feel that the one-hour free parking is not adequate and felt that two hours is more reasonable with no purchase of a car park ticket.

West Parley Parish Council

Please be advised that the Parish Council has no objection to the standardised charging across the council authority.

Shaftesbury Town Council

Shaftesbury Town Council acknowledges the importance of standardising the charging schedule so that Blue Badge holders have the same experience across all Dorset Council owned car parks.

The General Management Committee members resolved to submit a response stating the 3 hours free parking should be extended to all Blue Badge Holders and not restricted to just those awarded the Restricted Mobility Parking Permit (RMPP).

Whilst the proposed Blue Badge charging schedule relating to both concessions is fair and reasonable and the RMPP is an improvement versus the current charging situation the council expresses the need to extend the 3-hour parking to all Blue Badge holders.

Wareham Town Council

Wareham Town Council are not in favour of the proposal for several reasons.

Members feel the policy is far too complicated and will cause confusion to residents and visitors.

Visitors are a significant proportion of car park users, particularly in the summer months, and by making the system complicated it may deter people from parking. It could also encourage blue badge holders to park in the street on double yellow lines, which is free for up to three hours, although this may inadvertently cause traffic issues.

By having two concessions it is unfair and discriminatory. There is already a strict application process for obtaining a blue badge and all holders should be able to park without the need to apply for a further parking permit.

It is felt that this is a quick fix and other options should be explored. For example, members of the National Trust can scan QR codes from their membership card to obtain free parking at National Trust sites, while non-members have to pay. This idea could be used for blue badge holders?

We hope Dorset Council will reconsider these policy changes and look at alternative options that would be more favourable to blue badge users.

Dorchester Town Council

1. The harmonisation provided by the scheme is welcome.
2. The continued level of benefit provided to Blue Badge holders in West Dorset is welcomed:– 1hr supplementary parking in a Dorset Council car park space, and up to 3hrs free parking in a Dorset Council car park for cases of particularly restricted mobility.
3. The policy title is misleading. Although the policy requires people to have a Blue Badge in order for them to benefit from the policy, the policy is NOT a Blue Badge scheme, that being a national scheme for on-road parking. It is actually about supplementary permit schemes for parking in Council Car parks – the Restricted Mobility Parking Permit, and the 1hr supplementary parking scheme. The title should make that clear to a new user by perhaps redrafting to: “Dorset Council Car Parks Supplementary Parking Permit policy/scheme for Blue Badger holders”?.
4. On the same issue, the objectives stated in the Executive summary should start with perhaps;- “To provided a supplementary parking permit scheme for Dorset’s Blue Badge holders using Dorset Council car parks.”?
5. The policy makes no reference to the duration of a RMPP, and unless made explicit the lack of that information could be confusing to the reader particularly as a UK Blue Badge usually lasts 3 years.
6. The cost of a RMPP at £15 per year compares unfavourably to a UK Blue Badge at under £3.50 per year.
7. The policy makes no helpful mention of how to apply for a RMPP which is an essential prerequisite for running a scheme, and a link could be provided within the policy.
8. The Restrictions and enforcement are reasonable.

Bridport Town Council

General Comment

Bridport Town Council welcomes the principle of a unified policy on parking provision for motorists with disabilities, and the idea of a permit that recognises the particular challenges they face. The Council also agrees with the provision of additional parking time at no cost for those who do not qualify for the permit.

Specific Issues

The Town Council asks that the following be considered when finalising the scheme:

1. Extension of the three-hour permit to four hours. Three hours may not be sufficient for those with the most significantly restricted mobility.
2. The deterrent effect of charging for parking for those Blue Badge holders that do not qualify for the permit, and the consequent impact on on-street parking. In Bridport our experience is that a minority of these will choose to park in often narrow side streets with narrow pavements, and in some cases in obvious dangerous places on main shopping streets. We do not support

charges for on-street parking in Bridport, as this will not solve this concern. However, Dorset Council as highway authority should consider, alongside the introduction of a revised scheme, whether current on-street restrictions where Blue Badge parking is allowed are sufficient to ensure the safety of other road users – be they pedestrians, cyclists, motorists etc.

3. Whilst we recognise the benefit of a uniform general policy, consideration should be given to a more nuanced approach that caters for different types of area – as is the case with other Dorset Council car parking charges, which take account of the differing needs of urban, visitor, and rural areas. In Bridport and West Bay for example, motorists with disabilities can currently be issued with a visitor permit allowing up to three hours free parking per day, for a two-week period. The loss of this facility will be detrimental to the visitor economy.
4. It is unclear whether the RMPP will be available to any applicant, or solely to those in the Dorset Council area. Our preference would be for the former.
5. The RMPP should be available for purchase by means other than online application. Bridport Town Council, via its Tourist Information Centre, currently offers ‘over the counter’ services for parking permits and is happy to continue this arrangement.
6. Consideration should be given to the most effective means of informing motorists of the changes, particularly those visitors who may not be aware until they arrive on holiday.

Blue Badge Survey Report



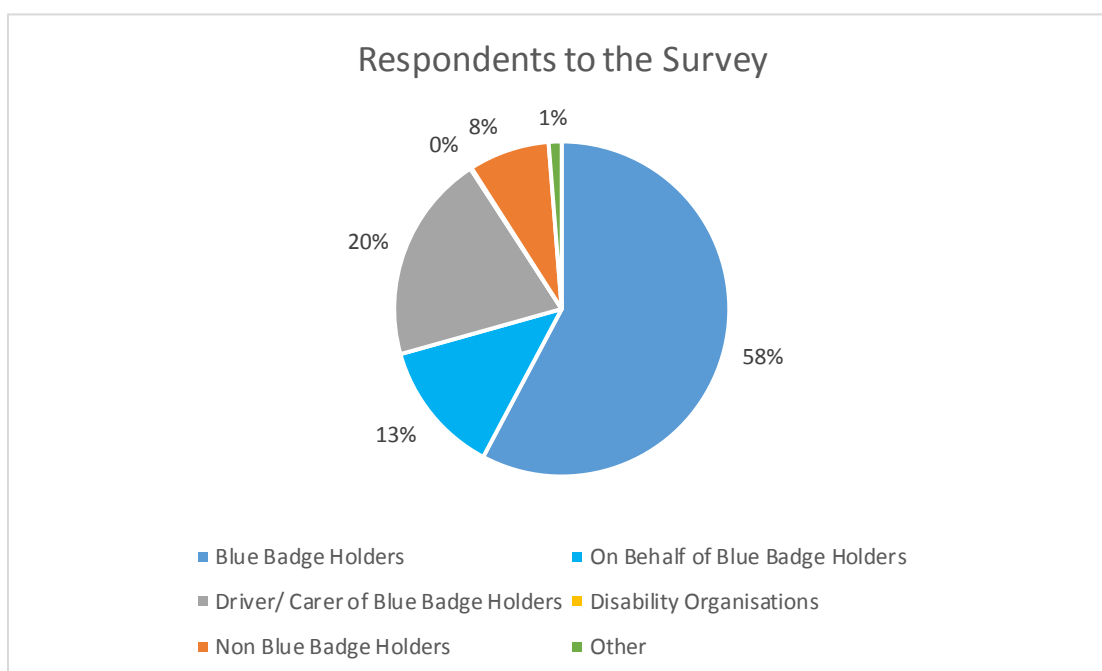
**Blue Badge Survey
Summary results
October 2021**

Mark Simons

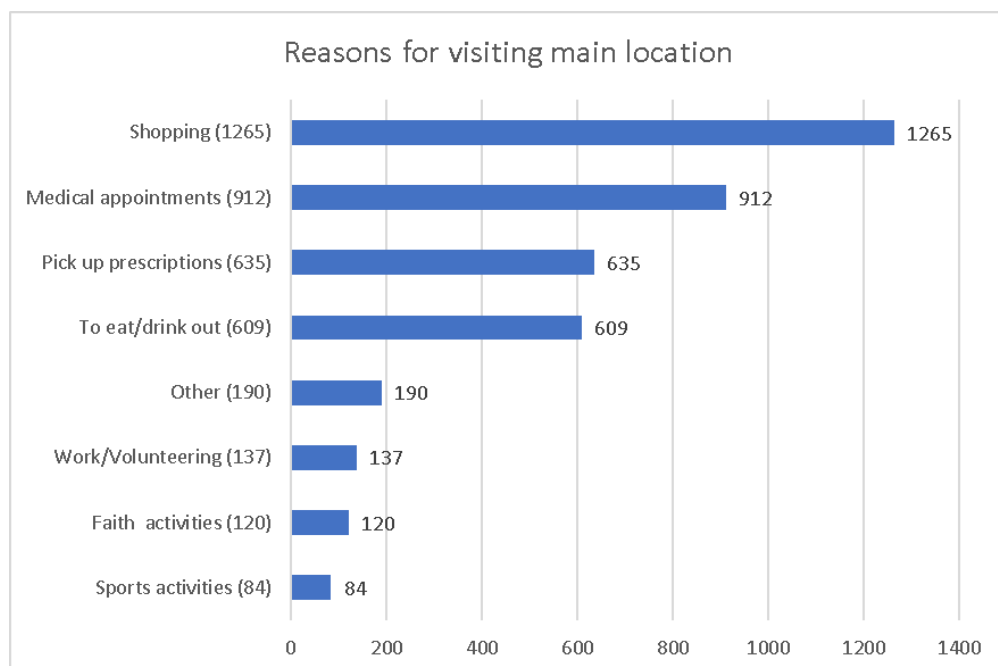
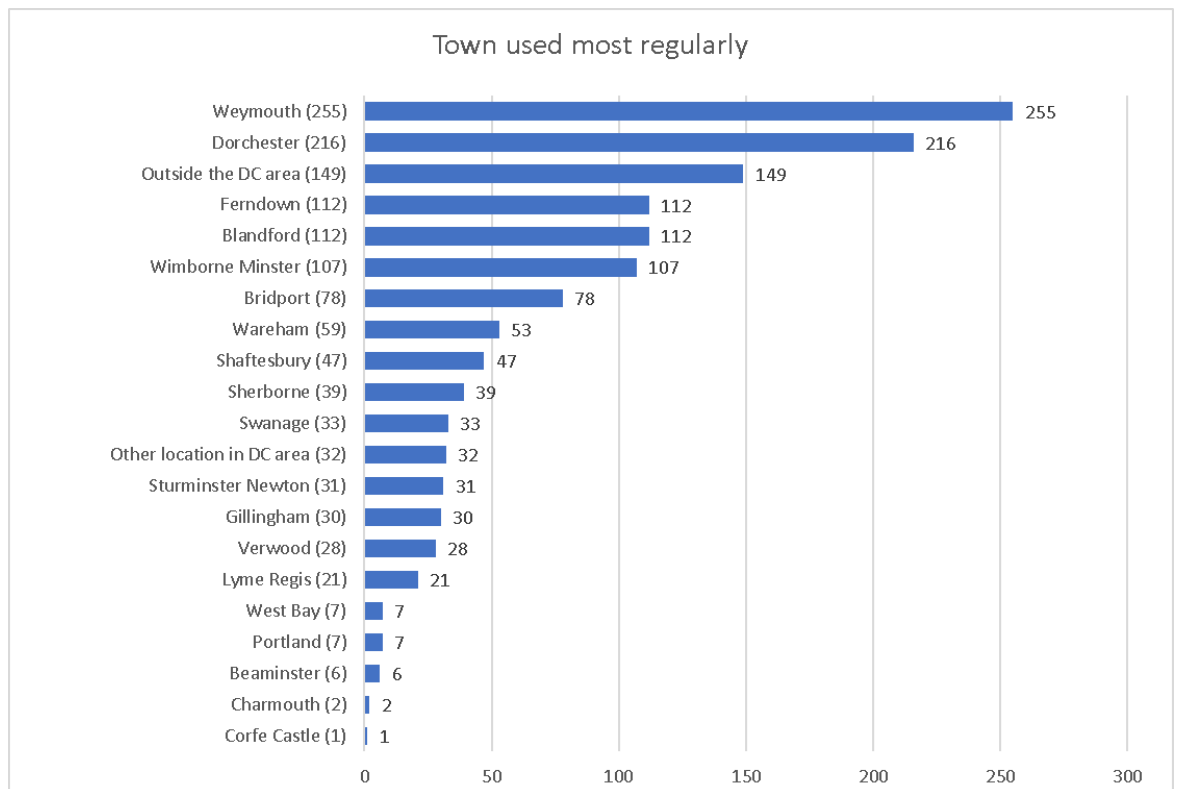
Corporate Consultation Officer

Blue Badge Survey

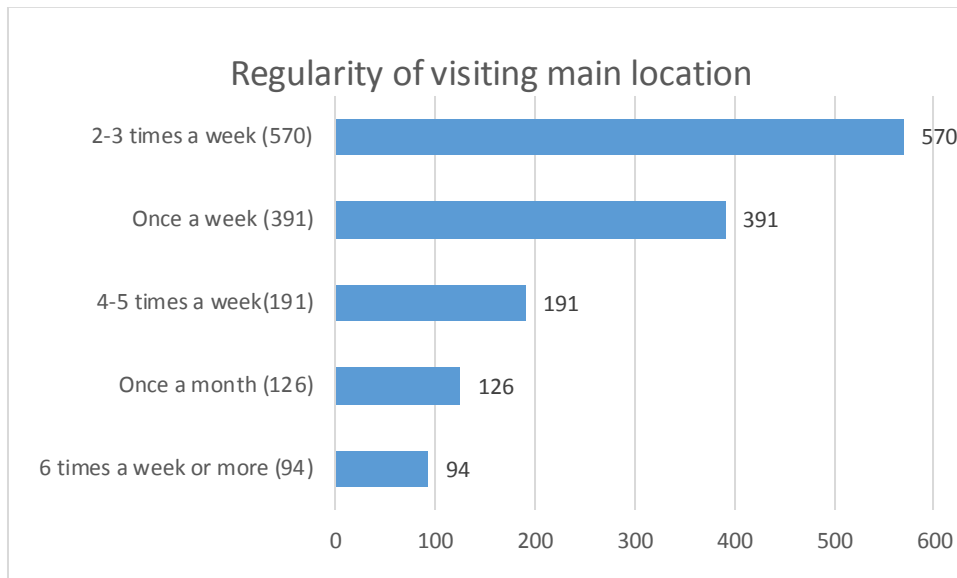
- **1,513 survey responses were received from across the wider area**
- **The survey ran from 13 August to 26 September 2021 inclusive.**
- Respondents came from across the age ranges with 55% aged 65 and older and 42% aged under 65.
- 57% of responses came from women compared to 40% from men – quite usual in council surveys.
- The biggest group of respondents was from Blue Badge holders themselves or people on behalf of Blue Badge holders, with 71% in these categories. A further 20% were drivers/carers of Blue Badge holders. Two disability organisations responded.



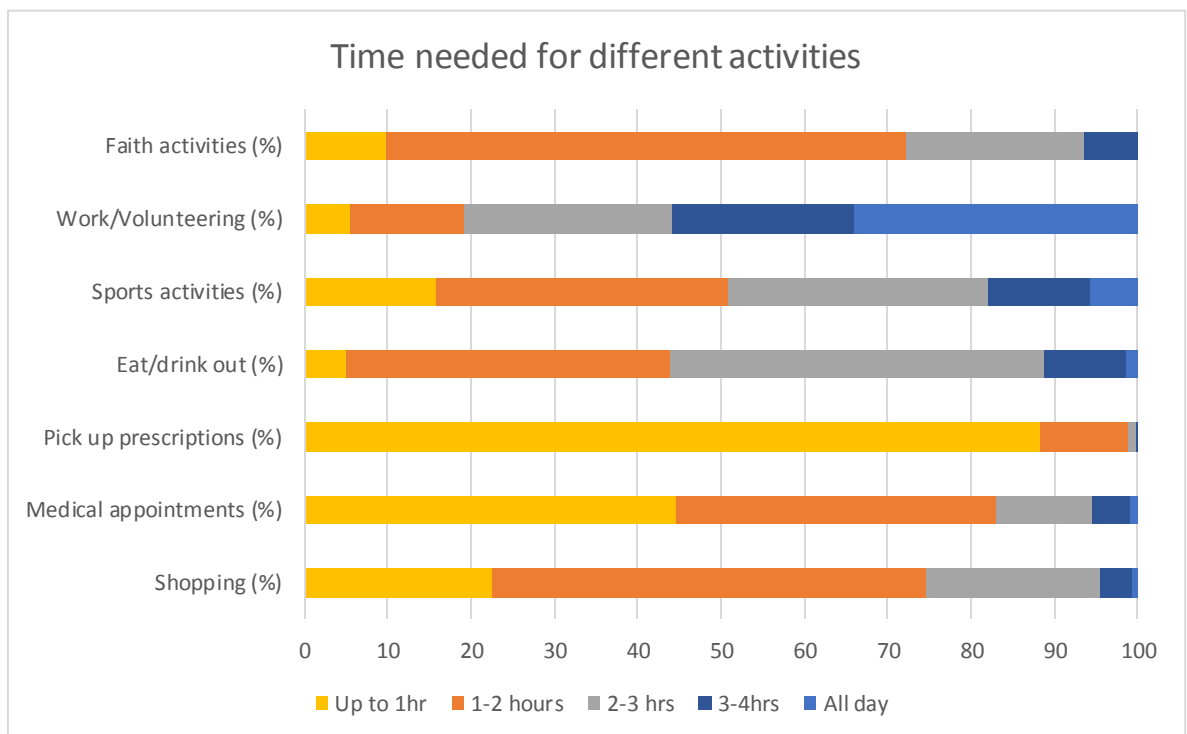
- The map (overpage) shows the distribution of the postcodes of respondents. The coverage is good, showing responses from right across the Dorset Council area and into Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.



- People were asked about their reasons for visiting their main location. Their principal reasons were predominately around shopping followed by health, involving medical appointments and prescriptions. Socialising/eating and drinking was the next most popular reason. These are shown in the chart above.



- Looking at how regularly people are visiting their main location it seems people's habits are quite varied. The most popular was 2-3 times a week. The second most popular was once a week. A considerable number (285) visited over 4 times a week.



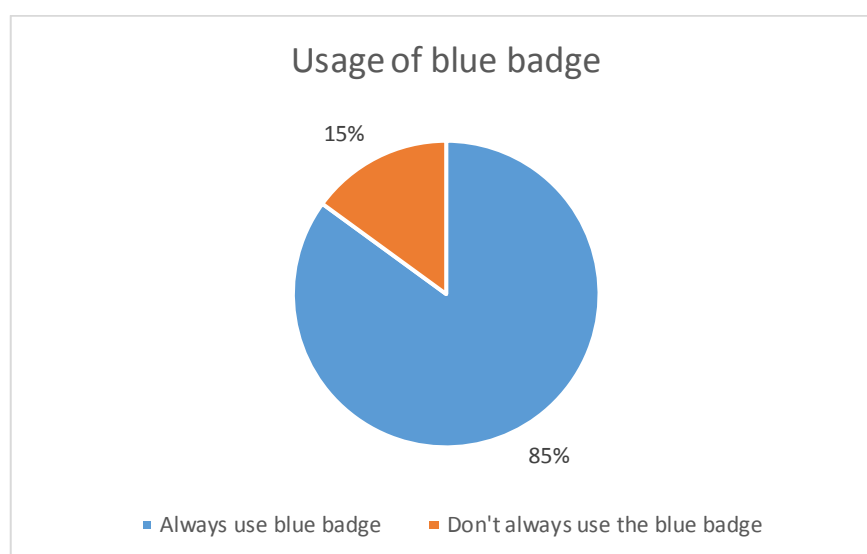
- Looking at the parking time needed for a variety of different activities the results are shown in the chart (above) and the table

below. We have excluded respondents who don't do these activities.

	Up to 1hr	1-2 hours	2-3 hrs	3-4hrs	All day
Shopping (%)	22	52	21	4	1
Medical appointments (%)	45	39	11	5	1
Pick up prescriptions (%)	88	11	1	0	0
Eat/drink out (%)	5	39	45	10	1
Sports activities (%)	16	35	31	12	6
Work/Volunteering (%)	5	14	25	22	34
Faith activities (%)	10	63	21	6	0

- The shortest time was needed for picking up a prescription and longest for work/volunteering.
- Looking at what could be done within a 2-hour window: 74% could do their shopping, 84% could attend their medical appointment, 99% get their prescription, 44% have a meal out, 51% do their sports activities, 19% could do their work/ volunteering, and 73% their faith activities.
- Looking at what could be done within a 3-hour window: 95% could do their shopping, 94% could attend their medical appointments, 100% could collect their prescriptions, 89% could have a meal out, 94% can do their sports activities, 44% can do their work/volunteering and 100% carry out their faith activities.
- The list of other activities included: Banking, cinema, trips out, exercise, hairdressers, library, school, visiting family, general leisure

Looking at whether Blue Badge holder/driver/carer, always use your/their Blue Badge when parking showed:



- Looking at the reasons for people not always using their Blue Badge showed the main reason was the lack of disabled spaces or the fact that the spaces were full.
- The second most common reason was people not using it as the badge holder themselves was not in the vehicle. Quite a few people mentioned that there were often more convenient spaces that were not specifically for disabled users.
- The table below shows the full analysis of the responses.

Issue	Mentions
No disabled spaces available/ Spaces full	76
Blue Badge holder not in the car	58
Other spaces are more convenient for destination	29
Have to pay anyway so not necessary	20
Leave disabled spaces to others who may need them more	11
Other parking options	8
Used to drop off only	3
Forget to take it	2
Happy to pay	1

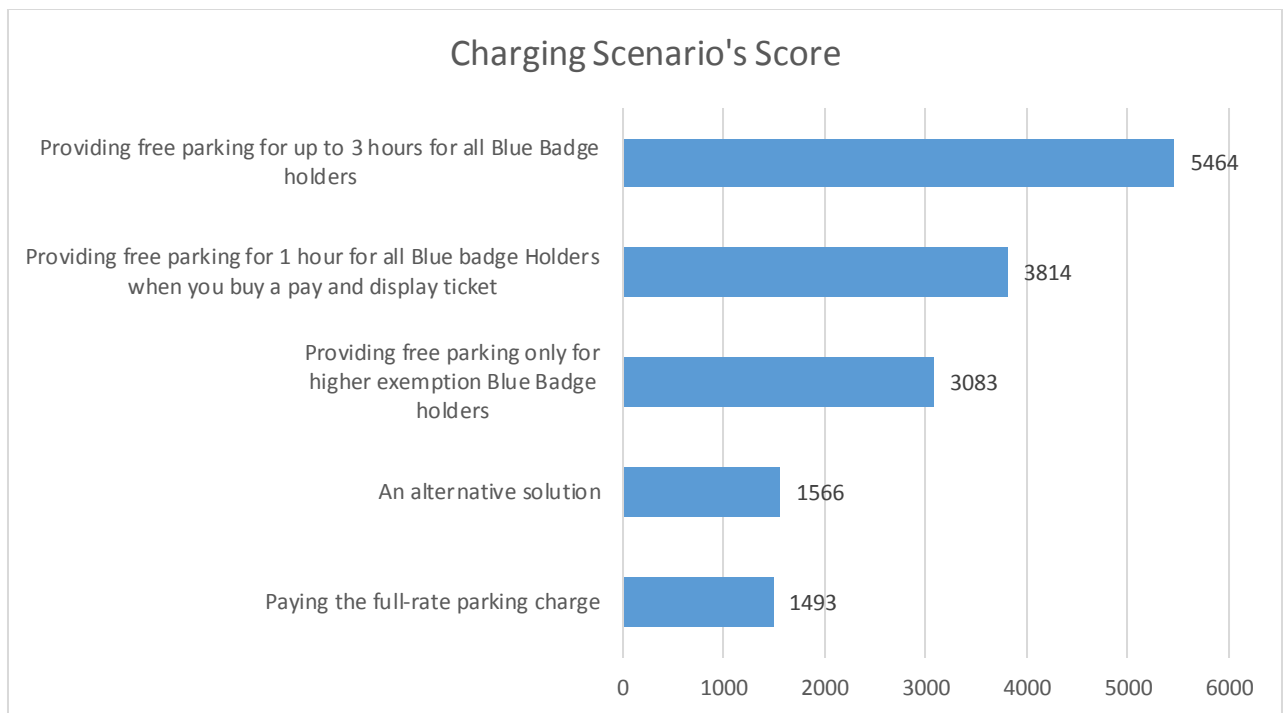
3hrs is not enough	1
Stigma to using	1

- Respondents were asked where they usually parked with their Blue Badge, with up to two selections possible. The table below shows the results:

Parking location	Numbers
In a car park	1,018
On-street on yellow lines - as permitted	601
On-street in free parking bays	485
On-street in a pay & display bay	318

- Whilst the majority chose to park in car parks, parking on double-yellow lines (as permitted) was the second most popular location.
- At present, the majority of Blue Badge holders pay when they park in car parks in the Dorset Council area but get one-hour free parking. On-street parking is free for Blue Badge holders.

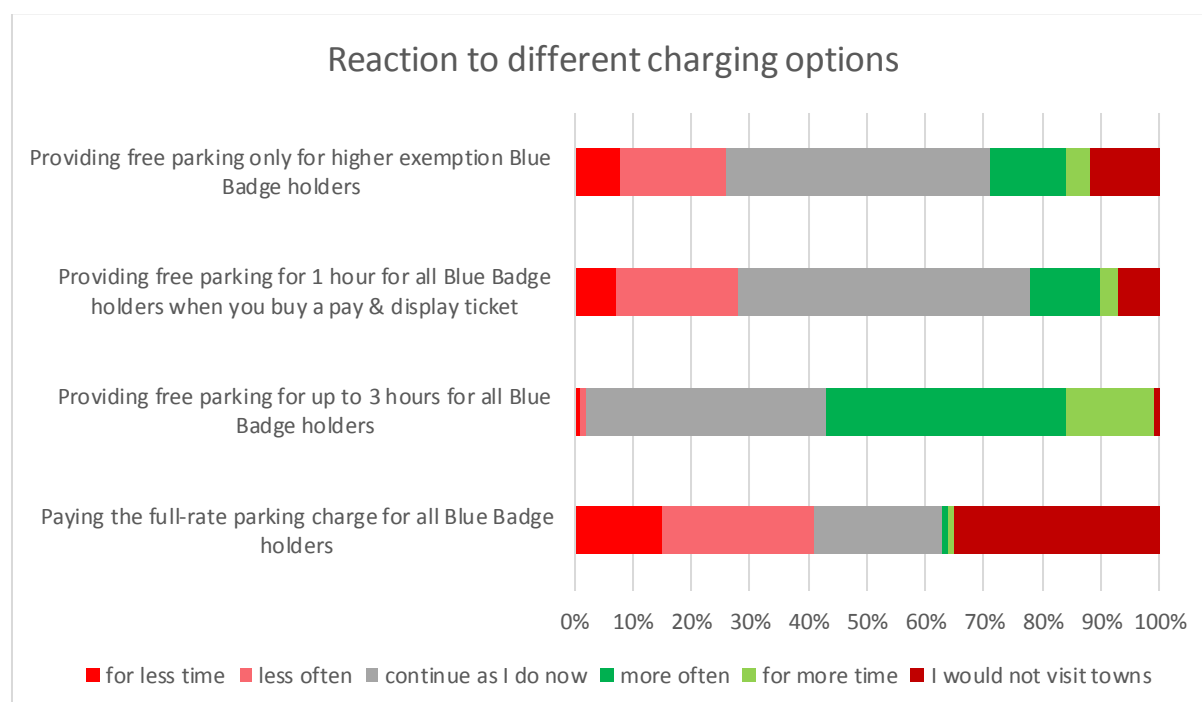
Four parking charging options (plus a user specified solution) were proposed for consideration and users were asked to rank the proposals by preference.



- The analysis method used was allocating 5 points for a first place down to 1 point for a fifth place when respondents were ranking.
- The chart above shows considerable support for free parking for 3 hours for Blue Badge holders. The second most popular choice was 1 hour free when Blue Badge holders buy a ticket. The third most popular was free parking for high exemption Blue Badge Holders. Paying the full parking charge was the least popular option.
- Free parking at all times for Blue Badge holders was not a specific option and was not proposed and supported in a big way as an alternative option by respondents.

Respondents were asked how they felt they would react to the different charging options. The table below shows their responses (%).

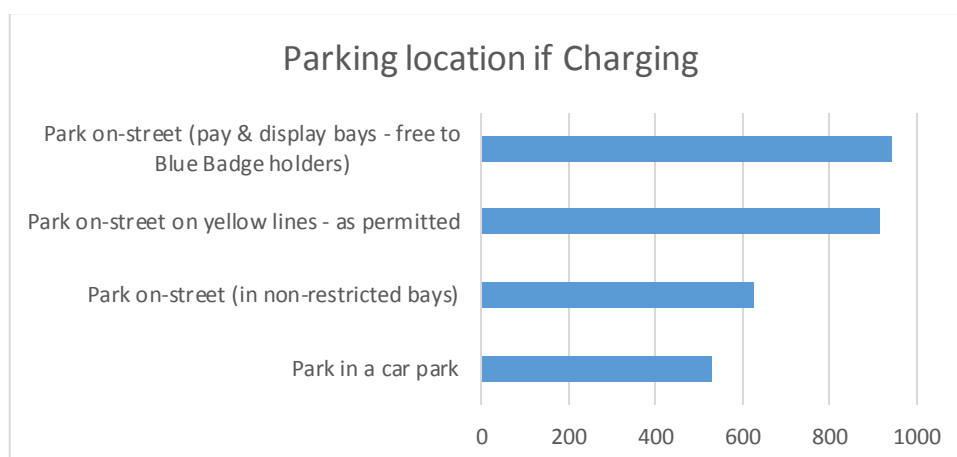
%	for less time	less often	continue as I do now	more often	for more time	I would not visit towns
Providing free parking only for higher exemption Blue Badge holders	8	18	45	13	4	12
Providing free parking for 1 hour for all Blue Badge holders when you buy a pay & display ticket	7	21	50	12	3	7
Providing free parking for up to 3 hours for all Blue Badge holders	1	1	41	41	15	1
Paying the full-rate parking charge for all Blue Badge holders	15	26	22	1	1	35



- The graph tries to highlight respondents' reaction with red colours being a negative reaction and green colours more positive. The grey shows no change in activity.
- So, for a number of people, whilst no change is the most popular choice, the option of 3 hours free parking would change behaviour bringing more people into town, and for longer. On the other hand, charging full fees was felt to have the opposite effect.
- Other options such as free parking for higher exemption permits and providing an hour free with a ticket purchased both had limited effect. Many people would continue as they do now, and a number would come into town for longer and more often.

Respondents were asked if parking charges were extended across Dorset Council car parks for all Blue Badge holders, how would this affect where they parked.

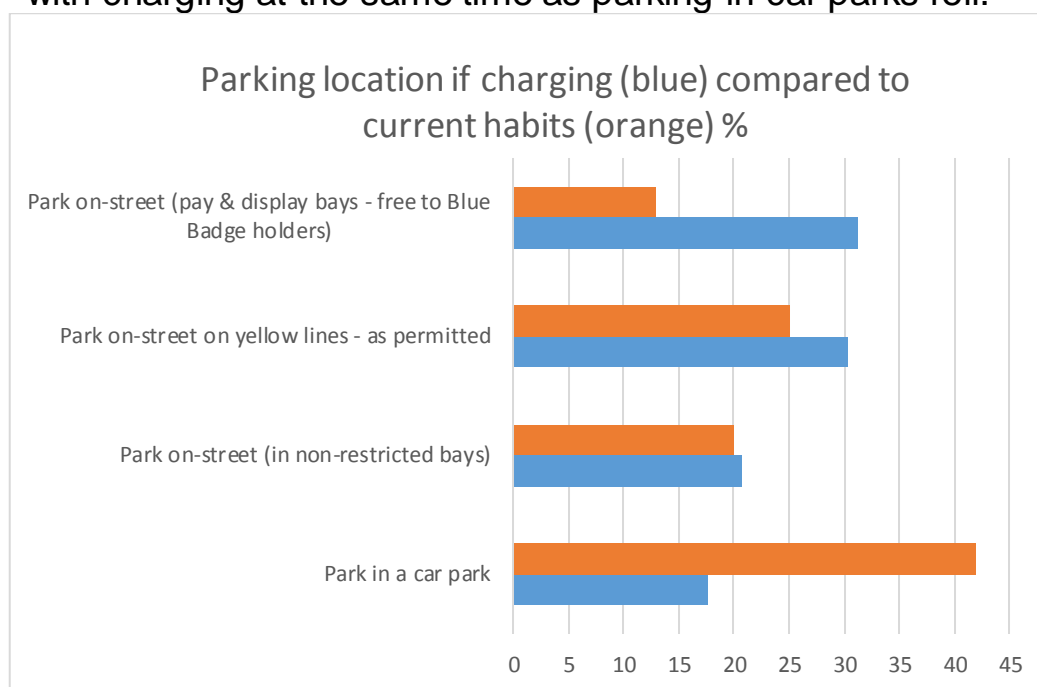
Parking location (could choose multiples)	responses
Park on-street (pay & display bays - free to Blue Badge holders)	943
Park on-street on yellow lines - as permitted	915
Park on-street (in non-restricted bays)	626
Park in a car park	531



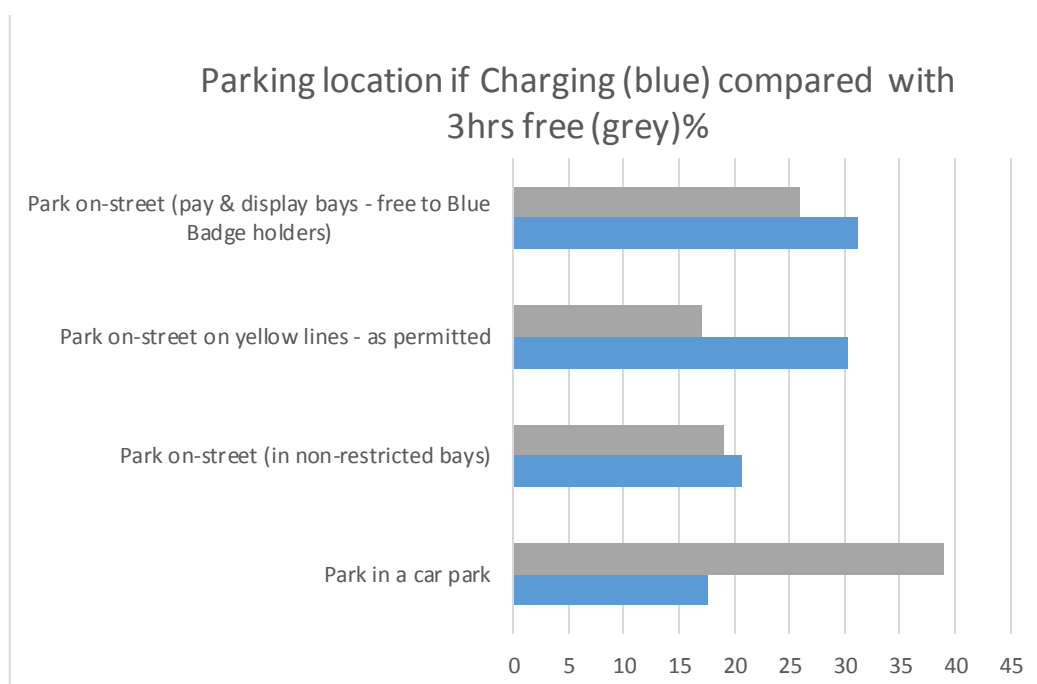
- As the table and chart shows if charging was applied across the area there would be a shift away from normal use, where Blue

Badge holders mainly parked in car parks, to on street parking.

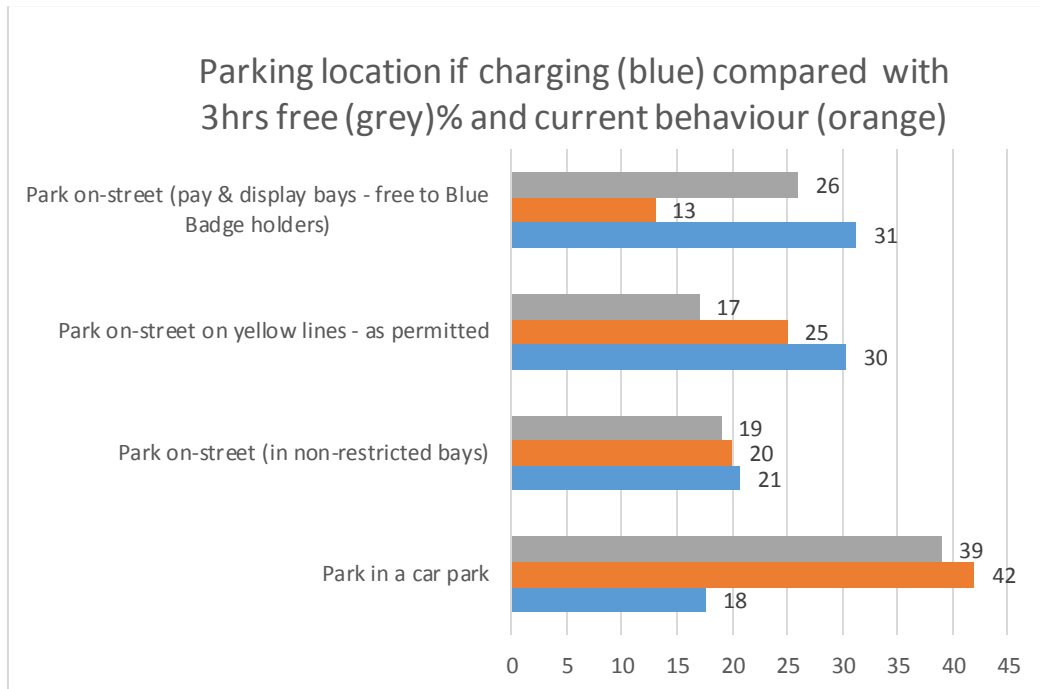
- All on-street parking methods increased for Blue Badge holders with charging at the same time as parking in car parks fell.



Respondents were then asked if car parking was free for 3 hours across Dorset Council car parks for all Blue Badge where they choose to park.



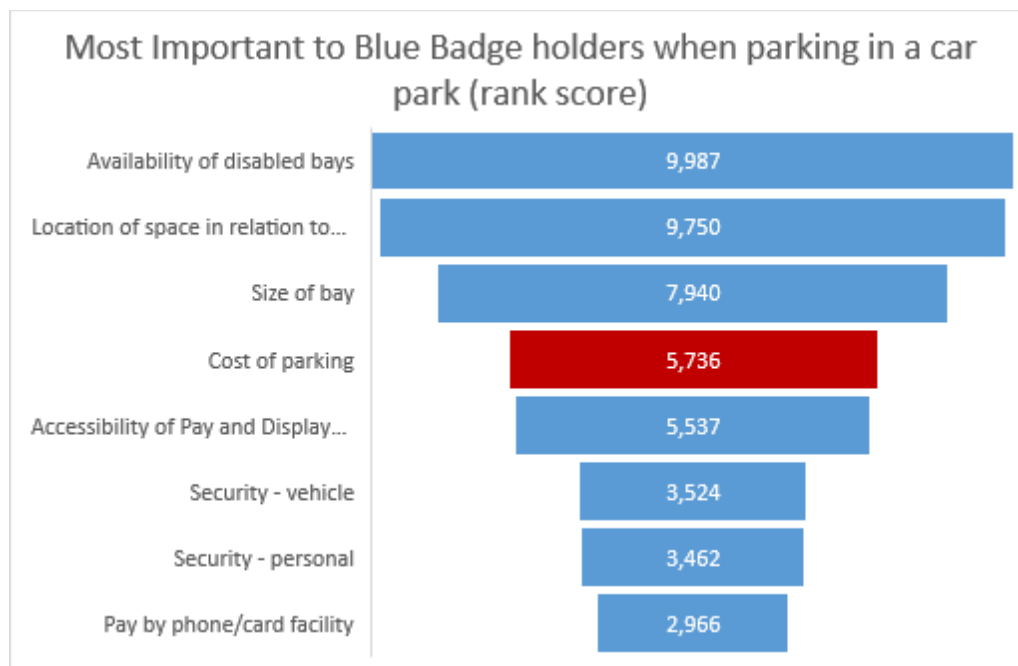
- So, comparing the option of full charging to 3hrs free parking in car parks, you now find car park use is high. On street parking (in free bays), on street (pay and display), and parking on yellow lines all reduce. The reduction in yellow line parking is the most noticeable.



- The chart above compares parking location as suggested by respondents depending what parking regime is in place
 - Current behaviour is shown in orange
 - The situation when parking is charged for is shown in blue
 - The situation when 3 hours free blue badge parking is offered shown in grey
 - It is clear that introducing full charging would reduce car park use.
 - Introducing 3 hours free would have a limited impact on car parking in car parks
-
- The table overpage shows the scores from the question about what was most important to a Blue Badge holder when parking in a car park
 - The top three items all relate to the space itself: availability, location in relation to facilities and the size of the space

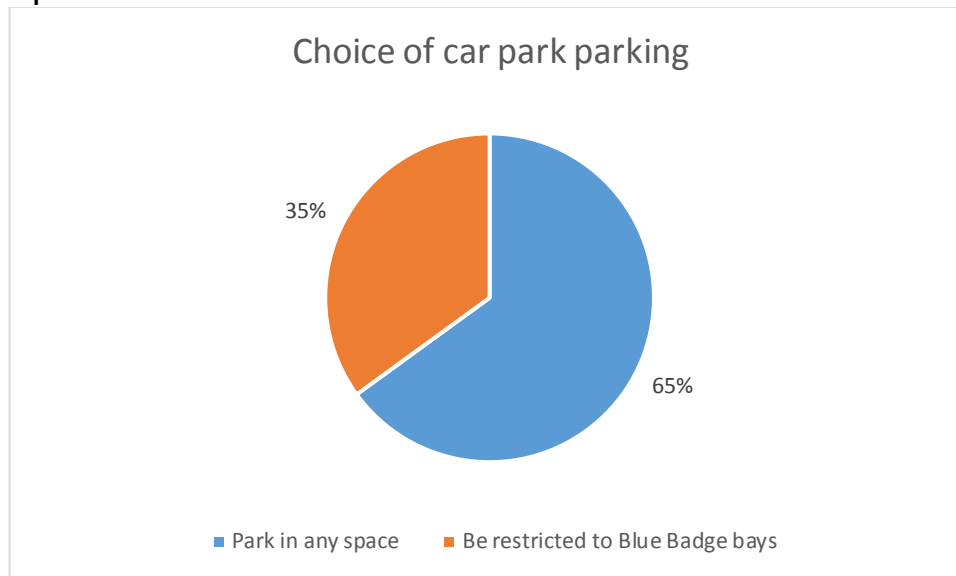
Most Important to Blue Badge holders when parking in a car park	score
Availability of disabled bays	9,987
Location of space in relation to local facilities	9,750
Size of bay	7,940
Cost of parking	5,736
Accessibility of Pay and Display machines	5,537
Security - vehicle	3,524
Security - personal	3,462
Pay by phone/card facility	2,966

- The cost of parking wasn't one of the most important issues



- When asked would you prefer to be able to park in any bay in a Dorset Council car park using your Blue Badge rather than be restricted to Blue Badge bays there was clear support to be able

to park anywhere in the car park, with 65% supporting that option.



- 1,111 people explained why they chose either to use a disabled bay or would rather have the option to park elsewhere in the car park. Many of those who chose to be restricted to disabled bays did so because they needed the extra access that those spaces normally brought. A typical comment was "I need a wider bay in order to open my door wide enough to get out of my car and also to get my wheelchair out of the car."
- However, many respondents felt they didn't need the extra space the disabled space gave and would be happy to use any space, as often they could get closer to their destination. Also, some end spaces gave them the necessary space they needed to access their vehicle. The shortage of disabled bays was a regular theme throughout the responses. A typical comment was "There are very few disabled spaces in most car parks so it's hard to guarantee a space which is stressful when with a disabled person".
- There were 581 further comments. These covered a very wide ranges of issues affecting blue badge holders, often re-iterating views already expressed. The comments demonstrate the range of issues faced with many asking for whatever scheme is proposed to ensure it brought fairness, clarity and simplicity.

Diversity Data - Key points

Age

- 55% of respondents aged 65+
- 38% aged 35-64
- 4% aged under 35

Gender

- 40% male
- 57% female

Disability

- 68% with a disability – most with a physical disability and/or long standing illness
- Even a third of all drivers/carers had a disability themselves.

Ethnicity

- 93% white British

Religion

- 57% Christian
- 28% no religion

APPENDIX 3

Equalities Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Before completing this EqIA please ensure you have read the guidance on the intranet.

Initial Information

Name:	Paul Hutton Elizabeth Murray
Job Title:	Service Manager for Parking Strategic Parking Projects Manager
Email address:	p.hutton@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Elizabeth.murray@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Members of the assessment team:	Paul Hutton, Elizabeth Murray
Date assessment started:	21/09/2021
Date of completion:	
Version Number:	Final

Part 1: Background Information

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Existing	
Changing, updating or revision	/
New or proposed	
Other	

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Internal (employees only)	
External (residents, communities, partners)	
Both of the above	/

What is the name of your policy, strategy, project or service being assessed?

Blue Badge car park charging scheme

What is the policy, strategy, project or service designed to do? (Include the aims, purpose and intended outcomes of the policy)

The outcome of this project is to deliver greater consistency for our customers from aligned charging across the Dorset Council car park estate.

The scope of the project is as follows:

- Review of the current Blue Badge offers in each car park location in Dorset Council
- Public engagement to determine what Blue Badge holders need/want
- Option report for the highway's director, portfolio holder and lead members
- Implementation of the new scheme, including public communications

What is the background or context to the proposal?

Since the formation of Dorset Council, aligning parking charges has been a key priority to bring consistency across the former council areas. Two projects have been run to align charges in car parks, on-street and car park permits, it is now necessary to complete the same process for Blue Badge holders.

Currently, the offer for Blue Badge holders when paying for parking in car parks is different depending on the location that is visited as the previous Councils' offers are still in place. The objective is to have one pan-Dorset Council offer and the expected outcome is to have an offer that is easy to understand and consistent across Dorset Council. The portfolio holder, Cllr Ray Bryan, has requested this review and implementation.

Public consultation on what is required for Blue Badge holders is being undertaken. The final proposal will be shared with Members, Town and Parish Councils, Disability Action Groups, Chambers of Commerce and BIDs for their review and feedback.

Part 2: Gathering information

What sources of data, information, evidence and research was used to inform you about the people your proposal will have an impact on?

This project engaged with the public through a survey. The purpose of this was to get a view on what Blue Badge holders feel is needed and is fair. It also provides data and evidence on the potential impact of changes to charging.

Discussion groups were held with Blue Badge holders to review the proposed policy, to gain feedback on the policies fairness and effectiveness.

What did this data, information, evidence and research tell you?

The survey received 1,513 responses. The largest number of respondents were Blue Badge holders or people responding on behalf of Blue Badge holders (71%). A further 20% were drivers/carers of Blue Badge holders, and two disability organisations responded.

Respondents were asked to rank four options in preference, as well as submit their own ideas for consideration. The highest-ranking option was for three-hours of free parking with 35%, followed by one-hours free parking when a pay & display ticket is purchased (25%). Free parking for higher exemption Blue Badge holders was also a popular option (20%). The full survey report can be seen on the Dorset Council consultation page.

Feedback from the discussion groups proved that the proposed policy is generally considered to be fair and does meet the needs of Blue Badge holders. There was a suggestion to change the name and the eligibility criteria for the 'Restricted Mobility Parking Permit', this was altered for the final proposal sent out to stakeholders for comment.

Is further information needed to help inform this proposal?

No

Part 3: Engagement and Consultation

What engagement or consultation has taken place as part of this proposal?

Engagement has taken place with the following groups:

Blue badge holders

Carers/representatives of Blue Badge holders

Disability Access Groups and other charities/support agencies

Towns and Parish Councils

Local Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)

Chambers of Commerce

How will the outcome of consultation be fed back to those who you consulted with?

The survey results will be published on the Dorset Council website. Advice will be sort from the Communications Team as to whether the results should also be shared with the local media. The final proposal will be presented to Place and Resources Overview and Cabinet.

Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment Guidance before completing this section.

Not every proposal will require an EqlA. If you decide that your proposal does **not** require an EqlA, it is important to show that you have given this adequate consideration. The data and research that you have used to inform you about the people who will be affected by the policy should enable you to make this decision and whether you need to continue with the EqlA.

Please tick the appropriate option:

An EqlA is required (please continue to Part 4 of this document)	Yes
An EqlA is not required (please complete the box below)	

This policy, strategy, project or service does not require an EqlA because:

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Name: Elizabeth Murray Job Title: Strategic Parking Project Manager

Date: 21/09/2021

Please send a copy of this document to [Diversity & Inclusion Officer](#)

Next Steps:

- The EqlA will be reviewed by Business Intelligence & Communications and if in agreement, your EqlA will be signed off.
- If not, we will get in touch to chat further about the EqlA, to get a better understanding.

Part 4: Analysing the impact

Who does the service, strategy, policy, project or change impact?

- If your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option. Please cut and paste the template accordingly.

For each protected characteristic please choose from the following options:

- Please note in some cases more than one impact may apply – in this case please state all relevant options and explain in the 'Please provide details' box.

Positive Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
Negative Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against
Neutral Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
Unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Age:	<i>Unclear</i>
Please provide details:	There is no data held on the number of Blue Badge users who fall into this protected category, so we cannot establish the scale of this impact. Due to introducing the Restricted Mobility Parking Permit, those in most need will be able to park without charge.

Disability: (including physical, mental, sensory and progressive conditions)	<i>Neutral Impact</i>
Please provide details:	There are currently over 22,000 active Blue Badge holders in the Dorset Council area and 1507 have the high-level exemption permit which gives free parking. Due to introducing the Restricted Mobility Parking Permit, those in most need will be able to park without charge.

Gender Reassignment & Gender Identity:	<i>Neutral Impact</i>
Please provide details:	There is no data held on the number of Blue Badge users who fall into this protected category, so we cannot establish the scale of this impact. The changes will affect all Blue Badge holders who use Dorset Council car parks. We do not anticipate at this stage; the proposals will have any impact on this protected characteristic group.

Pregnancy and maternity:	<i>Neutral Impact</i>
Please provide details:	There is no data held on the number of Blue Badge users who fall into this protected category, so we cannot establish the scale of this impact. The changes will affect all Blue Badge holders who use Dorset Council car parks. We do not anticipate at this stage; the proposals will have any impact on this protected characteristic group.

Race and Ethnicity:	<i>Neutral Impact</i>
Please provide details:	There is no data held on the number of Blue Badge users who fall into this protected category, so we cannot establish the scale of this impact. The changes will affect all Blue Badge holders who use Dorset Council car parks. We do not anticipate at this stage; the proposals will have any impact on this protected characteristic group.

Religion or belief:	<i>Neutral Impact</i>
Please provide details:	There is no data held on the number of Blue Badge users who fall into this protected category, so we cannot establish the scale of this impact. The changes will affect all Blue Badge holders who use Dorset Council car parks. We do not anticipate at this stage; the proposals will have any impact on this protected characteristic group.

Sexual orientation:	<i>Neutral Impact</i>
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Please provide details:	There is no data held on the number of Blue Badge users who fall into this protected category, so we cannot establish the scale of this impact. The changes will affect all Blue Badge holders who use Dorset Council car parks. We do not anticipate at this stage; the proposals will have any impact on this protected characteristic group.
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Sex (consider both men and women):	<i>Unclear</i>
Please provide details:	There is no data held on the number of Blue Badge users who fall into this protected category, so we cannot establish the scale of this impact. Depending on the outcome of the policy change there could be a negative impact on those who are currently able to park for free.

Marriage or civil partnership:	<i>Neutral Impact</i>
Please provide details:	There is no data held on the number of Blue Badge users who fall into this protected category, so we cannot establish the scale of this impact. The changes will affect all Blue Badge holders who use Dorset Council car parks. We do not anticipate at this stage; the proposals will have any impact on this protected characteristic group.

Carers:	<i>Neutral Impact</i>
Please provide details:	There is no data held on the number of Blue Badge users who fall into this protected category, so we cannot establish the scale of this impact. The changes will affect all Blue Badge holders who use Dorset Council car parks. We do not anticipate at this stage; the proposals will have any impact on this protected characteristic group.

Rural isolation:	<i>Neutral Impact</i>
Please provide details:	There is no data held on the number of Blue Badge users who fall into this protected category, so we cannot establish the scale of this impact. The changes will affect all Blue Badge holders who use Dorset Council car parks.

	We do not anticipate at this stage; the proposals will have any impact on this protected characteristic group.
Single parent families:	<i>Unclear</i>
Please provide details:	There is no data held on the number of Blue Badge users who fall into this protected category, so we cannot establish the scale of this impact. Due to introducing the Restricted Mobility Parking Permit, those in most need will be able to park without charge.
Social & economic deprivation:	<i>Unclear</i>
Please provide details:	There is no data held on the number of Blue Badge users who fall into this protected category, so we cannot establish the scale of this impact. Due to introducing the Restricted Mobility Parking Permit, those in most need will be able to park without charge.
Armed Forces communities	<i>Neutral Impact</i>
Please provide details:	There is no data held on the number of Blue Badge users who fall into this protected category, so we cannot establish the scale of this impact. The changes will affect all Blue Badge holders who use Dorset Council car parks. We do not anticipate at this stage; the proposals will have any impact on this protected characteristic group.

Part 5: Action Plan

Provide actions for **positive**, **negative** and **unclear** impacts.

If you have identified any **negative** or **unclear** impacts, describe what adjustments will be made to remove or reduce the impacts, or if this is not possible provide justification for continuing with the proposal.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
The demographics of DC Blue Badge holders, including the number with a high-level exemption permit.	Investigate whether this information can be gathered from the Blue Badge team or another source.	Elizabeth Murray	January 2022

EqlA Sign Off

Officer completing this EqlA:	Elizabeth Murray	Date:	12 January 2022
Equality Lead:	Rebecca Forester, Bridget Downton	Date:	12 January 2022

APPENDIX 4

Place and Resources Overview Committee Minutes

Proposed Blue Badge Car Park Charging Policy

The committee received a report and presentation from the Strategic Parking Project Manager which sought support for a new pan-Dorset Blue Badge Charging Policy. The policy sought to align the former Council policies into a new policy for Dorset Council, to bring consistency and fairness to Blue Badge holders who park in Dorset Council car parks.

Councillors considered the issues arising and discussion was held in the following areas:

- Support was expressed for aligning the policy across the Dorset Council area
- A Blue Badge and Restricted Mobility Parking Permit could be applied for from the council at the same time
- The proposed policy recognised that Blue Badge holders required additional support by means of increased time for parking and was not based on any financial benefit
- Enforcement issues were raised and would be further considered as part of future car parking reviews
- Signs in car parks were being updated and information would be included on the council's website.

It was proposed by V Potheary seconded by S Jespersen

Recommendation to Cabinet

That the new pan-Dorset Blue Badge Car Park Charging Policy be approved.

The Executive Director of Place, having heard the debate, confirmed the 'minded to' recommendation to Cabinet, under delegated powers on behalf of the informal meeting of the Place and Resources Overview Committee.