

NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL DECISION

DECISION OF: THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

WITH ADVICE FROM HEAD OF HR AND UNIONS



DECISION NO: 19/20 DE 387

SUBJECT: Car parking management in response to COVID-19 and lifting of restrictions following Government announcement on 10 May 2020

This is an urgent key decision and the public notice procedure has been followed.

KEY DECISION: Yes.

REASON: This decision effects communities across North Somerset.

BACKGROUND:

Decision 19/20 DE 341 approved the closure of car parks across North Somerset which were considered to be enabling high visitor numbers which contributed to the contravention of social distancing requirements. Other measures included car parking charges should remain, but enforcement would focus on the most serious parking incidents.

With the Prime Minister recently announcing the country moving to Covid Alert Level 3, and subsequent relaxation of some of the lockdown measures, it is anticipated that there will be more visits to North Somerset, especially our coasts.

Without having the facility to prevent these visits it will be necessary to have places for people to park to prevent potential transport disruption for visitors and residents. A limited opening of car parks is also in line with other organisations such as the National Trust and Forestry Commission.

It is possible to open the car parks listed in Table 1 with 24 hours' notice. This will enable enough time to organise signage, social distancing guides and prepare ticket machines.

Table 1 – proposed car parks to be opened

Car Park	Location
Salthouse	Clevedon
Bus Terminus	Kewstoke/Sand Bay
Beach Road (opposite Commodore)	Kewstoke/Sand Bay
Knightstone Causeway	Weston super Mare
Melrose	Weston super Mare
Worlebury Woods	Weston super Mare

It is not proposed to open parking on Marine Parade, Uphill and Weston super Mare beaches and Kilkenny Fields Portishead because this will provide more space to support social distancing measures and also send the message that the Council is not proactively “re-opening” its coastal areas.

It is proposed to introduce a 2 week ‘soft’ enforcement period where warning notices are used for contraventions instead of actual tickets. A repeat offence will generate a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN). All dangerous parking will continue to automatically receive a PCN. Full enforcement will resume after 2 weeks. It is also proposed that NHS, care home workers and North Somerset Together volunteers will be exempt from parking charges and time restrictions until 30 June 2020.

Enforcement will be subject to staff maintaining social distancing which will be underpinned by an appropriate risk assessment.

Other measures include reducing the use of cash payments. It is proposed that we do not allow cash payments in any of the car parks that we are re-opening and reduce the number of ticket machines in car parks that have remained open. This will reduce the need to touch surfaces and cash that can both transmit the virus thereby making it safer for visitors, our staff and contractors; and it is common for most transactions during the COVID crisis. This will also have the benefit of introducing the concept of cashless payments for car parking to a wider audience.

The same principles will apply to on-street parking to try and avoid congestion and other transport issues if people try to avoid paying at off street locations and choose to park on the streets.

A detailed explanation of the operational implementation of these proposals can be found in Appendix A.

DECISION:

1. To keep in place our current scheme of charges and to re-introduce full enforcement of parking restrictions by 27 May 2020.
2. To only allow cashless payment in the car parks listed below where charges apply. This will be kept under review particularly in relation to equalities groups.
3. That the car parks and other sites listed below are open from 13 May 2020.

Car Park	Location
Salthouse	Clevedon
Bus Terminus	Kewstoke/Sand Bay
Beach Road (opposite Commodore)	Kewstoke/Sand Bay
Knightstone Causeway	Weston super Mare
Melrose	Weston super Mare

Worlebury Woods	Weston super Mare
Cricket club car park Lake Grounds	Portishead

4. To exempt NHS staff, care home workers and North Somerset Together volunteers from parking charges and time restrictions until 30 June 2020
5. To reintroduce the measures laid out in Decision 19/20 DE 341 if the Government's Covid Alert Level reverts to more restricted movement

REASONS:

As detailed in background information.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

None

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Costs

Currently, payments via MiPermit generate a 10p 'convenience' fee to the ticket buyer. It is proposed that the Council covers this cost because we are forcing visitors to use MiPermit. It is estimated this cost, based on last year's income, is £2000 per month. Some of this will be offset by fewer cash collections. More detailed financial analysis will follow.

The cost for signage and other safety measures are estimated at £2000.

Funding

The lockdown restrictions have significantly impacted parking income. However, re-opening the car parks now will help to stop this shortfall. The MiPermit fee and signage will need to be funded from the income generated through the parking revenue budget

LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

The current off street parking order is:

North Somerset District Council (Various sites) (Off-street parking places) (Consolidation order) order 2017 (variation 2)

Under Part ii– Authorisation and use of parking places

Section 13: Nothing in this order shall prevent the Council by notice, sign or barrier displayed in the Parking Place;

- (i) from closing the Parking Place or any part or parts thereof for any period; and / or
- (ii) from setting aside the Parking Place or any part or parts thereof on all days or on certain days or during parts of days for use only by certain vehicles. Persons

(Part (ii) is being used to allow residents access through Knightstone Causeway car park and for the Old Colonial access through Melrose car park).

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

NA

CONSULTATION

This decision has been taken in consultation with the Executive Member for Business, Economy and Employment

RISK MANAGEMENT

This will help manage the control of visitors anticipated due to the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions on 11 May 2020.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? No

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

NA

APPENDICES

Appendix A – operational activities related to the re-opening of car parks

BACKGROUND PAPERS

DE 341 Car park closures in response to COVID-19

North Somerset District Council (Various sites) (Off-street parking places) (Consolidation order) order 2017 (variation 2)

SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):

Signed: 

Director of Development and Environment

Date: 18 May 2020.

With advice from

Head of HR and Unions

Enforcement of parked vehicles -Driver returns	CEO's and public	Gloves to be worn at all times and 2m distancing at all times. Inform driver to maintain distancing. Print notice and place under wiper. Inform driver to retrieve from there. Once complete change gloves. If driver refuses notice treat as a VDA threat. Body cams to be on with all enforcement but only made evidential if extra	Yes
During enforcement interactions with the public	CEO's	If the driver or passer-by refuses to keep the 2m distance or shows any aggression then the CEO to leave the area immediately and call for assistance as per normal procedures. Record the notice as a VDA threat and make notes. Body cams to be on with all enforcement but only made evidential if extra evidence is	Yes
General public interaction	CEO's	Maintain 2m social distancing at all times or leave the	
Touching surfaces such as machines or vehicles	CEO's	Gloves to be worn at all times and changed once there is no further need to touch the same surface. Use hand sanitiser or wash hands with soap and water	
Used gloves and cleaning materials	All	To be placed in yellow marked contamination bags one in each vehicle and at the parking office	Yes

Blue badge checking	CEO's	Badges can be checked by CEO's taking the badge number (no need to touch it) and the parking manager or supervisors checking the badge via the blue badge system. A photo of the badge holder can be sent to the CEO. If badge misused record vehicle and person details and this will then be followed up by telephone						
Evening patrols	CEO's	Not to recommence until two CEO's can be in the same vehicle	Yes					