

TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE & LEISURE COMMITTEE**Wednesday, 3 March 2021**

REPORT TITLE:	DEVELOPING LEISURE VEHICLE PROVISION ACROSS WIRRAL UPDATES
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOODS

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks agreement on developing business cases for identified sites for the Council to develop leisure vehicle provision across Wirral. Appropriate leisure vehicle provision across Wirral can complement the ambition in the Wirral 2025 Plan to “*Promote Wirral regionally, nationally and internationally as a world-class visitor destination*”, which will help Wirral to become a thriving tourist destination, so that it supports local jobs and puts money directly into hundreds of local businesses. For the purposes of this report, leisure vehicles will mainly be used to cover campervans, caravans, tourers, motorhomes and any other larger motorised vehicles that facilitate recreational use (overnight stays).

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee is requested to;

1. Agree to authorise the Director of Neighbourhoods to continue working on developing proposals for the leisure vehicle provision at four potential sites, Leasowe Lighthouse Car Park; Woodside Ferry Car Park; Price Street Car Park; and Perch Rock Car Park.
2. Agree to authorise the Director of Neighbourhoods to develop a business case for leisure vehicle provision at the Wirral Country Park Car Park site.
3. Agree to authorise the Director of Neighbourhoods to develop a business case for leisure vehicle provision at the Derby Pool site.
4. Agree to authorise the Director of Neighbourhoods to develop a business case for leisure vehicle provision at the Circus Field site.
5. Agree to authorise the Director of Neighbourhoods to bring back relevant recommendations on detailed proposals for leisure vehicle provision, following agreed business case developments, taking account of consultation, to a future Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Council must set a balanced budget for 2021/22 and beyond and is seeking ways to ensure this through efficiency savings and generating more income for the Council. There are potential income generating opportunities because of identified reduced local provision for leisure vehicles and a growing national demand for such provision.
- 1.2 The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee agreed on November 23rd 2020 to accept the recommendations to:
- 1. Approve the vision and the 4 key principles for the Council to develop leisure vehicle provision across Wirral as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.*
 - 2. Approve the range of business model options for consideration for leisure vehicle provision in Appendix 1 of the report.*
 - 3. Approve the review process for determining the proposed leisure vehicle sites for development outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.*
 - 4. Agree to establish a member workshop, in order to review potential sites for leisure vehicle provision against an agreed list of business model options and types of provision, and then ultimately make recommendations back to a future Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee.*
- 1.3 To fulfil recommendation 4 from the Committee on November 23rd 2020, a workshop was held on Monday 25th January 2021 with members of the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee and other interested members. The subsequent report and recommendations from that workshop are contained in Appendix 1. This included a consensus at the workshop across members on officers continuing with the work on developing four of the sites, Leasowe Lighthouse Car Park; Woodside Ferry Car Park; Price Street Car Park; and Perch Rock Car Park.
- 1.4 A consensus could not be reached on the other three sites proposed at the workshop to continue work on Wirral Country Park Car Park, Derby Pool and the Circus Field potential sites. Therefore, it was requested to bring further information on these three sites to the next Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee.
- 1.5 Recommendations 2,3 and 4 of this report do not commit the Council to developing these sites but recommend further business case development before decisions are reached.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) have been trialled and subsequently made permanent in the Kings Parade and Coastal Drive areas of New Brighton and have been extended recently to deal with overnight parking of campervans and similar

vehicles in the area. It has been noted that displacement of these vehicles has occurred because of the Traffic Regulation Orders and caused similar issues in alternative areas of New Brighton. Therefore, the review and use of Traffic Regulation Orders will continue to deal with overnight parking of campervans and similar vehicles in certain areas.

- 2.2 This report continues to take a phased approach to decision making on leisure vehicle provision. The workshop considered a variety of options for next steps including bringing all sites back to committee for decision to proceed and also to not bring certain sites back to Committee at all.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 A workshop was held on 25 January 2021 in response to several agenda items brought to the Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee.
- 3.2 A scrutiny review into the Management of Campervans was commissioned as part of the Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee's work programme in 2018/19, in response to residents' concerns around overnight parking of campervans in Wallasey and New Brighton. The recommendations from this review were brought to the Tourism Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee in October 2020.
- 3.3 The Tourism, Culture and Leisure Committee were apprised that the initial review scope also set out to assess the commercial opportunities available and potential for a dedicated campervan site to be established on Wirral, as it had become clear that that was a much bigger piece of work and should involve a wider group of stakeholders; as a result, the Panel looked only to review immediate resident concerns and to evaluate the effectiveness of the initial Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) on Kings Parade and subsequent ETRO on Pilot's Way, New Brighton that had been put into place.
- 3.4 The report also advised that an informal meeting was held with local New Brighton and Wallasey Ward Members on 14 July 2020, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Community Services. The outcome of this meeting was that no consensus could be reached on provision of a suitable short-medium term site for campervans/motorhomes in these wards due to the recent increase in demand in coastal locations as a result of Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. The meeting agreed that a Borough-wide review into commercial opportunities for sites with facilities, reporting into the new committee structure, would be the best way forward. This work had been picked up by the Council's Commercial Team.
- 3.5 Further to this review, in November 2020, the Director of Neighbourhoods presented a report to Committee which sought agreement on a set of key principles, business model options and a process for determining sites for the Council to develop leisure vehicle provision across Wirral. Members were informed of a growing leisure vehicle market and commercial opportunities for in house leisure vehicle provision.
- 3.6 The draft minutes of the Committee meeting in November 2020 state that Members discussed the report and options, with deterrents for people avoiding the sites, but the secondary spend and increases in people staying in this country for holidays

would provide opportunities for increased visitors and potential revenue for the Council and local businesses.

- 3.7 It was agreed that a workshop be established, in order to review potential sites for leisure vehicle provision against an agreed list of business model options and types of provision.

Workshop Overview

- 3.8 Members of the Committee received a background paper in advance of the workshop which informed that 2020 had proved to be a difficult year for the tourism and hospitality sector, with operators finding it extremely hard to adjust to the ever-changing situation and restrictions relating to the pandemic. Prior to 2020 there had been growth in the leisure vehicle sector both in sales and visits.
- 3.9 However, it was noted that after the roll out of the national vaccination programme by late 2021, there is now an expectation from the sector of a rapid growth in demand as soon as the restrictions are lifted as seen after the first lockdown in 2020. The market leader Caravan and Motorhome Club recorded a 14% increase in new members after travel restrictions were eased in June 2020. Similar trends had been reported in Wirral, especially around use of bicycles for leisure.
- 3.10 Members were presented with 7 possible sites and were asked to give officers a steer as to which sites were considered viable, and which ones needed more work. The possible sites were:
- Wirral Country Park Car Park
 - Leasowe Lighthouse Car Park
 - Derby Pool
 - Circus Field
 - Woodside Ferry Car Park
 - Price Street Car Park
 - Perch Rock Car Park
- 3.11 In order to inform the discussion, members were appraised of customer segments through applying principles of traditional demographic or life-stage based segmentation in combination with geography based and behavioural segmentation, focusing on needs and wants of the future customer. Members were also provided with an overview of each proposed site with a scoring on the strategic value, financial value, environmental value, commercial value and value management of each site.

Detailed information on Wirral Country Park Car Park, Derby Pool and the Circus Field potential sites

- 3.12 Detailed information on Wirral Country Park Car Park, Derby Pool and the Circus Field potential sites is contained in Appendix 2.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There could be potential investment required for leisure vehicle provision depending on the options chosen to take forward. This investment could be internal or external depending on the business model option chosen. This will be detailed in business cases. Some initial figures were shared at the workshop and are in Appendix 2. No business case will result in a pressure on the Council's budget, as all costs of investment will be offset with income in the same year of being incurred.
- 4.2 There may be a cost for the consultation set out in 8.1 depending on the nature of the agreed consultation.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Under the Localism Act 2011 and other relevant acts, the Council has powers to charge for services. If the Council wishes to make a surplus from these services, then it should establish a separate trading entity to run these services. This is covered under the options section of the report.
- 5.2 There is currently no national guidance for local authorities in the UK regarding the development of motorhome facilities, nor is there a consistent approach nationally. Each individual authority is responsible for the provision of services for motorhomes. Many countries in Europe have wide networks of approved stopovers for motorhomes most of them with motorhome service points offering CDP (toilet waste disposal), wastewater disposal and fresh water supply. Currently, none of Wirral's closest neighbouring authorities provide dedicated overnight camping sites for motorhomes, nor any formal policy for the provision of services to campervan users.
- 5.3 Depending on the options chosen for leisure vehicle provision, planning permission may be needed.
- 5.4 Relevant health and safety guidance, insurance cover, workforce statute and other statute and guidance affecting leisure vehicle sites will be researched and adhered to.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 These will be detailed in the business cases for the sites for consideration and options chosen.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 These will be detailed in the business cases for the sites for consideration and options chosen. Some of the challenges and possible mitigations are referenced for each site in Appendix 2.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Relevant stakeholders will be consulted which would include affected residents. If the business cases are agreed to be developed, then for each of the three potential sites, Wirral Country Park Car Park, Derby Pool and the Circus Field, engagement

consultation workshops will be held for local residents and businesses. These will include, the rationale for developing leisure provision and advantages and disadvantages; the proposal for the site; options considered; summary of the business case evidence; challenges and potential mitigation. There may be a cost for this consultation depending on the nature of the agreed consultation.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision, or activity.
- 9.2 An Equality Impact Assessment was produced for the original report on Developing Leisure Vehicle Provision Across Wirral for the November 2020 Committee. This Equality Impact Assessment is still relevant for this report and has not been amended apart from referencing this meeting and is available at <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Promoting Wirral as a leisure vehicle destination if successful will likely increase associated traffic. At present, the majority of leisure vehicles are fossil fuelled. An increase in such traffic will thus increase local greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants. In contrast, by better catering for the leisure vehicle market there could be a decrease in emissions associated with flying as people choose leisure vehicle holidays rather than flying to a holiday destination.
- To achieve climate objectives there is a need to move away from fossil fuel use. At present, there is a small but growing number of electric vans coming onto the market including some leisure conversions. It will be important to 'future proof' local leisure vehicle sites by ensuring suitable charging facilities can be provided to cater for the shift to plug in vehicles.
- To minimise negative impacts the leisure vehicle provision will:

- Look to market ourselves digitally and use as little paper as possible.
- Design any buildings to try and minimise energy use and encourage local management to reduce waste and consumption. We will also look to use renewable energy sources where possible.
- Provide recycling facilities at our sites.
- Look to enhance the local environment of our sites including increasing tree cover.
- Encourage visitors to the sites to use local and seasonal food.

The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Local Provision of Leisure Vehicles Workshop report
Appendix 2 - Detailed information on Wirral Country Park Car Park, Derby Pool and the Circus Field potential sites
Appendix 3 - Background paper for Leisure Vehicles Workshop

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Council Plan 2025
Localism Act 2011
2020/21 Budget Report 2020/21
Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report
Wirral Council Visitor Accommodation Development Strategy
Visit Wirral website
National Caravan Council website
Pitching the Value 2019 Economic Benefit Report: Holiday Parks and Campsites representative study using data of largest UK leisure vehicle membership organisations and think-tanks. <https://www.ukcca.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/SC6407-00-Holiday-Park-Econ-Impact-Wales-Final-Report.pdf>

Visit Scotland Insight Department Paper: An Overview of Our Target Segments
<https://www.visitscotland.org/binaries/content/assets/dot-org/pdf/research-papers/external-segmentation-paper-full-document2.pdf>

Office for National Statistics
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/leisureandtourism/articles/traveltrends/2019>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee	23 rd November 2020
Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee	26 th October 2020
Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Scrutiny Review Panel	March 2020
Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee	5 th November 2018