



## RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

# ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

*at the Council Offices, Farnborough on  
Tuesday, 20th March, 2018 at 7.00 pm*

**To:**

Cllr D.S. Gladstone (Chairman)

Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford

Cllr J.B. Canty

Cllr K. Dibble

Cllr C.P. Grattan

Cllr A. Jackman

Cllr Marina Munro

Cllr J.J. Preece

Enquiries regarding this agenda should be referred to the Panel Administrator,  
Justine Davie, Democratic and Customer Services, Tel. (01252) 398832, Email.  
[justine.davie@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:justine.davie@rushmoor.gov.uk).

# **A G E N D A**

1. **MINUTES – (Pages 1 - 4)**

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th February, 2108 (copy attached).

2. **REVIEW OF CHRISTMAS 2017 ACTIVITY AND PROPOSALS FOR 2018 –**

David Phillips, Town Centre and Cultural Manager, to advise the Panel on the success of the Christmas activity carried out in the Borough in 2017, including the community event in North Town and the shop front competition, and to introduce the proposals for Christmas 2018.

John Trusler, Principal Engineer, to report on the cost of a permanent tree and lights in North Camp and on the outcome of any discussions held with Princes Mead and Kingsmead on the joint procurement of Christmas lights and potential costs involved.

3. **PARKING CHARGES NOTICES – (Pages 5 - 58)**

At the Council meeting on 22nd February support was given to a motion to assess the activities and procedures of the private-parking operators in the Borough. The matter has been referred to the Environment Policy and Review Panel for detailed scrutiny.

A report has been prepared by Citizens Advice Rushmoor due to a significant increase in the number of clients coming forward to complain about receiving unfair parking tickets (copy attached). Councillor Alex Crawford has also produced three reports on the responses received to an online survey carried out to gather evidence on problems experienced by residents with private parking firms in Rushmoor (copies attached). An update on the outcome of discussions being held between the NHS, the CCG and Smart parking on the parking arrangements at Aldershot Centre for Health will be provided at the meeting.

The Panel is asked to consider the evidence and scope out the action available to the Council.

4. **WORK PROGRAMME – (Pages 59 - 70)**

To note the Panel's current work programme (copy attached).

## **MEETING REPRESENTATION**

Members of the public may ask to speak at the meeting on any of the items on the agenda by writing to the Panel Administrator at the Council Offices, Farnborough by 5.00 pm two working days prior to the meeting.

Applications for items to be considered for the next meeting must be received in writing to the Panel Administrator fifteen working days prior to the meeting.

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# ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Tuesday, 27th February, 2018 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

## **Voting Members**

Cllr D.S. Gladstone (Chairman)

Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford  
Cllr J.B. Canty  
Cllr K. Dibble  
Cllr C.P. Grattan  
Cllr Marina Munro  
Cllr J.J. Preece

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Sophia Choudhary and Cllr A. Jackman.

## 16. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd January, 2018 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

## 17. **BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS**

The Panel received a presentation from Phil Stoneman, Economic Development Officer, on the feasibility of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in Rushmoor. A BID was a not for profit body formed to improve a defined commercial area. The BID would be funded through a levy on business rates which was typically 1% of the rateable value although the BID Board could decide on a higher or lower levy. The BID Board would then choose to fund services and projects beneficial to the BID area using the funds raised through the levy such as marketing and promotion, entertainment/festivals, enhanced cleaning regime or improved security.

The feasibility of BIDs had been explored for Aldershot, Farnborough and North Camp town centres in 2015. A consultant had been appointed to carry out a feasibility study through surveys and workshops. There were only 41 responses to the survey and several hundred had been sent out, of those responses 92% were from independent businesses. Due to the low response to the initial consultation the decision was taken by Informal Cabinet not to pursue any BIDs at that time.

Currently BIDs had not been identified as a Council priority and pursuing a BID would involve considerable resource from the Council. A BID was estimated to cost approximately £70,000 per BID location. The Panel was advised that there could be alternative ways of resolving issues that were identified by businesses in the town

centres. The current priority for the Council was regeneration in the town centres and due to the limited Council resources it was important that focus remained on the Council priorities.

The Panel discussed the presentation and asked to be informed on the number of surveys sent out and numbers returned for each of the town centre areas. The Panel agreed that businesses would be reluctant to pay a levy on their business rates without a clear benefit for their business and many businesses, particularly in Aldershot, would rather see progress on the regeneration of the town centre rather than pay more money for a BID. It was agreed that a BID for Aldershot could be revisited once the regeneration was complete.

The Panel was advised that the Deputy Leader had already held meetings with businesses in Farnborough to bring them together and encourage the town centre areas to work more cohesively. The Panel suggested that as Farnborough town centre had changed dramatically since the feasibility work on BIDs in 2015 it was worth revisiting to see if there was renewed interest. It was suggested that there should be some initial work with the Farnborough town centre group led by the Deputy Leader to test if there was any appetite for BIDs. The three Town Centre Managers would be asked to approach their own retailers to gauge levels of interest before making any proposal to Cabinet.

The Panel suggested that radios should be provided to shops in the town centres to enable them to communicate with each other. The matter would be raised with the Safer Neighbourhood Team and the Community Safety Team.

<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>When</b>
The Deputy Leader of the Council to be asked to raise the issue of a BID application for Farnborough town centre at the next meeting of the Farnborough town centre businesses	Phil Stoneman	16th March 2018
Raise with the Safer Neighbourhood Team the possibility of radios being provided to shops to enable communication	Phil Stoneman	16th March 2018

## 18. HCC TRANSFORMATION TO 2019 PROGRAMME

The Panel received details on Hampshire County Council's Transformation 2019 programme (HCC T19) which was a programme focussing on saving the County £140m over the next three years. Savings of £19m were sought from the Economy, Transport and Environment area of work. The Economy, Transport and Environment savings included areas such as highways winter maintenance, street lighting, school crossing patrols and on-street parking.

Due to the proposed changes in the structure of the Council's Panels it was agreed that there was no benefit in discussing the HCC T19 programme in detail at this

stage. It was agreed by the Panel that a proposal should be made to Cabinet for a HCC T19 Task and Finish Group to be established within the new Panel structure to monitor the impact the changes had on service delivery over the next 12-18 months. It was also proposed that members of the Group should include the current Environment Policy and Review Panel members.

<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>When</b>
Proposal to be made to Cabinet to establish a HCC T19 Task and Finish Group in new Panel structure	Chairman	April 2018
Request that the Environment Panel members be invited to join the HCC T19 Task and Finish Group	Chairman	April 2018

19. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

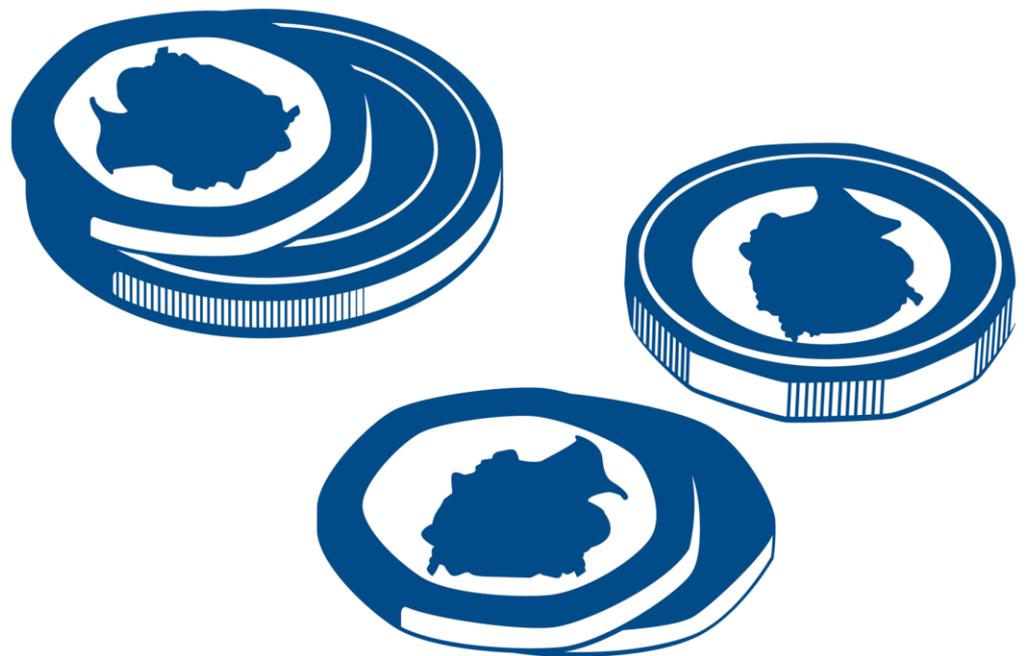
CLLR D.S. GLADSTONE (CHAIRMAN)

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# Aldershot Centre for Health Carpark

Report on the challenges and problems faced by  
carpark users



**citizens  
advice**

**Rushmoor**

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Report prepared by Reece Pritchard  
Student Placement  
Citizens Advice Rushmoor



# Introduction

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Citizens Advice Rushmoor has seen a significant increase in the number of clients coming forward complaining about receiving unfair parking tickets from Smart Parking, the company who provides the ticket machines at the Aldershot Centre for Health (ACFH) car park. During 2017, a number of clients approached Citizens Advice requiring help in dealing with parking fines from Smart Parking, as they either disagreed with the fine or were struggling to pay it. This is in addition to staff and volunteers identifying problems with the same system, and local coverage of similar issues.

Smart Parking has been running the ACFH car park since 2014. They ran a traditional pay and display system until August 2016, but then changed to the vehicle registration system that is now in operation. The vehicle registration system operates using a camera, which records when cars enter the car park; it then commences charging as soon as the car enters the area, rather than from when the ticket is purchased. This has led to many clients complaining about getting unfair parking tickets, which Smart Parking refuses to rescind.

This investigation aims to look at:

- How clearly the car park displays the parking regulations and guidance
- Where the confusion may be stemming from
- How accessible and easy to use the payment methods are

This will help an improved understanding of the increased problems with parking tickets from ACFH car park.



# Investigation

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For the investigation, we focused on

- observing the car park layout
- how busy it was
- the location of the pay and display machines
- the location of the parking signs
- how well the parking regulations and instructions are clarified.

The focus was on

- how easy and accessible it is to use the car park ticket machines correctly and
- how understandable and noticeable the instructions were on how to use the machines
- using the information on the car park regulations as a guide.

We also recorded any potential problems these factors may cause and how it could lead to a parking ticket. The past records of cases that involve parking tickets from ACFH were also researched to see if there were any similarities between the observations of the car park and the clients' experiences of using it. Other cases of people complaining of unfair practices from other car parks ran by Smart Parking throughout the UK have also been researched in order to establish whether public confusion relating to this company's systems is widespread.

## Previous cases

There have been a number of recent cases of clients approaching us having received parking fines from this car park in the past year. These cases have identified a range of issues with the payment system which include:

- the duration policy
- the appeal procedure
- confusion over the vehicle registration system

Other factors, such as the blue badge regulations or the registration input procedure, have also resulted in people receiving parking fines.

The following are brief descriptions of some of the cases involving local clients receiving fines from ACFH car park, as well as what issues they identify.

**Client A** obtained a ticket from the parking machine and left the car park long before the ticket expired. Luckily, he kept the ticket. He received a penalty ticket saying that he had parked without payment. He then e-mailed a copy of the ticket but received another penalty charge: each time the amount had increased. Again, he sent a photograph of his parking ticket from the machine with his registration number. There was again no response. The appeal procedure is through Popla, which is an independent appeals service which deals with parking appeals that involve private land, so he contacted them. They upheld Smart Parking penalty and advised client to pay the fine.

He continued to send photos of his receipt of payment for parking and eventually Popla agreed that he did have proof of payment but as they had already upheld the Smart Parking fine, he could not take any action as they couldn't reverse their decision of upholding the fine.

This case suggests that there is an issue with the appeal procedure, which seems to be inefficient at dealing with genuine mistakes from Smart Parking. There also seems to be confusion regarding Smart Parking's number plate recognition system which is now used to determine how long someone should be charged for – i.e. begins to charge people when they enter the car park rather than when they buy the ticket. It seems many people are being confused by this new system and not knowing when they are beginning to be charged.

**Client B** received a parking fine for £60 from Smart parking after parking at ACFH. She had paid £1.20 for a ticket but by mistake put in her postcode instead of the vehicle registration number. She was Polish so English was not her first language.

This case suggests that the instructions on the parking signs about the need for registration numbers and other information may not be clear or big enough for people who struggle to see or to understand English. It also highlights the same issue with Smart Parking's number plate recognition system as with Client A.

**Client C** saw that the sign stated that there is 15 minutes free parking. He did not have change so he tried to use the app advertised to buy a ticket just to be safe but it did not have the relevant parking location available. Therefore, he did not buy a ticket but he did not stay over 15 minutes. He received a PCN claiming that he has not registered his number plate. He appealed to the company but the appeal was rejected.

Again, this case highlights the issues with the appeal service, which seems to reject most cases immediately despite customers having a valid claim, as well identifying issues with the payment app. Again this issue may have also been caused by confusion the surrounding the number plate recognition system since the client

may have believed that the 15 minutes free parking started when he actually parked, not when he entered the car park.

**Client D** received a parking ticket and the PCN on his windshield stated that if paid within 14 days the fee would be reduced as he would pay £40 rather than the full fee. He made out a cheque to the company, it was cashed, and he enclosed the parking ticket inside the envelope, hence he did not have a copy of the ticket. He received a letter from Smart Parking asking for £60 within 14 days before the fee rises to £100. He did not understand how this came about given that he paid. He attempted to contact Smart Parking by phone but had no success, as the process was all automated and no one was present to talk to.

Like the other cases, the evidence is that Smart Parking's appeal process and customer service is poor and is unable to deal with customers who receive unwarranted fines. Since there is a time limit on the fine until it increases, this puts stress on clients and may force them to just give up and pay the fine.

**Client E** parked his car in the car park displaying his Blue Badge. He received a penalty notice for 'overstayed paid time'. He refused to pay it because he was only in the health centre for 45 minutes and having registered with ACFH as a Blue Badge holder he had been told he could park there for as long as was needed. He received a letter from DRP (Debt Recovery Plus Ltd) saying that he would now have to pay £160.

This case highlights another issue with the lack of clarity of the parking regulations, this time with the policy involving blue badge holders. The policy is for blue badge holders to contact a member of staff at the organisation being visited to confirm the blue badge in order to be exempt from time limits; otherwise normal rates apply. There are signs around the car park instructing blue badge holders to report to reception but they are easily missed: although the instruction is repeated on the sign next to the payment machine, this information is small.

**Client F** has sight problems and so needed help when reading the instructions on how to pay for a ticket at the health centre as the wording is very small and indistinct. The client also has back problems and so struggled to bend down to read the instructions and input his registration. As a result he was unable to purchase a valid ticket and so received a fine.

This could be considered as an act of discrimination against those with sight issues and those who have back problems, since they simply are unable to use the ticket machines. As a health centre, the likelihood of individuals with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, mental health problems or other vulnerabilities using the facility is very high.

# Possible causes

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From the observations and examples above relating to the ACFH car park, multiple possible causes can be drawn as to why so many problems are stemming from the systems in place, highlighted by the number of parking tickets issued and the level of confusion regarding the reasons for the tickets.

Some possible causes may include:

- Delays in doctors' appointments which results in people staying longer than anticipated.
- Unclear signage including
  - pay and display signs
  - unclear instructions for prices
  - required registration number notices
  - parking regulations for blue badge holders
- Faulty payment app that may not work, preventing some people from paying.
- Poor appeal process and customer service that either does not respond to callers or seemingly rejects appeals without proper consideration.
- Confusing policies regarding fine charges and when people begin to be charged that are not made completely clear.
- Lack of awareness that the duration of the stay is calculated from the point of entry to the point of exit rather than when the ticket was purchased.
- Physical disabilities, mental health issues and anxiety for those using the health facility, affecting the ability to focus on the detail of the requirements



# A National Issue?

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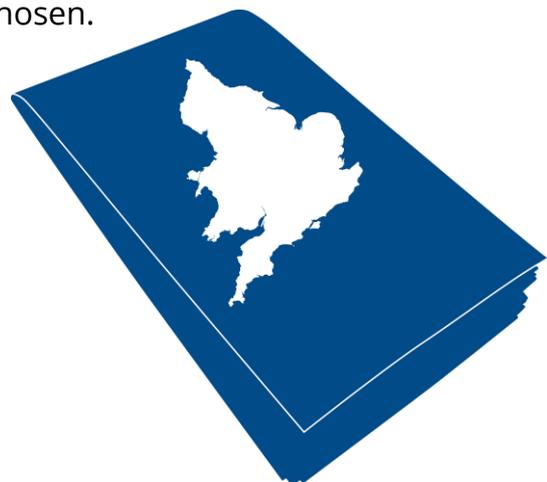
This confusion surrounding the policies and regulations of Smart Parking seems to be a wider spread issue rather than just confined to the ACFH. This is particularly true of Smart Parking's policy of duration from entry/exit, as well as the practical difficulties for some people in entering their registration number.

There have been cases around the UK when a simple misunderstanding or mistake resulted in a fine, such as when someone from East Renfrewshire put in the number of zero rather than the letter "o" when entering registration numbers. Smart Parking claimed that this invalidated the ticket and so a fine was implemented.

In another case someone paid for two hours parking and returned to his car before the ticket expired. However, after entering the car park it had taken him 15 minutes to find a space and then he had to queue for the ticket. Cameras film drivers entering and exiting, and Smart Parking says those minutes are chargeable and that his ticket was therefore not valid. A woman from Burton was fined for staying 2 seconds over the time limit as she was unaware that she was being charged whilst attempting to find a space.

Therefore, it seems that the confusion surrounding the parking regulations that is present in the cases at the ACFH is a national issue affecting not just the local area. Confusion is compounded by the fact that the ticket machines calculate the required parking time from the moment payment is made, so there is no indication on the ticket that they have been charged for the time already spent in the car park. Motorists assume that they have until the time stamped on the ticket, when they might have already unwittingly used up 10 minutes of their paid time finding a space. In order to use the system accurately, drivers are supposed to calculate how much time they want, including the time already spent inside the car park, which means they have to check the time they crossed the threshold and pay for an additional hour if it takes them over the tariff chosen.

The lack of clarity and visibility in the print used for the signage to explain the policy raises serious questions about Smart Parking's intentions and practices.  
Solutions?

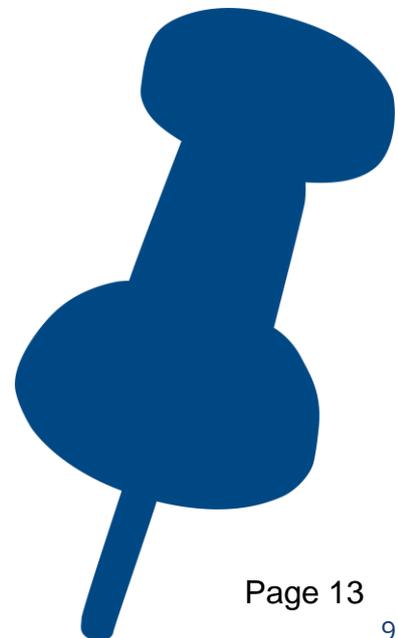


# Recommendations

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From the findings, the following recommendations are clear:

- Ensure information is as clear as possible regarding Smart Parking's regulation.
- Recognise that by the nature of the facility, the system should take into account the fact that users are likely to have a range of vulnerabilities relating to their health. The system should therefore be designed around the needs of vulnerable people.
- In particular, draw attention to the duration policy in charging from entry rather than when they buy the ticket (this appears to be the biggest source of confusion and the most common reason for parking fines).
- Give clear advice that the full car registration is entered correctly (including alpha/numeric guidelines) when buying a ticket.
- Some cautionary information about difficulties with the app and advice to bring sufficient change to pay cash would avoid some problems.
- Ask ACFH for improved signage in waiting areas to let people know they need to put more time on their parking if there are appointment delays.
- An additional solution is to recommend that people ask a member of staff at ACFH if they are unsure about any of the parking regulations - e.g. in the case of blue badges.
- An information leaflet to inform people about the parking regulations at ACFH would help raise awareness of the above.
- Overall, the above would help ensure people pay for enough time, and avoid them having to go through the appeal process.



# Bibliography

<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2017/jul/10/smart-parking-driver-complaints-fines-car-parks>

<https://www.burtonmail.co.uk/news/burton-news/burton-woman-hit-100-parking-989375>

# Photos



Parking notice at the entrance of the car park.



Parking payment instruction sign found near each pay machine



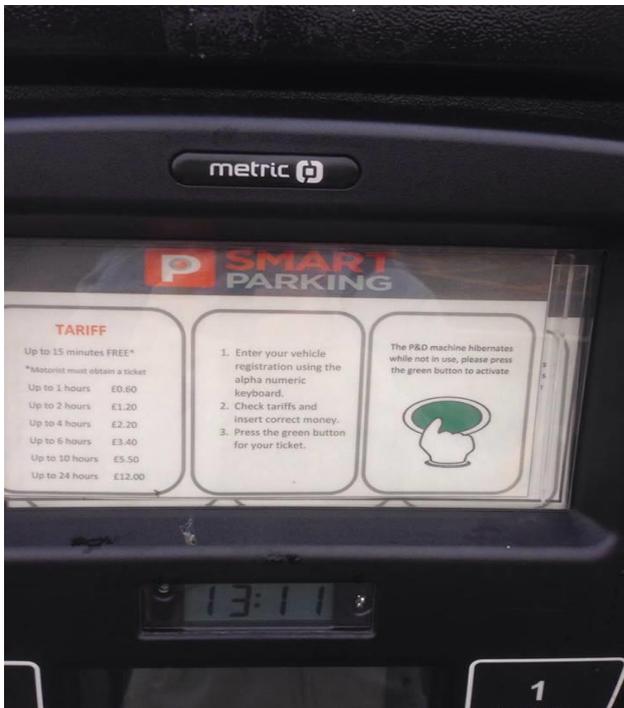
Sign instructing blue badge holders to report to reception. These can be found near the disabled parking spaces



Parking regulations sign found under the payment instruction sign near each pay machine



Pay machine of which several can be found in the carpark



Instructions on the pay machine indicating the prices and the guidelines on inputting vehicle registrations



Sign indicating the start of the staff only section of the car park. Only 1 can be found the entrance of the staff car park

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Citizens Advice Rushmoor is an operating name of  
Rushmoor Citizens Advice Bureaux

Registered charity number 1090669

## Difficulty Parking?

It's not unusual for people to receive parking fines from private car parks when they think that they have done everything possible to avoid one.

This is likely because they are unaware of the regulations that exist in some private car parks, which are regulated independent companies.

Such companies are known to operate in the following places:

- Asda supermarkets
- Lidl supermarkets
- Hospital car parks (including the Aldershot Health Centre)
- Matalan
- Retail Parks
- McDonalds

## The regulations

It's important to know the parking regulations when parking in a private car park. Some private companies use an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system in their car parks. These systems detect entries and exits into a car park – any cars that stay longer than the permitted time their ticket allows are automatically issued a Parking Charge Notice for up to £100.

Therefore, you are actually being charged from when you enter the car park, not from when you purchase the ticket. Don't assume that you have until the time stamped on the ticket as you may have already used up 10 minutes of the paid time finding a space. In order to use the system accurately, you must calculate how much time you want, including the time already spent inside the car park before a ticket was purchased.

Another regulation that may trip people up is that you must input your full registration number when you buy a ticket. If you miss out a digit or input it incorrectly then the parking regulators will claim that your ticket is invalid and will fine you.

If you are a blue badge holder, you may assume that you are exempt from time limits. However, with private car parks you must report to reception or the manager and tell them you hold a blue badge, otherwise you run the risk of getting a fine even if you display your badge.

In some car parks, such as the one at the Aldershot Health Centre, it will say that you have 15 minutes free parking. However this 15 minutes starts when you enter the car park, not when you actually park your car.

## What can you do?

The easiest way to avoid a fine is to make sure you pay for enough hours that you will need, including the time spent getting in and out of the car park.

It may be a good idea to get an extra hour just to be safe in case you are delayed.

Always ensure that you know your registration number when buying a ticket. You could write it down or take a picture of it before you leave.

If you are a blue badge holder, ensure that you tell someone who works at the organisation you are visiting, even if you aren't staying long.

If you have received a fine which you feel is unfair, visit your local bureau to get some help with the appeal process.

## Free, confidential advice, whoever you are....

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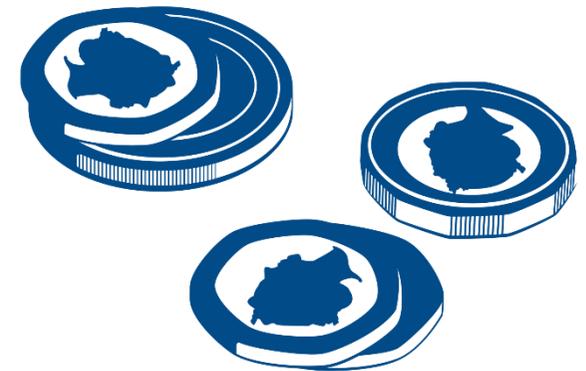
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Updated March 2018 by

**Citizens Advice Rushmoor**

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Company Limited by Guarantee number: 4354628  
Registered Office: Elles Hall  
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# A Guide to using private car parks!



# Aldershot Centre for Health – Parking Charge Notices

What brought this issue to the fore were the highly questionable activities of the private-parking operator at Tices Meadow, Aldershot Park Ward, after the sale of the garage-block sites. That all blew up three months ago when residents there started getting Parking charge notices (PCNs).

Faced with the difficulties caused by private-parking operators across the borough as sales of these sites went on, I launched an online survey on 10 February 2018 (*Appendix 1 – Survey form*).

The online survey obtained some 273 responses containing many hundreds of descriptions of unfairness, abuse and bullying of residents by private-parking operators.

As it turned out, over half the responses related to Aldershot Centre for Health (ACH). I am therefore focussing this first report on ACH.

Day in, day out, patients, particularly elderly and disabled, are being caught out simply because the system is badly designed.

Allegedly, it is a pay-and-display car park, which requires people to put in their vehicle number and pay for a ticket for the time they intend to park. However, the time charged is based on Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) before the driver enters the car park and then as the driver exits at the junction with Hospital Hill. No allowance is made for the time to find a parking space, park and get a ticket, on the way in, or for the time taken to exit onto Hospital Hill, which is particularly difficult at present because of the roadworks at the junction there.

## Data analysis

I analysed 273 responses to the five open-ended questions that gave the respondents the opportunity to give their views on different aspects of the systems and how private-parking companies treated them.

*Appendix 2 – ACH Data* comprises 436 comments in response to Questions 7 to 11.

**Question 7. Please would you give your reasons as to why the parking charge notice was not justified – 129 comments.**

There were many different reasons for visitors to ACH feeling aggrieved about getting PCNs.

Foremost of these was that, when the ticket machines are broken or the mobile phone system for paying does not work properly, the visitor gets a PCN because the ANPR system records the visit time and no vehicle registration number (VRN) has been entered on a ticket machine.

*“I tried to pay by mobile phone, but it didn't go through properly. I was late for an appointment as it took me 20 mins to find a parking space and I had a baby and a toddler with me so didn't notice the message on my phone until a few hours later. I fought it all the way to POPLA and won.”*

*“I bought a ticket but, when printed, the number plate had not fully printed on the ticket. There was a parking man in the car park and I spoke with him he said would be fine as I had paid and displayed my ticket. However, over 3 weeks later, a parking charge came through the door. I still had my ticket in the car, so I appealed with company. However, they declined the appeal, so I appealed with POPLA and won. My parking charge was cancelled.”*

Another very common grievance was that GPs often overrun and so appointments are not at the times arranged, and, as a result, the patients go beyond the time they have paid for when they arrived. Often, the patients are unaware that it is possible to top up with an extra payment in that situation, because there are no clear signs about that. Also, even when they are aware that they have gone beyond the time paid for, they are reluctant to leave the waiting area in case their appointment is called while they are topping up the time paid for.

*“I also put 15mins free on as I was on time for appointment and as you only get a 10min appointment with the GP this should have sufficed but, as the GP was running late, and I was on my own, I couldn't exactly walk out to buy another ticket – scared that I would miss my appointment. The whole system is a joke and if you are going to put a paying system in just to have the luxury of visiting the doctor then maybe a ‘pay-as-you-exit’ car park would be more workable?”*

*“My son had a speech therapy session. I paid for the hour's parking as the session was only 45 mins, but it over ran slightly over and I was charged for a parking fine. even though it wasn't my fault and the therapist said it was hers...”*

It is also relatively common for visitors to receive a PCN even when they have a valid ticket, but they must still go through the appeal process.

*“I had paid for the valid parking ticket, but I received a penalty letter with £60 from Smart Parking, which I had to pay.”*

*“I displayed a valid ticket, but they said they could not see it.”*

Separate from the car park, there is a drop-off area outside the entrance to the ACH and a significant number of visitors are caught pausing there for a short period of time because their visit is captured by the ANPR system and they have not obtained a ticket for 15 minutes free parking – even though they have not gone into the car park.

*“Parked in drop-off point for 13 minutes as husband was picking me up and son needed a wee. No signs around drop-off point indicating the need for a ticket for the free 15 minutes. In fact, no signs regarding parking at all around drop-off point.”*

*“My partner dropped me off at the health centre then came back for me, but, because he was shown coming in at the end of the road and then leaving again later once he had picked me up, they fined us.”*

Visitors need to enter their VRN using small keypads at the ticket machines, and for some – elderly with poor eyesight or disabled with limited mobility to see the letters clearly – entering the correct VRN proves problematic and they make errors – so they automatically get a PCN – even when they have purchased a ticket for the correct time.

*Appendix 3 – ACH Case of Vernon Maure* sets out the correspondence with Smart Parking in one such case, about which Mr Maure feels so aggrieved that he has sent it to Leo Doherty MP and me to draw attention to how unfair it is.

*“We had to take my son to his appointment and in a mad rush. My husband got one of the letters the wrong way round and, despite having paid enough for our ticket, we still had to pay a fine! There was another occasion where we received a fine despite just getting there as the person wrote a ticket.”*

*“On behalf of my father. He has terminal cancer and onset of dementia, as well as very poor mobility. He's 75. On the first occasion, he went to get a ticket for the free 15 minutes, the ticket machine was out of order. He then had to ascertain where the other machine was, tried to remember his registration – it was the new system by then. By the time he got there and back to put the ticket in his car he was given the fine.”*

Traffic delays are not allowed for – both in the car park in finding a space or in a queue waiting to exit the car park, or at the traffic lights waiting to drive onto Hospital Hill – as the ANPR system simply records the total time on the ACH site as being eligible to be charged for.

*“We left the car park in Aldershot Centre for Health within the hour we paid for, but, at the time, the main road was being reconfigured and had 4-way traffic lights on. It took us almost 25 mins to just get back on to the main road and the ANPR camera is situated on the entrance of the site so didn't clock us leaving until half-an-hour after the ticket had expired. The company is a joke.”*

*“The parking charge notice showed the picture of my car entering and exiting the car park. Due to traffic and reasons, like loading and unloading babies and their prams, I might have overstayed by 5 to 10 minutes (I had paid for an hour's charge) As per the picture, I had overstayed by half an hour. It took me more than 10–15 minutes to find a space and, while trying to leave, due to traffic, it took me more than 10 minutes to reach the exit. Besides, the charge is very high and hence I believe it's unfair and unjust. I appealed but got rejected and I paid £60 out of fear that if further appeal got rejected I would have to pay £100. I felt robbed.”*

The “15 minutes FREE” is seen readily from a distance, so visitors often interpret that as meaning that, if they are parked for no more than 15 minutes, they do not need to fear a PCN.

Unfortunately, there are several ways that they can be caught out:

- the small print says that, even if the visitor is having 15 minutes free, they still need to enter their VRN and place a ticket on display;
- the time is not 15 minutes parking but is taken as 15 minutes from the time the ANPR system records entry until the ANPR system records exit.

*“Free within 15 minutes stayed 11 minutes. Didn’t realise I still needed a ticket as just saw 15 minutes free.”*

*“There for 10 minutes. Supposedly free for 15. They had photographic evidence of time but issued ticket because I hadn’t entered my number into the machine.”*

Although Blue Badge holders are a minority of visitors, their disability can mean that they find it particularly difficult to navigate their way through the ACH system, and they are getting PCNs because, for example, they have limited mobility or poor vision, as they can take longer to do what the non-disabled do within the time paid for.

*“I was parked in disabled bay but make a very slight mistake in giving my reg in at the desk.”*

*“Disabled badge must be on display at all times. To allow free parking, it says ‘Please take blue badge to reception’. You can’t leave your badge in the car and reception at the same time.”*

**Question 8. Please would you set out any complaint about signage, notices or road markings used by a private parking company? – 81 comments.**

Again, there were many different reasons for complaining about signage, notices or road markings.

By far the most frequent complaint was about the signage being unclear.

*“Signage is not that clear. I didn’t realise that the Registration number was required. Put my money in without entering a reg no and got a ticket. For some reason, I decided to read signs, realised I hadn’t put my reg no in, but still got a ticket, and then checked ticket to realise it was someone else’s reg no, and that it was probably done by the confused older gentleman using the machine before me.”*

*“Signage is not clear enough to warn the drivers. I would rather recommend a barrier with ticket machine just like usual car parking.”*

*“Signs too small, no road markings, very poor notices, if any.”*

*“Not enough clear signage. Hardly visible. Should be payment when you leave, as appointments always late.”*

Also, a common complaint was difficulty in using the VRN keypad.

*“The parking system at Aldershot Centre for Health is abysmal. There have been problems since it was changed to an ANPR camera system and new machines installed. If you type in your registration number wrongly even by one digit you will get a ticket. The machines do not comply with the Equality Act as the buttons are too small, lighting is not good enough to see the letters and numbers on the buttons clearly on the lower level, sometimes unavoidable to find a space and one must bend over to type your registration in, which, for someone like me with back problems, can add to my severe pain and discomfort.*

*I also live with anxiety at the best of times and whilst attending appointments and am always anxious about overrunning and ending up with a parking ticket.*

*Please, for pity's sake, get rid of this awful system and replace it with a system that is accessible and permits payment on the way out instead of the way in. This is not fair or appropriate.”*

Many complaints were about the confusing nature of the conditions under which the ACH car park operates.

*“Aldershot Centre for Health parking conditions are very confusing for patients.”*

*“The car park is confusing because it is pay and display but is being checked by camera with car registration recorded. They are just trying to catch personnel to charge them heavily. If it is checked by camera it shouldn't be pay and display. It would be better if the car park was barrier controlled.”*

*“It only says you need to have a ticket on the ticket machine. If the first 15 mins are free, why do you need a ticket? It wastes time. They have image coming and going and the time stamps.*

*Also, the timing is from the cameras near the traffic lights – if they clock you coming in and you struggle to find a parking space, then you have no hope. The camera should be IN the entrance to the car park, not the road leading up to it.*

*My husband waited in the car for me one day, we stopped but didn't park in the car park, he never left the vehicle. I was slightly longer than anticipated because they were running behind, and we got a ticket for that too. It's totally wrong.”*

*“It is a very confusing operation for even the brightest people but those I feel sorry for are older people, as it is not clear what information you need to put in and, if you do it wrong, you still get a parking ticket, but it is not recorded. It also lets you have a ticket if you have misspelt your registration number, but then send you a penalty charge notice you for it.”*

Many complainants blamed the absence of any signs warning that parking time is measured by the ANPR system as the vehicle enters the ACH site.

*“The signs do not specify that your time starts as you drive on to the site.”*

*“They don't make it clear that you are charged via the camera seeing you come in and out.... especially as you have to print and display a ticket.”*

*“Only mentioned CCTV in tiny print on a board full of thousands of words that no one has time to read.”*

Further, the signs about the “15 minutes FREE” came in for criticism.

*“The requirement to get a ticket was further down the sign ‘15 minutes FREE’, which is at the top. so most people stop reading once that is seen.”*

*“Highlight (in the same way the 15 minutes FREE is highlighted) about having to enter details AND remove the 15 minutes FREE – as this is misleading.”*

**Question 9. Please would you set out any complaint about the process for appealing against a parking charge notice? – 77 comments.**

When people who had received PCNs attempted to appeal, they found several barriers in the process.

Most frequently mentioned was the impression that Smart Parking automatically rejected their appeals without considering any of the circumstances that the appellants were drawing to their attention.

*“They reject everything, from the research I have done. They do not take any complaints or reasons on board.”*

*“They NEVER think about situations that may trigger the penalty and any reason why it shouldn’t be paid. They don’t use any leeway and just treat it as black and white. Once you appeal to them, it’ll get refused, but then you have to take it up with another external company to try and sort it out. We ended up having a debt collector contact us and even THEY thought the fine for the free parking was ludicrous.”*

*“Process does work because they pretty much reject any excuse and they know you will not risk paying the high fine.”*

One major barrier was the difficulty that appellants had in getting Smart Parking to engage in the appeals process.

*“Tried to appeal through Smart Parking’s website as it suggested. I made 4 attempts, but, after entering all the details each time, it said ‘could not be processed and to try again in 24 hrs’. I then resorted to appealing in writing.”*

*“The website kept crashing when I was trying to upload photo evidence of my ticket, and there is no auto response to say they have received your appeal. I had to email separately to chase them up.”*

The long delays in Smart Parking replying to the appeal meant that the time to pay the reduced charge had passed, so appellants were then chased for the full £100 set out in the PCN.

*“It’s not a fair grievance process. It should be independent, not in-house – you are told if you go to the next stage you can’t pay the £60 and appeal, so you have to risk paying £100 even though you send the evidence that you paid as far as you were aware and checked with the Smart Parking duty officer on site.”*

*“If your appeal is rejected and you wish to further the appeal then you would have to pay the full amount if your further appeal gets rejected and is not within time period for discounted charge. This I believe is unfair because further appeal takes a long time.”*

Generally, appellants found Smart Parking were unhelpful over appeals.

*“They were most unhelpful and incredibly difficult to get hold of.”*

*“They are not interested in your dispute as they say it is clear that you have agreed to a contract with them.”*

**Question 10. Please would you set out any complaint about letters warning you about what will happen if you do not pay a parking charge notice? – 68 comments.**

Some two-thirds of complainants reported finding these letters threatening to varying degrees.

*“Just informing me that the charge would increase if I lost my case – money I didn't have after dad's funeral! I was only there to take my mum, as I'm her carer, to her diabetic appointment.”*

*“We got no correspondence until we were threatened with court action. We never actually received any letters until the bailiffs sent one threatening court action. We tried to say this and dispute, but we were met with deaf ears.”*

*“I found the letter quite threatening and intimidating in its wording.”*

*“Designed to scare the hell out of you - especially vulnerable or elderly patients. They almost give you an ultimatum...if you don't pay now and your appeal isn't upheld, it will cost you so much more.”*

*“They get doubled. I now have bailiffs constantly knocking my door. I'm in severe debt because I can't park my son's Motability car in disabled bay whilst waiting for Blue Badge. He doesn't even walk. I have to carry him. It's discrimination.”*

**Question 11. Please would you set out any other comments about the way that a private parking company has treated you? – 81 comments.**

About a quarter of comments indicated that Smart Parking were unconcerned about the people with whom they were dealing.

*“Totally not bothered to deal with fact that I had purchased a ticket and returned in time, even asked them to check their close circuit tv to prove it was my car.”*

*“Disgracefully. Bullied. Harassed. No empathy whatsoever. Disgusting way to run a business.”*

*“Unprofessional. Rude. Unco-operative. Lack of communication or resolutions.”*

*“Operatives have no powers of discretion and are not permitted to consider extenuating circumstances.”*

*“Harassing and taking advantage of people at a vulnerable time, when they are visiting hospital. This is bad for patients and bad for the reputation of Aldershot.”*

About another quarter of comments indicated that Smart Parking were only interested in the money they could make from PCNs.

This tallies with a report in *The Observer* (10 July 2017): “Smart Parking, owned by the Australian group Car Parking Technologies, revealed earlier this year that 75% of its revenue comes from parking breach charges and that the number of notices doubled over the 12 months following the roll out of number plate recognition technology.”

*“I just think they are out to make as much money as possible and hope that people won't appeal.”*

*“Just a money-making racket. Every ticket issued should have independent oversight.”*

*“They don't care - they just want money.”*

*“Is a money-making company rather than a service company.”*

*“It's all about making as much money as possible - there is no grey area for them.”*

## **Summary**

The system that Smart Parking are operating at ACH is very complex and completely unfit for purpose.

All the evidence from this survey is that it exploits patients' need to use the car park on the ACH site if they drive or are driven to see their doctors, nurses or other health professionals. Frequently, patients

cannot cope with such a complex system, for a variety of reasons, such as age, frailty, disability, sight, anxiety, and learning difficulties.

There seems a total disconnect between vision of the Clinical Commissioning Group locally – “The best possible health and well-being for the people” – and the apparent purpose of Smart Parking in using the complex car-parking system at ACH to maximise revenues from not only ticket income but also PCNs.

### **Recommendation**

That Rushmoor Borough Council carries out scrutiny with a view to calling in the CCG and NHS Property Services to discuss this evidence, to persuade them discontinue the current car-parking system at ACH immediately and to operate a new system that puts the needs of patients first and foremost.

*Councillor Alex Crawford JP*

1 March 2018

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## Problems with private parking firms in Rushmoor

There is high incidence of complaints about the unfairness of parking charge notices issued by private operators in Aldershot and Farnborough. Please would you complete this survey?

PAGE TITLE

1. Do you live in Rushmoor?

- Yes
- No

2. What is your postcode?

3. Is there private parking where you live?

- Yes
- No

4. Have you used the private parking at Aldershot Centre for Health?

- Yes
- No

5. Have you had a parking charge notice from a private parking operator?

- Yes
- No

6. If "Yes" to Question 5, do you accept that the parking charge notice was justified?

- Yes
- No

7. If "No" to Question 6, please would you give your reasons?



8. Please would you set out any complaint about signage, notices or road markings used by a private parking company?



9. Please would you set out any complaint about the process for appealing against a parking charge notice?



10. Please would you set out any complaint about letters warning you about what will happen if you do not pay a parking charge notice?



11. Please would you set out any other comments about the way that a private parking company has treated you?



12. Finally, do you think that the Government should introduce regulations to stop private parking firms issuing unjust fines?

Yes

No

## Aldershot Centre for Health - Car Park

Response	Complaints about signage, notices or road markings used
12	Yes, Aldershot Centre for Health parking conditions are very confusing for patients.
13	Signage is not clear enough to warn the drivers. I would rather recommend a barrier with ticket machine just like usual car parking.
17	Clarify where ticket machines are located.
18	The requirement to get a ticket was further down the sign 15 minutes free is at the top so most people stop reading once that is seen.
24	The parking system at Aldershot Centre for Health is abysmal. There have been problems since it was changed to an ANPR camera system and new machines installed. If you type in your registration number wrongly even by one digit you will get a ticket. The machines do not comply with the equality act as the buttons are too small, lighting is not good enough to see the letters and numbers on the buttons clearly on the lower level, sometimes unavoidable to find a space and one has to bend over to type your registration in which for someone like me with back problems can add to my severe pain and discomfort. I also live with anxiety at the best of times and whilst attending appointments and am always anxious about overrunning and ending up with a parking ticket. Please, for pity's sake get rid of this awful system and replace it with a system that is accessible and permits payment on the way out instead of the way in. This is not fair or appropriate.
30	No signs on drop off point about the need for a ticket.
36	Centre for Health is designed to confuse.
40	Camera for car park on exit road not on exit of car park.
41	Not well signed and notices.
42	It is small print, not very clear and high up.
44	They can use all the signs they like. Pretending something is law dosnt make it so. It's only an issue if you agree to their terms and conditions.
45	Card payment services are poor and automated - can't guarantee that payment is made, so at risk of receiving penalty notices.
49	Instructions are not easy to read. For anyone elderly, infirm, foreign or whatever, it is difficult to put in number plate etc. Looks like they are making it as difficult as possible for people to do it right!
50	Not made clear failure of their equipment means a fine.
52	No clear direction to make complaints.
56	A lot of older disabled people still don't understand about the new changes, and there should be larger signage and a clearly worded signs.
57	At Aldershot Centre for Health, when you register a blue badge, it goes by car reg not blue badge. As a result, I've just had a ticket from them, as my car has just changed, and I forgot it goes by car reg as I registered over a year ago with them. There is nothing on the signs to remind you that you need to re-register with a new car.
59	The car park is confusing because it is pay and display but is being checked by camera with car registration recorded. They are just trying to catch personnel to charge them heavily. If it is checked by camera it shouldn't be pay and display. It would be better if the car park was barrier controlled.
67	Not always clear and not compassionate.
69	Signs too small, no road markings, very poor notices, if any.
71	They take a picture on the slip road and just assume you have parked.
72	Yes. Not enough clear signage. Hardly visible. Should be payment when you leave, as appointments always late.
78	<b>Sent email and got it sorted in 7 days.</b>
79	The notices are so small and not really noticeable that you could read it properly.
81	Cameras set at traffic lights on entering time clocked there.
82	Nobody has time to read all that small print. You're paying to read it! Most people will pay for more than they need, but the few who pay too little get really clobbered!
83	Very inconsistent. Every car park has a different taffif and way to pay.
89	Notice on entry would be big help.
91	All private parking companies have extremely small, small print and don't make it clear enough about charges.
97	It only says you need to have a ticket on the ticket machine. If the first 15 mins are free, why do you need a ticket. It wastes time. They have image coming and going and the time stamps. Also, the timing is from the cameras near the traffic lights - if they clock you coming in and you struggle to find a parking space, then you have no hope. The camera should be IN the entrance to the car park, not the road leading up to it. My husband waited in the car for me one day, we stopped but didn't park in the car park, he never left the vehicle. I was slightly longer than anticipated because they were running behind and

102	Signs aren't clear.
103	It's not clear whether you pay before you leave the car park or after. If you can't find a space, then you can drive round ages and get a parking ticket issued from the automatic cameras. The best system would be to photograph on entry and then you enter your Reg. Number once you have finished (like Camberley Town) and then you pay the correct amount for the time you have spent at the health centre. The current system is flawed and gives no leeway if you are running late with the doctor. Every time I go to the doctors, there are people at the customer service desk complaining. This is a health centre - people should not be made anxious about going there because of these parking companies' sharp practices.
104	Especially when you're doing a drop of & pick up.
109	The notice is not clear and there's no way you should be charge these crazy prices. Being charged the full day parking price is fair - but £100 is not acceptable.
110	Parking meters at Aldersot Centre for Health have tiny blue letters on a silver background in order to key in registration number. I struggle and often key in the wrong letters. Not sure how an elderly person with less than perfect eye sight manages!
112	I had no idea the car park had gone over to camera recorded. There was not enough signage explaining. Trying to find a phone number for the car park was almost impossible.
114	The parking charges and number-plate-input scheme are terrible. Overpriced - let's not forget it was public money that built it in the first place!! It's out the way of town, so I see no reason why there is a parking charge there. It's a licence to fleece the public. Nearly all signage is too small and confusing.
122	Not clear enough.
123	Unclear signage; wording on side of road. Not enough signage.
129	They need to be clearer. Aldershot Centre for Health is awful not clear at all. Lots of taxis getting tickets waiting for customers.
135	Signage is not that clear. I didn't realise that the Registration number was required. Put my money in without entering a reg no and got a ticket. For some reason, I decided to read signs, realised I hadn't put my reg no in, but still got a ticket, and then checked ticket to realise it was some one else's reg no, and that it was probably done by the confused older gentleman using the machine before me.
136	At the time, the notices were very small and not accessible to read either in obscure text or high on post.
141	Only mentioned CCTV in tiny print on a board full of thousands of words that no one has time to read.
147	There is no number to call if you have a issue in the car park or parking area, which is deemed responsible to the company.
148	Yes, did complain to my MP.
161	Notices are as you drive in not easily read.
176	Nobody knows how long a doctor's appointment can take, so it would be great if you could pay after the appointment. Signage is clear, but I suspect it is because it is only there for revenue purposes...
177	Too small and should not have to pay to go to hospital.
181	It's the machines that aren't very user friendly, especially in a building that would have 70% older people using the car park. You have to type in your reg number because transferring a ticket to help a person out is frowned upon - this is not right.
182	The buttons on the machine are too close together making it almost impossible to put the right registration.
188	The signs are poor. The machines are insufficient.
195	Road markings are worn, signage damaged.
196	They don't make it clear that you are charged via the camera seeing you come in and out.....especially as you have to print and display a ticket.
200	Wrote to say I wasn't paying fine as had valid ticket
201	As stated, at the health centre, there are no clear instructions on how the system works. Also, it is time consuming and awkward to use, and, to follow that up, there is no way that you can pay retrospectively if you realise you have made a mistake and the helpline they allegedly have should actually be helpful.
216	Was unaware I could top up payment or use an app to pay.
218	Yes it is not clear the machines are not working. Number registered to be caught. Very insensible.
219	Signage is poor and doesn't explain that your time frame for parking is actually when you pass camera on service road. If there is a backlog of traffic, you could be waiting another 20 mins.
220	Unclear.
222	When you have a child with ADHD, a severely disabled child and a 7-year-old running around, you don't have time to look for signs.
223	It is not clear that people can add to the parking if held up by lengthy waits to see a doctor.

<b>224</b>	It's all about the money!
<b>226</b>	In my case I think they just charged it, hoping I wasn't aware that ANPR-issued tickets must arrive with registered keeper within 14 days - very dishonest.
<b>230</b>	Road markings and signs were worn out and in small print.
<b>231</b>	Proper notice must be place where people can see easily. And they must train their parking attendant in the procedure of the penalty system and public facilities - and not to hurry to place notice to make money.
<b>233</b>	The signage is almost legal-speak and takes some time to decipher...I did write 2 emails explaining that I'd only just passed my test and awaiting Blue Badge and if I hadn't had to drive all three tiers and traverse the car park to look for working machine, I would have been out on time.
<b>239</b>	It should state in bold alongside the free 15minutes that you must enter the number plate details.
<b>240</b>	There was no large signage and it is very dark at night, also they did not give me a window ticket but I was videoed, photographed, spied on, which was creepy and I felt vunerable seeing my car and myself on film without my permission.
<b>241</b>	Machines had covers on them saying "Out of order".
<b>243</b>	Yes, it is unclear where it is safe to walk, etc.
<b>244</b>	They need to make changes there ASAP as it's very bad.
<b>247</b>	The signs do not specify that your time starts as you drive on to the site.
<b>251</b>	My house mate did not realise that if she leaves the car park and comes back, her original ticket is effectively null and void and she has to buy another one. This can't be that unusual an occurrence so we do need better signage.
<b>252</b>	Requirement to input 15 min free parking is not clearly displayed. Also 15 mins is not long enough when you have to factor in queues at the pharmacy and doctors' reception.
<b>253</b>	There are not sufficient visible warning signages.
<b>256</b>	Lack signage in a prominent position where it's easily seen.
<b>262</b>	It is a very confusing operation for even the brightest people but those I feel sorry for are older people, as it is not clear what information you need to put in and, if you do it wrong, you still get a parking ticket but it is not recorded. It also lets you have a ticket if you have misspelt your registration number, but then send you a penalty charge notice you for it.
<b>263</b>	I believe they send out tickets hoping that the people who have been issued them don't have any proof that they paid for one as most people throw them away! Absolute con artists.
<b>264</b>	Think the machines for entering your car reg are poorly light, too low and small digits - this all means it's very easy to make an error inputting and then you get a fine.
<b>269</b>	Highlight (in the same way the 15 minutes free is highlighted) about having to enter details AND remove the 15 minutes free - as this is misleading.
<b>270</b>	I think should be made clear upon entering the car park that, even if you're at the drop off and pick up point, you need to register your car for the "free" parking. Also, considering in recent years, it's taken up to 20 mins to get a parking space! That it shouldn't be done this way as you're paying to drive in circles.
<b>272</b>	Intimidating.

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## **Garages sites (formerly owned by First Wessex) – Parking Charge Notices**

What brought this issue to the fore were the highly questionable activities of the private-parking operator at Tices Meadow, Aldershot Park Ward, after the sale of the garage-block sites. That all blew up three months ago when residents there started getting Parking charge notices (PCNs).

Faced with the difficulties caused by private-parking operators across the borough as sales of these sites went on, I launched an online survey on 10 February 2018 (*Appendix 1 – Survey form*).

The online survey obtained some 273 responses containing many hundreds of descriptions of unfairness, abuse and bullying of residents by private-parking operators – 17 of which related to the garage-block sites. There were also posts on social media, emails and correspondence. I am focussing this report on the issues relating to these former garage-block sites.

Charging for parking at garage sites in Tices Meadow, Aldershot, began suddenly after residents received a letter on 30 November from Courtman & Co acting on behalf of Hampshire Garages Investments warning that there would be charges for parking on their private land (*Appendix 2 – Courtman & Co letters*).

On 17 November 2016, the Community Policy & Review Panel of Rushmoor Borough Council recommended to the Cabinet that the transfer of the garage stock to Hampshire Garages Investment Ltd (*Appendix 3 - FW Garage Sites, Minutes, Community P&R Panel, 17-11-16*) and the Cabinet approved that recommendation on 13 December 2016 (*Appendix 4 - FW Garage Sites, Report, Cabinet, 13-12-16*).

At the Cabinet meeting on 13 December 2016, First Wessex confirmed that no consultation had been undertaken with existing tenants, as they proposed to do this after the Council had given its consent. In the event, First Wessex did no consultation with residents.

*Appendix 5 - FW Garages Policy - April 2017* comprises the Garage Allocation and Management Policy that First Wessex. On use of garage sites for parking, it included an Options Appraisal that promised “Consultation with residents, particularly those renting garages or living

close by, both initially and before a final decision is made.” In the event, no such consultation took place.

## **Data analysis**

I analysed 273 responses to the five open-ended questions that gave the respondents the opportunity to give their views on different aspects of the systems and how private-parking companies treated them.

*Appendix 6 - FW Garages Data* comprises 59 comments in response to Questions 7 to 11

### **Question 7. Please would you give your reasons as to why the parking charge notice was not justified – 17 comments.**

The main reasons were the lack of opportunity for residents to buy their own parking spaces outside their properties, where they had parked or gained access for years, the lack of consultation over the sale of the garages sites, and the speed and ruthlessness with which Park Direct UK Ltd implemented the new parking system.

*“I live on Tices Meadow in Aldershot, and when I bought my house, the deeds stated that I was on a public road (Romsey Close) owned by the council, but, when you look at the map with the deeds, it show the road that provides access to my house actually stops a few metres away, and the land immediately adjoining is not owned by the council.*

*On November 30 2017, I got a letter from a company called Courtman & Co, stating they were acting on behalf of a private company that had bought the land adjoining my back gate, that my neighbours and I had always believed was part of the public road - then within 1 single working day (Friday, December 1) they put signs up and started implementing parking fines for anyone who kept a vehicle near their house. I rang Hampshire Highways, and they said "they can't do that Romsey Close is owned by the council" - then they rang back and said "most of Romsey Close is owned by the council, but the bit you are on is not.*

*The deeds to my house state that whoever owns the adjoining land should adhere to certain obligations in the same way that the council would, e.g., fixing drains, and that the owners are obliged to give 28 days' written notice to any changes of easements, rights of ways etc. (although there is no explicit mention of parking), but I want to sell it*

*because I don't want to live on property which depends on road access on companies that behave in the way that Courtman & Co have been instructed to do (Land Registry shows the land owners as Hampshire Garages Investments Ltd, but that company is now listed as dormant and has been taken over by Quest Investments, although the letter sent by C&C state that the company is called Conhurst Investments, but . . . . I don't want to live anywhere near land owned by them).*

*But, in order to sell my house, will I need to get the deeds changed? They state that the property owner has a number of rights, that my emails to Land Registry, the council planning department, our MP Leo Doherty, Trading Standards (Laura Haydock) etc., all say are meaningless, and that it is perfectly legal for 'the-company-which-does-not-want-to-be-named' to give Courtman & Co the rights to implement parking fines with no ground markings and only 1 working day's notice to some of the residents affected, and to give no information regarding whether or not it is legal to park near the kerb (some have been fined, others haven't), access for emergency services or delivery vehicles, parking for visitors, etc.*

*I would be grateful if you could advise regarding what I should do over my house deeds before selling. Is it something that, like the fines, the council considers to be my responsibility to pay for the changes implemented?"*

*"I have parked opposite my gate for the past 10 years. On Thursday, 30 November, I got a letter stating that the part of the road I live on was private land and I would be charged for parking there, but there was no date given for implementation, so I kept the letter resolving to telephone to clarify what was happening the following week.*

*Friday evening, I drove to London, because my 87-year-old mother had recently been discharged from hospital and needed looking after. I arrived back late, in the dark and rain on Sunday, 3 December, parking where I usually do, where there were no road markings and I genuinely did not notice the signs at either end of the garage walls (which for the past 10 years had never had any signs on, so I did not think to look), and, on Monday morning, Park Direct patrols photographed my car and issued a fine.*

*I appealed, and they rejected my appeal saying the signs were clear and I must have seen them.*

*I wrote a letter to the IPC, which they responded to by sending me a long form and stating that they charged £15 to make an appeal, so I did not persevere.*

*Since then I have received a number of threatening letters."*

**Question 8. Please would you set out any complaint about signage, notices or road markings used by a private parking company? – 15 comments.**

There were several different reasons for complaining about signage, notices or road markings.

*“There were no road markings on Romsey Close until the 18 December. My fine was issued on the 4 December.*

*The deeds of my property state that the owners of the adjacent land need to give a minimum of 28 days’ notice to any change of easements or rights of way.*

*Although parking is not specifically mentioned, this change to access and parking should have given more warning to be reasonable – they were obviously trying to catch people out and make money out of people who can't afford a property with a driveway.*

*Many of my neighbours are in social housing, so they really are preying on the poorest sector of society, and the Council think that is perfectly allowable, and ... that, since they sold the land to a private company ..., it is nothing to do with them.”*

*“I am completing this form on behalf of my elderly father who lives at the above post code (GU11 3RW). For over 30 years, my father has had off-road parking at the rear of his property, which is accessed via the land now belonging to the private parking company who have purchased the land from VIVID (when First Wessex).*

*There was little or no warning of the changes that were taking place with the parking restrictions (he is not a housing association tenant and owns his own property), and, although I understand that there may have been some consultation with VIVID tenants, there was none with private residents.*

*Just over a week ago, without notice, the private-parking company came and put bollards up in front of the two spaces that lie across the access to my father's driveway.*

*Fortunately, he was in at the time. I dread to think what would have happened if he wasn't – would they have just put the bollards up anyway and we would have to lift his car out of the drive?!*

*I would suggest that this is intimidation, as they have not put bollards in any of the other parking spaces.”*

*“They have put bollards in front of the residents' houses, so they cannot park on their own driveways. They have put double yellow lines all round outside people's garages and have put a certain amount of parking spots that are numbered, and you have to have a permit, but there are not enough spaces to allocate one for each household.”*

**Question 9. Please would you set out any complaint about the process for appealing against a parking charge notice? – 9 comments.**

Residents who received PCNs in the first two months already have several types of complaint.

*“I don't think people who have been fined illegally should have to pay to appeal against the fine, and I don't see why the ICP are incapable of reading a perfectly clear letter outlining what happened and containing photos and evidence, etc., keeping those pieces of evidence and insisting on using their form, and asking for evidence that has already been sent and not returned.”*

*“Even though my car was parked on the road, not at their land, I was still issued with a fine and you can't even ring and talk to anyone – so irritating that you have to write to them.”*

*“Nothing really on the sign – just you will be fined – probably why it's always empty and people starting to dump stuff.”*

**Question 10. Please would you set out any complaint about letters warning you about what will happen if you do not pay a parking charge notice? – 5 comments.**

The complainants have found letters threatening and rude.

*“I have tried to complain to the parking company, but they are very rude!!*

*I have also sent emails to local councillors and they looked into the matter but haven't been able to come to any decisions on how to act upon the situation.”*

*“As per my neighbours, it's very threatening. I'm yet to hear about my fine.”*

*“The letter rejecting my claim Insisted that my headlights MUST have picked out the signs on the wall (they didn't, the place I parked did not have signs very near) and stated that the only way I could have not seen them was by driving illegally without headlights.*

*The fact that there had never been any reason to look at either end of the garage walls before is not referred to.*

*That letter also stated that the company had been 'courteous' enough to allow 4 days' 'grace' before implementing fines, which is a downright lie, because most of my neighbours woke up on Saturday morning to find parking tickets on their cars (apparently the signs were put up on Friday afternoon/evening – I had not noticed in my rush to get to my mother's in London).*

*I was only away for 3 days – but, had it been another time of year, I may have left my car there for up to a month while being abroad on holiday.*

*4 days' notice for changing the status of a public road to private land where you are fined for parking is NOT adequate, and I am selling my house and leaving Rushmoor as a direct result of this happening.”*

**Question 11. Please would you set out any other comments about the way that a private parking company has treated you? – 13 comments.**

Mostly, the comments were about how brutal it was for this community to be subjected to parking charges without warning.

*“The letters have been bullying and unreasonable, but the issue is not just with the parking company, it is with the sale of land, which has been used as a road for the past 50 years and provides access to peoples' homes, so emergency services or deliveries are now at risk.*

*There is no allowance for visitors coming by car, the parking bays are allocated to whoever buys them, regardless of whether they live near or not, regardless of need or whether there are disabled people living nearby and are valid for 365 days a year.*

*Otherwise, you park in the ever more crowded part of Romsey Close, which is owned by the Council, which, due to the heavier parking, larger vehicles – such as rubbish removal trucks and vans – are unable to access the end of the road (where I live).*

*Houses that were sold for similar values, a few doors down from each other either can park freely and have no access problems or are liable to be fined for parking for more than 2 minutes.*

*In addition, the parking ticket person told residents that, if they parked next to the kerb on Romsey Close, next to my gate, they would not be fined, but my neighbour then was fined for parking there. So again, very poor, confusing communications.”*

*“This permit parking is an absolute nonsense. Prior to this, there was no problem with parking. All neighbours could park in the vicinity of their property and there was no inconsiderate parking. Now it is a free for all.*

*I feel unable to visit my father, who is elderly and needs my support and care, as there is no parking, not even metered parking that I can pay for.*

*My father is also a registered Blue Badge holder, who now needs to park his car in the next road, which is for him a 5-minute walk. This is unacceptable for a 78-year-old man with a heart condition.”*

*“They have forced me into paying to park outside my own home. It's awful – we have to now pay £32.50 every 3 months. They also made us pay £137 two weeks before Christmas, otherwise we wouldn't have got a parking space.”*

## **Summary**

All the evidence from this survey, posts on social media, emails and meetings with residents is that the introduction of this new parking-charge regime was overnight and with little or no consultation with them.

There is a covenant that Rushmoor Borough Council has in place so that such garage land can only be developed for social housing with the Council being entitled to 100% nomination rights from such development. Any disposal for any other reason required the Council's consent. The purpose of the covenant was to allow the Council to benefit where garage land is redeveloped for a use other than social housing.

Unfortunately, in this covenant, the Council did not seek to protect residents from being exploited from the introduction of parking charges – which is a use other than social housing

Also, unfortunately, First Wessex Housing Association (since merged with Sentinel to form VIVID) did not consult with residents as they told the Cabinet they would or as required by their own Garages Policy.

Trading Standards at Hampshire County Council have received two complaints about Park Direct UK's activities, which they investigated, but they were satisfied that there were no trading standard issues. In their opinion, the signage is clear and bays are well marked. They will not be taking any action against Park Direct UK Ltd on these complaints, as there does not appear to have been a breach of *The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008*.

## **Recommendations**

Scrutiny should invite evidence about whether the Council bears any responsibility for the current difficulties being experienced by residents near to sites in the borough acquired by Hampshire Garages Investments from First Wessex.

Scrutiny should also invite evidence as to whether First Wessex has responsibility for failing to honour residents' rights and to carry out adequate consultation with residents over the sale of these garage sites to Hampshire Garage Investments.

Finally, the Council and VIVID should ensure that residents near to any other garage sites that are yet to be sold should have their rights honoured and should be fully consulted about any proposed sales.

*Councillor Alex Crawford JP*

5 March 2018

## Aldershot Park - Former VIVID garage sites

Response	Comments about the way that private parking company treated respondents
9	When the warden comes to issue the tickets, they park where they like - no permit - and sometimes not even in a parking space - my daughter has photos.
10	The letters have been bullying and unreasonable, but the issue is not just with the parking company, it is with the sale of land which has been used as a road for the past 50 years and provides access to peoples' homes, so emergency services or deliveries are now at risk. There is no allowance for visitors coming by car, the parking bays are allocated to whoever buys them, regardless of whether they live near or not, regardless of need, or whether there are disabled people living nearby, and are valid for 365 days a year, otherwise you park in the ever more crowded part of Romsey Close which is owned by the Council, which due to the heavier parking, larger vehicles - such as rubbish removal trucks and vans - are unable to access the end of the road (where I live). Houses that were sold for similar values, a few doors down from each other either can park freely and have no access problems or are liable to be fined for parking for more than 2 minutes. In addition, the parking ticket person told residents that if they parked next to the kerb on Romsey Close, next to my gate, they would not be fined, but my neighbour then was fined for parking there. So again, very poor, confusing communications.
12	Yes, we were given 2 days notice and no information was given that who actually owns the land. I'm happy, but place is too small to park my car, and no communication was offered before all it started
19	As above regarding the bollards. This permit parking is an absolute nonsense. Prior to this there was not problem with parking. All neighbours could park in the vicinity of their property and there was no inconsiderate parking. Now it is a free for all. I feel unable to visit my father, who is elderly and needs my support and care, as there is no parking, not even metered parking that I can pay for. My father is also a registered blue badge holder who now needs to park his car in the next road, which is for him a 5-minute walk. This is unacceptable for a 78-year-old man with a heart condition.
33	Some residents have taken up 2 parking spaces for the same family and there are only seven bays in the road.
34	All residents have been treated very badly and no notice of charges was given and very ambiguous as no road markings marked to know where charges will occur.
88	Very unfairly, but I feel more sorry for the residents who live there and are parking on completely different roads to their homes and having to walk, especially those with young children or disabled!
140	They have forced me into paying to park outside my own home. It's awful - we have to now pay £32.50 every 3 months. They also made us pay £137 two weeks before Christmas, otherwise we wouldn't have got a parking space.
157	No notice that next door car park was going to start charging - and the sign they nailed to my property without permission.
192	I just believe they are very rude when approached with a complaint and did not give the residents enough notice.
217	I've had letter from debt company on behalf of owners - £160 - if not paid by 22/2/18, then court.
227	There is no reason for private contractors to issue parking charges on housing estates.
259	They make s point of checking our road very early - before 8am.

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## Other Sites – Parking Charge Notices

What brought this issue to the fore were the highly questionable activities of the private-parking operator at Tices Meadow, Aldershot Park Ward, after the sale of the garage-block sites. That all blew up three months ago when residents there started getting parking charge notices (PCNs).

Faced with the difficulties caused by private-parking operators across the borough as sales of these sites went on, I launched an online survey on 10 February 2018 (*Appendix 1 – Survey form*).

The online survey obtained some 273 responses containing many hundreds of descriptions of unfairness, abuse and bullying of residents by private-parking operators.

Nearly 50 responses related to sites other than Aldershot Centre for Health (ACH) and the garage sites (formerly owned by First Wessex). ACH and the garage sites are the subjects of earlier reports. I am therefore focussing this third report on Other Sites.

As might be expected from a borough including two town centres, retail parks and stores, business parks and private housing estates, there are many private-parking operators, each with different terms and conditions.

### Data analysis

I analysed 273 responses to the five open-ended questions that gave the respondents the opportunity to give their views on different aspects of the systems and how private-parking companies treated them.

*Appendix 2 – Other Sites Data* comprises 158 comments in response to Questions 7 to 11.

### **Question 7. Please would you give your reasons as to why the parking charge notice was not justified – 48 comments.**

Perhaps the most serious cause for concern on Other Sites is the lack of special consideration for wheelchair users and disabled, who face extra difficulties in their activities.

*“Both occasions were at restaurants (McDonald's, Tumbledown Dick and Burger King, Wellington Avenue) and both times I had a wheelchair user in a wheelchair adapted vehicle.*

*I did not notice the signage on both occasions, probably because I was preoccupied with the needs of the wheelchair user.*

*It takes 10 mins to release the karabiners and exit the vehicle via the tail lift, plus 10 mins to enter the vehicle via the tail lift and re-secure the wheelchair. This is 20 mins of the allotted hour's parking.*

*For the wheelchair user who has cerebral palsy, including difficulty with eating, this does not allow enough time for her to eat a meal.*

*I believe disabled customers are being treated less favourably than others by not being allowed to park for long enough to eat a meal.*

*I appealed on the grounds of disability discrimination. The first time I never heard any more from the parking company. The second time my appeal was not allowed and so I have appealed further to POPLA. I am awaiting the outcome of this.*

*The letter threatened that I will have to pay £100 instead of £60 if I appeal to POPLA and the appeal is not upheld.*

*I may consider pursuing a case under the Equality Act if this appeal is not upheld, as I believe this is a clear case of disability discrimination.*

*I do not think parking companies should be allowed to flout the law by refusing to acknowledge that someone with quadriplegic cerebral palsy needs longer than other customers to eat a meal. I believe they are treating disabled people less favourably than everyone else by not allowing them to park at a restaurant for long enough to eat a meal.”*

Morrisons Car Park, Westgate, Aldershot, attracted the largest number of complaints about Other Sites – 7.

*“Westgate, Aldershot. Parked for 5 hours, spent a fortune having a meal for 9 people, panto for 9 people. Then a charge for £80! First and last time parking there (I usually walk, but there were elderly family in group, so hubby drove).”*

*“Morrisons Aldershot - had a meal, watched a film and got some shopping - and got an £80 fine for it.”*

There were 4 complaints about parking charges on the road next to Costa Coffee.

*“Parked next to Costa (Farnborough Airport) in the road as car park full. The road is a no through road and no problem with access. No lines on the road only a poorly placed sign - £60.”*

The high levels of charges for even minor breaches of the terms and conditions of parking aggrieved many respondents, including one taking advantage of the survey to complain about Rushmoor Borough Council.

*“I have been threatened with court action / bailiffs from Rushmoor Borough Council. I wrote to the MP to intervene as the threat was out of proportion to a 50p per hour ticket. It’s not the private car parks, it’s the Council-run ones that are worse!!!”*

*“We did technically violate the rules of the car park, but we find the size of the penalty disproportionate. The rules also seem unreasonable/unclear – we were in the Solartron car park in Farnborough. We went into Pets at Home and bought something.*

*We then went across the road to one of the other shops for maybe half-an-hour. Apparently, leaving the car park violates the rules. We thought because we had bought something it would be OK.*

*The layout of roads in that area means it is not practical to move from car park to car park if you want to visit different shops in the area. It is much simpler to just walk across the road.”*

*“I parked for 7 minutes in a hotel car park and received a £60 parking fine.”*

Residents of some estates with private roads have cause for grievance when the private-parking operator appointed by the managing agent issues them with PCNs.

*“Signage is incorrect, as it states the private company are members of the BPA; however, they are members of the IPC. I have email evidence from the BPA advising they are not to use their logo.*

*We have 22 PCNs, one of which I went to court for and WON, as it was ruled by the judge that it clearly states in my tenancy I have a right to park.*

*One of my neighbours is currently going to court for the same thing. CPM have notified us they have discontinued this claim although there are more to come!!”*

*“It was resident parking where I am a resident there; even after proving this, I still had to pay £350.”*

*“Private parking on our estate is nonsensical. Only come around at 3 am and penalise people who live on the estate for parking in V(istor) spaces.*

*We don't have a numbered space, even though we are told all properties have equal rights – clearly they don't, as some houses have garage, numbered space and access to V space.*

*I have 2 numbered permits for spaces that don't exist.*

*We are close to the station, so surely they should be coming in the day time and catching those without ANY type of permit.*

*We are literally paying them to fine us – it's ridiculous.”*

**Question 8. Please would you set out any complaint about signage, notices or road markings used by a private parking company? – 31 comments.**

By far the most frequent topic of complaint was signage, with two-thirds of the comments about it.

*“Notices blend into the car park too much at Morrisons. They also changed the parking length & gave no notification.”*

*“There were no road markings and no signs on the lamp posts immediately near where I parked – hence not seeing one further down the road.”*

*“(Morrisons, Aldershot) Parking restricted to 3 hours. Internal signage absolutely fine and clear but signage at entrance says that parking restrictions up to 5pm parking, but, if you enter at 5 minutes to 5 you are still restricted to 3 hours – which wasn't clear and is also misleading. Asked for the sign to be removed but it's still there”*

**Question 9. Please would you set out any complaint about the process for appealing against a parking charge notice? – 28 comments.**

The general impression is that appeal processes are dysfunctional in terms of being bureaucratic, lengthy, complex and, finally, not independent.

*“Appeals are routinely denied. The 'independence' of the appeals process is non-existent.”*

*“The appeal services are all owned by the same people, i.e., IPC, DRP, Gladstone’s are all the same people.”*

*“They just ignored the evidence presented. There was no ability to prove anything – I had a receipt – but that was deemed to be ‘not proof’ – and they didn’t even return it, which meant I had no proof of the purchase I had made from the shop (so, if I’d had a problem with the purchase, I had no recourse).”*

*“The ‘appeal process’ is difficult, loaded, not independent, and almost certain to be rejected. Also, engaging with either the parking company or the allegedly independent appeal adjudicator just grants them credibility and authority they don’t merit.”*

*“Who is the independent person who decides if your appeal stands? – Quite obviously, they were not independent and were just a fob off.”*

*“Appeals only in writing and its pointless. They always tell you your appeal has not be upheld – 3 TIMES I have tried.”*

**Question 10. Please would you set out any complaint about letters warning you about what will happen if you do not pay a parking charge notice? – 22 comments.**

Over half the complainants reported finding these letters threatening or intimidating.

*“Threatening letters were received. Threats of private bailiffs turning up unannounced to remove money and goods at their discretion - plus incredible levels of charges.”*

*“The letter threatened that I will have to pay £100 instead of £60 if I appeal to POPLA and the appeal is not upheld.”*

*“They’re threatening, relentless and intimidating.”*

**Question 11. Please would you set out any other comments about the way that a private parking company has treated you? – 29 comments.**

The respondents were almost unanimous in condemning the business practices of private-parking operators and the detrimental effect they have.

*“We parked at the Solartron retail park with a 94-yr-old friend who had just come out of hospital. She was unable to walk but wanted to purchase a new bed. We assisted her and parked in a disabled bay outside the shop using a wheelchair to get her in the shop.*

*The parking attendant issued a penalty notice and my husband had to pay the fine – even though the attendant apologised and said it would go no further if we just rang the number!*

*They would not listen, and we were forced to pay the fine.*

*I told the shop in question that I was cancelling the bed along with the wardrobes, chest of drawers, etc.*

*We went to Guildford the next week and ordered all the same items there.*

*I never shop at the Farnborough Retail Park since that incident.”*

*“This kind of company shouldn't be permitted to exist - there is no social good, of any kind, enabled by the exploitative business practices they follow.”*

*“I believe the car parking attendant is in a van that is parked at the end of the road just waiting for some innocent driver to park his vehicle. There were 3 other cars parked in this road at the same time we were there. Money grabbing, I call it. Why put a Costa in a busy spot and give it a small car park?”*

*“Basically, aggressive debt collectors and work on intimidation and scaring people.”*

*“We feel that these companies are predatory. The charge notice was dated within moments of us leaving the car park – they were clearly watching and waiting for it to happen.*

*A huge number of other cars also had penalty charge notices on the same day as us.”*

## **Summary**

The systems that private-parking companies are operating in Rushmoor are subject to numerous complaints that they are very unsatisfactory from the points of view of the respondents who fell foul of them often through little or no fault of their own.

No one disputes the need for parking to be controlled. But it seems that the way that some land-owners, including public companies and authorities, do so by contracting with private-parking firms is leading to resentment on the part of motorists, residents, shoppers, and disabled.

## **Recommendation**

That Rushmoor Borough Council carries out scrutiny, including using this evidence, to improve the systems operated by private-parking firms, with better signage and road markings, independent appeals and ombudsman, conforming to the Disability Discrimination Act, and unthreatening, unintimidating communications.

*Councillor Alex Crawford JP*

5 March 2018

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## Other sites

Response	Comments about the way that private parking company treated respondents
8	Crap.
11	This kind of company shouldn't be permitted to exist - there is no social good, of any kind, enabled by the exploitative business practices they follow.
16	Appallingly - just a way to rip you off.
32	Rude; Abusive
37	Stressful as they threaten you with bailiffs before it even goes to court. Signs are not large enough and aimed to catch you out.
39	I do not think parking companies should be allowed to flout the law by refusing to acknowledge that someone with quadriplegic cerebral palsy needs longer than other customers to eat a meal. I believe they are treating disabled people less favourably than everyone else by not allowing them to park at a restaurant for long enough to eat a meal.
43	I cannot see how a private company should charge more than the local council for a penalty. And I think a road affected should have painted lines.
46	It's shocking really - when you are a customer, but they don't care.
51	Treated me badly. I have 4 kids to with special needs and am a single mum. I was on my own the day I got the ticket. They told me I should have read the notice, but I didn't see any, and I was more worried about getting my kids out of a busy car park.
53	It was threatening and unjustified. Basically they say black is white and fine you for doing nothing wrong. This is fraud.
57	Very aggressive.
70	I believe the car parking attendant is in a van that is parked at the end of the road just waiting for some innocent driver to park his vehicle. There were 3 other cars parked in this road at the same time we were there. Money grabbing I call it. Why put a Costa in a busy spot and give it a small car park?
87	Basically, aggressive debt collectors and work on intimidation and scaring people.
103	We parked at the Solartron retail park with a 94-yr-old friend who had just come out of hospital. She was unable to walk but wanted to purchase a new bed. We assisted her and parked in a disabled bay outside the shop using a wheelchair to get her in the shop. The parking attendant issued a penalty notice and my husband had to pay the fine - even tho the attendant apologised and said it would go no further if we just rang the number! They would not listen and we were forced to pay the fine. I told the shop in question that I was cancelling the bed along with the wardrobes, chest of drawers etc. We went to Guildford the next week and ordered all the same items there. I never shop at the Farnborough retail park since that incident.
106	My colleague and I got tickets via post and it said £100, while the truth is we never found any ticket on our car. Ticket officer intentionally takes off the tickets from car so we get big fines.
108	My husband phoned them to try and reason with them but they were having none of it.
111	They're not interested in anything other than making money.
125	Rude, unhelpful.
133	It didn't feel as though our side had been listened to at all. Being a residential car park, we don't feel such sanctions should be in place, as most residents are paying mortgages plus ground rent. They are also subject to fines should they not display their permits.
165	Disappointed at the way appeal was carried out and that comments about signage were ignored.
171	Unfairly.
193	We feel that these companies are predatory. The charge notice was dated within moments of us leaving the car park - they were clearly watching and waiting for it to happen. A huge number of other cars also had penalty charge notices on the same day as us.
206	Terrible.
215	No joined up approach between the landlord and the company they are using to look after their car parks. Genuine customers appear to be penalised, regardless of evidence.
228	They are rude and greedy for money.
236	Unfriendly and very rude.
245	They won't get into conversations with us as we are tenants - which is pathetic as we have just as much right as the actual owners - this estate is pretty much rental accommodation - so just the few owners, who are obviously getting a cut from the parking firm they have hired.
249	A lack of empathy and consideration.
265	Bad surprise and really too expensive.

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## **Environment Panel – 20 March 2018**

### **Additional Information for Parking Charges Notices Item**

#### **Response from Trading Standards**

I am emailing to update you regarding the parking complaint we received.

I have today informed Councillor Roberts and one of the residents, that we will not be taking any action regarding the matter.

One of my colleagues went to the site on 13 February 2018, to view the signage at the location, and to take some photos of the area and the signage. My colleague has expressed to me, that in their opinion, the 'signage is clear and large, bays are well marked and numbered'. I have looked at the photos my colleague took, and the signage does appear to be clear and the signs appear to be of adequate size and there appears to be a sufficient number of signs.

On this occasion, there does not appear to be a breach of The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008. Therefore, Hampshire Trading Standards, will not be taking any action against Park Direct UK Ltd, or any of the companies mentioned in the complaint.

#### **Enquiry submitted by the Council to Park Direct UK Ltd**

The Council is receiving complaints regarding parking charges and fines on a local estate; being administered by Park Direct UK Ltd. We note that Park Direct UK Ltd is listed as an accredited Operator Scheme member of the IPC.

Whilst unable to substantiate the complaints made by local residents at this time, I have been asked to check with you (the IPC) as the relevant Accredited Trade Association when Park Direct UK Ltd were last audited and whether they operate in full compliance with the relevant code of practice as an accredited scheme member.

As a sensitive local issue involving a number of residents, I would also be grateful to know whether any and, where appropriate, what improvements have been specified or recommended to Park Direct UK Ltd following any such audit, so that we might work with them and yourselves on resolving local concerns.

Whilst I appreciate the contents of your online complaints procedure, the Council is looking to work in partnership to assist all stakeholders in resolution of local concerns. Accordingly, any information and assistance you can provide would be most welcome

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## **ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL WORK PROGRAMME**

Set out below are the key issues which form the Panel's on-going work programme. The topics covered reflect the following:

- the development of a new policy for recommendation to the Cabinet
- scrutiny of the process of the way in which decisions have been or are being made
- reviewing issues of concern to local people or which affect the Borough
- review of performance and delivery of specific services
- monitoring and scrutinising the activities of others
- items raised by Members and agreed by the Panel for consideration
- review of policies and proposals developed by others

The purpose of the work programme is to identify the way in which topics are being dealt with and the progress made with them. An update will be submitted to each meeting of the Panel.

### **ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO ACCOUNTABILITY AND AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY**

#### **Planning and Building Control**

To carry out all functions falling to be determined by the Council in relation to planning policies including regional, structure and local plans and non-statutory development plans and policies.

To carry out the Council's functions in respect of the necessary statutory provisions in relation to all matters related to applications for and enforcement action under the building regulations and issues relating to the building acts and any other associated legislation, regulations and provisions, including provisions on dangerous buildings and structures and means of escape in case of fire.

To deal with the planning and transportation policy aspects of major development and re-development proposals.

To carry out the Council's functions in respect of the definition and re-definition of conservation area boundaries and policy issues relating to trees and nature conservation.

To study planning and transportation proposals outside the Borough, which may affect the Borough, and to make representations thereon as appropriate.

To exercise the Council's functions in the preparation, approval and management of schemes for environmental improvements in the Borough.

To approve and administer schemes for historic buildings and access grants

To deal with planning policy aspects of economic development proposals in the Borough

To deal with matters relating to service administration and working arrangements in relation to the Development Control Service.

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### **Economy and Regeneration**

To promote the regeneration of the Borough through the development of policies and initiatives to promote the long-term success of the local economy and through the development of partnerships with local and regional organisations in relation to town centres and local centres.

To control and manage markets.

To liaise with the European Community, the Government Office for the South East and other appropriate bodies and to, where possible, seek financial assistance for initiatives to assist regeneration and the local economy.

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## Street Scene Services

To deal with all highways matters either under statute for action by the Council or under agency arrangements with the appropriate highway authority, including:-

- Matters relating to the regulation of traffic, restrictions on the use of highways (including the making of traffic regulations orders) and the provision of parking places;
- Matters concerning the control, naming and lighting of streets (including the numbering of houses, siting of litter bins and other street furniture), and the exercise of the Council's powers under the New Streets Byelaws ;
- Matters relating to private streets, including their making up under private street works procedures or the advance payments code;
- Adoption of highways; and
- Approval of the siting of telephone kiosks, post boxes, cables, mains and other apparatus in, under and over the highway.

To deal with the removal and disposal of abandoned vehicles

To deal with all issues in relation to the provision and management of car parks (including parking charges and the provision of parking bays for the disabled).

To deal with matters relating to road safety, in conjunction with the County Council, as appropriate.

To deal with matters relating to the street scene including street cleansing (highways, parks, car parks, the provision of litterbins, removal of flytips and litter education).

To deal with discretionary matters relating to land drainage.

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## Environmental Health

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To exercise environmental health powers (other than those licensing powers dealt with by the Licensing Committee) exercised by the Council in relation to the following issues:-

- public conveniences;
- refuse, salvage, waste collection/disposal, recycling and waste minimisation;
- cemeteries, burial grounds and crematoria;
- environmental health issues in relation to the control of markets;
- Sunday trading;
- caravans and caravan sites;
- food safety and hygiene matters;
- infectious diseases;
- pest control; and
- control of dogs.

To develop the policy framework in relation to the environmental health functions to be discharged by the Council (including those issues identified under the Licensing Committee) and to make recommendations to the Council where such policies affect the overall policy framework of the Council.

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## Other Matters

To carry out all statutory and discretionary functions relating to sewers and drains.

To deal with all matters relating to the administration and enforcement of the Council's byelaws relating to the functions of the portfolio.

To deal with issues relating to the letting and monitoring of contracts relating to the functions in the portfolio.

To develop and monitor initiatives for landscaping and Christmas decorations for shopping areas, etc.

**WORK PROGRAMME - ON-GOING ITEMS**

DATE RAISED (LAST UPDATED)	ISSUE AND DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC	PROCESS AND TIMETABLE	CURRENT POSITION	CONTACT (SERVICE MANAGER)
29.05.01  (06.06.17)	<p><b>Parking Management</b></p> <p>To review the objectives of the Parking Management section, monitor their achievement and make recommendations.</p>	<p>The Panel receives an annual report from the Parking Service on arising issues such as dealing with persistent offenders, blue badge misuse, signage, abandoned vehicles and verge parking.</p> <p>A Working Group had been established in November 2016 to develop the car parking strategy and the Panel received an update at <b>6 June 2017</b> meeting.</p>	<p>The Working Group had been disbanded in October 2017 due to the changes to on-street parking proposed in the Hampshire County Council Transformation to 2019 programme which would affect a large proportion of the strategy.</p>	<p>Peter Amies, Head of Community                      Tel. (01252) 398750                      Email.  <a href="mailto:peter.amies@rushmoor.gov.uk">peter.amies@rushmoor.gov.uk</a></p>
28.06.05  (11.04.17)	<p><b>Farnborough Town Centre</b></p> <p>To receive updates on the Farnborough Town Centre Development.</p>	<p>The Panel receives regular updates on the redevelopment of Farnborough Town Centre.</p> <p>A Farnborough Town Centre Working Group was set up to focus on the development and marketing of the town centre. Members of the Group are Crs. R.L.G. Dibbs, C.P. Grattan, D.S. Gladstone, P.J. Moyle, Marina Munro, L.A. Taylor, and P.G. Taylor.</p>	<p>The Panel received a progress update from the Working Group at the <b>11 April 2017</b> Panel meeting.</p>	<p>Andrew Lloyd, Chief Executive                      Tel: (01252) 398397  <a href="mailto:andrew.lloyd@rushmoor.gov.uk">andrew.lloyd@rushmoor.gov.uk</a></p>

DATE RAISED (LAST UPDATED)	ISSUE AND DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC	PROCESS AND TIMETABLE	CURRENT POSITION	CONTACT (SERVICE MANAGER)
<p>9.07.05 (06.06.17)</p>	<p><b>Aldershot Town Centre</b>  To receive updates on the Aldershot Town Centre Development.</p>	<p>The Panel receives regular updates on the redevelopment of Aldershot Town Centre.</p> <p>An Aldershot Town Centre Task and Finish Group was replaced by the Aldershot Regeneration Group for the 2016/17 municipal year to focus on the regeneration of the town centre.</p>	<p>An update was received on Aldershot Town Centre on <b>6 June 2017</b>. The Aldershot Regeneration Group was a Cabinet Group and updates would be provided to the Cabinet in future.</p>	<p>Andrew Lloyd, Chief Executive Tel: (01252) 398397 <a href="mailto:andrew.lloyd@rushmoor.gov.uk">andrew.lloyd@rushmoor.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>10.11.15</p>	<p><b>Markets</b>  To review the progress with the Aldershot and Farnborough markets/ car boot sales.</p>	<p>In January, 2015 Cabinet had agreed to bring the operation of the markets and car boot sales 'in-house'.</p> <p>The Farnborough Tuesday market had opened in March, 2015 followed by the Sunday market in May, 2015.</p> <p>The Aldershot Saturday market had opened in June, 2015.</p>	<p>An update on the performance of the markets and car boot sales and details on the impact of recent changes was provided at the Farnborough Town Centre Working Group on 15 February 2017.</p>	<p>Peter Amies, Head of Community Tel. (01252) 398750 Email. <a href="mailto:peter.amies@rushmoor.gov.uk">peter.amies@rushmoor.gov.uk</a></p>

DATE RAISED (LAST UPDATED)	ISSUE AND DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC	PROCESS AND TIMETABLE	CURRENT POSITION	CONTACT (SERVICE MANAGER)
09.06.15 (05.04.16)	<p><b>Recycling, waste collection and environmental crime and grime</b></p> <p>To review the progress of recycling, monitor implementation, performance and make recommendations on future developments.</p>	<p>A presentation was received by Serco, the new waste and recycling contractor at the Panel meeting on 11 April 2017.</p>	<p>Serco would be invited to a future Panel meeting to provide feedback on performance once the contract was being delivered.</p>	<p>Peter Amies, Head of Community Tel. (01252) 398750 Email. <a href="mailto:peter.amies@rushmoor.gov.uk">peter.amies@rushmoor.gov.uk</a></p>
19.02.13 (06.06.17)	<p><b>Hampshire Highways - Panel Monitoring</b></p>	<p>The Panel would be monitoring the Council's highways improvement in the future.</p> <p>The Panel considered the schemes to be included in the 2015/16 Rushmoor Programme at the September 2014 meeting.</p>	<p>The Panel received details on the changes to the Highway Agency agreements at the 6 June 2017 meeting.</p>	<p>Peter Amies, Head of Community Tel. (01252) 398750 Email. <a href="mailto:peter.amies@rushmoor.gov.uk">peter.amies@rushmoor.gov.uk</a></p>
18.11.14 (08.11.16)	<p><b>Aldershot Crematorium and Cemeteries</b></p>	<p>The Panel received a presentation in November, 2014 on the work of the Bereavement Service and received details about a new scheme to recycle metal parts.</p>	<p>The Panel to received and update on sustainability and maintenance of Rushmoor's cemeteries at November 2016 meeting.</p>	<p>Peter Amies, Head of Community Tel. (01252) 398750 Email. <a href="mailto:peter.amies@rushmoor.gov.uk">peter.amies@rushmoor.gov.uk</a></p>

DATE RAISED (LAST UPDATED)	ISSUE AND DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC	PROCESS AND TIMETABLE	CURRENT POSITION	CONTACT (SERVICE MANAGER)
09.05.12 (26.01.16)	<b>Outside bodies contribution</b>	The Council's Conservation Team, Rowhill Nature Reserve, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership and Basingstoke Canal Authority, Friends of Brickfields Country Park and Cove Brook Greenway Group attended the 26 January 2016 meeting.	A further update would be presented to the Panel in due course.	Peter Amies, Head of Community Tel. (01252) 398750 Email. <a href="mailto:peter.amies@rushmoor.gov.uk">peter.amies@rushmoor.gov.uk</a>
20.01.15 (06.09.16)	<b>Overnight Toilets in Aldershot Town Centre</b>	Following a proposal by Cr. Jeremy Preece, and consideration of the various options, the Panel recommended that a scheme for additional toilet provision in Aldershot Town Centre be evaluated prior to consideration by Cabinet.	A further proposal from Cr. Jeremy Preece was made at the 6 September 2017 Panel meeting. It was referred to the Aldershot Regeneration Group.	Peter Amies, Head of Community Tel. (01252) 398750 Email. <a href="mailto:peter.amies@rushmoor.gov.uk">peter.amies@rushmoor.gov.uk</a>
31.01.17	<b>Demolition of Buildings and Dangerous Structures</b>	Details received from Building Control and Environmental Health on the procedure for dealing with demolition and dangerous structures at the 31 January 2017 meeting.	The Panel noted the position and requested additional monitoring on individuals that had not followed correct procedures in the past.	Martin Hobley, Building Control Partnership Manager Tel. (01252) 398723 Email. <a href="mailto:martin.hobley@rushmoor.gov.uk">martin.hobley@rushmoor.gov.uk</a>

DATE RAISED (LAST UPDATED)	ISSUE AND DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC	PROCESS AND TIMETABLE	CURRENT POSITION	CONTACT (SERVICE MANAGER)
31.01.17	<b>Aldershot Catchment Study and Lead Local Flood Authority</b>	Eight20 informed the Panel on the Aldershot Catchment Study and the proposed scheme to address the flooding issues. HCC as the Lead Local Flood Authority attended to advise on the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.	The Panel requested regular updates on the progress of the work to address the flooding issues in Aldershot.	Helen Payne, Principal Environmental Health Officer Tel. 01252 398170 Email. <a href="mailto:helen.payne@rushmoor.gov.uk">helen.payne@rushmoor.gov.uk</a>
05.09.17	<b>Christmas Activity in the Borough</b>	The Panel received information from Council Officers and representatives from Princesmead and The Meads regarding current activities planned for Christmas 2017. A number of actions were agreed to be taken forward.	A review of the Christmas activity in 2017 would be carried out at the March 2018 Panel meeting and officers would report back on the costs of additional activity in 2018.	David Phillips, Town Centre and Cultural Manager Tel. 01252 398570 Email. <a href="mailto:david.phillips@rushmoor.gov.uk">david.phillips@rushmoor.gov.uk</a> John Trusler, Principal Engineer Tel. 01252 398377 Email. <a href="mailto:john.trusler@rushmoor.gov.uk">john.trusler@rushmoor.gov.uk</a>
23.01.18	<b>Serco</b>	The Panel received an update on the Serco contract delivery six months into the contract.	An update would be provided at the September 2018 Panel meeting.	Peter Amies, Head of Community Tel. (01252) 398750 Email. <a href="mailto:peter.amies@rushmoor.gov.uk">peter.amies@rushmoor.gov.uk</a> James Duggin, Contracts Manager Tel. (01252) 398167 <a href="mailto:james.duggin@rushmoor.gov.uk">james.duggin@rushmoor.gov.uk</a>

DATE RAISED (LAST UPDATED)	ISSUE AND DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC	PROCESS AND TIMETABLE	CURRENT POSITION	CONTACT (SERVICE MANAGER)
23.01.18	<b>Farnborough Civic Quarter Masterplan</b>	The Panel received a report on the position with the Farnborough Civic Quarter Masterplan.	Details on the Farnborough Growth Package would be provided at a future meeting.	Karen Edwards, Corporate Director Tel. (01252) 398800 <a href="mailto:karen.edwards@rushmoor.gov.uk">karen.edwards@rushmoor.gov.uk</a> Nick Irvine, Principal Planning Officer Tel. (01252) 398739 <a href="mailto:nick.irvine@rushmoor.gov.uk">nick.irvine@rushmoor.gov.uk</a>
27.02.18	<b>HCC Transformation to 2019 Programme</b>	The Panel received details on the proposed service changes as part of the HCC T19 programme	The Panel agreed to recommend to Cabinet to establish a task and finish group as part of the new Panel structure to monitor the impact of the services changes	Ian Harrison, Corporate Director Tel. (01252) 398400 <a href="mailto:ian.harrison@rushmoor.gov.uk">ian.harrison@rushmoor.gov.uk</a>
27.02.18	<b>Business Improvement Districts</b>	The Panel discussed whether applications for Business Improvement Districts should be considered for the Borough	The Panel agreed that the interest of retailers in Farnborough would be explored through the Farnborough town centre business group	Phil Stoneman, Economic Development Officer Tel. (01252) 398760 <a href="mailto:phil.stoneman@rushmoor.gov.uk">phil.stoneman@rushmoor.gov.uk</a>

Chairman – Councillor David Gladstone

Lead Officer – Ian Harrison, Corporate Director, Tel. (01252) 398400, Email. [ian.harrison@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:ian.harrison@rushmoor.gov.uk)

Last Updated: 12 March, 2018

## ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL WORK FLOW – 2017-2018

<b>31 January 2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aldershot Catchment Study - Thames Water Utilities</li> <li>• Hampshire County Council – Lead Local Flood Authority</li> </ul>
<b>11 April 2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rushmoor Local Plan – final draft submission</li> <li>• Waste Recycling Contract – Presentation from new Contractor</li> <li>• Update from Farnborough Town Centre Working Group</li> </ul>
<b>6th June 2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highway Agency Agreements</li> <li>• Update on the development of the Car Parking Strategy</li> <li>• Update on Aldershot Regeneration</li> </ul>
<b>5th September 2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christmas Activity in the Borough</li> </ul>
<b>7th November 2017</b> <i>Joint meeting with Leisure and Youth Policy and Review Panel</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southwood Golf Course consultation</li> </ul>
<b>23 January 2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serco – contract delivery performance feedback</li> <li>• Farnborough Civic Quarter</li> </ul>
<b>27 February 2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HCC Transformation to 2019 programme</li> <li>• Business Improvement Districts – potential for application</li> </ul>
<b>20 March 2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Christmas 2017 activity and update on costs</li> <li>• Parking Charges Notices – Aldershot Centre for Health and Garage sites</li> </ul>
<b>Items for Future Meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aldershot Catchment Study – Update</li> <li>• Temporary Lights/Road Works – co-ordination of works</li> <li>• Farnborough Growth Package – update on proposals</li> <li>• Food Safety and Hygiene</li> <li>• Flooding in the Borough</li> <li>• Parking on Grass Verges</li> <li>• Serco – six-monthly update (Sept 18)</li> <li>• Environmental Nuisance / Littering Pilot Project with East Hants DC – update on progress (Nov 18)</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Shopping Facilities Policy (Local Plan)</li> <li>• Historic England – Conservation Area Assessment (Local Plan)</li> </ul>
<b>Upcoming Items on Cabinet Work Programme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High Street Multi-Storey Car Park – 6 March</li> </ul>

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