



Dorset
Council

Parking review and emerging strategy

Listening Events

How can Parking enhance Dorset?

Regarding wider public transport developments: Dorset Council is

- Already supporting bus services countywide (£3.3m spent in 2025/26)
- Designing the Local Transport Plan 2026-41 (→ shape travel/ transport over the next 15 years)
- Designing new ways to expand and integrate public bus and community transport

Regarding Parking Services, Dorset Council is

- Reviewing its Parking services (→ set local parking tariffs for 2027/28)
- Improving the Parking services, which may generate additional surplus income . . . if it does, then
- → use surplus income to support better bus/ community transport countywide

Key point

Parking is a *travel and transport behaviour management tool*, helping to create good outcomes in each town

Strategic question

Over the next ten years, how can car parks and parking services enhance Dorset's local communities?

Growing challenges

- Seasonal pressures on town centres
- Central car parks → completely full during good weather/ weekends/ holidays
- Underused car parks just outside the town centre
- Congestion → drivers hunt for a town centre park → more congestion
- Concerns about poor air quality, noise, visual impact
- Some drivers question the fairness of pricing to park in some locations
- Unsafe parking behaviours (parking on double yellow lines, blocking access, etc.)
- → Frustration for residents, drivers, local businesses, visitors
- → Local economic growth not well supported
- Need to support wider objectives (public & community transport, active travel)
- Need to support strategic priorities (climate emergency, renewable energy, defence industry)

Listening Events – please sign up!

Mon	10 Aug	2 – 3 pm	Coastal area
Tue	11 Aug	7 – 8 pm	Countywide (all areas)
Wed	12 Aug	12 – 1 pm	North & Central Dorset
Thu	13 Aug	12 – 1 pm	Dorchester area
Fri	14 Aug	3 – 4 pm	Eastern Dorset
Mon	17 Aug	12 – 1 pm	Coastal area
Mon	17 Aug	3 – 4 pm	North & Central Dorset
Tue	18 Aug	3 – 4 pm	Dorchester area
Tue	18 Aug	7 – 8 pm	Countywide (all areas)
Thu	20 Aug	2 – 3 pm	Eastern Dorset

Listening Events

Coastal area

Lyme Regis, Bridport, West Bay, Weymouth, Portland

2 - 3 pm Mon 10 Aug [REGISTER HERE](#)

12 - 1pm Mon 17 Aug [REGISTER HERE](#)

Eastern Dorset

Wareham, Corfe, Swanage, Wimborne Minster, Ferndown, Verwood

3 - 4pm Fri 14 Aug [REGISTER HERE](#)

2 - 3pm Thu 20 Aug [REGISTER HERE](#)

Listening Events

North and central Dorset

Beaminster, Gillingham, Sherborne, Stalbridge, Sturminster Newton, Shaftsbury, Blandford Forum

12 – 1 pm Wed 12 Aug [REGISTER HERE](#)

3 – 4 pm Mon 17 Aug [REGISTER HERE](#)

Dorchester area

Dorchester and nearby villages

12 – 1 pm Thu 13 Aug [REGISTER HERE](#)

3 – 4 pm Tue 18 Aug [REGISTER HERE](#)

Countywide

7 – 8 pm Tue 11 Aug [REGISTER HERE](#)

7 – 8 pm Tue 18 Aug [REGISTER HERE](#)

Listening Events - FAQs

Question	Answer
How can I access these online events?	By Zoom, arranged by DAPTC
Can I just turn up on the day?	No, you must pre-register via DAPTC's registration link
Can I attend any of these Listening Events, or more than one?	Yes
Will each event be recorded?	We will transcribe what is said, and will circulate a digest of the main points talked about
Can I make specific, local proposals?	Yes
Can my organisation send in written views?	Yes (not later than 15 Sep) to David.Rosselli@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Will Dorset Council present specific, local proposals?	No, the Council is here to listen to your ideas, concerns, suggestions

Listening Events - FAQs

Question	Answer
Have any decisions already been made?	Parking tariffs for 2027/28 will be set on a town-by-town basis (no longer countywide) Parking machines will be upgraded A new parking enforcement & permit management IT system is being procured More Civil Enforcement Officers being recruited
Have new parking tariffs been selected for each car park?	No, but external experts are currently benchmarking our tariffs against those set by other comparable councils
When will decisions be made?	Cabinet will take decisions (6 Oct meeting)
Are the Listening Events a formal consultation?	No, that will follow during Nov to Feb
When will changes start to happen?	From April 2027 onwards

Scope of the Parking review

New evidence available and analysed

- New parking technology introduced in 2023
- → Detailed parking utilisation data available
- → Countywide review based on actual parking behaviour

Reviewed

- Analysed data from April 2024 to August 2025,
- All council-operated car parks (a big analysis task), & also on-street parking arrangements
- Enforcement, resident permits, pricing structures
- Car parks performance
- Seasonal patterns

Overall parking capacity is not the big issue

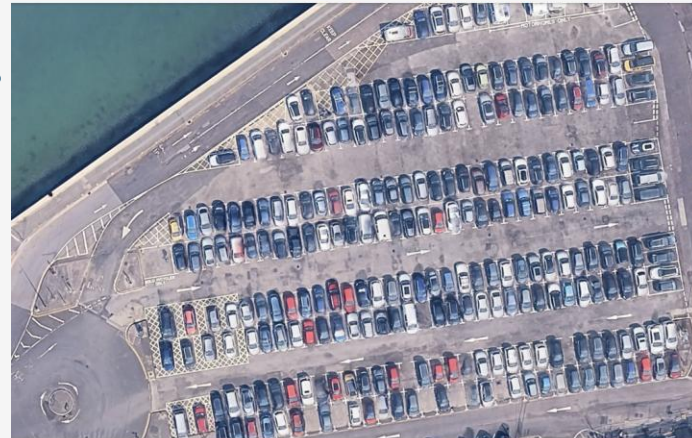
Dorset has a parking *distribution* problem

- Overall utilisation: Moderate
- Reality: Small number of central and coastal car parks experience very high demand
- Peripheral car parks remain underused
- Demand is concentrated in the most convenient locations

Consequences

- Frustrated drivers circulate hunting for spaces
- Increased congestion
- Poorer air quality
- Frustration for residents and visitors
- Reduced accessibility

**The challenge is *where* people park,
not the total number of spaces**



Pavilion car park Weymouth



Weymouth Park and Ride

A new strategic direction

Proposed approach

- Town-by-town approach (instead of the current county-wide parking charges in three tiers)

Reasons why

- Weymouth is different compared to Dorchester
- Coastal towns are different compared to market towns
- Travel choices vary across Dorset
- Parking demand varies significantly by location

Objective

- Put the right parking offer in the right place

Better use of existing car parks, manage demand better

The aim: to redistribute where drivers choose to park their vehicles

Proposed measures

- Review tariff structures locally
- Review lengths of stay
- Improve wayfinding and signage
- Promote less-used car parks
- Incentivise drivers to use available capacity elsewhere (Park & Ride, “*park & stride*”)

Expected outcomes

- Reduced congestion
- More parking availability
- Better customer experiences
- Improved town centre access
- Better support for people to shop locally, stay in town longer

Enforcement is important

Current position

- Dorset has far fewer Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) than many comparable authorities
- Our CEOs are also significantly hindered by outdated, non-integrated, legacy IT systems
- Driver parking compliance levels are lower than they should be
- Unsafe and obstructive parking behaviours remain a concern

Initiatives to improve enforcement

- Increasing CEO staffing levels
- Replacing legacy IT systems → improved enforcement and permitting system

Benefits

- Higher levels of compliant parking behaviours by drivers
- Safer streets and less dangerous parking
- Better traffic flow
- Improved customer experiences

Residents and fairness

Review findings

- The current residents' permit provides very good value
- But take-up is low

Areas for consideration

- Promote existing resident permits?
- Create new parking offers for residents?
- Review residents' parking zone policy?

Key principles: Any future changes must be

- Legal
- Practical, workable
- Fair, considering equality impacts and accessibility requirements

Potentially challenging topics, likely to attract debate

Key point: No decisions have been made - more work, engagement & impact assessment are still to come

Integration with public and community transport

- Parking surplus income could fund better public & community transport
- How to integrate all transport assets and services into a joined-up system?

Emissions-based parking incentives?

- Discounts for lower-emission vehicles? Surcharges for higher emission vehicles?
- Overview Committee (9/7/2026) recommended to Cabinet not to proceed with these options

Resident discounts

- How to ensure such discounts are legal, fair, practical?

Future use of our most underused car park sites

- Enhance and promote? Alternative uses? Redevelop? Sell?



Next steps

Already underway

- Recruiting more CEOs
- Procuring a new IT system for parking enforcement & permits management
- Holding a series of Listening Events

Short term

- Reviewing local tariff structures, town by town
- Exploring resident offer options
- Deciding what to do regarding emissions-based tariff options
- Improving communications and signage
- Upgrade our parking machines to the latest model (pictured, left)
- Formal consultation (Nov – Feb) on any proposed changes to parking charges

Longer term

- Develop an integrated long-term parking strategy
- Review underused car parks

Governance

- 9 Jul Place and Resources Overview Committee ([LINK](#), see page 107-118)
- 15 Jul Dorset Council webinar to brief our Councillors
- Aug Informal external Listening Events (online via Zoom)
- Aug – 15 Sep Send written views to David.Rosselli@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
- 17 Sep Report goes for consideration by Cabinet
- 6 Oct Cabinet decisions on any changes to parking charges and/or policies

If Cabinet decides to propose changes to parking charges and/or policies, then

- Nov - Feb 2027 Formal external consultation
- Mar 2027 Cabinet for final decisions
- Apr 2027 Implementation



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Transport & Parking Strategy Lead