

Update for the Transportation and Parking Working Party on the Progression of a Torbay Strategy for Motorhome and Campervan Parking - Thursday 18th August 2022

At previous Transport and Parking Working Party it was suggested the Council should work towards a Torbay wide strategy for motorhomes and campervans using either the highway or the car parks to either live full time or to sleep and eat when visiting Torbay.

As a tourist area it is important to ensure those with motorhomes and campervans are welcomed to Torbay to experience all the bay has to offer as a premier destination. There are holiday parks within Torbay and surrounding areas who offer facilities for overnight stays, development of any approach which displaced activity away from these parks would be resisted by the business community and likely to run counter to the premier destination ambition of the place.

This update is to provide information which may have previously been supplied verbally in meetings and the next steps towards a Torbay strategy.

Current Position

On the Highway

Highways colleagues have explained it is not an offence to use a vehicle on the highway for eating, sleeping, etc. however it is an offence to discharge effluent or waste onto the highway. This however is a matter for environmental protection to consider. Any discharge action would need to be witnessed by the Council's nominated officer. Information was provided at the previous meeting on the use of Section 77 and an update will occur at today's meeting as to the appropriateness of using this legislation.

As it is not an offence to eat or sleep on the highway it is difficult to stop this activity. A change in parking regulations for areas where this activity is taking place may not have the desired effect of stopping the use of the highway for sleeping but merely displace the vehicle to a different location nearby. Also a change in parking restrictions may affect other users of the area including residents who do not have the availability of off street parking.

It is possible to implement parking restrictions that target types of vehicles or particular times of the day, however such restrictions cannot be specific to the actions of individuals within the vehicles, so restrictions would have to apply to camper vans that are being used as legitimate transport as well as for encampment use. It would therefore not be appropriate to consider a wider use of parking restrictions across Torbay, however these may be used in isolated locations.

The information on the Torbay Council website is as follows:-

Campervans and motor homes which are parked on the highway are required to adhere to on-street parking restrictions and must ensure that they park their vehicle in a location suitable to the size of their vehicle. When using designated on-street parking bays, the vehicle must fit entirely within the bay markings, and must not overhang any part of the bay which also includes walls and promenades and any other land. Vehicles are not permitted to use multiple parking spaces even if more than one pay and display ticket or parking session is paid for.

Off Street Parking

Car Parks

At the current time the off street parking order does not allow overnight camping in Torbay Council operated car parks. The website provides motorhomes and campervan owners information as follows:

Campervans and motor homes are welcome in our car parks where we do not have height barriers installed, as listed below. All vehicles must be parked so that they do not overhang any part of the parking bays, as parking in this manner can cause hazards for passing pedestrians or obstruct the flow of traffic within the car park.

Pay and Display Tickets in Car Parks

If your vehicle takes up more than one parking bay, you must purchase a pay and display ticket for each of the bays occupied, and your vehicle must not overhang the bay markings so as to cause an obstruction to pedestrians or traffic flow within the car park. If your vehicle overhangs any part of the bay markings, or if you fail to display the correct number of tickets when using more than one marked bay, this will result in the issue of a Penalty Charge Notice.

Overnight Use

Overnight sleeping in vehicles or camping is not permitted, nor is the heating, cooking or preparing of food. There are many suitable camping and caravanning sites across the bay with full amenities. Further information can be found on the English Riviera: Accommodation website ([Where to Stay on The English Riviera](#))

It has been reported at times, but not constantly, of a few vehicles parking overnight in car parks and being used to sleep in. Such activity is extremely difficult to monitor and apply enforcement to.

Across the country local authorities have considered the options to allow self-contained motorhomes/camper vans to park overnight in car parks. These are vehicles which have their own washing, toilet and waste storage facilities.

Officers have looked at various arrangements across the UK. There is a legal requirement when offering these facilities to ensure all health and safety requirements are met. In some areas of the country these facilities have proven to work successfully but in other areas there has been opposition from residents and businesses to provide for off street parking within a limited number of Council car park sites would likely require investment into facilities at these sites.

Next Steps

Officers will bring to the next meeting an Options Appraisal for a Torbay wide strategy for the parking of motorhomes and camper vans in Torbay.

The appraisal will include the current conditions for overnight sleeping with options to be able to use designated car parks for overnight stays for self-contained motorhomes and camper vans.