
Report To:	The Petitions Committee	Date:	10 November 2022
Report By:	Head of Legal & Democratic Services	Report No:	LS/100/22
Contact Officer:	Peter MacDonald	Contact No:	01475 712618
Subject:	Fore Street Car Parking Charges		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to bring before the Committee for consideration a petition by Mrs Claire Jamieson seeking the Council to reconsider charges on the car park at Fore Street, Port Glasgow.

1.3 A petition has been created on the Council's website seeking the Council to reconsider charges on the car park at Fore St, Port Glasgow.

1.4 This petition was initiated on 23 September 2022 and as it has gathered in excess of 100 signatures within the publication period, it is now being brought before the Committee for consideration.

1.5 The comments on the Petition by the Council Services affected by it are set out in Appendix 2.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee

2.1.1 considers the terms of the petition as set out in this report, and as part of that consideration consider oral representations (if any) made by the relevant Council officers and by the Petitioner, all in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Oral Representations adopted previously by the Committee (Appendix 1); and

2.1.2 following such consideration **either:**

- (a).decides that the issues raised merit further action, remitting to the Head of Shared Services – Roads and Environmental Services to bring a report to the Environment and Regeneration Committee with recommendations on this matter; **or**
- (b).rejects the petition, bringing matters to an end.

Iain Strachan
Head of Legal & Democratic Services

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 The Petitioner, an individual residing in the Inverclyde Council area created an online petition on the Council's website on 23 September 2022 seeking the Council to reconsider charges on the car park at Fore Street, Port Glasgow.

3.2 The full description of this petition entered by the Petitioner and shown on the website is as follows:

“As of the 3rd October 2022 parking charges will be applied to Fore Street Car Park in Port Glasgow. There will be free parking 0-3hrs and then £2 a day beyond 3 hours. This long stay car park has always been free to park and services the local community and business nearby including Port Glasgow Health Centre. These charges unfairly affect the staff of nearby businesses and the Health Centre who are providing vital services for the community of Port Glasgow. We are petitioning Inverclyde Council to reconsider charges on this car park subject to any statutory consultations as the impact on staffing and future staffing of these services could be greatly impacted by this change.”

3.3 As at the date of publication of this report, this petition has received 302 signatures. As it has within the publication period received more than 100 signatures, the petition is being brought forward for consideration by the Committee, all as provided for in the Council's Petitions Criteria.

3.4 The Rules of Procedure for Oral Representations at the Petitions Committee were approved by the Committee at its meeting of 15 June 2017 and are designed to ensure a fair hearing for all concerned, in relation to petitions coming before the Committee. These will apply in relation to the consideration of this petition by the Committee and are reproduced at Appendix 1 for ease of reference.

3.5 The appropriate Council service, in this case Roads and Environmental Shared Services, has set out its view on the in relation to the Petition in terms of Appendix 2.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial	x		
Legal/Risk		x	
Human Resources		x	
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)		x	
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty			x
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing			x
Environmental & Sustainability			x
Data Protection			x

4.2 Finance

There are no financial implications arising from this report. The removal of parking charges as sought in the petition would have financial implications, which would be dealt with in any future reporting on the matter.

4.3 Legal/Risk

The Committee approved “The Rules of Procedure for Oral Representations at the Petitions Committee” on 15 June 2017, which were designed to ensure a fair hearing for all concerned, in relation to petitions coming before the Committee. These rules will apply at this meeting of the Committee in relation to the consideration of this petition, but adapted where required to take account of the Remote/Hybrid Meeting Protocols subsequently adopted by the Council.

In terms of the Council’s approved petitions procedures, in their consideration of a petition, the Committee can decide :

1. that the issues raised merit further action and will refer the matter to the relevant decision making body (which may be within the Council) and which may require further work, resolution or influence from the Council;
2. that the issues raised do not merit any further action; or
3. to take any other action, provided there is no financial impact for the Council’s service committees, as may be decided as appropriate.

It is the view of Officers that, by its nature, support of this petition will have financial implications and that the appropriate route, should the Committee decide to support the petition, is that the matter be remitted to the appropriate Service Committee.

4.4 Human Resources

There are no Human Resource implications arising from this report.

4.5 Strategic

There are no Strategic implications arising from this report.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Head of Environmental and Shared Services has been consulted on the terms of this report

6.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 None

Appendix 1 – Rules of Procedure as approved at the 15 June 2017 meeting of the Petitions Committee.

**INVERCLYDE COUNCIL
PETITIONS COMMITTEE
RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE ORAL REPRESENTATIONS AT THE PETITIONS
COMMITTEE.**

During the consideration of a petition as an item of business (“**the Petition**”) at the Petitions Committee, the person responsible for the submission of the Petition (“**the Petitioner**”) will be given an opportunity to make oral representations in relation to the subject matter of the Petition. Council Officers (“**the Council Officer(s)**”) from affected Council Services will also be given the opportunity to make such representations, as will any Ward Members (see g) below). Below are the rules of procedure under which such representations will be heard at meetings of the Petitions Committee (“**the Rules of Procedure**”), and they have been designed to:

- create the right atmosphere for discussion;
- eliminate or reduce formalities; and
- give everybody a fair hearing.

The Rules of Procedure are as follows:

- a) The Convener will conduct the consideration of the Petition.
- b) At commencement of consideration of the Petition, the Convener will identify those intending to make oral representation on the merit of the Petition, namely : the Council Officer(s) present; the Petitioner (if present, or any person who, with the approval of the Convener, the Petitioner wishes to speak on his or her behalf); and any Ward Member in terms of g) below.
- c) The Convener will outline the procedure, explaining that it will take the form of a discussion which he/she will lead based on the Report to the Petitions Committee issued in relation to the Petition (“**the Report**”). The Report will have been circulated to the Members of the Committee, the Council Officer(s) and the Petitioner prior to the meeting. Copies will also be made available at the meeting.
- d) The Convener will ask the Petitioner whether or not he/she is content with the synopsis of the Petition contained in the Report. If the Petitioner disagrees with the summary he/she will be invited to clarify. This allows the Petitioner to ensure that the members of the Committee have a good understanding of the Petition.
- e) The Council Officer(s) will be invited to present the view of the affected Council Services on the merit or otherwise of and implications of the Petition, with their recommendation as to whether or not it should be supported, to set the scene for the discussion, with a time limit of 5 minutes.
- f) The Petitioner will be invited to speak to his/her Petition and comment on the representations made by the Council Officer(s), with a time limit of 5 minutes.

- g) Where the Petition relates to a specific part of the Inverclyde Council area, any Member of the Inverclyde Council whose ward includes all or some of that part ("**Ward Member**") may make representation in support of or against the Petition. Any such Ward Member present will be invited to do so, with a time limit of 5 minutes.
- h) Where a Ward Member makes representation in terms of g) above and is also a Member of the Committee, he or she will not be entitled to participate in the decision of the Committee on the Petition. Similarly, any Member of the Committee who has prior to the consideration of the Petition at the meeting made it clear that he or she is either for or against the Petition will also not be entitled to participate in the decision of the Committee on the Petition. This is essential to ensure that the Petition is given a fair and proper hearing and will avoid any impression of bias in relation to the Committee's decision-making processes.
- i) The Council Officer(s) will be invited to reply to the representations of the Petitioner or any Ward Member (introducing no new material), restricted to a time limit of 5 minutes.
- j) The Convener will allow the Petitioner the final word (introducing no new material), if he/she wishes it, by way of summary and in relation to any comments by a Ward Member, or the Council Officer(s), restricted again to a time limit of 5 minutes. The Convener will discourage repetitive or superfluous comments. At no time will cross examination be permitted. The Convener will indicate when he or she considers that sufficient clarification of the Petition has been achieved, and the discussion will then move on in terms of these rules, the oral representations element being at an end.
- k) The Committee will then proceed with consideration of the Petition as an item of business in terms of the Standing Orders.

Appendix 2 - Position of Council Officers

Parking charges have been introduced to Fore Street car park Port Glasgow to increase availability for residents and visitors (patients, shoppers, library users etc,) to park in the town centre location.

Long stay parking including local staff and commuters using the train and bus services have reduced turnover of available parking spaces throughout the day for those wishing to make short or medium stays within the town centre.

Due to the location of the car park a large proportion of short stay usage is for visitors to the Health Centre, Library and nearby Pharmacy. These visitors may be elderly, infirm or disabled or may have reduced mobility and require access to available town centre parking spaces.

Car parking spaces in Port Glasgow have been generally free of charge and without time restriction which has resulted in spaces taken up all day long by staff of the town centres or commuters parking to travel out with Inverclyde. This means that shoppers and those visiting town centre businesses are unable to park and may be deterred for using the towns thus affecting the trade. The new restrictions implemented in October 2022 are to discourage long stay parking whilst increasing turnover of spaces and therefore promoting trade in the towns by allowing free parking for up to 3 hours.

Free parking remains available at the Highholm Avenue Park & Ride which is approximately 400m-500m from the centre of the town centre (King Street/Church Street junction) depending on the route taken which is considered reasonable. This route will be improved in 2023 by the construction of a new DDA compliant link through Port Glasgow train station to the Park & Ride.

It should be noted that guidance supports the Council's position, that short term parking encourages turnover in town centres and that free parking is within an acceptable walking distance.

Port Glasgow Health Centre has a private car park with approximately 27 spaces (17 marked, 7 unmarked and 3 Disabled bays). The restriction in Fore Street car park does not include this car park and the NHS could opt to restrict this for use of staff, etc if desired.

Staff in Greenock and Gourock Town Centres are subject to the same parking charges. Removal of parking charges from this car park would introduce an unfair disparity between Inverclyde's town centres.

Finally, if the parking charges in this car park are removed this may have an impact on proposed Council income and savings which would need to be addressed to ensure there is no impact on wider Council Services. The estimated annual income from this car park with the charges currently applying is £22,250.