



North Devon Council

Report Date: Monday, 4 November 2024

Topic: Ilfracombe Pier Car Park

Report by: Georgina Carlo-Paat, Ilfracombe Harbour Master

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. During the process of compiling a Business Case submission for the resurfacing of the Pier Car Park an Equality Impact Assessment was carried out. The public consultation was carried out from 17th June to 29th July 2024 and the results were collated. The responses showed a clear division of opinion as to the continued use of the Pier Car Park.

1.2. Some considered that the car park should be repurposed whilst others recognised the improvements that could be made to the existing facility; these will be discussed further in the body of this report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. To continue to use the area as a car park with the added benefits recommended in the consultation; to include improvements to and additional disabled bays, developed from the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) responses.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. Before any further progress can be made as to resurfacing of the Car Park the on-going use of the area needs to be determined. It is considered that the car park should remain as such with the improvements recommended in the EIA.

4. REPORT

4.1. Between 17th June and 29th July this year a public consultation was held as per Equality Impact Assessment guidance to help formulate the Business Case submission for the re surfacing/re lining and other improvements to the Ilfracombe Pier Car Park.

4.2. 169 responses were received to the consultation; 163 as individuals and 6 from organisations. Two main questions were asked:

1. When using the Pier Car Park, have you identified any issues where improvements could be made to improve accessibility for all users?

2. Do you have any suggestions that could be made to the Car Park to improve accessibility and walking around the Car Park to the pier area? Out of a possible 338 responses from the above 2 questions asked, 28.4% were not relevant to the questions asked, 34.6% of respondents requested an all-round pedestrian walkway to be protected from the vehicles, for better access to pay machines for blue badge holders and to increase the number of

disabled bays and to locate said bays away from the main car park entrance. 33.7% called for the Car Park to be taken away and the area pedestrianised and to have alternative uses, e.g. Markets area/Pop Up stalls/ Fun Fair.

- 4.3. Ilfracombe Harbour is a Statutory Harbour empowered by Parliament and as such the Harbour Authority has certain duties which they must uphold, one of these is referred to as 'Open Port Duty' under the Harbours, Docks and Piers Clauses Act 1847 Section 33, **Harbour, dock, and pier free to the public on payment of rate.** *Upon payment of the rates made payable by this and the special Act, and subject to the other provisions thereof, the harbour, dock, and pier shall be open to all persons for the shipping and unshipping of goods, and the embarking and landing of passengers.* While this law dated from the nineteenth century it is still in force today. This duty may prevent the Pier and access to the Pier from being pedestrianised as the shipping and unshipping of goods does entail a road transport element.
- 4.4. From October to March the area is required to act as winter boat storage for the resident boats. This is not optional as the Harbour is an open harbour, meaning open to the weather fronts with no breakwater or lock to prevent weather damage to the boats. Owners are reluctant to leave their boats in the Harbour and insurance companies are very reluctant to insure Ilfracombe vessels over the winter. There is no alternative area that can be used for boat storage.
- 4.5. Removing the Pier Car Park would have an adverse effect on the local businesses not just those on the Harbour and Quay Road but for Ilfracombe as a whole as this would reduce the already limited parking availability in the Town dramatically. This would also have a significant adverse financial impact.
- 4.6. The purpose of the EIA was to ascertain what improvements could be made to the Car Park; the Business Case is for a full resurfacing of the Car Park rather than asking if there should be a change of use. A change of use would require a much wider consultation to include the town as a whole and not just the Pier users which this EIA was designed for.
- 4.7. Notwithstanding the responses received, a new layout for the Pier Car Park has been devised that takes into account the comments made by the 34.6% who requested a more pedestrian and disabled friendly area.
- 4.8. It is considered that the Pier car park should remain a car park and the resurface works/improvements to the layout should be set out in a separate business case to enable the works to proceed.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. A business case would be submitted for consideration - the financial implications would be dependent on the outcome of this report. If Members resolve to upgrade the Pier car park, then in addition to the monies required for those works, support will be required from the Harbour team, Parking team, Property Services (to include our Engineering team), Finance and Legal.

6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. Public consultation carried out from 17th June to 29th July 2024. Summary 169 responses received, 163 as individuals and 6 from organisations. Two main questions were asked. 1. When using the Pier Car Park, have you identified any issues where improvements could be made to improve accessibility for all users? 2. Do you have any suggestions that could be made to the Car Park to improve accessibility and walking around the Car Park to the pier area? Out of a possible 338 responses 28.4% were not relevant to the questions asked, 34.6% of those relevant to this proposal there was a call for an all-round pedestrian walkway to be protected from the vehicles, for better access to pay machines for blue badge holders and to increase the number of disabled bays, to locate said bays away from the main car park entrance. 33.7% called for the Car Park to be taken away and the area pedestrianised and to have alternative uses, e.g. Markets area/Pop Up stalls/ Fun Fair. These consultation responses have been the foundation stones of the overall proposals laid out above and in the formation of the Business Case

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. If the resurfacing of the car park and associated upgrades are permitted, then an Environmental Assessment will follow as part of the wider Business Case.

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1. What impact, positive or negative, does the subject of this report have on:

8.1.1. The commercialisation agenda: Positive

8.1.2. Improving customer focus and/or: Positive – the upgrades to the car park will respond to the community consultation event and provide enhancements to the car park for the customer.

8.1.3. Regeneration or economic development: Positive – the improved car park with enhanced facilities will be positive for regeneration.



9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1. The decision in respect of the recommendations in this report can be made by this Committee pursuant to delegated powers provided in Part 3 Annexe 1 paragraph 1 of the Constitution.

10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: (The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

Pier Car Park Equality Impact Assessment
Pier Car Park consultation results summary

12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers:

Capt. Georgina Carlo-Paat MBE, Ilfracombe Harbour Master