

10 July 2026

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LEISURE AND PUBLIC REALM

A Decision to provide an extension of free parking in Dovercourt for July and August 2026

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to set out the proposed temporary extension of free parking arrangements in Dovercourt during July and August 2026, in response to the ongoing public realm and highway improvement works in the Kingsway and High Street areas.

These works, which form part of the wider regeneration programme, have resulted in a significant reduction in available on-street parking provision within Dovercourt. This has generated concerns from local businesses and residents regarding accessibility and potential impacts on footfall and economic activity.

Extending the existing two-hour free parking offer (or equivalent free parking provision) during the summer period would help to mitigate the impact of the works. Informal support for this approach has been indicated by Cabinet Members; however, a formal decision is now required.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Significant public realm and highway improvement works are currently being undertaken in Dovercourt, focused on Kingsway and the High Street. While these works are expected to deliver long-term benefits to the area, they have temporarily reduced the availability of on-street parking, particularly the existing two-hour free provision. This has led to concerns from local businesses regarding reduced accessibility and a decline in customer footfall.

To mitigate these impacts during the peak summer period, a proposal has been put forward to provide a form of free parking provision in Dovercourt throughout July and August 2026. This would effectively provide an alternative to the displaced on-street parking and support continued access to the town centre while works are ongoing. Informal support for this approach has already been indicated by Cabinet Members, subject to a formal decision and a clear understanding of the implications.

The most deliverable option identified is extending the Householder resident permit scheme to residents that allows free parking between 11am and 6pm at Orwell Place car park for the duration of July and August.

This option will limit income loss and allow turnover of parking. Based on previous income data, income for this car park is £5,335pa.

Operationally, the proposal can be implemented through existing parking management arrangements.

This change balances the short-term financial impact against the need to support Dovercourt town

centre during a period of disruption.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Public Realm:

1. Approves the extension to the resident householder parking permit scheme for use at Orwell Place car park, Dovercourt;
2. Agrees that the permit will enable free parking between 11:00 and 18:00 hours during the months of July and August, in order to offset the temporary loss of on-street parking arising from the Kingsway and High Street improvement works;
3. Delegates authority to the Corporate Director (Operations and Delivery), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to make all necessary operational arrangements to implement the scheme, including eligibility criteria, communication with residents, and system configuration;
4. Approves the use of an appropriate exemption process to enable the scheme to be introduced at pace without the need for a formal amendment to the existing parking order.

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

To mitigate the loss of on-street parking caused by the Kingsway and High Street improvement works and maintain access to Dovercourt town centre.

To support local businesses and sustain footfall during a period of disruption.

To provide a practical and deliverable short-term solution that can be implemented without requiring a formal amendment to the parking order.

To introduce a proportionate, time-limited measure that can be reviewed following implementation.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Option 1 – Do Nothing

Retain existing parking charges and arrangements.

Implication: No financial impact to the Council, but does not address the significant loss of on-street parking and may further impact town centre footfall and local businesses during the works.

Option 2 – Remove Tariffs at Orwell Place (Full Free Parking)

Temporarily suspend all parking charges at Orwell Place car park for July and August.

Implication: Provides the strongest mitigation and simplest offer for users; however, this would result in a direct loss of parking income and would require either a formal amendment to the parking order or use of an exemption process to implement within required timescales.

Option 3 – Time-Limited Free Parking for All Users

Introduce free parking for all users during specific hours (e.g. morning period) rather than full-day free parking.

Implication: Reduces financial impact compared to full tariff suspension while still supporting access during peak trading periods; still likely to require legal or exemption considerations depending on implementation.

Option 4 – Extension of the Householder Permit Scheme (**Recommended Option**)

Provide an extension to the Householder resident permit allowing residents to park for free at Orwell Place between 11:00 and 18:00 during July and August.

Implication: Targeted mitigation aligned to displaced parking demand; can be implemented quickly through existing systems without requiring a full parking order amendment, making it the most practical short-term solution.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The proposed temporary parking arrangements support the Council's Corporate Plan by maintaining access to Dovercourt town centre during significant public realm works, helping residents continue to access services and supporting local businesses by sustaining footfall during disruption; it complements wider regeneration activity, demonstrates a responsive and collaborative approach to stakeholder concerns, and provides a proportionate, time-limited intervention that balances support for the local economy with the effective use of Council resources and financial sustainability.

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT (including with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee and other stakeholders where the item concerns proposals relating to the Budget and Policy Framework)

Engagement on-line and in person with local business in Dovercourt shows strong concerns with the impact of works on business, and the appetite for temporary parking improvements to attract residents into the town.

The Council has also engaged with Essex County Council who are leading the works in the town centre.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers)

Is the recommendation a Key Decision (see the criteria stated here)	No	If Yes, indicate which by which criteria it is a Key Decision	
		And when was the proposed decision published in the Notice of forthcoming	

		decisions for the Council (must be 28 days at the latest prior to the meeting date)	
	The Monitoring Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:		
	No additional comments		
	FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS		
	The introduction of a temporary free parking permit scheme will have financial implications for the Council, primarily through a reduction in parking income at Orwell Place car park during the period of operation. The exact level of income foregone cannot be precisely quantified at this stage, however, a loss of revenue should be anticipated. Given the historic and ongoing favourable position relating to car parking income along with associated money being set aside from previous years, the overall expected minimal impact can be accommodated within the existing parking budget in 2026/27. There will also be minor implementation costs, including system configuration within the permit platform, communication with residents, and any associated administration. From a resource perspective, extension to the scheme should not generate a significant increase in customer contact.		
	The Section 151 Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:		
	No additional comments beyond those within the body of this report.		
	USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY		
	The following are submitted in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators:		
A)	Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;	The proposal represents a targeted, time-limited intervention that supports the local economy during disruption while recognising an associated loss of parking income. By utilising a permit-based approach, the Council avoids the cost and delay of a formal parking order amendment, ensuring an efficient use of resources.	
B)	Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks;	The decision is subject to relevant approvals and exemptions	
C)	Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the body uses information about its costs and	The proposal supports continuous improvement in service delivery by using available information on parking income, demand and customer behaviour to	

performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.	inform a proportionate, targeted response to the disruption caused by the public realm works.
MILESTONES AND DELIVERY	
Communications team to promote the changes set out in this report. MiPermit to go live with the permit.	
ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION	
Loss of Parking Income <i>Risk:</i> The introduction of free parking through extension of the permits may reduce income at Orwell Place, with the total financial impact uncertain due to variable uptake and behavioural change. <i>Mitigation:</i> Monitor income levels during implementation, and review continuation after the trial period. Increased Demand and Displacement <i>Risk:</i> Free parking may attract additional demand, leading to increased vehicle turnover or displacement of existing users, including paying customers. <i>Mitigation:</i> Restrict eligibility (e.g. resident-focused permit), limit hours (11:00–18:00), and continue enforcement to manage turnover and misuse. Operational Pressure on Parking Services <i>Risk:</i> A possible increase in customer enquiries, particularly telephone calls, may place pressure on staff during an already busy period. <i>Mitigation:</i> Provide clear upfront communication (website, signage, FAQs), utilise automated permit systems where possible, and reprioritise workloads temporarily to manage peak demand.	
EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS	
There is no expected equality implications associated with this decision.	
SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS	
The impact will be to improve the vibrancy of the town centre in Dovercourt, benefiting social value.	
IMPLICATIONS RELATED TO DEVOLUTION AND/OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION	
No LGR implications in this decision as the impact will complete before LGR take effect.	
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S AIM TO BE NET ZERO BY 2030	
While the decision will promote car parking and so driving within Dovercourt, the aim is to keep the same amount of parking / driving, which has fallen as a result of works, not to increase it from the base line.	
OTHER RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS OR IMPLICATIONS	
Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.	
Crime and Disorder	None
Health Inequalities	None

Subsidy Control (the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and the related Statutory Guidance)	None
Area or Ward affected	Dovercourt

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Tendring District Council is working in partnership with Essex County Council to deliver a programme of public realm and highway improvements in Dovercourt town centre, including the Kingsway Improvement Corridor. These works form part of a wider regeneration programme aimed at enhancing the quality of the public realm, improving accessibility, and supporting long-term economic growth within the town.

As part of the construction phase, significant sections of Dovercourt High Street and Kingsway have been affected by roadworks, resulting in the temporary loss of on-street parking, including areas previously offering short-stay (two-hour) free parking. This reduction in parking provision has led to concerns from local businesses and residents, including a reported decline in morning visits and customer footfall.

In response, Cllr. Ivan Henderson has requested that options be explored to mitigate the impact of the works, including extending or replacing the displaced free parking provision during the summer period. Informal discussions with Cabinet Members have indicated support for a temporary intervention, subject to a clear understanding of how it would operate in practice and the associated financial and operational implications.

Initial consideration was given to suspending tariffs at Orwell Place car park; however, this approach presents delivery challenges, including the need for a formal amendment to the parking order, associated costs, and timescales that would extend into the summer period. As a result, alternative solutions have been explored, including the introduction of a temporary permit-based approach to provide targeted support during the disruption.

This report therefore builds on these discussions and sets out the proposed approach to mitigate the impacts of the works on parking provision and town centre accessibility.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

Fees and Charges 2026/27 Parking places Tendring

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

APPENDICES

None

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