

Overnight motorhome parking in EDDC car parks – Exmouth consultation summary report

Table of Contents

1. Summary.....	2
2. Survey goals and methodology:.....	2
3. Survey process:	3
4. Data analysis:.....	4
1. Do you support overnight motorhome parking in Exmouth? Please provide your reasons for this by clicking add something else.....	5
2. Are you a motorhome owner?.....	6
3. Would you consider sleeping overnight in a car park including those in Exmouth? Please provide your reasons for this by clicking add something else	7
4. Please score (1 – 5) how effective you believe each of the following could be in resolving the issues and concerns that have been identified (Please see background information).	8
5. What additional facilities should EDDC consider providing for those staying overnight ..	8
6a. Do you believe that allowing visitors to stay for 3 consecutive nights within the car park is	9
6b. Please state your reasons?	10
7. The current fee for overnight stopovers is £11.00 per night, including 24 hours parking within either car park. The current fee to just park a standard car for 24 hours is £8. So the overnight sleeping element attracts a premium of £3. Do you believe that this is?	11
8. If either too much or too little, please suggest an alternative amount that EDDC should charge for overnight stopovers. The amount in brackets indicates the possible difference in annual income purely based on current visitor numbers. Please explain why you chose this amount by clicking add something else.....	12
5. Key findings:.....	14
6. Recommendations:	14

1. Summary

This consultation was initiated to gather feedback from residents and car park users regarding the overnight parking arrangements in Maer Road car park and along Queen's

Drive Echelon in Exmouth. The primary objective was to evaluate the existing overnight parking provision and gather views on potential areas for improvement.

Specifically, the consultation sought to address three key areas:

1. Assessment of the current overnight parking arrangements
2. Identification of challenges or concerns experienced by users and residents
3. Collection of suggestions for improvement to the overnight parking offer.

The feedback collected through this consultation has been reviewed by the dedicated Motorhome Task and Finish Forum (TAFF) and proposals for improvements will be shared with the Extended Leadership team at EDDC before being presented to the Cabinet Committee.

The consultation was live from the 4th January 2025 to the 13th February 2025.

2. Survey goals and methodology:

The consultation was designed to gather perspectives on the overnight parking arrangements in Exmouth.

Target Audience

The consultation deliberately targeted three primary stakeholder groups:

1. Motorhome owners who utilise the overnight parking facilities at Maer Road car park and Queen's Drive Echelon
2. Residents of Exmouth with particular emphasis on those living in proximity to the parking areas
3. Tourists visiting the area who may use or be affected by the overnight parking arrangements

While these groups constituted our primary focus, the consultation was intentionally made accessible to all interested parties to capture the widest possible range of viewpoints. This inclusive approach allowed us to gather insights from occasional visitors, businesses operating in the vicinity, and other stakeholders with relevant interests.

Methodological Approach

The consultation was conducted through a structured survey instrument designed to elicit both quantitative assessments and qualitative feedback. The survey remained open for public participation for 40 days, providing ample opportunity for stakeholders to contribute their perspectives.

Key Insights Obtained

The consultation yielded valuable insights regarding the current overnight parking provisions, including:

- Diverse perspectives on the adequacy and appropriateness of existing arrangements

- Specific concerns related to facility management, environmental impact, and community integration
- Constructive suggestions for enhancing the overnight stop-over experience for users while addressing resident concerns
- Areas of consensus and divergence between different stakeholder groups

These findings provide a robust foundation for developing evidence-based recommendations to optimise overnight parking arrangements in Exmouth that balance the needs of visitors and residents alike.

3. Survey process:

Consultation Platform and Technical Infrastructure

The consultation was implemented utilising East Devon District Council's dedicated consultation software platform, Commonplace. This specialised system was selected for its robust functionality in facilitating public engagement and its capacity to securely collect, organize, and analyse stakeholder feedback in a structured manner.

Distribution Strategy and Stakeholder Outreach

A comprehensive multi-channel distribution strategy was deployed to maximise awareness and participation across diverse stakeholder segments:

Digital Communications

1. **Email Distribution:** A formal notification was disseminated to all subscribers on the Commonplace mailing list, providing direct access to the consultation.
2. **Social Media Engagement:** Strategic announcements were published across the Council's official social media platforms at key intervals, including initial launch notifications and targeted reminders as the consultation closure date approached.
3. **Website Integration:** Prominent placement of the consultation link was established on the East Devon District Council website, ensuring visibility to all website visitors and providing an accessible participation pathway.

Institutional Communications

1. **Community Engagement Newsletter:** Comprehensive information regarding the consultation was featured in the Council's Community Engagement Newsletter, reaching organized community groups and active civic participants.
2. **Residents' Newsletter:** Details of the consultation were incorporated into the standard Residents' Newsletter, ensuring broad dissemination to households throughout the district.

Participation Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Throughout the consultation period, participation metrics were monitored to assess engagement levels across different stakeholder segments. This ongoing evaluation allowed

for tactical adjustments to outreach methodologies when necessary to ensure adequate representation from all targeted groups.

The consultation remained accessible until 17:00 hours on 13th February 2025, at which point the formal data collection phase concluded, and systematic analysis of the accumulated feedback commenced.

4. Data analysis:

The graphs below show how the public responded to the consultation and how respondents voted for each of the options.

1. Do you support overnight motorhome parking in Exmouth? Please provide your reasons for this by clicking add something else

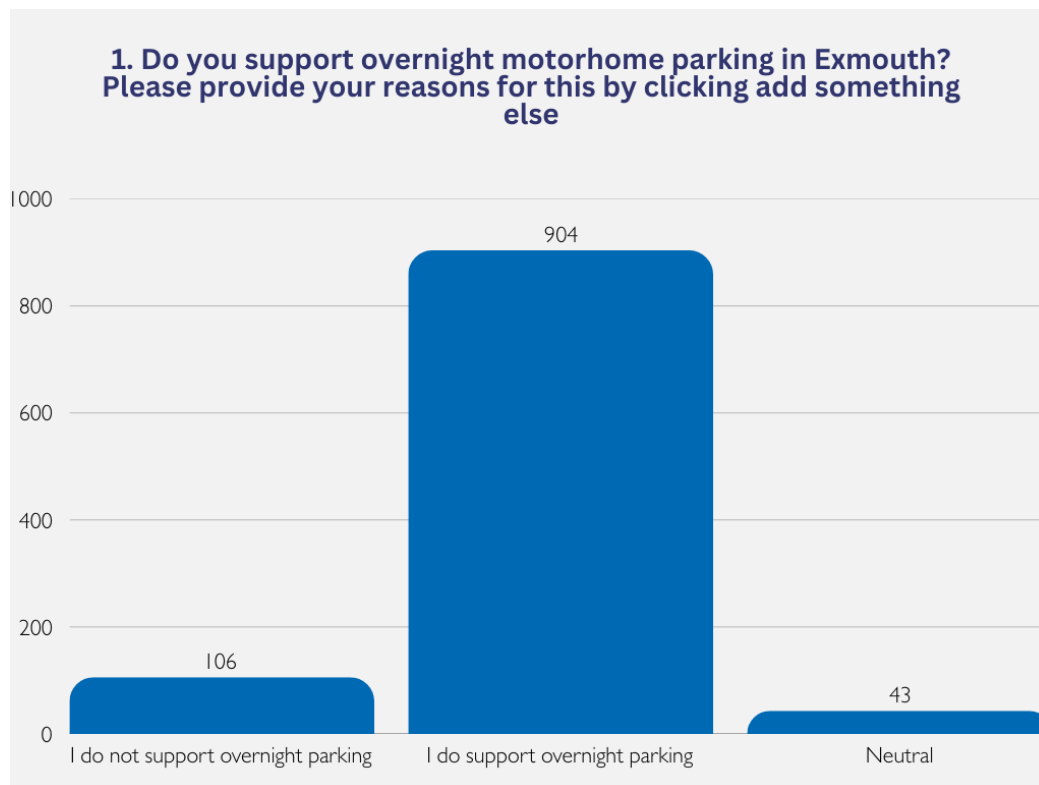


Figure 1: Public opinions on overnight parking in Exmouth

Of the 1,043 responses, 904 respondents were supportive of overnight parking in Exmouth, 106 were not supportive and 43 remained neutral.

Those who supported overnight parking generally cited the economic benefits to the town, while those who did not support it raised concerns about overcrowding and anti-social behaviour.

A summary of the free text responses:

Economic Benefits: Many respondents believe motorhome visitors bring significant revenue to local businesses and the council through parking fees. They mention that visitors

shop locally, eat at restaurants, and contribute to the tourism economy, particularly during off-season when campsites may be closed.

Location Preferences: There's a clear division in opinions about where overnight parking should be permitted. Many support parking at Maer Road car park but oppose it on Queen's Drive/Echelon, citing space constraints, obstruction issues, and impact on day visitors' parking availability.

Facilities and Infrastructure: Respondents frequently mention the need for proper facilities including waste disposal, water supply, and adequate space between vehicles. Many draw comparisons to European "Aires" systems where such facilities are common.

Regulation and Management: There are strong opinions about the need for proper regulation, including limits on duration of stay (commonly suggested as 1-2 nights maximum), enforcement of rules against setting up chairs/tables outside vehicles, and appropriate fee structures.

Residential Impact: Many comments express concern about the impact on local residents, including reduced parking availability, visual impact on the seafront, waste management issues, and the feeling that residential areas are being transformed into unofficial campsites.

2. Are you a motorhome owner?

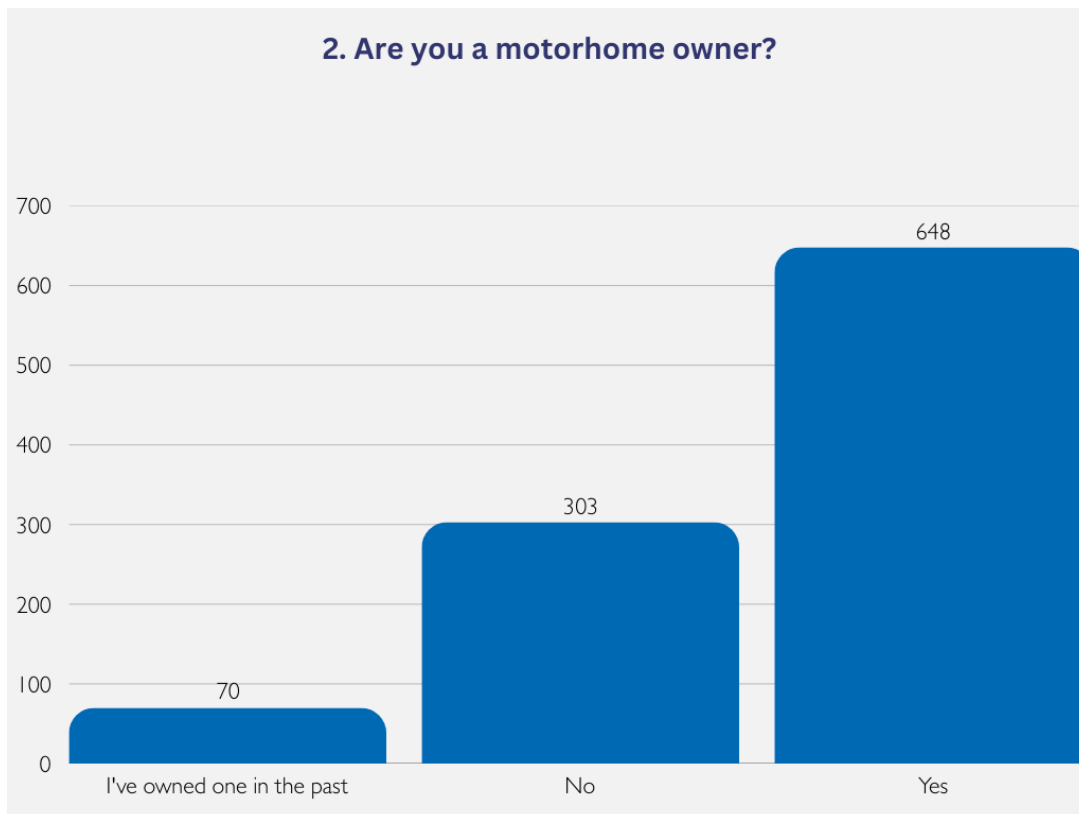


Figure 2: Graph showing if the respondent was a motorhome owner

The majority of consultation responders were current motorhome owners. Out of the total responses, 648 indicated they own a motorhome, 303 stated they do not own one, and 70 mentioned they have owned one in the past.

3. Would you consider sleeping overnight in a car park including those in Exmouth? Please provide your reasons for this by clicking add something else



Figure 3: Public opinions on if they would consider sleeping overnight in a car park

A significant number of respondents indicated a willingness to consider sleeping overnight in a car park, with 752 selecting “Yes, I would consider it.” 163 respondents stated they would not consider it, whilst 91 remained open to the idea under specific conditions. Lastly, 13 participants did not provide a direct answer.

For those sharing their reasons, these are summarised as follows;

Accessibility & Location: Emphasis on being near town amenities, attractions, and beaches, allowing easy visits and convenient exploration.

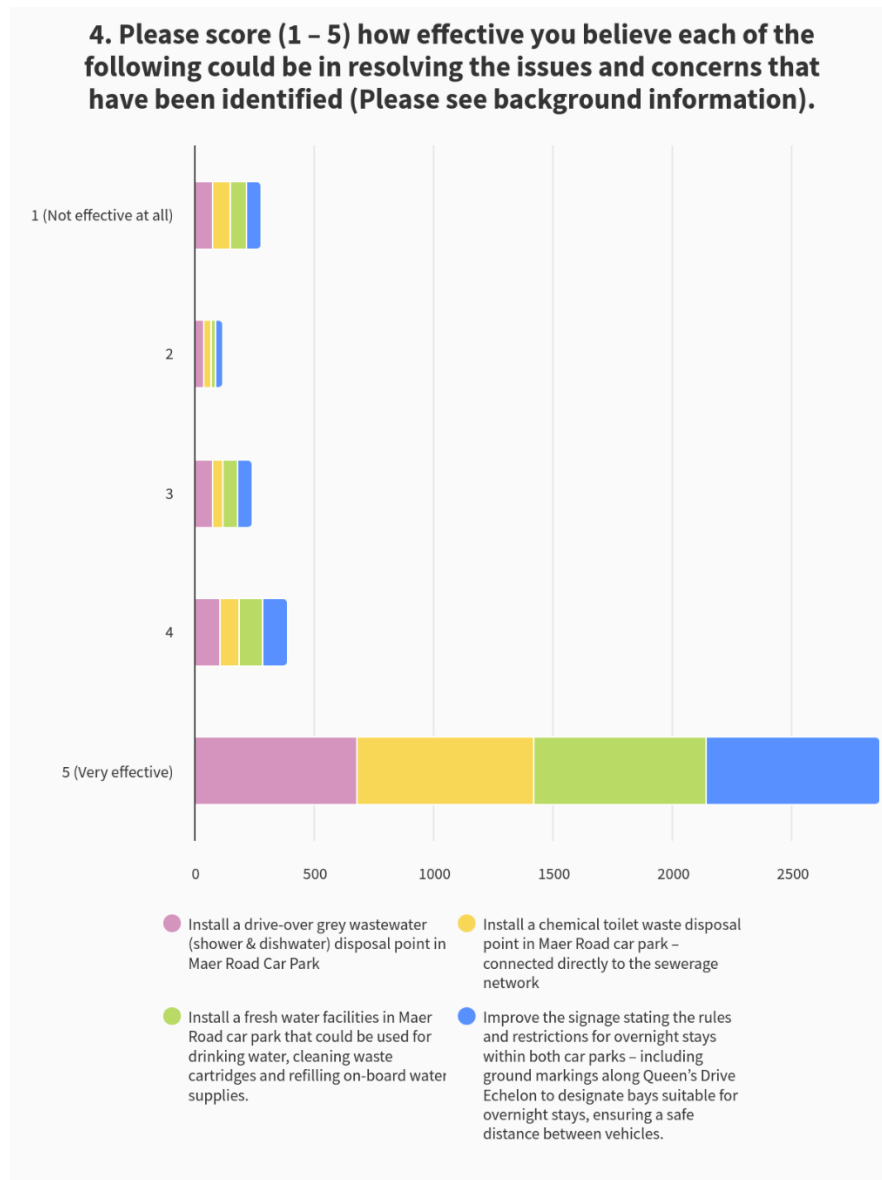
Essential Facilities: A strong need for basic infrastructure like fresh water, chemical and grey water disposal, toilets, and security features such as CCTV.

Cost Efficiency: Support for a low-cost, one-night stopover option that remains distinct from traditional, more expensive campsites.

Safety & Regulation: Calls for regulated, well-organized areas to ensure safety, prevent misuse, and avoid negative impacts from unmonitored parking.

Boost to Local Economy: Belief that providing such facilities encourages spending in local businesses, drawing both domestic and continental visitors.

4. Please score (1 – 5) how effective you believe each of the following could be in resolving the issues and concerns that have been identified (Please see background information).



Overall, respondents indicated that improving signage and clearly marking overnight parking rules in both car parks would be the most effective measures, receiving the highest combined score. Installing a chemical toilet waste disposal point connected to the sewerage network came next, followed closely by installing fresh water facilities for drinking and cleaning waste cartridges. Lastly, installing a drive-over grey wastewater disposal point in Maer Road Car Park received a lower—though still positive—level of support compared to the other measures.

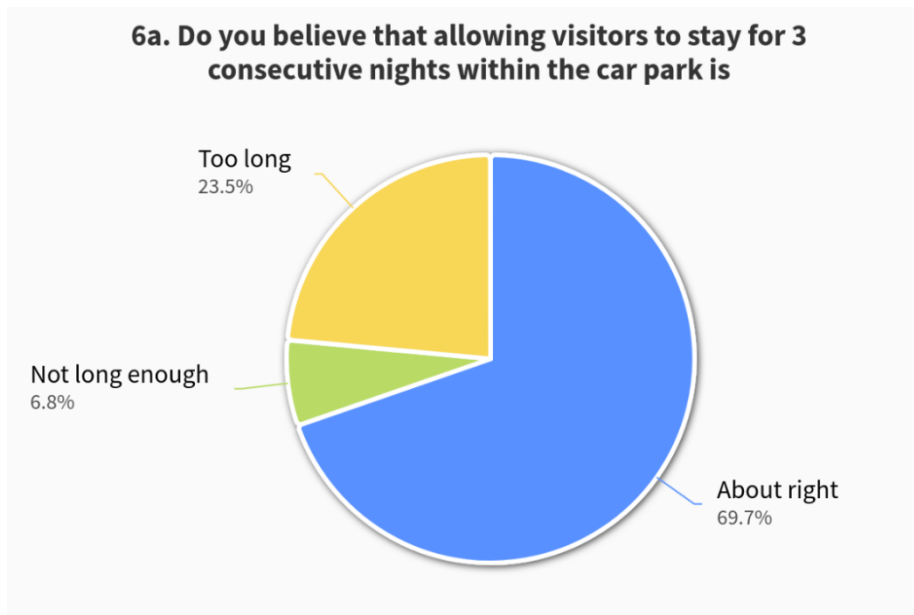
5. What additional facilities should EDDC consider providing for those staying overnight

A summary of the free text responses:

The feedback from users regarding facilities for overnight stays in Exmouth highlights a significant demand for improved waste and water services. Many comments stress the importance of providing freshwater taps, dedicated waste disposal facilities, and toilet amenities to prevent public nuisance, especially in areas like Maer Nature Reserve and Queen's Drive. Suggestions for restricting overnight parking to designated areas, offering proper signage and enhancing rubbish management demonstrate a clear divide between those advocating for improved facilities and those concerned about maintaining local infrastructure. Overall, the feedback indicates a necessity for a balanced approach to accommodating motorhome users while addressing community concerns.

Key Suggestions: The following additional facilities were suggested by respondents to the consultation, along with the number of respondents who mentioned each one: Waste disposal facilities (85) Chemical disposal point (77) Fresh water (68) 24-hour toilet (42) Electric hook up (34) Recycling facilities (32) Showers (28) CCTV (25) Signage (18) More bins (16) BBQ bins (9) Picnic benches (7) Security lighting (6) Bookings (5) Shop (4) Laundry (3) Code to enter and leave (3) Dog area (2) Tourist information (2) Wheelie bins (1) Locks (1) Wi-fi (1) Washing facilities (1)

6a. Do you believe that allowing visitors to stay for 3 consecutive nights within the car park is



The majority of respondents (69.7%) believe that allowing visitors to stay for three consecutive nights in the car park is about right. A smaller portion (23.5%) feel that this duration is too long, while 6.8% think it is not long enough.

6b. Please state your reasons?

A summary of the free text responses:

The discussions on overnight parking for motorhomes in Exmouth indicate significant concerns regarding long-term stays, particularly on Queens Drive. Many suggest limiting stays to three nights to support local tourism and reduce congestion, allowing more visitors access to the area’s amenities. Residents fear that extended stays lead to nuisance behaviours and reduced availability for day visitors, impacting local businesses. A need for balance in accommodating visitors while ensuring local interests are protected is clear.

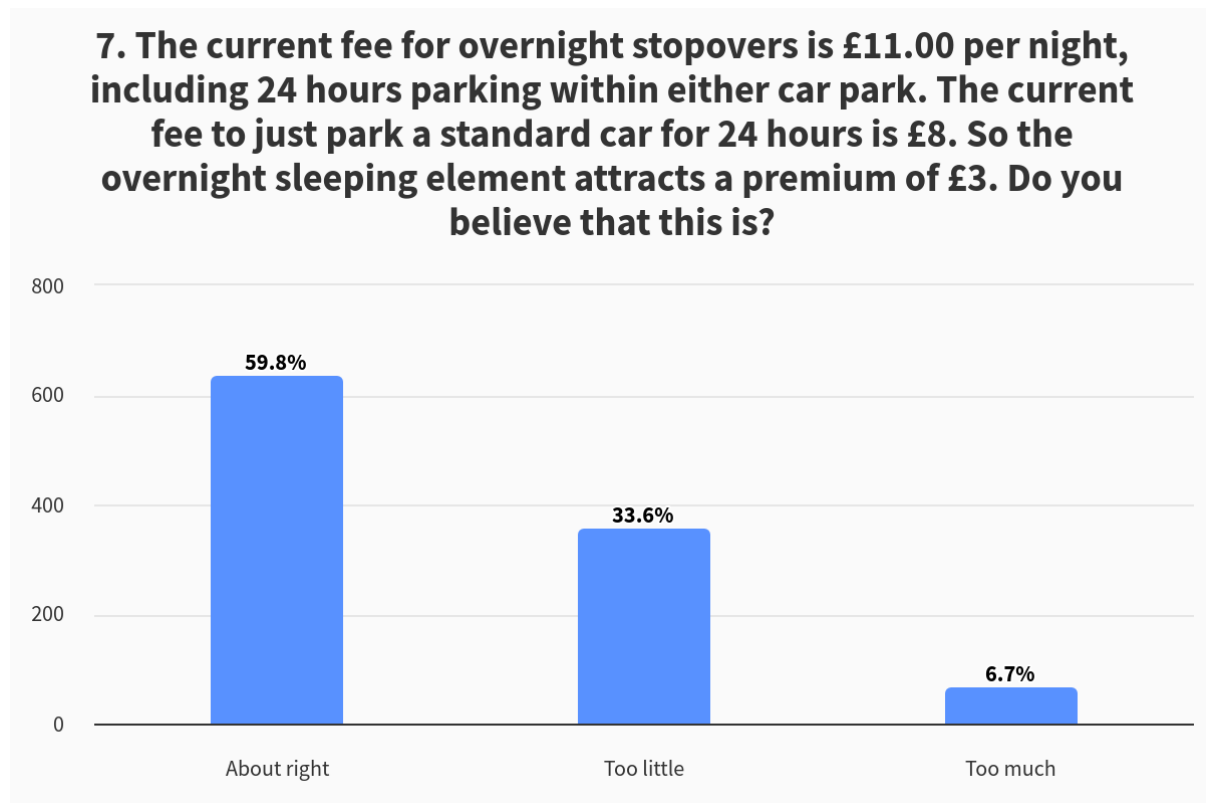
Many respondents felt that 3 nights was the right amount of time, with some saying that they thought it should be less, perhaps 2 nights or 48 hours. Others felt that it should be dependent on the time of year, with it being acceptable to have longer stays in the off-season.

Those who felt it was about right said that it gave people enough time to explore the local area and support local businesses, but that anyone wanting to stay longer should use a campsite. They felt it struck a good balance between allowing people to enjoy their stay and ensuring that spaces were available for others. It was also pointed out that 3 nights is the norm in many places in the UK and Europe.

Respondents who felt that 3 nights was too long said that they thought people would take advantage of the situation and that it would be fairer to limit it to 2 nights. They also raised concerns about people staying for longer periods and not contributing to the local economy, or treating the car park as a campsite.

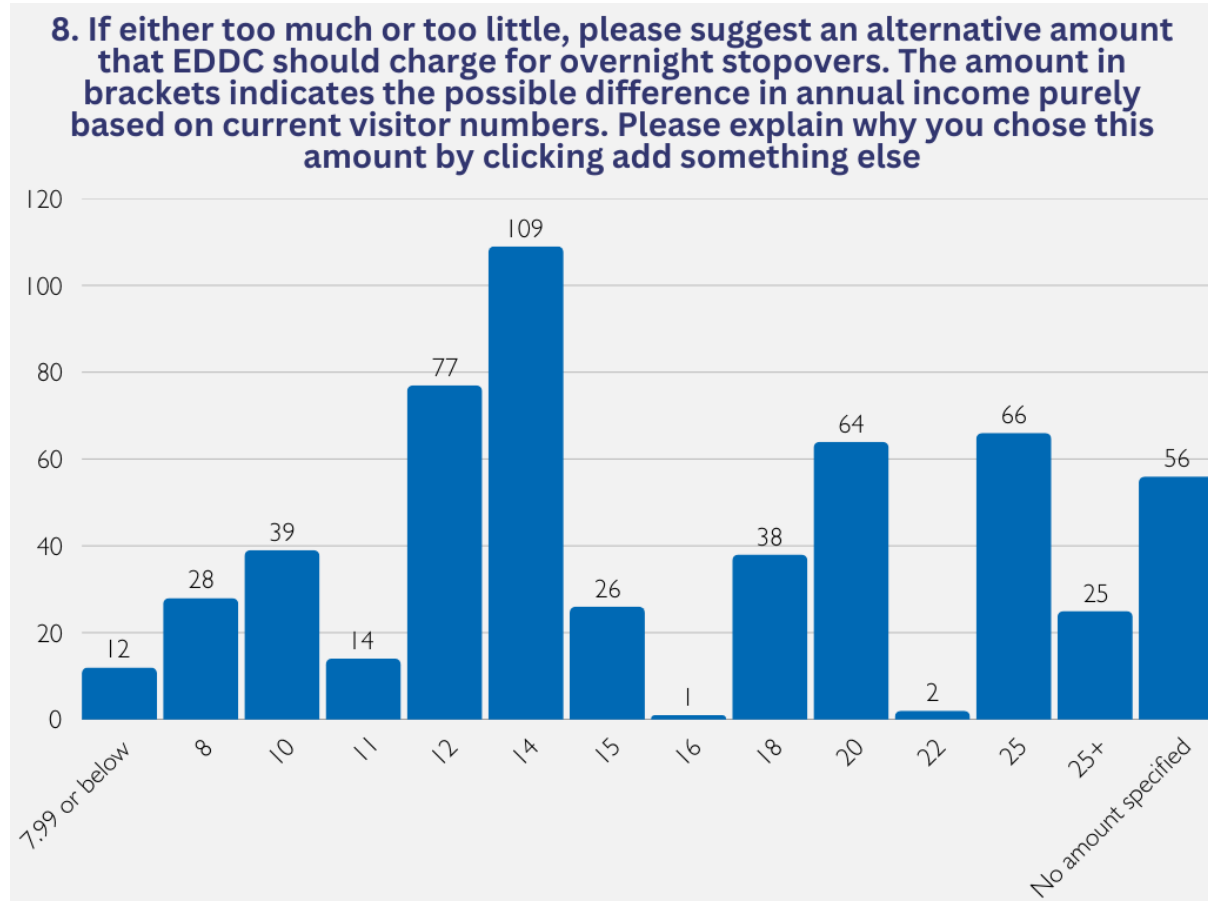
There were also a number of respondents who felt that 3 nights was not long enough and that people should be allowed to stay for up to a week. They felt that this would allow people to properly explore the area and that it would bring more money into the local economy.

7. The current fee for overnight stopovers is £11.00 per night, including 24 hours parking within either car park. The current fee to just park a standard car for 24 hours is £8. So the overnight sleeping element attracts a premium of £3. Do you believe that this is?



The majority of respondents—59.8%—believe the additional £3 premium for overnight parking is “about right.” However, a substantial portion (around 33.6%) feel that this amount is “too little,” indicating support for a potentially higher fee. In contrast, a smaller group of 6.7% consider the premium “too much.” Overall, these findings suggest that while most respondents are comfortable with the current rate, there is a notable proportion who would be open to an increase, and a smaller group who believe the fee is already too high.

8. If either too much or too little, please suggest an alternative amount that EDDC should charge for overnight stopovers. The amount in brackets indicates the possible difference in annual income purely based on current visitor numbers. Please explain why you chose this amount by clicking add something else



A summary of the free text responses:

Among those who suggested an alternative overnight fee, the single most popular amount was £14, with 109 respondents selecting this figure. Other commonly suggested amounts included £12 (77 responses) and £25 (66 responses). Smaller but still notable groups proposed £20 (64 responses), £10 (39 responses) or £8 (28 responses)

9. If EDDC were to generate additional revenue by increasing the charge for overnight stopovers, what do you believe they should spend this revenue on that would further improve the overnight parking offer?

A summary of the free text responses:

Many respondents feel EDDC should use any increased overnight parking charges to improve facilities in the Maer car park, specifically for fresh water, grey and black water

disposal, and public toilets. Concerns about higher fees potentially deterring visitors were raised, along with calls for stricter enforcement of parking regulations and enhanced street cleaning in Exmouth. The variety of suggestions illustrates a clear demand for better facilities and community-focused improvements in the area. Overall, there is significant community interest in enhancing the functionality and cleanliness of parking facilities to benefit all visitors.

Key Suggestions:

- Provide fresh water, grey waste, and black waste disposal facilities to enhance the overnight parking offer "The facilities you stipulated earlier, use those funds for those (wastewater etc) and then use any additional revenue to maintain these areas."
- Improving public toilet access, including 24-hour facilities, to support both overnight users and general visitor: "Better public toilet facilities. Perhaps a place we can empty our sewage and grey water. Drinking water tap in easy to access place."
- Increase the number of parking enforcement officers to ensure compliance with parking regulation: "Employ more parking enforcement officers who could identify illegal parking."
- Use revenue to enhance street cleaning and maintenance in Exmouth for the benefit of all visitors: "Use it to increase street cleaning, which is virtually non-existent in Exmouth."
- Install recycling bins for glass, plastic, cardboard et: "Recycling bins for glass, plastic, cardboard etc"

10. What more do you believe EDDC could do to tackle irresponsible motorhome owners and those who do not respect the natural environment.

As summary of the free text responses:

The comments express concerns about irresponsible motorhome owners, particularly in areas like the Maer and Queens Drive. Many advocates for stricter enforcement of parking regulations and improved facilities, such as toilet disposal points and rubbish bins, to mitigate environmental damage. Suggestions include increased patrols and the installation of CCTV to monitor behaviour. While many motorhome owners are respectful, a minority's actions have led to significant issues. A balance of enforcement and facilities is deemed necessary to support responsible usage.

Overall, a combination of regulatory measures and improved amenities is key to promoting responsible motorhome use.

Key Suggestions:

- Increase fines and enforcement actions against violator: "Enforcement and bans for those caught in breach including issuing fixed penalty notices for inappropriate disposal of waste."
- Install CCTV and regular patrol: CCTV could help capture this and bring any wrong-doers to justice."
- Provide waste disposal facilities: If you provide the facilities this would be a rare occurrence.
- Restrict overnight parking to self-contained vehicles only: Only allow fully self-contained vans to use the parking areas, provide good facilities and enforce the rules.

- Educate users about respectful behaviour: Clear signage with regard to what is permitted and what isn't.

11. Please use this space to add any further comments you may have regarding overnight stopovers in East Devon car parks.

Comments on overnight stopovers in East Devon, particularly in Exmouth, reveal both appreciation for the economic benefits and concerns regarding motorhome parking, specifically on Queen's Drive and Maer car park. Many users have noted issues such as litter and safety from overcrowding while suggesting enhancements for waste disposal and parking regulations. Improvements to facilities in Sidmouth and the enforcement of parking rules have been highlighted as necessary actions to balance visitor accommodation with local interests.

Overall, addressing community concerns is essential for fostering support for overnight stopovers.

Key Suggestions:

- Implement stricter regulations for motorhome parking on Queen's Drive: Motorhomes should be banned from Queens Drive, they often try to use two spaces by placing chairs, tables, water sport kit in 2nd bay.
- Increase overnight parking facilities in other towns such as Sidmouth: "It would be good to see more in other towns such as Sidmouth, with full facilities as mentioned above.
- Provide better waste disposal and fresh water facilities: If no water/waste facilities are provided then I do not agree that either area is suitable for motorhomes as we are simply encouraging irresponsible behaviour.
- Monitor and enforce parking regulations effectively: It's annoying little VW vans will park in the ten metres bay in Maer road carpark when there is like a dozen big spaces.
- Charge a reasonable fee for overnight stays aligned with locally available service: I think it would be better to charge an overnight sleeping fee and a separate day fee.

5. Key findings:

The respondents to the consultation were generally supportive of overnight motorhome parking within EDDC car parks, although it is evident that improvements should be considered that would better regulate overnight visits. Additional signage and facilities are required to encourage and support responsible tourism, as well as better oversight and enforcement of the rules and regulations.

6. Recommendations:

The consultation responses support and endorse the proposals that were presented to the EDDC Cabinet Committee in January 2024.

These were:

- Install a drive-over grey wastewater (shower & dishwasher) disposal point in Maer Road Car Park
- Install a chemical toilet waste disposal point in Maer Road car park – connected directly to the sewerage network
- Install a fresh water tap in Maer Road car park.
- Reduce the maximum permitted number of consecutive overnight stays to 3 nights – this is in line with other authorities and prevents the risk of paid habitation within the car parks.
- Improve the signage stating the rules and restrictions for overnight stays within both car parks – including ground markings along Queen’s Drive Echelon to designate bays suitable for overnight stays, leaving a safe distance between vehicles.

Additional monitoring, enforcement and booking procedures will be considered as well as the above to provide a package of improvements that help alleviate previously reported issues and create clear guidelines for overnight visitors to follow.