

Forestry England New Forest Car Park Charging Proposals

Annex to the Background Document which Accompanies the HRA

11th September 2025

1.0 Introduction

In January 2025, the New Forest Car Park Charging Project moved into the detailed development phase. This Annex is intended to provide further detail relating to the monitoring protocol and mitigation measures set out in the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Background Document to Accompany the HRA (both submitted to Natural England in March 2025). Forestry England will adhere to the HRA and the Background Document for the lifetime of the scheme.

1.1 A dedicated Parking Team

A new dedicated Parking Team will be recruited - the first of its kind in Forestry England. This is in recognition of the special nature of the New Forest, as described in the HRA. The Parking Rangers within this team will manage unauthorised and irresponsible parking outside of official Forestry England car parks through enforcement, monitoring and education. The Parking Rangers will also actively engage visitors who park on verges and educate them in the importance of the sensitive habitats and the need to protect them.

1.2 Parking in official car parks

Parking will only be permitted in the 129 official Forestry England car parks. This will be stated on the existing 'Threshold' signs situated at the main entry points into the New Forest and on the signs within the official car parks.

1.3 Forestry England Membership

Forestry England membership will enable regular visitors to park for free in all 129 car parks. Membership will cost £96 for 12 months and will be made more affordable through the provision of a monthly Direct Debit payment option. Membership will create a direct connection with visitors for engagement and education around the importance of the habitats and the need to protect them.

1.4 Parking in gateways and access roads

Enforcement will be carried out to prevent parking in gateways and on access roads on Forestry England land through the placement of signage and the issue of Parking Charge Notices (PCNs). All signage will display clear Terms and Conditions as required by the British Parking Association (BPA).

1.5 Overnight parking

Overnight parking will be prohibited in official car parks and enforcement will be carried out to prevent this through the issue of Parking Charge Notices. Overnight parking for the purpose of overnight stays will only be permitted for customers staying within the official campsites in the New Forest.

1.6 Parking on roadside verges

The New Forest Verge Protection Risk Map shows where visitors might park in roadside locations across the New Forest in order to avoid parking charges when they are introduced in the official car parks.

The red areas indicate where new verge parking is likely and will require proactive measures to protect designated habitat. These measures will be installed before parking charges are introduced. They will be in the form of new dragon's teeth, or the reinstatement of old ditch and bank, or the installation of new ditch and bank where necessary. Exact locations are shown on the Indicative New Forest Verge Protection Map. This map also indicates where a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) might help prevent existing verge parking - Forestry England has begun to explore this option with Hampshire County Council (the competent body for a TRO).

The amber areas indicate where new verge parking is possible but less likely owing to the lower accessibility of adjacent designated land. A reactive approach will be taken in these areas where the dedicated Parking Team will monitor verge parking and instigate the rapid installation of verge protection measures within 12 weeks if:

1. There is a change in vegetation cover in these designated locations caused by parked vehicles (as evidenced by Google Earth Pro imagery and photos taken prior to the introduction of parking charges) that could lead to erosion and damage of habitat if no measures are installed
and
2. Verge parking cannot be prevented through engagement, education or enforcement.

The green areas on the map indicate where new verge parking is unlikely but will be monitored and elevated to amber or red if necessary after parking charges are introduced.

1.7 Monitoring Protocol

The Monitoring Protocol described in the 'Forestry England New Forest Car Park Charging Proposals Background Document to Accompany the HRA' explains that the 'escalation of mitigation measures will take a targeted approach based on likely impact on the protected features of the SSSI, SAC, SPA, Ramsar. If cars are parked on any of the 260 parking locations comprising verges, laybys, gateways and roadside spaces (identified in the HRA – Map 5), across more than two dates, then one or more mitigation actions will be taken.'

This Annex document adds more detail and timescales to these potential mitigation actions as follows:

- Dedicated Parking Ranger time to speak to the people parking on verges, laybys, gateways and roadside spaces on designated land. The aim will be to educate the visitor on the importance of the sensitive habitats and the need to protect these. The aim will also be to ensure visitors are aware of options for membership and how to pay to park. This will take place as soon as a vehicle is seen parked in an unauthorised location on designated land. If the vehicle is in a Forestry England gateway or access road where a No Parking sign with Terms and Conditions is displayed, the Parking Ranger will wait 15 minutes before issuing a Parking Charge Notice together with an information leaflet on the windscreen.
- Information leaflets will be placed on windscreens where the driver of a vehicle parked on a verge on designated land does not return to the vehicle within 15 minutes.
- Dragon's teeth or ditch and bank will be installed/reinstated on Forestry England designated land within 12 weeks of escalation by the Parking Ranger as a result of monitoring if:
 1. There is a change in vegetation cover in these locations caused by parked vehicles that could lead to erosion and damage of habitat if no measures are installed
and
 2. Verge parking has not been prevented through engagement, education or enforcement over a period of at least 12 weeks.
- Civil enforcement will take place in all Forestry England gateways and access roads where a No Parking sign with Terms and Conditions is displayed. Signage and enforcement will be immediately added to additional gateways and access roads on designated land where vehicles park in these locations on more than two dates.
- The implementation of parking charges will be reviewed each month for the first year (quarterly thereafter), with a focus on the following data:

- Transect counts (and maps) of parked cars on designated land outside of official car parks (shared with partners).
- Number of memberships.
- Quantity of parking sessions by tariff period (and any need to adapt the charging model).
- Quantity and locations of Parking Charge Notices issued in official car parks.
- Quantity and locations of Parking Charge Notices issued in gateways and access roads.
- Escalation of locations for verge protection measures on Forestry England designated land, as informed by Monitoring.
- Escalation of designated locations for engagement with neighbouring landowners regarding protection of protected habitats from parked vehicles, as informed by Monitoring.
- Inclusion of additional gateways/access roads on designated land for No Parking signage and enforcement, as recorded by Parking Rangers.
- Efficacy of verge protection measures and specifications.
- Ability of mitigation measures to enable the car park charging scheme to operate without adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC/SPA/Ramsar/SSSI sites.

1.8 Neighbouring land outside of Forestry England ownership

Forestry England has engaged neighbouring landowners through a mix of the following methods:

- Face-to face meetings and briefings (Verderers, NT, HCC, NPA, NFDC, NFD OG)
- Consultative Panel
- Quadrant meetings
- Recreation Management Partnership

The dedicated Forestry England Parking Team will monitor verge parking on both Forestry England designated land and close neighbouring designated land identified in the New Forest Verge Protection Risk Map, using the monitoring protocol described in the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Background Document to Accompany the HRA. If targeted mitigation actions, as described in 1.7 above, do not prevent new verge parking on neighbouring designated land, and if there is a change in vegetation cover in these locations caused by parked vehicles that could lead to erosion and damage of habitat if no measures are installed, the Parking Team will contact the landowner to offer to discuss potential ways to prevent damage to protected habitat caused by verge parking. This may include Forestry England sharing its approach to communications, education and engagement, including key messages, communication channels and specifications for signage and windscreen leaflets.

Forestry England may offer to support the installation of verge protection measures in the 18-month period following the introduction of parking charges in Forestry England car parks if it can be demonstrated that additional verge parking has arisen as a result of

the introduction of parking charges in Forestry England car parks. Criteria to assess this would include:

- Demonstration that other targeted mitigation actions have been tried over a period of at least 12 weeks and have been ineffective at preventing verge parking.
- Demonstration of a change in vegetation cover in these locations caused by parked vehicles that could lead to erosion and damage of habitat if no measures are installed (using Google Earth Pro historical imagery and using photographs collected as part of monitoring).