

COMMITTEE: Petitions and Community Empowerment Review Committee

MEETING DATE: 9 October 2025

BY: Executive Director for Council Resources

REPORT TITLE: Petition PET0125 – Calling on East Lothian Council to scrap the proposed parking management proposals to have parking meters/charges in Haddington town centre

REPORT STATUS: Public

2

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present petition PET0125 to the Petitions and Community Empowerment Review Committee for consideration. The petition is entitled 'Opposition to parking charges/meters in Haddington town centre'.

1.2 The petition text reads:

We the undersigned call on East Lothian Council to scrap the proposed parking management proposals to have parking meters/charges in Haddington town centre.

The attached signatories are happy with the current parking management. Any changes to the current system will have an economic impact on the unique small businesses. Currently there are no charges at Haddington Retail Park. By introducing them in the town centre, shoppers will be driven out.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

2.1 Consider the petition and take action as required.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A petition was submitted on 15 July 2025 by Karla Mullen, principal petitioner on behalf of the Haddington Business Group, and was deemed to be competent.
- 3.2 Further details of the petition are contained within the petition form at Appendix 1.

Signatories

- 3.3 There are 3008 signatories to this petition. Of note is that a fair proportion of the signatories did not provide a full contact address, which is a requirement to be a signatory to a petition; however, as many signatories did provide all relevant details, the petition was still deemed to be competent.
- 3.4 Of the signatory details provided, Haddington addresses appeared most frequently. Although a number of signatories gave addresses from other parts of the UK, the vast majority had East Lothian postcodes.
- 3.5 The petition can be viewed by contacting the clerk to the Petitions and Community Empowerment Review Committee.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no immediate policy implications arising from this report. Depending on the action required and agreed by the Committee, there may be policy implications relating to particular issues arising from competent petitions. These will be subject to a separate report to the relevant committee, as required.

5 RESOURCE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Finance: dependent on the action agreed by the Committee.
- 5.2 Human Resources: dependent on the action agreed by the Committee.
- 5.3 Other (e.g. Legal/IT): dependent on the action agreed by the Committee.
- 5.4 Risk: dependent on the action agreed by the Committee.

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 **Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an 'X' in the relevant box.**

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken and the subject of this report does not

X

affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on: equality and human rights; tackling socio-economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the environment and sustainability; the Council’s role as a corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.

or

The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and impacts have been identified as follows:

Subject	Impacts identified (Yes, No or N/A)
Equality and human rights	
Socio-economic disadvantage/poverty	
Climate change, the environment and sustainability	
Corporate parenting and care-experienced young people	
Storage/collection of personal data	
Other	

[Enter information on impacts that have been identified]

The Integrated Impact Assessment relating to this report has been published and can be accessed via the Council’s website:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210602/equality_and_diversity/12014/integrated_impact_assessments

7 APPENDICES

- 7.1 Appendix 1: Petition form
- 7.2 Appendix 2: Officer’s response to petition and example correspondence with petitioners

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None.

9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

Report Author(s)

Name	Becky Crichton
Designation	Committees Officer/Clerk to the Petitions and Community Empowerment Review Committee
Tel/Email	rcrichton@eastlothian.gov.uk
Date	25 September 2025

Head of Service Approval

Name	Hayley Barnett
Designation	Head of Corporate Support
Confirmation that IIA and other relevant checks (e.g. finance/legal) have been completed	Yes
Approval Date	2 October 2025



PETITION TO EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

Name of Principal Petitioner (and organisation if applicable) (Block Caps)	KARLAMULLEN HADDINGTON BUSINESS GROUP 60 MEMBERS
Address of Principal Petitioner (inc Postcode) (Block Caps)	[REDACTED]
Contact telephone number of Principal Petitioner	[REDACTED]
Title of Petition	OPPOSITION TO PARKING CHARGES / METERS IN HADDINGTON TOWN CENTRE
Petition text. We the undersigned call on East Lothian Council to..	TO SCRAP THE PROPOSED PARKING MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS BY ELC TO HAVE PARKING CHARGES / METERS IN HADDINGTON TOWN CENTRE
What action have you taken and who have you contacted before submitting this petition and what was the result of this?	I HAVE WRITTEN TO ALL EAST LoTHIAN COUNCILLORS, ATTENDED THE CONSULTATION & THE PUBLIC MEETING. RESULTS & REPLIES
Please provide more information about your petition	THE ATTACHED SIGNATORIES ARE HAPPY WITH THE CURRENT PARKING MANAGEMENT. ANY CHANGES TO THE CURRENT SYSTEM WILL HAVE AN ECONOMIC IMPACT ON THE UNIQUE SMALL BUSINESSES. CURRENTLY THERE ARE NO CHARGES AT HADDINGTON RETAIL PARK BY INTRODUCING THEM IN THE TOWN CENTRE SHOPPERS WILL BE DRIVEN OUT.
Signature of Principal Petitioner	[REDACTED]

Your details will only be held by East Lothian Council and will not be used for any purposes other than in relation to this petition.

For Office Use:	
Date Received:	15 July 2025
Receiving Officer:	B Crichton
Petition Reference:	PET0125

All Petitions should be forwarded to: Clerk to the Petitions Committee, Legal & Democratic Services, East Lothian Council, John Muir House, Haddington EH31 3HA or handed in at Main Reception, John Muir House, Haddington

PLEASE SIGN OUR PETITION

Opposition to Parking Meters in Haddington Town Centre

We, the businesses and residents of Haddington, stand united in **opposition to the proposed installation of parking meters** in our town centre. This proposal threatens the very fabric of our local economy, and we urge East Lothian Council to reconsider this damaging plan.

Parking Charges Don't Work – Proven by Experience Elsewhere

Evidence from towns across Scotland and the UK clearly shows that the introduction of parking meters often leads to significant declines in town centre footfall. Local businesses suffer, and many eventually close their doors due to reduced customer access. This is not speculation—it is the reality experienced by many communities that have gone down this path.

Haddington's Businesses Will Suffer

Our town centre relies on short visits, convenience, and a welcoming atmosphere. Coffee shops, hairdressers, beauty salons, barbers, and small retailers all depend on customers having the freedom to stop by without worrying about parking fees. Even the proposed 30 minutes of free parking is not enough—people need time to relax, browse, and engage. Rushing people in and out will destroy the friendly, social nature of Haddington's town centre.

Turning Haddington into a Ghost Town

Without sufficient free and easy parking, people will go elsewhere—to retail parks, supermarkets, or Towns with better parking provisions. This will strip Haddington of its local vibrancy and community spirit, leaving empty shops and deserted streets. We refuse to let our High Street die.

There Is a Better Way

The current system of **90 minutes free parking with no return** has been effective and popular. It strikes the right balance between access and turnover. What we need is not a new system that punishes visitors, but better **enforcement and management** of the existing one. East Lothian Council should focus on maintaining and refining what already works, not implementing a system that has failed elsewhere.

We Must Be Heard

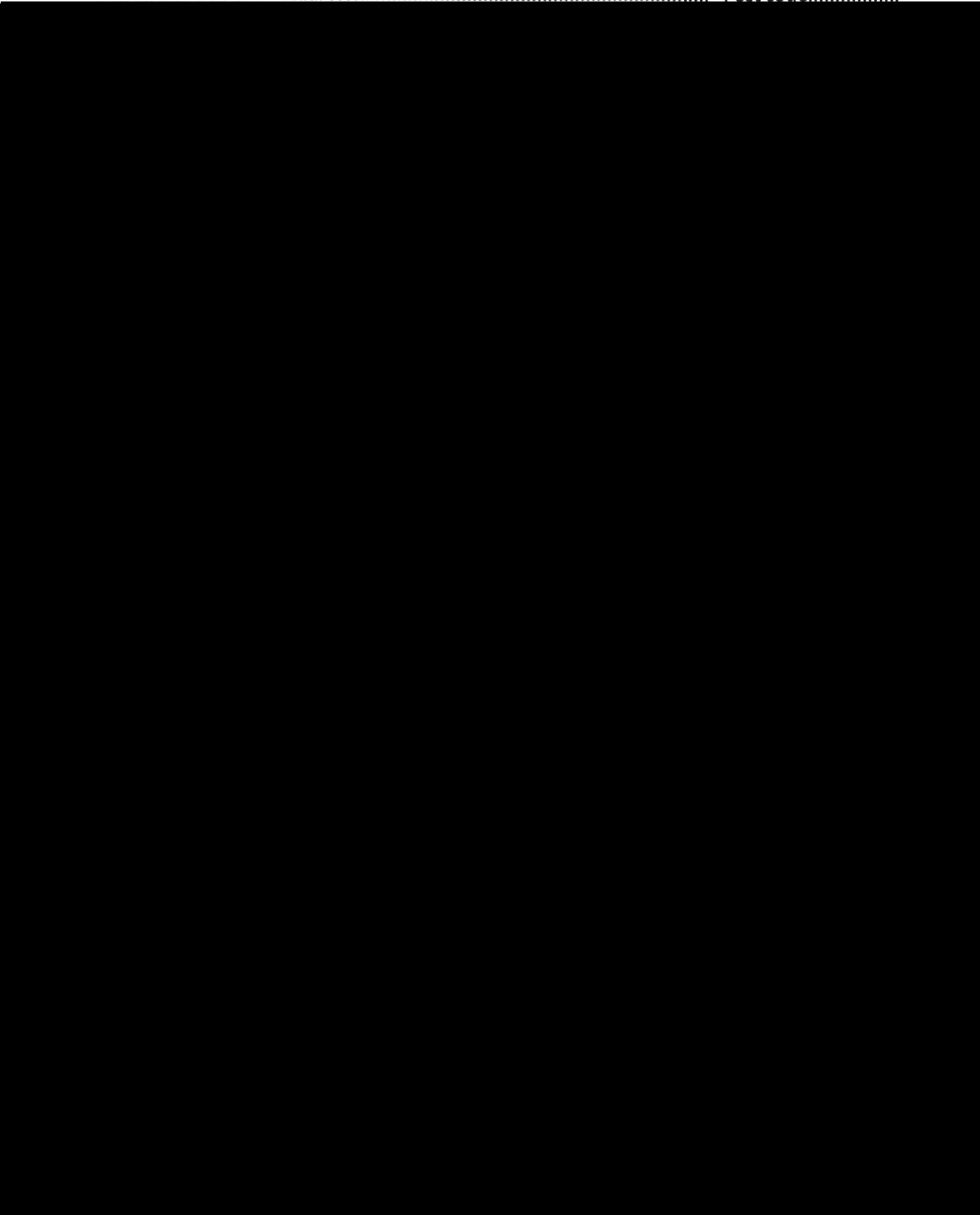
This consultation must reflect the **strong and unified opposition** from local businesses and residents. Haddington has the potential to thrive—**not with meters and restrictions**, but with smart, fair, and supportive parking management.

We call on East Lothian Council to **scrap the parking meter proposal** and work with the local community to build a better future for our town centre.

Let's protect what makes Haddington special.

Please sign petition here:

Name: Address: Post code:



Officer response to petition to scrap plans for parking charges and parking meters in Haddington town centre

Peter Forsyth

23 September 2025

It is recommended that the Petitions and Community Empowerment Review Committee note the comments raised within the petition, and support the Haddington Parking Review to continue to advance through its formal consultation process and be presented back to Council for wider consideration in due course. It is further recommended that the Committee note that the assessment of public engagement analysis, business case development, and data collection requirements have not concluded, and that any decision on the proposals will be premature before a report to Council is made. It is also recommended that the introduction of parking charges must adhere to Council policy and that the making of a Traffic Regulation Order must be in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act and administered in accordance with the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedures) (Scotland) Regulations 1999, which will allow formal objection to be made to the Council, subject to the Council progressing to publish the making of the Order.

On 30 October 2018, East Lothian Council adopted the Local Transport Strategy and associated Parking Management Strategy. The strategy provided the necessary context for the introduction of parking management intervention including parking charging within the county.

On 27 February 2024, Council agreed to note the intention to accelerate the parking management review, consult on the five remaining towns concurrently, and draft and publish Orders introducing parking restrictions in due course.

On 19 May, the Haddington parking review public engagement consultation started. This ran until 30 June, a total of six weeks. A face-to-face event was held on 12 June at the Corn Exchange, Haddington. Over the period, a public survey questionnaire sought public opinion on the initial proposals for Haddington. This data is currently being analysed.

The questionnaire sought to understand parking usage within the town, who you are, preferred mode of travel, the main reason for parking, where people park, problems or difficulties parking, length of stay, and presented some initial proposals for consideration to resolve problems previously identified.

Feedback from the survey questionnaire, stakeholders' comments and written correspondence is currently being analysed. The output from this exercise will be presented to Council in due course.

The lead petitioner has written separately to all East Lothian Councillors and the Council presenting their strong opposition to parking meters in Haddington.

To impede the process now, without due consideration of the data, would be detrimental to local government processes and frustrate wider democratic decision making. It is recommended that the Petitions and Community Empowerment Review

Committee supports the matter's continued progress through its formal consultation process and presentation back to Council for wider consideration in due course.

The following background papers may be of use:

- Report to Council on 10 December 2024 – Update on North Berwick Traffic Regulation Orders
- Report to Council on 27 February 2024 – Update on Parking Management Traffic Regulation Order for North Berwick
- Report to Council on 25 April 2023 – Town Centre Parking Management: Introduction of Parking Management Proposals in North Berwick
- Report to East Lothian Council on 28 June 2022 – Town Centre Parking Management: Consultation
- Members' Library Report – Economic Impact Assessment Report (Ref: 34/23, April 2023 Bulletin)
- Members' Library Report – Consultation Report (Ref: 35/23, April 2023 Bulletin)
- Integrated Impact Assessment
- Report to East Lothian Council on 30 October 2018 – East Lothian Council Proposed Local Transport Strategy
- East Lothian Council Proposed Local Transport Strategy 2018-24 – Draft Parking Strategy, Members' Library Ref: 142/18 (October 2018 Bulletin)
- East Lothian Council Proposed Local Transport Strategy 2018-24 – Draft Active Travel Improvement Plan, Members' Library Ref: 141/18 (October 2018 Bulletin)
- Policy and Performance Review Committee – 04 Roads Asset Management – Annual Status and Options Report
- Report to East Lothian Council on 25 April 2023 – Town Centre Parking Management: Introduction of Parking Management Proposals in North Berwick
- Report to East Lothian Council on 27 February 2024 – Update on Parking Management Traffic Regulation Order North Berwick
- Members' Library Report – East Lothian by Numbers: Travel and Transport (Ref: 152/24, November 2024 Bulletin)

From: Karla Mullen

Sent: 02 August 2025 10:09

To: Hampshire, Norman <nhamshire@eastlothian.gov.uk>; McMillan, John <jmcmillan@eastlothian.gov.uk>; Haddington and District Community Council <all@haddingtoncc.org.uk>; Rockey, Laurence <lrokey@eastlothian.gov.uk>

Subject: Clarification Regarding parking charges

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

You don't often get email from. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear All,

Clarification Regarding Parking Charges in Haddington Town Centre

It has been brought to my attention that my views on the proposed parking charges in Haddington Town Centre may have been misunderstood. I would like to take this opportunity to clarify my position.

I am **100% opposed** to these proposals and want to make it absolutely clear that I do **not** support the introduction of parking charges or meters in Haddington Town Centre under any circumstances.

To further reinforce this position, please find below a copy of the letter that was

sent on the 9th June 2025, to all East Lothian councillors, strongly opposing the introduction of parking charges in our town centre.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to set the record straight.

Karla & George

TV & Audio Repair Centre
12 High Street
Haddington

Dear All

- **Subject: Strong Opposition to Parking Meters in Haddington Town Centre I would welcome your support.**

I stand in total opposition to the proposed installation of parking meters in our town centre. This proposal threatens the very fabric of our local economy, and we urge East Lothian Council to reconsider this damaging plan.

Parking Charges Don't Work – Proven by Experience Elsewhere

Evidence from towns across Scotland and the UK clearly shows that the introduction of parking meters often leads to significant declines in town centre footfall. Local businesses suffer, and many eventually close their doors due to reduced customer access. This is not speculation—it is the reality experienced by many communities that have gone down this path.

Haddington's Businesses Will Suffer

Our town centre relies on short visits, convenience, and a welcoming atmosphere. Coffee shops, hairdressers, beauty salons, barbers, and small retailers all depend on customers having the freedom to stop by without worrying about parking fees. Even the proposed 30 minutes of free parking is not enough—people need time to relax, browse, and engage. Rushing people in and out will destroy the friendly, social nature of Haddington's town centre.

Turning Haddington into a Ghost Town

Without sufficient free and easy parking, people will go elsewhere—to retail parks, supermarkets, or cities with better parking provisions. This will strip Haddington of its local vibrancy and community spirit, leaving empty shops and deserted streets. We refuse to let our High Street die.

There Is a Better Way

The current system of **90 minutes free parking with no return** has been effective and popular. It strikes the right balance between access and turnover. What we need is not a new system that punishes visitors, but better **enforcement and management** of the existing one. East Lothian Council should focus on maintaining and refining what already works, not implementing a system that has failed elsewhere.

We Must Be Heard

This consultation must reflect the **strong and unified opposition** from local businesses and residents. Haddington has the potential to thrive—**not with meters and restrictions**, but with smart, fair, and supportive parking management.

We call on East Lothian Council to **scrap the parking meter proposal** and work with the local community to build a better future for our town centre.

Let's protect what makes Haddington special.

SAVE HADDINGTON TOWN CENTRE!

Kind Regards

Karla Mullen

TV & AUDIO REPAIR CENTRE
12 HIGH STREET

HADDINGTON

From:
To: [Reid, Tom](#)
Cc: [Forsyth, Peter \(Development\)](#)
Subject: Re: Request for Costings-Parking Consultations & Traffic Survey
Date: 20 June 2025 13:51:39

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Afternoon Tom.

Thank you for the prompt response, have a good weekend .

Best

Karla

On Friday, June 20, 2025, 1:48 pm, Reid, Tom <treid@eastlothian.gov.uk> wrote:

Good Afternoon Karla

Having checked I can confirm the following:

Consultant support across the Parking Management project - £93,000

Cost of the recent traffic survey in Haddington - £35,735

Best Regards

Tom

Thomas Reid
Head of Infrastructure
Place
East Lothian Council
Comhairle Lodainn an Ear

Phone: 01620 827541
Email: treid@eastlothian.gov.uk
Website: www.eastlothian.gov.uk

Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail

From:
Sent: 20 June 2025 10:52
To: Reid, Tom <treid@eastlothian.gov.uk>

Subject: Request for Costings-Parking Consultations & Traffic Survey

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Subject: Request for Costings – Parking Consultations & Traffic Survey

Good morning Tom,

Following on from our chat last week at the Corn Exchange, I'm getting in touch to kindly request the costings for the parking consultations carried out across East Lothian towns, as well as the costs associated with the recent traffic survey conducted in Haddington.

Your assistance on this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Kind regards,

Karla Green