

**COMMITTEE:** Planning Committee  
**MEETING DATE:** 7 October 2025  
**BY:** Executive Director for Place  
**REPORT TITLE:** Application for Planning Permission for Consideration

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*Note: This application was called off the Scheme of Delegation List by Councillor Findlay for the following reason: Given the level of opposition both from residents of these streets and from the population of North Berwick as a whole, the Planning Committee should look at these applications and allow residents to give voice to their concerns so that local democracy can be seen to being followed.*

Application no. **25/00363/P**  
Proposal Installation of parking meters  
Location **St Margarets Road  
North Berwick**

Applicant East Lothian Council  
Per Stantec UK Ltd

**RECOMMENDATION** Consent Granted

## **REPORT OF HANDLING**

### **PROPOSAL**

Planning permission is sought for the installation of two parking meters on the public footway at St Margarets Road, North Berwick. One would be positioned on the west side of the road on the footway close to the access to No.6 St Margarets Road, with the other positioned on the south side of the road on the footway between nos. 16 and 18 St Margarets Road.

The proposed parking meters would be sited within North Berwick Conservation Area.

The parking meters proposed to be instated would be MS1 Parking Terminals, measuring 317 x 305 x 1524mm high. They would have a black frontage housed within a high security stainless steel body, and protected with an anti-graffiti coating. They would be solar powered and would be able to accept cash or cashless payments (chip and pin or contactless card payments). It is stated in the application submissions that the proposed parking meters are compliant with all relevant standards for disabled access.

The proposed parking meters would operate using solar energy, therefore they would not require any cabling or connection to existing utilities and would operate independently. It is proposed that each meter would be bolted to the public footway surface meaning no excavation would be required.

A Design Statement has been submitted in support of the application, which states that the main driver of the proposals to install parking meters in North Berwick is to reduce current parking issues identified in the town. The Design Statement informs that it has been observed that during summer months in North Berwick, parking demand outweighs available capacity, leading to instances of inappropriate and unlawful parking, including includes misuse of the 90-minute waiting restriction at certain locations, where vehicles have been observed to be parked for up to 5-10 hours.

The Design Statement continues that the proposed parking meters should discourage unlawful parking, and in turn provide a benefit to existing residents and visitors to North Berwick with controlled and more frequent turnover of parking. The Design Statement further states that there would be an economic benefit as the revenue made from parking charges would be used towards the improvement of transport and parking infrastructure in the local area.

The Design Statement informs that North Berwick Conservation Area includes a variety of land uses including residential, retail, commercial, leisure and recreation. Milsey Bay and West Bay beaches, as well as the West Links Golf Course are also included within the Conservation Area boundary. It continues that in addition to its Conservation Area status, the North Berwick Conservation Area also contains numerous listed buildings, none of which would be adversely impacted by the proposed development given the location, scale and design of the proposed parking meters. None of the parking meters would be physically attached to any property including listed buildings.

This application is one of 12 applications proposing a total of 27 parking meters in different locations in North Berwick.

## **THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires that the application be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless

material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan is National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and the adopted East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 (LDP).

Policies 7 (Historic assets and places) and 14 (Design, quality and place) of NPF4 and Policies CH2 (Development Affecting Conservation Areas), DP2 (Design), NH11 (Flood Risk) and T2 (General Transport Impact) of the LDP are relevant to the determination of the application.

Material to the determination of the application is Section 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

Section 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 requires that a planning authority must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area in which the building is located.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

There have been 13 written representations received to this application, all of which object to the proposed development.

The main grounds of objection can be summarised as follows:

- \* The road should be 100% for residents parking where needed;
- \* The proposed parking meters will encourage further parking when other areas are restricted;
- \* There is already a dangerous bend in the road, promoting parking on this street will make a bad situation worse and dangerous;
- \* The proposal would result in charges to friends and family to visit each other, which is a money grab from the Council;
- \* The site plan is not clear;
- \* Concern over accessibility for pavement users as the proposed meters may obstruct the pavement;
- \* The applicant should be forced to conduct an accessibility assessment for all meters as these are all going to cause access issues for those with buggies and wheelchairs when someone is using the meter given that they are located on busy narrow pavements;
- \* Applications for parking meters should not be split into separate applications and the cumulative impact should be considered;
- \* Individual applications fundamentally misrepresent the scale and impact of the provision of parking meters;
- \* The submitted Design Statement is inadequate;
- \* There are far too many parking meters proposed;
- \* The impact of the meters would be visually harmful. Their significant cumulative number, size, prominence and associated signage and poles would give rise to an unacceptable adverse impact upon the North Berwick Conservation Area and, in many cases, upon the setting of nearby listed buildings;
- \* The development would neither preserve nor enhance the Conservation Area or

the settings of nearby listed buildings;

\* The proposed parking meters are physically and visually intrusive, being located on narrow footways that further impact on access for the visually impaired as well as others, including pedestrian access for families with push chairs, and are directly in the critical line of sight that impacts on the visual appearance and historical impression of the common grazing grounds surrounding Glebe House, which are both architecturally and visually of significant importance within North Berwick Conservation area;

\* Were the application to be approved it would bring into question the independence and reasonableness of the democratic planning process, where an application is submitted by the Road Authority to the Planning Authority, who are both administered by Council; and

\* The proposed meters would result in a disfigurement of the conservation area, with street clutter and visual affronts in the form of not only the intrusive and ugly ticket machines, but also the signage and the painted lines on the street edges.

It should be noted this application proposes the installation of parking meters only and the planning assessment of them can consider only the merits of these proposed structures. The matter of parking controls/charging and the impact of that is not a material consideration in the determination of this application.

There is no impediment to the Council being applicant and, as Planning Authority, deciding on the application. Planning Circular 3/2009 states that sometimes, as well as being the decision-maker on a planning application, a planning authority will have some other interest in the proposed development, for example as the developer or the owner of the land. This in itself is not unreasonable; in fact it is quite normal and occurs regularly. In these circumstances though, it is essential that the planning authority does not allow any possible conflict of interest to have an undue influence on its planning assessment. Planning authorities generally exercise their duties fairly in such matters, recognising how essential it is that probity is scrupulously observed.

In certain circumstances, to protect the integrity of the planning system, where the Planning Authority has an interest, applications must be notified to Scottish Ministers where the proposed development would involve a significant departure from the authority's own development plan or there is an objection by a Government agency, neither of which applies in this case.

## **COMMUNITY COUNCIL COMMENTS**

North Berwick Community Council as a consultee on the application object to the proposed development. The Community Council advise that the Council has a duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 to ensure the character and appearance of the Conservation Area are preserved or enhanced, and state that the proposed parking meters are sizeable columns in a number of different locations within the Conservation Area and, whilst certain individual locations may be more discrete or less obtrusive than others, when considered together it is a fact that they do not preserve the character underpinning the designation of the Conservation Area and certainly do not enhance it.

The Community Council advise that this is just one application, but the cumulative impact of all of the meters will also be a consideration. They state that the submitted Design Statement assesses impact on trees and listed buildings, but fails in its fundamental purpose by not assessing or otherwise referring to the impact on the Conservation Area.

The Community Council advise that this particular application covers 2 parking meters opposite the Glebe field, which is a prominent beauty spot in the town centre, and have provided a picture which they assert underestimates the true scale and visual impact of a grey and black column of the size proposed. The Community Council add that an additional consideration is that the owners of house number 16 cannot be forced to cut back the beautiful big bush overhanging the solar panel, which may result in problems with the power supply of the meter.

The Community Council state that no objective planning assessment can conclude that the parking meters meet the test in LDP Policy CH2, so consequently the application is contrary to that policy and they recommend that planning permission be refused.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Under the provisions of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 the proposed development falls within the category of a Schedule 2 Development, being one that may require the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Schedule 3 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 sets out the selection criteria for screening whether a Schedule 2 development requires an EIA. On 24 March 2025 the Council issued a formal screening opinion to the applicant. The screening opinion concludes that it is East Lothian Council's view that the proposed development, individually or cumulatively with other proposed parking meters in North Berwick, is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment such that consideration of environmental information is required before any grant of planning permission. It is therefore the opinion of East Lothian Council as Planning Authority that there is no requirement for the proposed development to be the subject of an EIA.

## **PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

The proposed parking meters would be of a slim linear form and design, being only 317mm across by 305mm in width and 1524mm high. Although visible in public views they would be positioned next to front garden boundary enclosures to the rear of the footways on which they would be located. They would also be seen in relation to other street furniture in the form of streetlights on St Margarets Road and with the backdrop of the larger buildings they would be positioned to the front of. They would also typically be viewed in the context of parked vehicles. Due to their positions and by their relatively small size, scale and form the proposed parking meters would not appear harmfully prominent, intrusive or incongruous in the street scene and would not result in any harmful visual or landscape impact. They would not be inappropriate to their setting on the footway of a public road and

would not be harmful to but would preserve the character and appearance of the North Berwick Conservation Area.

Given the distance between the other parking meters proposed elsewhere in North Berwick and the intervening land and buildings between them, the proposed parking meters would not lead to any harmful cumulative impact.

The proposed parking meters would not cause a loss of amenity to any neighbouring residential property.

The **Council's Senior Landscape Officer** acknowledges that the application site lies within the North Berwick Conservation Area and advises that due to the small size and scale of the proposed parking meters they would not harm the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The Council's Senior Landscape Officer therefore raises no landscape objection to the application.

The **Council's Archaeology/Heritage Officer** advises that although the location of the proposed parking meters lies within the Conservation Area, he is satisfied that that there would be no harmful impact on the historic environment and therefore he raises no objection to the application.

The **Council's Flooding & Structures Officer** advises that SEPA's Flood Hazard Mapping indicates that the site is not at risk from a flood event with a return period of 1 in 200 years, plus climate change. That is the 0.5% annual risk of a flood occurring in any one year, with an allowance for climate change. The Flooding & Structures Officer advises that in any event, the proposed parking meters would not create any more catchment of surface water and would not have any significant effect on the storage capacity of the functional flood plain, nor would they affect local flooding problems. The Flooding & Structures Officer therefore raises no objection to the application on the grounds of flood risk.

The **Council's Road Services** advise that the locations of the proposed parking meters are acceptable as adequate pedestrian space would remain on the sections of footway where the parking meters would be installed. Road Services therefore raise no objection to the application subject to the parking meters being installed in such a way that they allow at least 1.2 metres unobstructed clear footway width for users of the footway, which they have confirmed is achievable. Such control can competently be imposed as a condition on a grant of planning permission.

On all the above considerations the proposed parking meters are consistent with Policies 7 and 14 of NPF4 and Policies CH2, DP2, NH11 and T2 of the LDP.

The proposals are considered to be in accordance with the provisions of the stated relevant Development Plan policies and there are no material considerations which outweigh the proposal's accordance with the Development Plan.

#### **CONDITIONS:**

- 1 The development hereby approved shall begin before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason:

Pursuant to Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended.

- 2 The parking meters hereby approved shall be installed such that they allow at least 1.2 metres unobstructed clear footway width to remain available for users of the footway.

Reason:

In the interests of road and pedestrian safety.

