



Summary Report: Review of Somerset Council – Minehead Town Council Car Park Management Agreement

Purpose of the Report

This report summarises the key differences between the original draft management agreement and the revised version provided with this agenda, identifies the issues previously raised by councillors and sets out the steps required to finalise and sign the agreement so that the outstanding funds can be released.

Background

Somerset Council and Minehead Town Council (MTC) are entering into a Management Agreement for Alexandra Road and North Road Car Parks, following the transfer of these sites to MTC in May 2025.

The original version of the agreement was presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee in October 2025 but was not approved due to several inaccuracies and unclear references. A revised version has since been prepared to address these issues.

Key Issues Identified in the Original Version

The original draft was not approved for the following reasons:

Incorrect or missing clause references - Several sections referred to clause numbers that did not exist, making parts of the agreement unclear or unenforceable.

Irrelevant reference to a “factory outlet” - The original text included a statement suggesting the car parks served a factory outlet centre, which was not relevant to Minehead and caused confusion.

No reference to MTC parking in its own car parks - The draft did not include provisions confirming that authorised MTC vehicles would be exempt from charges when parked for official Council business.

Key Improvements in the Revised Version

The updated version now:

- Corrects all clause references.
- Removes the irrelevant factory outlet terminology.
- Adds provisions for MTC vehicles, including the listing of authorised VRMs.
- Clarifies responsibilities for maintenance, revenue sharing, reporting and tariff reviews.

- Strengthens wording on data provision, transparency and audit processes.
- Retains and clarifies the Management Committee approach, supporting joint working and issue resolution.

These improvements bring the document in line with MTC expectations and render the agreement workable.

Shoppers Permit Consideration

Although not part of the agreement wording itself, councillors previously raised concerns regarding the Shoppers Permit scheme:

- The scheme remains a manual, paper-based system.
- Income cannot currently be separated or attributed accurately to individual car parks.

Given this, it is not recommended that MTC pursue separate entitlement calculations for its two car parks at this stage.

It is recommended that the Management Committee (as established in the maintenance agreement) keep this matter under review, exploring the potential for digital modernisation jointly in the future.

Importance of Prompt Signing

Signing the revised agreement is necessary in order to:

- Enable Somerset Council to release outstanding payments owed to MTC.
- Ensure a legally clear and mutually agreed framework for future car park operations.
- Avoid delays to income flow or machine maintenance responsibilities.

Recommendation to Council

It is recommended that Minehead Town Council approve the revised Management Agreement and appoint two councillor signatories because:

- The errors identified in the earlier draft have now been addressed.
- The document reflects a practical and accurate working arrangement.
- Signing will unlock income due to MTC and formalise the management structure.
- Any remaining operational complexities (e.g., Shoppers Permit issues) can be dealt with by the Management Committee as intended.

Ben Parker
Town Clerk
January 2026