

PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21ST JULY 2023

FREE PARKING REVIEW

Purpose: The Council has supported town centres with the provision of free parking schemes for several years. This report provides members with information that considers the impact of the schemes from an output and revenue perspective. It provides several options for decision.

Scrutiny Committee is asked to:-

Review and assess the information contained in Report and provide any recommendations, comments, or advice to the Cabinet Member prior to the report's consideration by Cabinet.

Cabinet will be asked to consider the following options:

1. Retain the five free days for events in line with the current policy and cease the current free parking offer which provides towns with free parking periods for set hours and days of the week or provide a budget.
2. Retain the five free days for events in line with the current policy and cease the current free parking offer which provides towns with free parking periods for set hours and days of the week or introduce the one-hour free parking and support with a budget.
3. Retain the five free days for events in line with the current policy, cease the current free parking offer which provides towns with free parking periods for set hours and days of the week and allow the BID teams from key towns to provide a free car parking offer subject to the bid funding in full the authority's calculated loss of revenue.
4. Retain the five free days for events in line with the current policy, cease the existing free parking offer and provide a set budget allocation for towns for them to determine their own free parking periods relative to the budget provided and the authority's calculated loss of revenue.
5. Reinstate standard charging to part address the current budget pressures and remove all free parking offers.

Reasons: Revenue support for the existing free parking offer is no longer available. Scrutiny Committee is being consulted for views to formulate a submission to the Cabinet for consideration.

Cabinet Decision Required YES

Council Decision Required NO

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER: -
Cllr. Edward Thomas. Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services.

Directorate:

Name of Head of Service: S.G. Pilliner

Report Author: S.G. Pilliner

Designations:

Head of Highways and Transportation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21ST JULY 2023

FREE PARKING REVIEW

The Council has supported town centres with the provision of free parking schemes for several years. This report provides members with information that considers the impact of the schemes from an output and revenue perspective. It provides several options for decision.

Car parks serve extremely important environmental, economic and social objectives that include:

- Enabling the expeditious movement of traffic*
- Reducing congestion
- Improving air quality
- Managing the environment
- Making towns attractive to visitors/tourists
- Stimulating and supporting economic activity and retail spend in town centres.
- Stimulating sustainable travel

Behavioural changes and the growth of internet shopping continues to impact on town centres. The stimulus introduced to support free car parking has not changed parking behaviours and this is consistent with the findings of previous research. It is the town centre offer that influences demand. Parking charges are a low proportion of total annual car operating expenditure for a motorist.

The two biggest concerns of motorists from the findings of recent survey work undertaken by the RAC are the cost of fuel which takes up a greater proportion of the operating cost of a car. Motorists are also more concerned about the condition of the highway. Parking charges feature on the bottom quartile of motorists' concerns.

The existing budget pressures caused by a reduction in income are being mitigated by reductions in expenditure on car parks and other highways and transportation related expenditure which impacts on the standard and appeal of car parks and the town centres. It is also mitigated by an increase in revenue from the camera enforcement. Both are not sustainable.

There are options for consideration in the report as set out in the recommendations.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report:

Signed: **S.G. Pilliner**

Head of Transportation and Highways

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
NONE	NONE	YES	NONE	NONE	NONE	YES

1. Finance

Parking income is not achieving budgeted target with income for off street parking forecast to be circa £817k below the target, this is partly offset by an increase in on street income from enforcement which is not sustainable in the medium term. Options two three and four all have a financial implication ranging from a minimum of £219k to £409k.

2. Physical Assets

The continued reduction in maintenance expenditure is leading to a deterioration in the parking asset.

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S)
AWARE**

YES

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

There are none