

Appendix 1

Car Parking Working Group – meeting notes 12 July 2019 (1.30pm)

Present Members: Cllrs R J Dolley, R Evans and R F R Radford (also Cllrs F Letch and Mrs N Woollatt as observers only)

Present Officers: A Jarrett, S Noyce, C Gillard, V Lowman and S Lees

Cllr Bob Evans was elected as Chairman of the re-established Working Group.

He explained that he had initially been appointed to the group as a co-optee and he remained as such since he was not a Member of the Economy PDG but had relevant experience and knowledge. Two of the original members of the working group had not been returned following the district council election in May and the remaining member was now a member of the Cabinet, therefore it had needed a new membership to be appointed.

At its meeting on 13 June 2019 the Economy PDG had appointed Cllrs Ron Dolley and Ray Radford to the re-established Working Group to work alongside Cllr Evans. Cllr Evans stated that the timing and change in membership had been unfortunate but he hoped he would provide some consistency.

He further explained how the original group had gone about their task having had discussions about each individual council owned car park in the 3 main towns. The WG had felt this was necessary since the 'offer' was not the same in each of the towns and each car park represented a unique set of circumstances. At their final meeting in December 2018 the previous WG had come up with a draft set of proposals. They had started from the premise that the 30 minutes 'free' parking did not do anything to encourage 'dwell' time within each town. This view had also repeatedly been relayed to them by traders.

With the aid of a spreadsheet showing the current car parking charges compared to the proposed new car parking charges, the newly re-formed WG considered each car park in turn to ascertain whether they were still of the same view:

William Street

Because of the need for parents to drop off and pick up children from Castle Primary School the WG felt it was still important to maintain the fee 8.30am to 9.30am and 3pm till 4pm free parking periods. However, they continued to recommend that the 30 minutes free parking throughout the day be removed.

St Saviours / Crediton

Recommendation for charges to remain as previously proposed.

Discussion took place regarding the number of car park permits given to the local school and the fact that many parents preferred to transport their children to school via a vehicle rather than walk them even though in many cases this was a short distance.

Phoenix House

The previous recommendation had been to alter these charges so as to take account of the Premier Inn and ensure that the council's income from car parking was not detrimentally affected.

It was felt that an hour ought to be the maximum stay in the parking bays outside Phoenix House. If people wanted longer then they could park in the multi-storey. It was confirmed that disabled drivers would get an extra hour free but that signage could be better in order to clarify this. It was suggested that DWP be asked to display some 'Pay and Display' signage in their window as a way forward.

MSCP

It was felt that previous charges had been on the low side compared to other multi-storey car parks in Devon. It was important to remember that this was a long stay car park and there was a need to encourage people to purchase permits. To park in the MSCP at the moment each day, if a person worked in Tiverton, would total £470 p.a., however, a permit currently only costs £180.

The recommendation of the WG is that the charges for the MSCP be tidied up and that they are:

- £2 for 2hrs
- £4 for 5hrs
- £6 for 10 hrs

If there was a charge for all day parking this would capture the Premier Inn customers. People that lived and worked locally could buy a permit which would work out at £1.32 a day. It was felt that this should be reflected in the other long stay car parks throughout the district.

Overnight charging

Cllr Woollatt made the point that, overnight in Cullompton, car parks were almost empty, most of the time, and yet the streets were clogged up with cars making it very difficult for local residents to park outside their own properties. She suggested that the WG consider offering free overnight parking in car parks where locally there was a problem for local residents. She also questioned whether charging for overnight parking was supporting the night time economy.

Cllr Evans stated that, in his view, overnight charging should stay but that the council should advertise permits better. It was still only £1 to park overnight and this had not

been increased in 3 years. An annual permit would reduce this cost to 50p per night, i.e. 50% less. It was his view that the council's revenue still needed to be maintained in order to support the provision of other vital services.

Cllr Dolley stated that there was a fine balance to be made and other parts of Devon and Somerset still charged for overnight parking.

The consensus view was that there should be charging for overnight parking but that the cost of permits should be reduced.

Westexe

The number of PCN's issued had been minimal but enforcement costs were still high. This was a different short stay car park – there was a relationship with Wetherspoons to bear in mind.

May need to look at increasing permit costs for the MSCP if charges are reduced elsewhere in order to balance costs.

The point was made that the situation was different in Westexe compared to Cullompton with regard to overnight charging. The streets in Westexe would be full of cars if the proposal was to go ahead. It was therefore agreed that the WG needed to consider the situation car park by car park.

High Street, Crediton

Moving away from the charge for 10 hours and staggering the charging periods was seen as an improvement.

Leave tariffs as they were previously recommended.

Wellbooke Street

The previous proposals were discussed on the spreadsheet provided and agreed.

Cllr Frank Letch's motion – free parking on Saturday's in the three main towns

Cllr Letch had felt that the footfall in Crediton on Saturdays was much greater on Saturdays than on week days largely due to there being a market. This had obvious benefits to the local economy. He felt that car parks were a community asset and should be used for the benefit of the local community and its economy. On market day, because of car park costs, there were an increased number of cars looking to park on the streets. However, he did understand that not charging on Saturdays in each of the towns would mean a loss of income to the council of between £37k and £50k per annum.

Cllr Woollatt stated that she did not quite understand why a lot of traders closed their businesses at lunchtime on Saturdays in Cullompton she still felt that not charging for overnight parking would be more beneficial to local residents than offering free

parking on Saturdays. Therefore she was not able to support Cllr Letch's Motion. Cllr Dolley was also not able to support the motion for similar reasons.

Cllr Evans stated that he would relay the views of the WG to the Economy PDG on 8 August so that they could formulate an opinion as to whether or not the Motion should be supported or rejected.

Permits

At the moment the council asked for a one off payment for an annual permit costing £185. It was felt that the council should look to offer customers the choice of either paying for an annual permit on a monthly basis, quarterly and half yearly. However, at the moment the software was not in place to support alternative payment methods. However, negotiations could take place with the supplier to provide alternative payment methods if the Cabinet supported the proposals. This was seen as a vital step forward if greater numbers of people were to purchase permits.

A suggestion was made to reduce overnight permits from £180 to £100 provided the option to pay monthly was made available to people. If the numbers of people wanting to buy permits increased greatly due to them being able to pay monthly then it might be worth the council investing some money into improving the software system to support this.

Discussion took place regarding whether or not overnight parking permit charges should be generic across the district or whether separate charges should apply to individual car parks. The consensus view was that consistency was needed across the three towns and that the following charges should be recommended for overnight charging:

- If paying by monthly direct debit – 12 months x £10 per month (total £120 per year)
- If making a one off payment – 1 year x £100 (total £100 per year)

Next steps

WG report to go to the 8 August Economy PDG meeting, Cllr Evans to present the report.

Include notes of this meeting and the spreadsheet with current and proposed new charges. Also include a bullet point summary of the recommendations being made listed by car park.

AJ to be present at the Economy PDG meeting.

Meeting closed 15:05pm