

Report for: Economy PDG

Date of Meeting:	16 November 2023
Subject:	Car Park Working Group Update Report
Cabinet Member:	Cllr James Buczkowski, Cabinet Member for Finance Cllr Guy Cochran (Chair of Working Group)
Responsible Officer:	Luke Howard, Environment and Enforcement Manager
Exempt:	None
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

The Car Parking Consultation Group was founded in response to concerns regarding the decision making process in relation to car parking tariff increases proposed in 2023 as well as the lack of consultation with local business leaders and representatives. This decision to create the group was made in March 2023 by this PDG to better inform future proposals on parking changes in the years to come.

Recommendation(s):

Note only

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

1.1 In March 2023 a higher set of Tariff and Permit charges for parking were decided upon and implemented in June 2023. During the decision making

process there were concerns raised by members and business groups regarding how the figures had been calculated and the input (or lack of) there had been from local representatives and business leaders.

- 1.2 As parking tariffs had not been increased for some years, an accumulative interest was added to the charges. This raised the question as to why charges had not increased year on year to prevent a sudden hike in cost.
- 1.3 To prevent similar issues occurring again and to explore how parking stock is best utilised, Economy PDG requested a consultation group be founded to engage with community groups, town councils and leading business representatives.
- 1.4 The Section 151 Officer was also delegated authority by members to increase future parking tariff and permit charges in line with inflation if this was required.
- 1.5 The newly formed group has representative members of the community and business leaders from Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton. It is chaired by an elected member of this PDG, supported by Officers.

2.0 Parking Consultation Group Terms of Reference

- 2.1 In order to determine the scope of the group and better understand what proposals could be explored, terms of reference were discussed and agreed by officers and representative members at its first meeting
- 2.2 The terms of reference agreed are
 - Sustainability of car parks including climate impacts
 - Visible presence of The Council to user groups
 - Development of current redundant/zero revenue parking areas
 - Future planning and community provision
 - Revenue streams
 - Tariff and permit options
 - Highway Authority traffic management plans

3.0 Group meeting September 2023

- 3.1 The group held its first meeting on 20 September 2023. The meeting was well represented and attended by Members, Officers, Community Groups, Town Councils and Business Leaders.
- 3.2 The group discussed the terms of reference and how these could be considered for each respective community. The Chair, supported by Officers, provided guidance on making credible and economically viable proposals that would enable this Economy PDG to make proposals to Cabinet. This included discussion surrounding current interest rates and the expectation for these to remain high for some time.

3.3 The group were asked to explore and decide upon an initial set of matters that were most pressing for their communities. The group settled on:

- Three hour tariffs being explored as an option in short stay car parks.
- Exploring opportunities to utilise empty parking stock, with reference to cheaper pricing strategy for such spaces.
- Incentivising permit use via car sharing with a focus on business use.
- Christmas parking decisions for both 2024 and future years to be decided upon during budget setting for that financial year.
- Review of disability access.
- Market trader permits currently preventing shoppers from parking in the market car park, Tiverton.

3.4 A decision recording by the Cabinet Member for Finance was announced in respect of Christmas parking for 2023. This decision agrees to allow free parking on five Saturdays in the lead up to Christmas. For clarity, these dates are 25 November and then the 3, 9, 16 and 23 December 2023. Users will be able to park free of charge on these days in the Multi-storey Car Park in Tiverton, Station Road/Forge Way in Cullompton and High Street/St Saviours Way in Crediton.

4.0 Future Meetings

4.1 The group will continue to meet on a regular basis with expectation for meetings every eight weeks, where possible. The next group meeting will be held in early December, with the aim of the group to explore in further depth the pressing matters identified in the September meeting.

4.2 Future meetings will also include reviewing the terms of reference and examining proposals from the group for the Economy PDG. It is hoped that via this consultation group any proposals in respect of parking will have a better rounded representation from communities.

Financial Implications

Parking generates substantial revenue and proposals from the group are expected to help the council balance income against community requests. The group also explores opportunities to increase revenue streams.

Legal Implications

Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 regulates how changes can be implemented. Any decisions need to have consideration for this act and requirements for amendments.

Risk Assessment

None required

Impact on Climate Change

The group will consider how decisions impact on the climate, with special consideration given to improving climate impacts of parking through the implementation of technology such as EV Charging.

Equalities Impact Assessment

All decisions will consider the needs of all user groups. Any amendments will follow legislative requirements for advertisements, consultation and engagement with community groups.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The aim of the group is to explore ideas to advance the corporate plan of The Council.

Contact Details and Background Papers

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Background papers: