

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

14 December 2010

**Item 5 – Public Participation
Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 – Car Parking Strategy (item 6)**

Statement from Mr Brian Deeley on behalf of the Trustees, Staff and Volunteers of Age UK Wiltshire

It is with significant concern that we read of the proposed increases to car parking charges to be considered by the Cabinet of Wiltshire Council. Age UK Wiltshire has its main offices located in Devizes and would like to ensure that the following points of concern are brought to the attention of the cabinet;

1. For many older people the use of the car parking facilities within our urban centres is not a matter of choice but one of necessity. The erosion of key facilities within many of Wiltshire's rural communities has meant that the only method for accessing the same is by having affordable car parking facilities within our towns and villages. The reported rise in charges is totally disproportionate to the minimal increases in income that many older people will be receiving.
2. A vital aspect of the ability of Age UK Wiltshire to deliver its services is the commitment of our team of volunteers, many of whom are either based in, or have to visit our offices in Devizes. The increase upon the costs of volunteer expenses will have a significant impact upon our overheads. This at a time when increasing service demands are being placed upon the voluntary sector.
3. The majority of our staff are based at the Devizes office. Many of these work on a part-time basis. The effect upon these valued and very necessary members of the Age UK Wiltshire team will be considerable.

Whilst it is appreciated that the current economic climate demands that difficult decisions have to be made, it must be questioned whether the potential car parking charge increases can be considered acceptable in that they will impact upon some of the most vulnerable within our society.

Recent strategy documents issued for consultation by Wiltshire Council (and others) fully recognise the changing demographic of the county and the need for the continued development and involvement of a strong voluntary sector. The reported charge increases would appear to do little to support these laudable goals.