

Wessex Association of Chambers of Commerce

The Chambers of: Bradford-on-Avon Calne Chippenham Corsham Cricklade Devizes Frome
Malmesbury Marlborough Melksham Mere Pewsey Tidworth Trowbridge Warminster Westbury
Wilton Wootton Bassett (Linked with Cricklade
Business Association)



Pentagon House : 52 Castle Street
Trowbridge : Wiltshire : BA14 8AU
Telephone: 01225 355553 Fax: 01225 355554
E Mail: info@wessexchambers.org.uk
www.wessexchambers.org.uk

Councillor Toung

2nd December 2010

Our ref: HMH/TP

Your ref:

Dear Cllr Tonge

CAR PARKING PROVISION

We have in writing and at our meeting expressed the views of the Chambers that represent well over 1,000 businesses.

Our recent meeting concentrated on a few things that the Council were exploring but did not address the central issue of a car parking policy which should be linked to an integrated economic regeneration and development approach.

We are extremely concerned that as it stands the Councils attitude to car parking is very simplistic in that it is a revenue raising exercise.

There are no impact assessments on local traders and no consideration has been taken of the likelihood that a change in policy will not raise revenue but will result in car parking outside of the regulated sites.

Indeed, we have yet to see the figures that indicate that Wiltshire does make money on car parks at all. The provision of revenue figures is welcome but the key factor are the costs allocated with these sites.

We are very aware of one central fact – an increase in charges on a change in the charging policy will have an impact on shopping patterns and traffic movements.

This is not a County where the vast majority of urban areas fit neatly into a few bands. Other than the three large centres all the towns have different trading patterns dependent on a number of factors such as tourism and proximity to a larger urban area.

The three large towns also have a mix of council controlled pay sites, and private sector sites some of which are free. This makes it very difficult to foresee what effect an increase on the council sites will have in the overall scheme of things.

We welcome your disclosure that you are actually looking at:-

- a. Pay on exit or a telephone scheme similar to that employed at railway car parks.
- b. Distinguishing between short-term parking for shoppers and the requirements of employees which are vital in low wage, rural economy where public transport is not always an option.

The draft consultation document has identified 4 bands of which band D may be allowed to 'buy out' for an agreed sum. Can you confirm whether this will be extended to Band C as well?

We have re-consulted with our Member Chambers and as a group we are very concerned that the policy put forward is purely a knee jerk reaction to an immediate financial problem and is an imposition of a 'one size fits all' approach which is quite inappropriate. Nowhere have we seen a discussion of a car parking policy as a tool of an economic development program, backed up by impact assessments both on the County and individual towns.

We cannot understand a policy that does not:-

- a. Reflect where the Council wishes growth to be in the future.
- b. Recognise the different roles of the three economic centres and the other towns in Wiltshire.
- c. Contain a discussion of future planning requirements in respect of the provision of car parking on new and altered development sites.
- d. Recognise different towns have different trading patterns.
- e. Consider the development of a policy which will deal adequately with the problem of parking outside of the car parks which will be especially relevant because of the increases envisaged.

We recognise the economic reality of the Councils position and also recognise the need for all revenue producing areas to maximise their potential but believe that a straight increase across the board based on the present system (flawed that it is) would have a smaller impact on business than the proposed policy changes which are based on a wish to harmonise and standardise policy without regard to impact and without grasping this opportunity to integrate with planning, public transport delivery and economic development.

Yours sincerely

Harry Hilliard
Email harryh@monahans.com