

**Wiltshire Council**

**Car Parking Review Task Group**

**Environment Select Committee**

**17 February 2015**

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## **Car Parking Review Task Group Position Statement Post Consultation**

### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

To advise the Environment Select Committee on the position of the Car Parking Review Task Group having considered the consultation responses received and the proposals made as to amending the current car parking strategy. This report should be taken in conjunction with the summary report on the Car Parking consultation as the Task Group's view on the process and outcomes (Item 6a on the Agenda).

### **2.0 Background**

At its meeting on 29 October 2013, following discussions between the chair and vice chair of the Environment Select Committee and the Cabinet member for Highways and Street Scene and Broadband; the Committee agreed to the inclusion of the Car Parking Review on its forward work programme. The Committee was advised that it would be appropriate for this piece of work to commence early in 2014.

It was agreed that the Task Group's remit would be limited to car parking only and would provide an advisory and support role to the team undertaking the review as well as providing a member to sit on the Project Board. The initial task was to review and comment on the presentation and town profiles that were due to go out to Area Boards in March. Considerations included the quality of the presentation, the questions being asked of the communities and whether or not the communities have sufficient and/ or the correct information on which to base their decisions.

Subsequently, the review team decided on alternative approach of a 3 stage document-based process as follows:

- I. To give key stakeholders an opportunity to shape the scope of the review: consult with external stakeholders as part of the scoping exercise of the Parking Review (6 week period); at the end of the consultation period 1 - 2 surgeries were offered at County Hall.

- II. To give key stakeholders an opportunity to make specific proposals for their local towns and / or individual car parks: prepare town-by-town assessments, using feedback from the consultation where appropriate. Provide the assessments to each Area Board for consideration at its councillor only meetings. At this stage, it is not considered advisable to address the public Area Board meetings as they would generate many questions which it would not be possible to answer at this stage.
- III. Public consultation: comprehensive consultation to canvass public opinion on the strategic considerations of car parking, this was a process lasting 12 weeks and was widely publicised.

### **3.0 Observations**

The Task Group reconvened on 2 February to review the consultation responses in summary and to consider the proposals that will be put forward to Cabinet on 17 March. During this process, the Task Group made the following observations:

- The use of pay by phone services was strongly supported by the Task Group and it was held that this should be promoted.
- It was noted that there is currently a surcharge on payments made by phone and that this is being addressed with the provider. At the very least the surcharge should be brought down to 5 pence from 20 pence.
- It was considered that further education and support for the public, particularly the elderly and those less used to technology will be required in order to make cashless technologies successful;
- The Task Group was keen to ensure that sectors of the public are not disenfranchised through moving to cashless technologies and that any such move should be done over a suitable timeframe due care and thought has been given to members of our community who for whatever reason will find such a scheme difficult or even impossible to use, particularly the elderly.
- Concern was also raised in terms of limited mobile phone signal in some areas;
- It was suggested that the removal of pay by cash machines would force the public to utilise alternative methods of payment and that this may be a required step to facilitate change;
- That open, frank dialogue and negotiations are required between the Council and communities regarding the car parks in their areas and the potential for transferring such assets to town and parish councils;
- Parking enforcement via employed personnel is costly and should not be the primary source of revenue protection;
- The Salisbury Park and Rides could be made more attractive by providing access to hot desks and refreshments;
- It was noted that the issue of coach parking would have lead to an unmanageable workload at this stage of the review; however it remains an important issue in the greater scheme.

- The review has been a worthwhile exercise which has provided the necessary data to facilitate and support such discussions with town and parish councils;
- It is important to actively promote the use of car parks through altering charges;
- It was acknowledged that the review provides for flexible and individual solutions, which is paramount to catering for the diverse towns and cities of Wiltshire;

#### **4.0 Recommendations**

On consideration of the consultation responses and the proposals that will be made to Cabinet, the Task Group made the following recommendations:

1. That the use of automated pay by phone systems be made more attractive by ensuring the same charges are levied irrespective of the method of payment; for example they should be no surcharge on payments made using the automated phone service.
2. Increased pressure should be levied on mobile phone companies to ensure that better mobile phone signals are achieved across the County's car parking areas.
3. That the use of smart card technology be investigated.
4. Additional consideration should be made as to educating members of the public who do not have the skills to use cashless technologies and ensure that alternative provisions are made for where this is not possible with due care and attention.
5. That Council officers should continue their efforts to maximise use of Car Parks when they are less well used. This would be by means of cheaper or free periods when revenue has been proven not to be affected. Consultation responses were keen to encourage this sort of experimentation.
6. The current Park & Ride scheme in Salisbury should encourage out of town city workers to use this service with a more attractive offering.
7. The Council should be prepared to enter into discussions with Shopping Centre owners (in addition to Town and Parish Councils) to take over Council Car Parks.
8. The issues of coach parking and residential parking provision need to be considered as part of an overall parking management strategy.
9. That towns and parishes are actively given the opportunity to take on assets or top-up funding to enable reduced charges; and that they are properly supported in making any such decision through the provision of real and accurate information.

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#### **Car Parking Review Task Group**

**Cllr Mark Packard, Chairman of the Car Parking Review Task Group**

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