

JOHN GLEN M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

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Dick Tonge
Wiltshire Council
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13th December 2010

Dear Dick

Having attended a meeting of Salisbury City Centre Management on Friday, I am writing to you ahead of the forthcoming vote on parking charges to make the case for Salisbury City Centre not to become the victim of a county-wide approach to pricing policy.

People who shop in Salisbury typically weigh up the relative merits of going to Southampton, Winchester or Andover – not Trowbridge, Melksham or Chippenham. The fact that the latter are included in the same county is a geographical reality, not an economic one.

I am sure you will agree that, when it comes to determining the viability of a particular city centre, the most meaningful comparisons are to its **actual** competitors for footfall and retail spend.

Furthermore, Salisbury's retail centre is still a work in progress. It is about to be enhanced by major changes to the Market Square and The Maltings project and does not need to be undermined in advance by measures that risk alienating any of its current clientele.

I am, of course, aware that Salisbury is starting from the unfortunate position of having an expensive and under-utilised park & ride provision that is still some way off justifying the investment made in it. If our experience to date has taught us anything, it is that park and ride is not a hit with short-term visitors to the city. The best avenue to improve take-up is, in my opinion, to aggressively market it to city centre workers, making a special effort to ensure a smooth-running service at times when local commuters need it.

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Of course, I fully appreciate the pressures imposed on Wiltshire Council by the local government settlement and applaud the steps taken in many areas to deal with the tough challenges you face.

It is my view that Salisbury CCM is not blindly opposing all price hikes but has proposed viable alternatives and I would only ask that, if prices do have to rise, you first take account of some of the board's ideas for improving revenue generation in the existing car parks.

One such idea is the installation of pay-on-exit barriers in the Central Car Park to encourage people to spend longer in the city centre, rather than racing to meet a self-imposed one or two hour 'deadline' determined at the point of arrival.

David M. Owen

PP **John Glen MP**
Member of Parliament for Salisbury

cc Jane Scott
John Brady
Richard Clewer
Chris Cochrane
Mary Douglas
Bill Moss
Paul Sample