

Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

01 November 2011

Minute No. 191 - Car Parking Charges

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Cllr Dick Tonge, was in attendance as requested by the Environment Select Committee held on 06 September 2011. Cllr Tonge informed the committee that the report in the agenda pack had been revised ahead of its consideration by Full Council on 08 November 2011. He outlined the revisions to the report as follows:

- A new paragraph (paragraph 8) and appendix (Appendix 3) have been added detailing proposals made by Salisbury City Council, Salisbury City Centre Management and others that were considered by Cabinet on 18 October.
- Chart 1, Table 2 and paragraphs 36-38 have been amended to take account of revised and updated car parking data.
- A new appendix (Appendix 5) has been added outlining how the Council is supporting regeneration activities in Wiltshire's towns.
- A new paragraph (paragraph 40) and appendix (Appendix 7) have been added providing car park ticket sales and income for each town from April 2010 to September 2011

The key points of the report, *Countrywide Analysis of Car Parking Charges*, highlighted by the Cabinet member were:

- The report's conclusions that car parking charges were not of primary significance in relation to retail health, and that the primary factor encouraging economic success was the level and range of retail services on offer to visitors.
- Shop vacancies across Wiltshire's market town's had declined with the exception of Salisbury.
- Within Salisbury, footfall levels had stabilised and undergone recovery since February 2011 after months of decline.
- Short stay ticket sales have reduced by 5.8% as shown in like-for-like data tables for On and Off Street Parking Ticket Sales in 2010 and 2011. The figures excluded the areas of West Wiltshire and Salisbury.
- In Appendix 7 figures were presented showing town by town ticket sales. It was emphasized that long stay ticket sales were down, and that sales were down for short stay even in some area where prices had remained unchanged.
- Appendix 8 presented mixed results where other local authorities reduced car parking charges.

A verbal update was provided on the impact on bus services of changes in car parking income. In Salisbury there had been an increase in the use of general bus services and of Park and Ride, but figures for the rest of the county April 2010- April 2011 showed a decrease of 9%. Carshare Wiltshire was up 73% in 2011.

Where car parking charges produced a surplus this money was hypothecated for use by bus services but in the case of a shortfall these monies would be found from the departmental budget. The committee was advised this arrangement was a legal arrangement.

Overall there was a £500,000 shortfall of income from on- and off-street parking for 2011-2012.

A debate followed, wherein concern was raised in relation to the time the committee had to digest the revised report. The committee also discussed the possibility that on street parking in residential estates had risen in response to parking charges. The committee was informed of the Cabinet Member's intent to promote the use of season tickets.

With regards to the decline in shop vacancies, it was highlighted that the impact of the increase in charity shops within those figures had not been fully assessed. The committee also further debated the level of support given to various towns for Economic Development and Regeneration activities, including the cost to the Council of CCTV systems in different areas. The Chair requested a written response from the Service Director for Economy and Enterprise to provide this information in more detail.

Several measures to improve the service for users of Council car parking sites were discussed, including the need to improve signage at car parking sites. Some members of the committee felt that in their localities the perception of the impact of the changes was potentially damaging the Council's reputation.

The committee noted that the issue would be debated fully at Full Council on 08 November 2011.

It was:

Resolved:

- 1) To thank the Cabinet member for the opportunity to contribute to the Car Parking review;**
- 2) To recognise the current economic climate and the challenges it presents the Wiltshire public and its business sector;**
- 3) To recognise that due to the legislative process any immediate policy changes on car parking pricing will impact on the 2012/2013 budget; and in response to ask the Cabinet member to inform Council on the service implications of the current (2011/12) shortfall on the Car Parking budget.**