

**CAR PARKING STRATEGY – ACTION PLAN
(Report by the Head of Administration)**

1. INTRODUCTION

At its meeting held on 15th January 2008, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) considered a report by the Head of Planning Services regarding the development of a Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan.

1.2 The conclusions of the Car Parking Working Party originally had been presented to the Scrutiny Panel in October 2007 when the Panel had made a number of recommendations on the content of the report. Cabinet subsequently asked the Working Party to investigate further the recommendations of the Panel and also additional ideas suggested by Cabinet itself.

1.3 Following consideration of those issues, the Working Party's further report was considered by the Panel at its January meeting.

2. VIEWS OF THE PANEL

2.1 Although appreciative of the additional work undertaken by the Car Parking Working Party, the Panel still had reservations about some aspects of its recommendations. In order not to delay the matter any further, the Panel decided to raise no objections to the report but to invite the Cabinet to take into account the following issues when considering the Working Party's recommendations.

- The Panel was disappointed that the Working Party decided not to change its proposal that there should be a 25% reduction in the cost of a car parking season ticket for cars with CO₂ emissions of 120g/km or less. The Panel felt that this did not provide sufficient incentive to encourage motorists to purchase low emission vehicles and that the percentage reduction should be greater.
- The Panel remained of the view that any surplus income generated by increased car parking charges should be ring-fenced to provide integrated, sustainable and accessible transport.
- The Panel was concerned that few of the recommendations previously made by both itself and the Cabinet had been accepted by the Working Party and considered that a further review of car parking should be commissioned by Cabinet as soon as possible after the new charges had been implemented in

the forthcoming summer, with particular emphasis on actions to encourage environmentally sensitive forms of car use.

3. CABINET DECISION

- 3.1 The Cabinet, at its meeting held on 31st January 2008, concluded that a reduction of 25% in the cost of a car parking season ticket for cars with CO₂ emissions of 120 g/km or less represented a fair and equitable discount. With regard to surplus income generated by increased car parking charges, the Cabinet decided that it would not be appropriate to ring fence income in this way. The Cabinet therefore resolved to make an order to implement the increased charges and other proposals recommended by the Car Parking Working Party with effect from 1st June 2008 and to review the arrangements following a period of 12 months after their introduction.

4. CALL IN

- 4.1 Following publication of the Cabinet's decision, 8 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) called in the matter. This was discussed again at a special meeting of the Panel held on 20th February which Councillors I C Bates and P L E Bucknell as Leader and appropriate Executive Councillor respectively attended.
- 4.2 At that meeting, the Panel made clear its concern and disappointment that its recommendations had not been accepted by the Cabinet. The Panel explained that, from the research it had undertaken, the proposed 25% reduction in the cost of a car parking season ticket for vehicles with emissions below 120 g/km would have minimal impact in the District as this would apply to no more than a handful of vehicles. The Panel was of the opinion that the Cabinet should take a more innovative approach and set positive incentives that encouraged motorists to purchase and use low emission vehicles.
- 4.3 On the question of the use of surplus income from car parking charges, the Panel drew attention to the current Car Parking Strategy which states that the Council will direct surplus income derived from car parking charges to the furtherance of securing measures to promote integrated, sustainable and accessible transport. The Panel was advised that the Cabinet wished to retain flexibility to manage its budgets, within a policy adopted by the Council of not ring-fencing income from its various services. Nevertheless, the Panel pointed out the inconsistency between the statement in the Car Parking Strategy and the Council's policy which was both misleading and confusing. The Panel therefore invited the Cabinet to rectify this anomaly.
- 4.4 In terms of the next review of the car parking action plan, the Panel suggested that the Cabinet's decision to undertake a review 12 months after the implementation of the current proposals in June 2008 would effectively mean that the latter would remain in force until the autumn of 2010 given the time taken to carry out the review. As technology was rapidly changing, the implications for climate change were becoming more widely appreciated and the Council would shortly be approving an Environment Strategy, the Panel reiterated its view that a delay of this length was too long.

- 4.5 The Panel therefore referred the matter back to Cabinet for further consideration of the recommendations set out in Minute No 07/85 of the meeting which is reproduced elsewhere on the agenda.

5. CABINET RESPONSE

- 5.1 The Cabinet, at its meeting held on 21st February 2008 discussed the Panel's recommendations and resolved as follows:-

- (a) that the views expressed by the Overview & Scrutiny (Service Support) Panel be noted;
- (b) that a reduction of 50% in the cost of a car parking season ticket for cars with CO² emissions of 120g/km or less be introduced as part of the implementation of the car parking action plan with effect from 1st June 2008;
- (c) that the wider issues of encouraging the use of low emission vehicles, public transport, cycling and walking be dealt with in the development of the Environment Strategy and in the next review of the car parking action plan;
- (d) that surplus income from car parking charges be not ringed fenced for integrated, sustainable and accessible transport;
- (e) that the resolution in Minute No 99 (c) of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 31st January 2008 be amended and the proposed car parking charges outlined as the second option in Annex D of the Car Parking Strategy Action Plan be approved and advertised;
- (f) that the resolution in Minute No 99 (d) of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 31st January 2008 be amended and issues relating to climate change in the car parking action plan be reviewed following a period of 6 months after the introduction of the revised charges; and
- (g) that further consideration be given by the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, a representative of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) and relevant officers to the initial scoping of the review of the Car Parking Action Plan referred to in (f) above.

- 5.2 Following the meeting of the Cabinet, 7 Executive Councillors signed a Notice of Motion, under Standing Order 13.1 of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution, to rescind (e) above. The options for car parking charges will therefore be referred back to Cabinet for further consideration at their meeting scheduled for 13th March 2008.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Panel is invited to note the Cabinet's decisions as a result of the call in as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Minutes of the meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)
held on 9th October 2007, 15th January and 20th February 2008
Car Parking Strategy: Draft Action Plan – Report by the Head of Planning
Services

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