

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT TO CABINET ON CAR PARKING CHARGES

Recommendation passed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee Tuesday 26th November

"That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee produce a report to Cabinet with its response to the proposed car parking charges increase consultation before the closing date of 16 December 2019."

[OSC resolved to uphold the Cabinet decision on 5 November 2019 and that the OSC produce a report to cabinet with its response to the proposed car parking charges increases consultation before the closing date of 16 December 2019].

At the Chairman's request the proposed Car Parking Charges 2020 to 2022 were brought to Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enable a wider view of Car Parking charges to be debated by Councillors and invited outside bodies.

The outcome of the meeting was that no specific recommendations where made but the Committee wished to make a range of observations.

The committee welcomed a number of elected members and invited speakers.

- Vicki Meddows-Smith - CEO Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Colin Hicks - BID
- Cllr Alan Sutton (Member of Chichester District Parking Forum) also read out a statement from Cllr Gordon McAra.
- Cllr Judy Fowler (Midhurst Ward Member) read out statement from her and Stephen Morley (Midhurst Town Councillor)
- Cllr Eileen Lintill, Leader
- Cllr Penny Plant (Chaired the Chichester District Parking Forum meeting)
- Cllr Martyn Bell (Director of Chichester BID)

Colin Hicks from the BID

Colin Hicks presented a strong case for changing the psychology of parking so that it was not seen as a cost but was incentivised to encourage visitors to stay longer.

He also proposed that we should continue to work across the BID and the Council to offer events and other special promotions to encourage visitors to come to the City.

In addition BID expressed concern over any increase in parking charges.

Festival Theatre

Whilst not present for the car parking debate, representatives from the Festival Theatre had specifically reported during the *Overview and Scrutiny Committee 19th November Agenda Item 9 Chichester Festival Theatre Monitoring Report* that evening car parking charges made at the Northgate Car Park had affected the number of covers at the Brasserie at the Theatre.

Representation from Midhurst and Petworth

There was strong representation from Midhurst and Petworth that no changes should be made to the free parking element of car parking charges as this was seen as crucial to retaining visitors to Midhurst and Petworth.

Comments from the Committee [Comments from individual members not a reflection of the whole of the committee]

Chichester Councillors were concerned that Chichester was paying too much of the Car Parking costs whilst a level of free parking was retained elsewhere. This needs to be taken into account in the future.

There was a major concern that evening parking charges discourages visitors to use local restaurants prior to attending the Festival Theatre and using the New Park Centre.

Concerns were expressed that the new Car Parking charges were being proposed for the next two years, whilst the new Council had not had a more open debate. It was suggested that charges should be fixed for one year. Officers explained why this was not advisable.

Some members felt that charges needed to increasingly reflect the Council's aim to reduce traffic in the city and to encourage public transport.

Support was expressed for increasing parking for Blue Badge holders and the provision of electric charging points in Little London and Baffins Lane car Parks.

Other members of the committee felt the new charges were a realistic increase and would not be detrimental to visitor numbers.

Some members did wish to see a more innovative approach to charging as a way to manage the strategy.

There were no formal proposals to make changes to the recommended new charges.

Key observations from the Committee

- The committee supported the increase in charges to Little London to reduce the affect of idling cars at Little London Car Parks.
- Consideration should be given to increasing the provision of "Blue Badge" parking spaces in Baffins Lane and Little London.
- The Committee[some members of the committee] is concerned about the evening parking charges is affecting the night time economy.
- The provision of Electric Charging points could be increasingly focused on Little London and Baffins Lane to reduce the affects of idling petrol and diesel vehicles.
- BID introduced a range of progressive and innovative options for car parking charges in Chichester. In the forthcoming review of Parking Strategy these should be investigated further.
- The current Car Parking charges reflect a charging policy that may need to be reviewed in light of changing visitor behaviour.

Appendix 4

- The forthcoming District wide Car Parking Strategy Review needs to consider how we can mitigate the challenges of.....
 - increased congestion in the city
 - Air quality caused by idling vehicles
 - Changes to the visitor economy in Chichester and elsewhere in the District
 - Improving the use of specific car parks
- The Council needs to carefully consider the balance of charges in the City and in the rural and coastal car parks.
- The Car Parking Strategy needs to take an innovative approach to parking, taking into account the pressures on our towns and cities to find the best ways to encourage visitor to stay longer.

December 16 2019

Adrian Moss

V1.3