

Cabinet Response to the Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group

Introduction

At the Cabinet meeting on 6th April 2016 consideration was given to the report of the Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group.

The Leader welcomed Councillor M. T. Buxton to the meeting as a representative of the Task Group (as the Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor K. J. May was unable to attend), and thanked her for being present to provide clarification on any matters raised by Cabinet Members.

The Cabinet then discussed and considered each of the recommendations of the Task Group in detail.

Response to recommendations

Please find below the formal responses to the recommendations contained within the Review report:

Recommendation 1

The Council needs to formulate a clear Economic Development strategy that includes car parking as soon as possible, whilst considering the following key features of any such strategy:

- a) Ensuring that car parking arrangements are managed in accordance with the interests of the local economy.
- b) Working with partners in business and retail to develop the Economic Development Strategy that includes car parking options and tariffs that encourage customers to visit Bromsgrove.
- c) Ensure car parking arrangements support the Council's Economic Development Strategy.

Cabinet Response

In relation to recommendation 1 the Cabinet agreed that car parking was vital to the economic development of the Town and accepted the principles behind the recommendation. It was felt however that the existing Economic Development Priorities should be reviewed in order to assess the impact of car parking charges, rather than produce a new Economic Development Strategy which may need to alter in 6 months time. It was fully accepted that the needs and views of businesses in the Town needed to be taken into account and the new Centre

Manager would be fully involved in this review process and in working with local businesses. The process should be undertaken prior to the consideration of the next round of changes to fees and charges. The existing Economic Priorities needed to focus more strongly on car parking. Officers and Members from Economic Development, Car Parking and Planning would need to work very closely together on the further regeneration of the Town Centre.

The recommendation was therefore accepted in the amended form below:

- (1) that the Council reviews its Economic Development Priorities to assess the impact of car parking charges as soon as possible, whilst considering the following key features:
 - (a) ensuring that car parking arrangements are managed in accordance with the interests of the local economy;
 - (b) working with partners in business and retail to review the Economic Priorities that includes parking options and tariffs that encourage customers to visit Bromsgrove; and
 - (c) ensuring that car parking arrangements support the Council's Economic Priorities.

Recommendation 2

Having formulated the Economic Development Strategy it is recommended that an external expert be engaged by the Council, with a clear remit of what the Council wishes to achieve, it is suggested that such a consultant would need to consult with the following Council officers/Members:

- a) Economic Development Team
- b) Environmental Services Team
- c) Relevant Portfolio Holders
- d) Members of the Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group
- e) Local businesses and retailers.

Cabinet Response

This recommendation was largely accepted, with a minor change to the wording to reflect the changes made to recommendation 1 above . In addition the new Centres Manager has been added to the list of officers/Members to be involved in the consultation on car parking.

- (2) that whilst reviewing the Economic Priorities it is recommended that an external expert be engaged by the Council, with a clear remit of what the Council wishes to achieve. It is suggested that they would need to consult with the following Council officers/Members:

- (a) Economic Development Team
- (b) Environmental Services Team
- (c) Relevant Portfolio Holders
- (d) Members of the Evening and weekend car Parking Task Group
- (e) Local businesses and retailers
- (f) Town Centres Manager

Recommendation 3

Prior to any further trials (of any nature) being agreed and carried out any necessary data should be collected in order to have appropriate comparative data and information available to ensure that any such trial can be measured successfully.

Cabinet Response

Recommendation 3 was agreed.

Recommendation 4

Until the introduction of a strategy the current parking charges and concessions should be maintained (including the continuation of free evening car parking).

Cabinet Response

This recommendation was agreed subject to a minor change in wording to reflect the changes within recommendation 1.

- (4) that until the review of the Economic Priorities, the current parking charges and concessions should be maintained (including the continuation of free evening car parking).

The Leader and the Portfolio Holder thanked the Task Group Chairman and Members for the detailed work they had undertaken and for the recommendations arising from this.

Councillor Rod Laight – Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Regulatory Services .