

**JOINT CORPORATE RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**
15 MARCH 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Corporate Resources and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold on Thursday, 15 March 2018

PRESENT:

Councillors: Mike Allport, Haydn Bateman, Sean Bibby, Clive Carver, Bob Connah, Paul Cunningham, Chris Dolphin, Andy Dunbobbin, David Evans, Patrick Heesom, Andrew Holgate, Dave Hughes, Ray Hughes, Paul Johnson, Richard Jones, Colin Legg, Mike Lowe, Hilary McGuill, Michelle Perfect, Vicky Perfect, Owen Thomas, Andy Williams and Arnold Woolley

SUBSTITUTES: Councillors: Geoff Collett (for Paul Shotton), Mike Peers (for Veronica Gay) and David Wisinger (for Cindy Hinds)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Helen Brown, Rosetta Dolphin, Carol Ellis, Veronica Gay, Christine Jones and Billy Mullin attended as observers

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Aaron Shotton, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance; Councillor Carolyn Thomas, Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside; Chief Executive; Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation); Car Park and Enforcement Manager and Finance Programme Manager

IN ATTENDANCE: Democratic Services Manager, Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Support Officer

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Democratic Services Manager sought nominations for a Chair for the meeting.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Ray Hughes be appointed as Chair for the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CONSULTATION ON REVIEW OF CAR PARKING CHARGES

The Democratic Services Manager introduced the report and explained why the consultation was being conducted through a joint meeting of two Overview & Scrutiny Committees (Corporate Resources and Environment). As the review of car parking charges had both budget and car park operational

sides, and the review of charges was an outstanding issue from the full Council budget meetings, a joint meeting was appropriate - Corporate Resources being the lead committee for budget scrutiny and Environment the lead committee for car parking policy and operations

The Chief Executive reminded Members that during the County Council meeting held on 20 February 2018, there had been a collective agreement to increase the income target for car parking by £450,000 for the 2018/19 financial year. He recognised that there might be differing views on how to achieve the target and reminded members that securing the target was a collective responsibility.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) introduced the proposals for revised charges, and details of the arrangements and commencement date for the deferred introduction of car charges in Flint. Car parking charges had previously been discussed by Members of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee which was made open to all Council Members on 16 January 2018. During the meeting, a number of suggestions had been made by Members on the charging options and detailed explanations of which of the suggestions had been accommodated and the reasons why some had not been taken forward were outlined within the report.

The Chief Officer concluded that the opportunity to offer some free on-street parking, close to town centres, had been examined and that the Council was consulting with two Town Councils on the potential to remove pedestrianisation orders which would allow vehicles back into the High Streets. Town councils could consider subsidising car parking charges in their areas. Any proposals would need to ensure that corporate car parking income targets were met. The car parking charging system would be kept under review.

The Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside apologised that a suggestion made by Councillor Mike Peers during the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16 January 2018 to increase the minimum stay to 1 hour for 30p had not been included in the report. She assured Members that this suggestion had been considered but had been found to be unaffordable. She commented on the importance of ensuring the viability of town centres and explained that the increased car parking charges would cover the management costs of car parks across Flintshire.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the scrutiny process in considering the proposed car parking charges and said that the comments from the meeting would be taken into consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 20 March 2018. He commented on the challenging budget process and his concern that if car parking charges were not increased to meet the full costs of providing the service then savings would have to be found elsewhere within the Council to balance up the budget. He said that local car parking charges would still be comparatively low.

A summary of the observations made by Members is attached at Appendix 1 of the minutes.

Following the debate, the Chief Executive advised that the following information would be collated in advance of the Cabinet meeting on 20 March 2018:-

- Evaluate and costs of the Committee proposal to adjust the schedule to £0.30 for 1 hour from £0.30 for 30 minutes (only for those towns where the 30 minutes charge is shown in the schedule/appendix);
- A breakdown of the management/maintenance costs for both 2017/18 and 2018/19 according to the budget heads listed in the report – showing exact and estimated/apportioned as necessary; and
- The full list of County charged and non-charged car parks.

It was proposed by Councillor Heesom that the recommendations to Cabinet be supported, subject to the points outlined by the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Cabinet be asked to consider adjusting the schedule to £0.30 for 1 hour from £0.30 for 30 minutes (only for those towns where the 30 minutes charge is shown in the schedule/appendix);
- (b) That the Committee request a breakdown of the management/maintenance costs for both 2017/18 and 2018/19 according to the budget heads listed in the report – showing exact and estimated/apportioned as necessary;
- (c) That the Committee request the full list of County charged and non-charged car parks; and
- (d) That the Democratic Services Manager present the formal response of the Corporate Resources and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committees to Cabinet at its meeting on 20 March 2018.

4. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the public and one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 11.30am and ended at 1.25pm)

.....
Chair

Member issues raised at the joint meeting of the Corporate Resources and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committees
Thursday 15th March 2018

Councillor	Issue	Response
Cllr David Evans	The 30p for 30 minutes is impractical. Could this be a free period before charging?	It is estimated that the cost of providing a free 30 minute period at all car parks would be £110 k per annum.
Cllr Owen Thomas	Why is Mold being penalised? Charges will impact on the viability of the market. Is Mold subsidising other places?	Mold is not being penalised. Mold is distinguished from other County towns as a tourist and day visitor destination and its charges are comparable to like towns in the region. Car parking charges go into a County wide fund for the whole service costs. There is also an income sharing arrangement with Mold Town Council by prior agreement.
Cllr Haydn Bateman	Short stay costing £1 is wrong. Should be reduced to 50p.	The 50p option is available outside Mold and at County Hall.
Cllr Ray Hughes	The proposed two hours isn't long enough, especially for people visiting on Saturdays.	No specific response required.
Cllr Chris Dolphin	Acknowledged that we can't standardise car parking charges across all of our towns. The 30 p for 30 minutes needs addressing. Should be an hour.	The car parking charges need to be seen in the context of a difficult budget round and against our corporate policy for cost recovery of services through charging where possible. Flintshire has decide to retain control of its car parks and

		<p>the charges are less than neighbouring authorities. We are not proposing to charge at our country parks.</p> <p>Other council services will have to bear the financial strain if we do not cost recover in the car parking service.</p> <p>We have no proposals to charge for disabled parking.</p>
Cllr Geoff Collett	<p>Mold is being penalised: in January we voted that all towns should be treated equally. Mold is not being treated equitably. The market is shrinking.</p> <p>People are being offered partially used tickets: could the extent of this be surveyed?</p>	<p>Based on the expected contribution to MTC of £20k in the new financial year, the overall benefit of the higher charges in Mold is an estimated £200k per annum.</p>
Cllr Andy Dunbobbin	<p>Are there other authorities which run their own car parks but don't charge?</p>	<p>Our neighbouring Councils all charge for their town centre car parks.</p>
Cllr Carol Ellis	<p>Asked that further consideration be given to accepting the subsidy proposed by Buckley Town Council. She did not feel that the income targets would be met given the increase in free parking at Aldi and Home Bargains in Buckley and if the Council allowed Buckley Town Council to pay for the parking at the levels they are now this would be a guaranteed income for the Council.</p> <p>She also questioned the loss of potential income through not charging at Tinkersdale,</p>	<p>Any local proposal would be considered within the following constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be no reduction to the overall income levels from the new charging levels • The proposals remain within the principles of the overall car parking strategy – i.e. no free parking for extended periods of time. <p>This information is not currently available as the utilisation levels are not measured. It was agreed in 2015 that</p>

	Wepre Park or Etna.	charges would not be introduced if there were less than 50 spaces in a town. The cost of introducing charges for car parks with less than 50 spaces would not be cost effective, due to the capital costs of installing the parking machines
Cllr Arnold Woolley	There are three competing forces: 1) the Council's need for cash; 2) the need for cash flow into Flintshire shops and 3) the need to keep cash in the pockets of Flintshire people. The growth deal statistics shown that there are 8,000 families of working age where there is no wage earner. We have imposed the brown bin charge and the Council Tax increase of 6.7 %.	The effects of the current financial position for the public services are acknowledged.
Cllr Paul Cunningham	Our charges are far lower than our neighbours and we are doing well to keep them as low as is being proposed.	No specific response required.
Cllr Clive Carver	<p>Asked for that a list of all charged car parks across Flintshire be provided.</p> <p>Emphasised that fine income isn't shown as car parking income and should be.</p> <p>Could the enforcement officers use a memory stick to retrieve information on ticket sales to stop the need for telemetry</p>	<p>We have 42 chargeable and 13 chargeable car parks (not including leisure centres, parks depots or schools etc. – cost per car park is £16.9K per year)</p> <p>Income levels can be provided but there is an income target for the service from this activity.</p> <p>The machines communicate through SIM card to back office software that has multiple function to support the efficiency of the service.</p>

	communication?	
Cllr Owen Thomas	Suggested that on certain days of the week car spaces near the centre of Mold be designated short stay which he felt would attract more revenue.	This would be confusing for car park users if the designation changed during the week.
Cllr McGuill	Has concerns at the impact of increased car parking charges on the business plan viability for our CAT s at Holywell and Connah's Quay.	Monitoring of attendances at the 2 leisure centres in Flint and Mold will be included as part of the 6 month monitoring process.
Cllr Mike Peers	<p>Table 1 in the report refers to the business model. What is being done to raise income?</p> <p>Can we have a breakdown of the 'significant costs' referred to in para 1/07 of the report?</p> <p>The 1 hour option is missing from the lists and is needed. The 30 minute option is impractical for people with children, push chairs or assisting someone in a wheel chair.</p> <p>How did the Mold percentage pay back come about? Asked how the agreement for a percentage of income collected from Mold is given back to Mold Town Council came about.</p> <p>What are the special arrangements for farmers on market days at the Love Lane car</p>	<p>A detailed breakdown of the 2017/18 costs will be shared with Cabinet together with projected costs for 2018/19. The information states where the costs are projected or actuals.</p> <p>Provided.</p> <p>All options have been considered.</p> <p>Originally the Town Council kept all of the income from the car parking charges (less costs) – this arrangement was removed when charges were introduced across the County.</p> <p>This is a long standing formal agreement between the Council and the auctioneers J Bradburne Price & Co.</p>

	park?	
Cllr Mike Allport	Consider changing to machines where the registration number is put in, to avoid unexpired tickets being passed on	We have just changed machines because the type suggested was found to be too complicated for users. However this may be reconsidered if it were thought to be beneficial.
Cllr Richard Jones	<p>The car parks are not cash cows and the proposals are for more than covering costs by £34k.</p> <p>What are the maintenance costs?</p> <p>Fines income is not included and should have been.</p> <p>'Flexibility' shouldn't have been included.</p> <p>The proposals will have an impact on retail employees</p>	<p>The costs for 2017/18 are approximately £886k. The costs will increase for next year because of NNDR, pay inflation etc. so some flexibility was included.</p> <p>A detailed breakdown of the 2017/18 costs will be shared with Cabinet together with projected costs for 2018/19. The information states where the costs are projected or actuals.</p> <p>If the income from CPN's was included it would create a pressure elsewhere</p> <p>The flexibility was included following concerns from members of the Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The daily costs for parking are now consistent and fair across the County. The cost are reasonable when compared to the cost of daily parking costs in all towns.</p>