

**Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet
held on Thursday, 18th November, 2021
from 5.00 pm - 5.15 pm**

Present: J Ash-Edwards (Chair)
J Llewellyn-Burke (Vice-Chair)

J Belsey
R de Mierre

S Hillier
R Salisbury

N Webster

1. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY MATTER ON THE AGENDA.

None.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

No apologies were received as all Members were present.

3. TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2021.

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

4. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS THAT THE LEADER AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT BUSINESS.

None.

5. INTRODUCTION OF FLEXIBLE SEASON TICKETS AND REVIEW OF PAY AND DISPLAY PARKING CHARGES.

Judy Holmes, Assistant Chief Executive introduced the report. She highlighted that the Council's adopted Parking Strategy proposed the development of an investment strategy and the introduction of differential tariffs in the current financial year. Due to the impact of the pandemic the consultants' advice was not to proceed with the introduction of differential tariffs at this time. There was however a proposal that parking charges should be aligned more closely to those of neighbouring authorities; and with inflation, given that the Council's parking charges have not increased for over 10 years. In addition, a flexible approach to season tickets is being proposed to respond to the changing working and commuting patterns of our communities following the pandemic. She noted that the full financial implications of these changes are difficult to predict at this time.

The Leader confirmed a small number of comments had been received from the Members.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Growth confirmed he supported the recommendations noting the proposed changes to season tickets was part of the Parking Strategy and was more important since the pandemic. It was vital to determine the correct tariffs, the work had been complex and praised the Officers for their efforts. As the full impact of the pandemic was uncertain, he advised caution when proceeding with the further elements of the action plan until the Council has further clarity.

The Deputy Leader confirmed that the Council is financially independent and parking tariffs have been low for many years. The car parks have seen a number of improvements over recent years, including general maintenance, resurfacing, upgrading of ticket machines and the introduction of cashless parking; all with no increase in the tariffs. In addition, the pandemic has impacted the Council's income from parking, so an increase is necessary.

The Cabinet Member for Community highlighted the cross-party working group that had put forward the Parking Strategy and confirmed that he supported the report recommendations. He also commented on changing working habits since the pandemic and believed an increase in the tariffs was in the best interest of the District.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services stated that the tariffs had to increase, and the proposed rates were fair. She commented that the increased revenue should pay for further improvements and sought reassurance that the ticket machines would continue to accept cash payments. This was confirmed by the Assistant Chief Executive along with the introduction of an investment strategy for the car parks.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery welcomed the report and confirmed that the Council had been looking at their car parks for a number of years through the cross-party Members Working Group and had commissioned an independent consultant to prepare the strategy. He noted that the consultants had advised that it was very unusual for a Council not to have increased parking charges for over 10 years.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning noted tariffs increase may not be popular and the Council needed to keep up with new technology, enable flexibility for the public's use of the car parks and continue to invest in the facilities.

The Leader noted the work of the cross-party working group, that tariffs had not increased for over 10 years. The new tariffs would bring the charges back in line with inflation, and would be comparable to other neighbouring local authorities. He noted that further aspects of the Parking Strategy would come forward in due course, and would need to be considered carefully to ensure they continue to support the vitality of our town centres.

As there were no further questions the Leader took the Members to the recommendations which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet recommended to Council, subject to consultation:

- i. the introduction of flexible 3, 5 and 6 day season tickets;
- ii. Cabinet is recommended to agree the new tariffs, as outlined in paragraph 16;

iii. an annual inflationary review of parking charges thereafter.

The meeting finished at 5.15 pm

Chairman