

Draft Cabinet Minutes – 10 March 2022

4. On-street Parking Management - Cross Party Working Group Recommendations

Councillor Wallace Redford (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning) explained the background to the setting up of the cross party working group, noting that in 2007, Cabinet initially agreed parking policies based on the principle that charges for residents permits should be based on the cost of administering the scheme and should not be profit making. In 2020 Cabinet took the decision to hold permit prices due to the impact of the pandemic but asked that a cross party working group be set up to review the pricing structure. Councillor Redford summarised the recommendations that were set out in the report, particularly noting the recommendation to introduce a tiered charging system for multi-car households which included deletion of the third residents' permit. The group also recommended that charges should be reviewed every three years in line with inflation and that a 25% discount should be available for electric vehicles, with the proviso that only one 25% discount could be applied per household. Whilst the working group's recommendations initially excluded hybrid models from the proposed discount scheme, Councillor Wallace indicated that his subsequent discussions had led him to propose that Cabinet include hybrid models in the discount scheme. Councillor Redford also advised that the working group had recommended that the concept of a business permit be explored further, that the cost of the guesthouse visitor parking scheme should rise as set out in the report and that pay and display charges should at least match those charged by the District and Borough Councils. Councillor Redford stressed that the residents' permit charges should remain non-profit making and stated that the proposed charges would result in an average permit cost of £60 across the entire permit uptake, which was close to the externally assessed value of £63 per permit. Councillor Redford noted the working group's recommendation to review the impact of the increases 12 months after their implementation.

Councillor Isobel Seccombe (Leader of the Council) welcomed the paper and thanked the working group for their efforts. She noted the comparison data on the charges made by other local authorities, which reflected the position of Warwickshire not to increase charges in 2020 as part of the drive to support post-Covid recovery in the town centres, and reflected on the current international situation with residents facing numerous financial increases and that it would be important to now reflect their interests in the scheme alongside those of business and the town centres. She suggested that Cabinet defer implementation of the pricing of on street parking only, not permits, for 12 months so that the impact of cost of living rises could be better understood. Councillor Jerry Roodhouse noted that the working group had undertaken a valuable task but that there was not unanimous agreement on the recommendations set out at paragraph 2.5 and he considered that future reports of this nature should be more clear on voting matters.

Councillor Roodhouse highlighted that key workers, such as a domiciliary care worker who had been in touch with him, required their cars to undertake their jobs and the proposed increases would be a blow to family finances. Therefore, he considered that more account should be taken of the impact of the charges on key workers, particularly in light of the increasing cost of living. He suggested that a

deferral would provide time to consider this further and obtain more data about the numbers involved and he suggested the introduction of a discount permit for key workers. Councillor Roodhouse also considered that the report did not address the issue of the high number of cars associated with Houses in Multiple Occupation. He welcomed more in-depth discussions about the affected communities to ensure that key workers were not driven to alternative career paths as a result of the financial burdens being imposed. He concluded by urging Cabinet to defer the whole decision.

Councillor John Holland supported previous comments but raised concern about the vitality and prosperity of town centres. He noted that one of the aims of introducing resident parking schemes was as part of a recovery strategy for town centres by encouraging people to live in them. Opening flats above shops not only created more homes but had the added benefit of driving crime reduction. He noted that residents' parking was a limited resource, and a balance was needed between allowing residents to take up space by parking all day or making space for retail customers. He suggested that changing the scheme was inappropriate at a time when closer work was needed with the District and Borough Councils and residents had been encouraged to live in the town centres on the basis that parking permits were available. He supported proposals for the decision to be delayed and welcomed opportunities to link the scheme to the economic activity of town centres and the prosperity of residents.

Whilst the debate was taking place, Councillor Seccombe had entered into some discussion with some of her Cabinet colleagues, and she informed the meeting that if Cabinet chose to move forward with the recommendations, a public consultation would be required. She suggested that, as the cost of living was a key concern and that the working group had not addressed some of the issues being raised, that the statutory consultation be launched on the proposals which would allow Cabinet time to consider those particular areas. In any event, she considered that Cabinet was keen to defer the implementation due to the rising cost of living which would give further time to receive feedback on the impact on key workers and agree the timescale that Cabinet wanted to take forward on the implementation.

Councillor Peter Butlin noted the impact that the international situation was having and expressed the view that the focus of the report was parking habits and the proposed pricing structure was a part of influencing those habits. However, he echoed the view that it was important to be mindful of those who could not afford an increase but still needed a car to conduct their job and he felt that more investigation needed to take place on this issue and supported consultation for that to take place.

Councillor Margaret Bell, also supported a consultation, noting the impact that the proposals would have in North Warwickshire where civil parking enforcement was being introduced and she welcomed the proposal to enter the consultation with further consideration of timescales.

Councillor Heather Timms highlighted that the charging infrastructure for electric vehicles was not present on the streets where the permits were being proposed and more joined up consideration of policies was required going forward.

Councillor Wallace Redford agreed with the proposals above and in response to Councillor Roodhouse's earlier comments, he also noted that it was not unusual for working groups to reach a majority decision and stated that this had been reflected in the report.

Councillor Seccombe clarified the recommendations before the Cabinet and it was **resolved**:

That Cabinet 1. Endorses the recommendations made by the Cross-Party Working Group in sections 2 and 3 of the report, but with the discount for electric vehicles extended to hybrid vehicles, and authorises the Strategic Director for Communities to advertise variations to the on-street parking orders pursuant to sections 45 and 46 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 giving effect to the changes to the residents' and guesthouses' permit structure and charges so recommended;

2. Requests a further report following statutory consultation advising on the issues raised in the debate, any objections or comments received, any proposed modifications, and on an appropriate timescale for implementation of any variations, including the proposal to defer implementation for 12 months.