

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

6 NOVEMBER 2014

SUBJECT:	<i>CAR PARKING - SCRUTINY REPORT</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>ALL</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>THE CHAIR OF THE CAR PARKING SCRUTINY PANEL</i>

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides background information regarding the report of the Car Parking Scrutiny Review, which has been approved by the Regeneration and Environment Policy & Performance Committee and referred to Cabinet for further consideration.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 In October 2013, the Regeneration & Environment Budget Option Scrutiny Panel report recommended a review of Car Parking. During a meeting of the Party Spokespersons for the Regeneration and Environment Policy & Performance Committee, it was agreed that a review of Car Parking would be added to the work programme.

2.2 A Task & Finish panel consisting of seven Members was set up in November 2013. The panel included Councillors Paul Doughty, Jim Crabtree, Anita Leech, Jerry Williams, Leah Fraser, Steve Williams and Alan Brighouse. At the first meeting it was agreed that Councillor Paul Doughty would be the Chair of the Panel.

2.3 The outcome of the review was to inform a coherent; evidence based Car Parking Strategy that considers revenue, user requirements and the local economy.

3.0 EVIDENCE GATHERING AND REPORT

3.1 The review was conducted over a number of meetings with appropriate Council officers between January 2014 and July 2014. Information was also provided as requested by the Review Panel to allow detailed question and answer sessions to be carried out. Members of the Panel also considered town centre economic viability and the effect that the harmonisation of charges has had on usage. The policies of similar sized authorities with similar competition from larger commercial and retail offers were also considered.

3.2 The final report was presented to the meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Policy & Performance Committee on 22 September 2014. The relevant draft minute from that meeting is:

“At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Paul Doughty introduced the Car Parking Scrutiny Review Final Report, which had been undertaken by a Task and Finish Panel that he had chaired and which also comprised Councillors Alan Brighouse, Jim Crabtree, Leah Fraser, Anita Leech, Jerry Williams and Steve Williams.

The detailed report set out the context for the Review and set out its scope and methodology. It recognised that the pressures on retail and commercial centres were many and varied and that a Car Parking Strategy should be supportive of the economic sustainability of each of the centres. Following research and discussion of the approach taken by other, similar local authorities, the Panel had proposed a number of ‘Objectives’ and ‘Principles’ to provide a guiding framework for any future Strategy and considered that they were in full harmony with the Council’s Corporate Plan. He highlighted the findings of the Panel, which had resulted in a range of recommendations for consideration, related to pricing, technology and demand based decision making. It had not been the role of the Panel to formulate a Car Parking Strategy but it was hoped that its recommendations would provide a suitable framework. Councillor Doughty thanked the Members of the Panel and the support officers for the considerable work they had undertaken. He also drew the attention of the Committee to a minor error in Table 1.2 of the Review and circulated a correction.

A Member referred to considerable increased parking charges, particularly in Heswall and West Kirby and expressed a view that such increases were detrimental to the local economy. He also commented that it was not acceptable to charge Medical Centre patients for parking at West Kirby Concourse. As locations for increased parking charges were not specified in the Review, he could not support its recommendations.

The Chair indicated that the Review made no such recommendation and anticipated that the detail of any future Car Parking Strategy prepared by officers would be subject to consultation. He commented also that there had been cross party involvement in the Panel and he commended its recommendations.

Resolved (12:2) –

- (1) That the Scrutiny Review and its recommendations be endorsed.**
- (2) That the Review be referred to the Cabinet for approval.”**

4.0 REFERRAL TO CABINET

4.1 As agreed by the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee, the Report of the Scrutiny Panel has been referred to Cabinet for consideration

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) Cabinet is requested to support the contents and recommendations of the Car Parking Scrutiny Report.
- (2) Cabinet requests officers to develop an Action Plan to implement recommendations contained within the report.

REPORT AUTHOR: Michael Lester
telephone (0151) 691 8628
email michaellester@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Car Parking Scrutiny Report