

CABINET**Tuesday, 12th January, 2016**

Present:-

Councillor Burrows (Chair)

Councillors T Gilby
T Murphy
Blank
Huckle

Councillors Ludlow
Serjeant
A Diouf

Non Voting Members Bagley
J Innes

Brown
Hollingworth

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

129 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS
RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations of interest were received.

130 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Wall.

131 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 15 December, 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

132 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan for the four month period 1 February – 31 May, 2016 was reported for information.

***RESOLVED –**

That the Forward Plan be noted.

133 **DELEGATION REPORT**

Decisions taken by Cabinet Members during December were reported.

***RESOLVED –**

That the Delegation Report be noted.

134 **CONSIDERATION OF THE SCRUTINY REPORT ON CONCESSIONS ON FEES AND CHARGES**

Councillor Jeannie Barr, Scrutiny Project Group Leader presented the report and recommendations of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum on how Chesterfield Borough Council offered concessions on fees and charges made on chargeable services. The review had examined the consistency, fairness and objectives in the provision and application of concessions across council services.

The recommendations of the Scrutiny Project Group had been considered and approved by the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum at its meeting on 8 December, 2015. The Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum's recommendations were now required to be considered by Cabinet in accordance with the Council's Scrutiny Procedure rules. A copy of the Scrutiny Project's Group report was attached as an appendix to the Cabinet report.

The issue of how the Council offered concessions on fees and charges had originally been raised by Environmental Health Management as an area for Scrutiny to look at in 2012. The issue had again been raised as an area for Scrutiny work in 2015 by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Terry Gilby and Executive Director, James Drury. It was noted that there was currently no corporate policy on the application of reduced rates (concessions) for chargeable services with regard to the rate of discount applied or eligibility criteria, as well as there being no guidance available to managers on when it was appropriate to apply concessions.

Councillor Barr gave details of the how the project group had conducted the review and noted that there had been direct input from local residents via a consultation with Community Assembly members. The information gathered from the consultation had then informed the project group's focus, as well as the group's subsequent recommendations.

Councillor Barr outlined the report's recommendations and noted how they had been formulated in order to address numerous issues in the current way in which concessions on fees and charges were offered by the council. The report stated that the way concessions were currently offered did not meet the council's commitment to equalities, as well as not meeting the council plan objectives of Chesterfield Borough Council becoming financially self-sufficient by 2020 and being able to provide sustainable services to residents of the borough. The report also stated that services needed to have a thorough and detailed understanding of all costs involved in service provision so that decisions taken on pricing and concessions of individual services were well informed and were made as part of an overall charging and concessions policy that aimed to cover the cost of a service being provided and reduced the level of subsidy.

Members discussed the recommendations, and considered how they would affect resident's access to services and equality considerations, as well as how they may impact on the council's finances.

Cabinet members expressed their appreciation to Councillor Barr and the members of the project group for their hard work on this issue, and noted the thoroughness and professionalism of the project group's report and the accompanying Equalities Impact Assessment; members also thanked Councillor Barr for attending and presenting the report to Cabinet.

***RESOLVED**

That Cabinet approves in principle all of the recommendations of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum report on Concessions on Fees and Charges as set out below, but that before the implementation of any resolution that could have a financial implication to the Council, further investigation on the impact is carried out by officers and brought to Cabinet for consideration.

- I. That any concessions made on fees and charges are used as part of a dynamic and agile pricing approach for services, where the overall objective is that total costs are covered.
- II. That the concessionary rates of reduction made on bulky waste and pest control services is reduced from 50% to 20%.

- III. That the cost of providing concessions, along with the provision of less popular or costly services is supported by revenue from higher demand services and services paid for at the full rate.
- IV. That Leisure Services and Theatres continue to have the freedom to vary the rate of concessions offered in order to manage demand.
- V. That services establish the unit cost of providing a service before setting a price for a service. The costing of services should include all possible applicable costs, both fixed and variable involved in delivering a service such as buildings, staff, materials and IT.
- VI. That where appropriate, services should only advertise that concessions are available, rather than listing all concessionary categories at the point of a service being enquired about.
- VII. That concessionary discounts for services should only be granted after entitlement of eligibility for the concessionary rate has been confirmed.
- VIII. That the concessionary categories for all services are updated to include the categories of:
 - i. Universal credit, with no earned income.
 - ii. Universal Credit with a housing element included.
- IX. That the Sports and Leisure Manager reviews the published list of categories giving entitlement to concessionary rates so that the list is shorter, clearer and easier to understand by service users.
- X. That concessionary reductions on fees and charges for services are not offered solely on the basis of age.
- XI. That a member and officer working group is established to develop a corporate policy on concessions and that:

- i. the corporate policy on concessions on fees and charges includes all the recommendations made by the project group.
- ii. that the members of the scrutiny project group on concessions on fees and charges are included in the working group.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS

To provide a more coherent approach to offering concessions made on fees and charges.

That the approach to offering concessions on fees and charges should be informed by equalities considerations as well with consideration to the costs involved in providing the service and any subsequent concessions.

135 2016/17 OPEN MARKET FEES AND CHARGES

The Cultural and Visitor Services Manager attended to present a report detailing the proposed fees and charges for Chesterfield's open markets and Sunday car boot sale for 2016/17.

The report outlined the current fees and charges and how they relate to the size of stall, day of the week and location. The car boot sale, now held at the Proact Football Stadium and managed by Chesterfield Football Club, has a fixed fee charged to all vehicles according to the number of spaces they occupy.

Though busy market days contribute positively to the success of the town centre, there had been a decline in occupancy on all days due to traders retiring or ceasing trading, a reduction in casual traders and traders deciding not to trade on all three market days. It was noted however that despite the decline in occupancy Chesterfield still had a good market with between 100 and 150 stalls trading on a market day.

It was proposed that in order to retain existing market traders and attract new traders and shoppers, the issues of footfall, sightlines and weather protection needed to be addressed. The Council appointed consultants to carry out a feasibility study on the potential remodelling of the open

market which resulted in the development of a number of options for the reconfiguration of the market layout, with various levels of intervention. Alongside this officers had been tasked with developing a business case to be completed in early 2016 to support the necessary investment that would be required to deliver the various options.

At the Markets Consultative Committee in October 2015 traders expressed their concerns that any rise in stall fees would be difficult to sustain considering the current issues facing town centre traders. Attracting and retaining new traders had also proved difficult. It was therefore proposed that there should not be any increase in stall fees from 1 April 2016 on either the general or the flea market.

The electricity charges for stall holders had been increased in 2014/15 from £1.40 to £1.50 and it had been calculated that these charges would cover the costs of providing the services in 2016/17. It was also proposed that there would be no increase to the publicity levy or the storage charges in 2016/17.

As part of the management arrangements the fees for the car boot sale are reviewed annually by both the football club and the council. The current fee of £10 per car space was benchmarked against rival car boot operators and it was believed that it was the maximum fee that could be charged without having a negative impact on occupancy levels.

It was estimated that the nil increases to the 2016/17 charges would result in a target income from the general and flea markets of £572,900 and that council would make a net surplus of £64,560 in 2015/16 and £56,650 in 2016/17. The Cultural and Visitor Services Manager advised efficiencies were being looked at in order to reduce the cost of operating the marketing so to increase the amount of surplus generated.

An option to increase market rents by 3% was ruled out as it would not be sustainable and could have had a detrimental impact on stall occupancy and income, as well as the vitality of the town centre. In addition an option of a 5% increase on the car boot fees was ruled out as it could have had a negative effect on attendance and lead to traders leaving in favour of cheaper competitors.

***RESOLVED**

That from 1 April 2016:

1. there will be no increase in stall fees on all stall rents for the general, flea and farmers' markets.
2. there will be no increase on the car boot sale fee at the Proact Football Stadium.
3. there will no increase on electricity, storage charges, and the publicity levy for stall holders on the open market.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS

To continue to secure a viable open air market in Chesterfield.

To ensure that the council continues to receive an acceptable return on a valuable town centre asset through supporting traders during this continued economic downturn.

136 REVIEW OF CAR PARKING CHARGES

The Cultural and Visitor Services Manager attended to present a report detailing the proposed charges for Chesterfield's Town Centre Off-Street Parking for 2016/17.

The report outlined the current parking charge structure and the complications and inconsistencies with the structure. A new pricing structure was proposed that enabled the charges to be more consistent, encourage shoppers and visitors to stay longer and spend more money in the local economy and encourage the correct use of long and short stay car parks. It was proposed to incentivise shoppers to stay longer by reducing the tariff for 3 and 4 hours in short stay car parks.

It was reported that the Residents Parking Permit scheme was being well used, and the officer's report proposed that the north and south Queen's Park car parks should be included in the scheme.

It was proposed that advance purchase day saver tickets should only be available in long stay/commuter car parks and should be withdrawn from

Holywell Cross and Albion Road car parks from 1 April 2016 in order to encourage the use of these two car parks as shopper's car parks. In addition, it was proposed that all advance purchase tickets will cost £3.50 per day in all long stay/commuter car parks from 1 April 2016, regardless of location.

The monthly parking permits currently range in price from £20 per month to £70 per month and prices had not been increased for several years. Therefore it was proposed that all monthly parking tickets would cost £60.00 in all long stay/commuter car parks no regardless of the location.

The Cultural and Visitor Services Manager noted that car parks needed to be both competitively priced, and also have easy to understand tariffs in order to be attractive to customers. It was acknowledged that previously the council's long stay car parks had been too expensive compared to those of competitors and that special offer discounts had been offered in car parks where discounts had not been needed to attract customers.

It was also proposed that car park ticket sales would be monitored monthly and, if the income target is achieved, it was proposed that there would be no increase in tariffs in 2017/18 but the prices would be reviewed for 2018/19.

The proposed changes to the tariffs would be advertised in all relevant car parks and roads giving access to them for a clear 21 days. After the 21 days' notice of the proposed changes the signage in the car parks would be amended before the new changes could be introduced on 1 April 2016.

*** RESOLVED**

1. That from 1 April 2016:

- I. the cost of parking for up to 4 hours will be charged at the same rate in all town centre car parks.
- II. the parking charges in all town centre car parks will be:

£0.70 for up to 30 minutes, £1.30 for up to 1 hour, £2.60 for up to 2 hours, £3.00 for up to 3 hours and £4.30 for up to 4 hours parking.

- III. in the short stay/shoppers car parks, as listed at paragraph 5.1 of the officers report, it will cost £1.30 for each subsequent hour over 4 hours to park.
 - IV. in all long stay/commuter car parks, as listed at paragraph 5.5 of the officers report, it will cost £5.00 to park for over 4 hours.
 - V. all residents of the borough will continue to benefit from free parking before 10am and after 3pm Monday to Saturday, and all day on Sundays, in the car parks at Albion Road, Derbyshire Times, Devonshire Street, Durrant Road, Hollis Lane, Holywell Cross, Queen's Park (North and South), Spa Lane, Station Road, St Mary's Gate, Theatre Lane, West Street.
 - VI. all advance purchase tickets will cost £3.50 per day and shall be available for use only in all long stay/commuter car parks.
 - VII. all monthly parking tickets will cost £60 and will be available for use only in all long stay/commuter car parks.
 - VIII. yearly parking tickets for all long stay/commuter car parks will cost £600 per annum.
2. That, if the income target for car parks is achieved in 2016/17, there will be no increase in car parking charges in 2017/18, but the prices will be reviewed for 2018/19.

REASON FOR DECISIONS

To ensure that council operated car parks are competitively priced with simple charging structures so that they encourage an uplift in the number of trips and an increase in dwell time, all of which will contribute to the economic performance of the town.