

RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFERENCES FROM THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 NOVEMBER 2000

(a) MINUTE 369 – REVIEW OF CAR PARK CHARGING POLICY

The Proper Officer reports that, pursuant to Standing Order 18(6), a requisition has been received in the names of Councillors P F A Webster, R A Pearson and J E Grey requiring that Minute 369 be referred to Full Council for decision.

A copy of Minute 369 is set out below. To assist Members, a copy of the report to the Committee is set out at Appendix 1.

369 REVIEW OF CAR PARK CHARGING POLICY

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management which asked Members to consider the charging policy for fee paying car parks as part of the budget making process for 2001/2.

A full review of the car park service had commenced in September 1999 and a revised scale of charges had been agreed at a meeting of Extraordinary Council on 28 June 2000 (Minute 212/00). The new charges had been introduced on 11 September 2000. On 21 September 2000 Members had agreed to a further full review of the Council's Car Park Charging Policy as part of the 2001/2 budget process.

Members were informed that the first week of operation of the new tariff had coincided with a national fuel shortage due to industrial action. This had resulted in reduced usage of the Council's Car Parks. At the time of writing the report, there had only been five weeks of normal usage and additionally during that time, the Bellingham Lane Car Park had suffered disruption due to demolition and improvement works. It was difficult, therefore, during this time to accurately forecast potential usage and income. However, based on the information to hand, the likely yield for a full year at the new tariff would be in the region of £434,000.

It was evident, however, that with the lack of a "one-hour ticket" option, more motorists were choosing to purchase the half-hour ticket rather than the two hour ticket as predicted in the financial model. The new charge structure did not, therefore, appear to be having the desired effect of encouraging motorists to stay longer in the town centres. No

substantial increase had been noted in the number of penalty tickets issued.

Members noted that the views of the local Chambers of Trade and Commerce had originally been taken into account when determining the pricing bands, namely that:-

- the Hockley Chamber of Trade and Commerce had favoured the removal of the 30 minute short stay band
- the Rayleigh and District Chamber of Trade and Commerce supported the view that abolition of the half hour band would be detrimental to trade.
- In both instances, when requested to comment, the Chambers had put forward scales of charges which they considered ought to apply for the whole of the District.

At the Southend Road, Hockley car park, currently with a minimum stay of two hours, there was now evidence of ticket swapping. To date, 15 complaints had been received from members of the public with regard to the charging policy at this particular car park.

Members were informed that the Civic Suite Car Park, Rayleigh would shortly be under the control of the Car Parking Order and that visitors would need to obtain a permit to use the casual parking area to the front of the Civic Suite. These could be obtained from the Civic Suite receptionist and would be for a timed period.

Resolved

- (1) That no further action be taken to revise the Car Park tariff at present.
- (2) That the Hockley Car Park tariff be brought in line with the rest of the District. (HRHM)

Andrew Smith

Head of Administrative and Member Services