

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 14 January 2019

Wards: All

Subject: Reference from the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel – public health, air quality and sustainable transport, a strategic approach to parking charges

Lead officer: Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services

Lead member: Councillor Laxmi Attawar, Chair of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

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Recommendations:

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1. The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel recommends that Cabinet take into account its reference set out in paragraph 2.8 below when making future decisions on the strategic approach to parking charges and on the associated public consultation.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. At its meeting on 9 January 2019 the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel received a report on a strategic approach to parking charges that was referred to the Panel by Cabinet at its meeting on 10 December 2018. The Panel was asked to discuss and comment on the report and agree any reference it wished to make back to Cabinet.
- 1.2. The Panel agreed to make a reference to Cabinet, as set out in paragraph 2.8 below.

2 DETAILS

2.1. Scrutiny process

- 2.2. The Panel received a detailed report setting out the proposals and background information including an equality impact assessment.
- 2.3. The Panel heard representations from Sustainable Merton, LOVE Wimbledon and a local resident. The speaker from Sustainable Merton urged the council to use positive communication and other tools to encourage changes in driver behaviour instead of pursuing higher parking charges. The speaker from LOVE Wimbledon regretted that the business community had not been involved in the development of the strategy so far, questioned the impact that the proposals would have on the level of traffic and asked that the policy of charging for parking after 6pm be reviewed. The local resident said that she thought the proposals discriminated against residents in Wimbledon and doubted that the proposals would have an impact on pollution, she thought drivers would seek avoidance measures such as paving over gardens.

2.4. Panel members asked questions and sought responses to concerns raised. Responses were provided by the Director of Environment and Regeneration and the Director of Public Health. They explained the rationale behind the proposed strategy and cited research from a study carried out by Leeds University which demonstrated that charging policy had an impact on car use.

2.5. Full details of points made in the discussion will be published in the minutes of the meeting.

2.6. **Scrutiny response**

2.7. The Panel discussed whether to respond to Cabinet or to make a referral to Council. Three motions were debated and subsequently fell;

- A motion to refer the matter to Council on the basis that the proposal falls outside the Budget and Policy Framework was defeated. (Three voted in favour, four against)
- A motion that 'recommends to Cabinet that targeting one half of the borough and not the other is deeply unfair on the residents of Wimbledon and Raynes Park and that until such time that the public transport links and by association air quality are improved in Mitcham, the parking tax proposals be rejected' was defeated. (Three voted in favour, four against)
- A motion that 'refers back to the Cabinet that a different solution is needed to help bridge the health gap between the East and West of the borough which the current proposal does not achieve' was defeated. (Two votes for, five against, one abstention)

2.8. Panel RESOLVED (five votes for, two against and one abstention) to make the following reference to Cabinet:

"The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel welcomes this opportunity to comment on the report and to raise issues for consideration by Cabinet. The Panel recognises the need to improve public health and air quality in the borough and welcomes this attempt to use the parking charges strategy as one of the levers to address these important issues. The Panel has previously taken an active role in scrutinising air quality issues and has examined the link between air quality, vehicle emissions and traffic speed through pre-decision scrutiny and two call-ins relating to the diesel levy. Cabinet is asked to note that the Panel plans to monitor the implementation of the diesel levy to assess whether the policy is beginning to have an impact on desired outcomes. The Panel also plan to take an active role in contributing to the terms of reference for a review of the levy in 2019/20.

The Panel request that Cabinet should receive additional evidence to demonstrate that increasing parking charges results in a decrease in traffic, and on the link between higher costs for high polluting cars and changing the behaviour of drivers.

The Panel welcomes Cabinet's plan for public consultation on these proposals and recommends that Cabinet share the results with the Panel so that it can contribute additional thoughts prior to a final decision being made by Cabinet.

The Panel also welcomes the review planned 6-12 months after implementation of the new charges (paragraph 2.3.26 of the report) and recommends that the Panel also has an opportunity to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the findings.”

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. None – Cabinet is required under the council’s constitution to receive, consider and respond to references from overview and scrutiny.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. Invitations to provide submissions to the Panel were sent to a wide range of residents’ associations and local community organisations.

5 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. These are included in the report to Cabinet on 10 December 2018 and the subsequent report to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 9 January 2019.

6 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Cabinet is required under the council’s constitution to receive, consider and respond to references from overview and scrutiny. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires Cabinet to respond to reports and recommendations made by scrutiny committees within two months of written notice being given.

7 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. These are included in the report to Cabinet on 10 December 2018 and the subsequent report to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 9 January 2019.

8 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. These are included in the report to Cabinet on 10 December 2018 and the subsequent report to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 9 January 2019.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. These are included in the report to Cabinet on 10 December 2018 and the subsequent report to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 9 January 2019.

10 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- None

11 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1. None

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