

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 15 July 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 Natasha Irons, Chair of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Contact officer: Rosie.McKeever@merton.gov.uk; 0208 545 3864

Recommendations:

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1. The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel recommends that Cabinet take into account its reference set out in paragraphs 2.9 to 2.13 below when making decisions on the strategic approach to parking charges.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. At its meeting on 27 June 2019 the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel received a report on the results of the parking charges public consultation. 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 paragraphs 2.9 to 2.13 below.

2 DETAILS

2.1. Scrutiny process

- 2.2. The Panel received a detailed report setting out the background information, proposed charges and the equality impact assessment.
- 2.3. The Panel heard representations from Merton residents and the LOVE Wimbledon BID. The residents remarked on the unpopularity of the proposals, the need for extra public transport provision and the essential improvements required to walking and cycling paths. The speaker from LOVE Wimbledon questioned the lack of measurable objectives with regards to improving the boroughs air quality, the effect the ULEZ expansion will have and also commented on the impact the parking charges will have on small independent businesses.
- 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.
- 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. Two motions were debated and subsequently fell;

A motion that the Panel does not believe that the substance of the report has changed substantially or materially since January, therefore recommend that Cabinet scraps their plans to implement the parking tax was defeated. (Three votes for, five against)

A motion that recommends to Cabinet that council officers proactively work with TfL and other partners to clean up the bus fleet as per the February Council motion, and consider an aggressive tree planting strategy to help mitigate emissions in areas with poor air quality, the panel also recommend a more extensive roll out of electric charging points, and that the council undertakes a promotional campaign to encourage residents to switch to electric vehicles. This panel therefore concludes that until these action are under taken it does not recommend the implementation of the parking tax' was defeated. (Three votes for, five against)

2.8. Panel RESOLVED (eight votes for, none against) to make the following reference to Cabinet:

2.9. The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel welcomes this opportunity to comment on the proposals and on the results of the public consultation. The Panel would like contribute additional thoughts/raise issues for consideration prior to a final decision being made by Cabinet.

2.10. The Panel requested that Cabinet should receive additional evidence to demonstrate how public transport accessibility issues will be addressed and improvements achieved. The EIA action plan relies heavily on the uptake of the blue badge scheme, but with a 10.7% of the Merton population over 65 years of age and a further 1.7% over 85, it is not only the disabled population (10.8%) that will be affected by the increase in charges. How will the elderly population that cannot apply for a blue badge be supported in using sustainable travel/public transport as an alternative to owning a car? Furthermore, in light of the 'Access for All' funding not being granted, a number of Merton's stations remain without step free access. The action plan refers to working with TfL but there are no substantive plans mentioned.

2.11. The Panel also reiterated their original request of 14 January 2019 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. To date, has this evidence been supplied?

2.12. The Panel welcomes the review planned 6-12 months after implementation of the new charges and recommends that the Panel has an opportunity to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the findings of this review. However, a clearer outline of what measurements will be used to track the success of these proposals are required to determine the true impact. Will the metrics consist of data on; an increase in permits for electric cars, a fall in overall applications for resident permits, increase in public transport usage or air quality monitoring improvements.

- 2.13. The Panel recommends and encourages the Council to investigate alternative options to improve air quality and take a more proactive approach in terms of sustainable travel. For example, Waltham Forest and Kingston, who have upgraded their streets and road networks to help tackle key issues surrounding road safety, air quality, public health and ease the burden on the public transport network.

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 reports to Cabinet on 10 December 2018 and 14 January 2019 and the subsequent reports to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 9 January 2019 and 27 June 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 reports to Cabinet on 10 December 2018 and 14 January 2019 and the subsequent reports to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 9 January 2019 2019 and 27 June 2019.

8 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. These are included in the reports to Cabinet on 10 December 2018 and 14 January 2019 and the subsequent reports to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 9 January 2019 and 27 June 2019.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. These are included in the reports to Cabinet on 10 December 2018 and 14 January 2019 and the subsequent reports to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 9 January 2019 and 27 June 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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