

EXETER CITY COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY
3 SEPTEMBER 2009

MOTION TO WITHDRAW SUNDAY CAR PARK CHARGES

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Members' views on a motion to withdraw Sunday charges in all City Council car parks.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting on 14 July 2009, Council received a motion from Councillor Newby, Ward Member for Topsham, calling for the withdrawal of Sunday charges in all City Council car parks in order to help combat the effects of the recession on the local economy. Council referred this motion to Scrutiny Committee – Economy for consideration.
- 2.2 While the withdrawal of Sunday parking charges would be welcomed by many, it would raise serious issues for the Council by exacerbating the financial challenges the authority is already facing and undermining the commitment to tackle climate change (by incentivising car use). It is also far from clear that it would have any meaningful impact on the local economy: there is growing research evidence which indicates that parking charges are not a major factor in determining whether or not people will choose to visit a particular location; of far more significance is the perception of the quality and choice of shops and attractions on offer.
- 2.3 Sunday parking charges are already lower than charges for the rest of the week, in order to provide support for the 'Sunday economy', and in recent years Executive has extended Sunday charging to all car parks on the basis that it is no longer appropriate to provide free parking. Officers believe this continues to be a sound charging policy, which balances support for local businesses against the Council's wider financial and climate change objectives, and would strongly recommend against the withdrawal of Sunday charging.
- 2.4 Members are asked to give their views on Councillor Newby's motion. It should be noted that were this Committee to support the motion, this would need to be referred to Executive for a final decision.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Parking income is one of the Council's most important revenue streams and is itself under pressure as a result of the current economic climate. Sunday parking charges account for approximately £150,000 in income each year. Were charges to be withdrawn, proposals would need to be brought forward for making good this income from elsewhere or cutting budgets to meet the shortfall.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

- (i) That Members note the motion and give their views in light of officer comments.

ROGER COOMBES
HEAD OF PARKING, ENGINEERING AND BUSINESS SUPPORT
ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:-
None