

EXETER CITY COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ECONOMY
16 JANUARY 2014
PARKING REVIEW

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1. To consider the Terms of Reference for the Parking Review.

2. PARKING REVIEW

- 2.1. The current Car Parking Strategy was agreed in 1999 with the objective of switching from long stay to short stay parking in the City Centre to increase churn and retail footfall.
- 2.2. Fifteen years on, the newly adopted City Centre Strategy 2013 – 2022 seeks to:
- Reduce peak hour congestion
 - Encourage visitors and maximizing dwell time
 - Connect the day-time and evening economy
 - Make the City Centre easy to navigate
- 2.3. As a result, a new strategic approach to parking in the City Centre is required to continue to support a successful economy, given the rapidly changing shopping and leisure demand patterns, and to ensure that car-parking capacity is enough to meet future demand. In addition, maintaining income from car parking remains an imperative. The review will also take account of other key existing strategic documents including the Core Strategy, Climate Change Strategy, Air Quality Strategy and the Exeter Vision.
- 2.4. In November, a series of meetings were held with retail stakeholders in the city. While a variety of opinions were expressed, a great deal of consensus emerged. This feedback has been used to compile Terms of Reference for the Parking Review, in addition to input from City Council and County Council specialists in economic development, estate management, transportation and parking. A meeting with Stagecoach is scheduled for early January. The Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.5. In summary, the Terms of Reference seek to scope the Parking Review to cover the strategic imperatives of delivering economic growth, future car parking provision and income requirements as well as operational issues such as asset management, demand and pricing, ticketing and management options and alternative parking provision and transport provision.
- 2.6. The Terms of Reference will guide a detailed tender specification and the contract for the review will be advertised in January, with consultants appointed to undertake the review from April. The review will be concluded in December next year and will be used to inform a new Parking Strategy in 2015.

3. CHRISTMAS PARKING OFFERS

- 3.1. Following consultation with retail stakeholders, experimental parking discounts were offered in the Council's Pay and Display car parks, between 21 November and 31 December:
- Free after 5pm, 7 days a week – to connect the daytime and evening economy
 - Buy 3, stay for free on Sundays – to improve Sunday footfall
 - Half price parking (2 for 1) on Small Business Saturday (7 December only)
- 3.2. These offers have been very well received by retailers. The impact on parking income data is being monitored. Data for December is not yet available, but income on November 2012 is up in November 2013, with significant increases in many Pay and Display car parks, suggesting more economic activity in the retail centres. This data, while welcome news, is not particularly fine-grained. New Pay and Display machines will be introduced in April and will provide us with significantly better data. In the meantime we are using CCTV footage of car park use before and after the experimental offers to indicate whether they have had any impact on parking demand. Analysis to mid December indicates little change in demand later on Sundays and on weekdays after 5pm, except for Thursdays when most retailers offer late night shopping and the car parks are full. City Centre highways cameras have also been monitored and traffic patterns appear unaffected.
- 3.3. In addition, new measures around footfall and retail spending are being created, with data being supplied by retailers and other key City Centre stakeholders. This will help us monitor the economic vitality of the city as well as measuring the economic impact of parking interventions.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposed Parking Review is strategically important to the City and the Council in terms of driving economic growth, determining the City's strategic and operational parking offer and delivering a key income stream. It will be a significant piece of work with far-reaching outcomes. Money is available from the £150K set aside for feasibility works around the redevelopment of the bus station site. This important regeneration scheme will increase visitors and may reduce parking spaces and needs to be informed by the Parking review.
- 4.2 Early indications are that the Christmas parking offers have had no negative impact on parking income.

5. RECOMMENDED

- 1) That Scrutiny – Economy notes the Terms of Reference for the Parking Review.

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:

None