

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY
16 JANUARY 2014
MEMBER QUESTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 20

Question from Councillor Ruffle on St Mary Arches Car Park

I understand that since we last looked at the non collection of car parking fees from this car park at the previous Scrutiny Committee, a security company was employed for two weeks to cover the car park until midnight but this has now been reduced to two days a week.

Reply: This was correct

- 1) Is the Portfolio Holder aware that on those days when security has been used the extra revenue collected between the hours of 10 pm and midnight has been of the order of £200-double the original estimate?

Reply: During the 15 days prior to Christmas when security was employed the value tickets where drivers attempted to leave without paying after 10.00pm, totalled £162.20 (£10.81 per day) The value of tickets correctly presented during the same period amounted to £1,990.90 (£132.73)

They found that a relatively small number people were not paying for their parking.

- 2) How much extra money are we being charged for this security cover?

Reply: The cost was £25 per day.

Would it not make more sense to roster late night car park cover using our own staff instead as the extra overtime pay is more than covered by the extra revenue being collected at present?

Reply: There are not the resources to extend the current coverage. The cost of the additional security was only £2 per hour more than if we used City Council staff, thus a business case for additional resources to cover this in isolation would be unsustainable.

- 3) Further can the Portfolio Holder explain in simple terms that the public would understand how-when a car is closed it is in reality open because the barriers are raised-and when a car park is open it is not as the barriers are down!

Reply: We have not felt it necessary to physically close the outside area of Mary Arches car park when the facility is 'closed' preferring only to secure the inside decks only. In common with all our open air car parks, the public are permitted to use them outside the tariff charging times.

When the car park is open for business the exit barriers are down and rise when a valid paid ticket is inserted.

- 4) Would it not be more sensible to keep the barriers down when the car park is closed and late leavers can call the security firm to let them out? This would ensure that such late leavers would be obliged to pay in order to get out.

Reply: The cost of attendance by the security company would be prohibitive and would at, the current rate, be more than that paying for someone to staff the barrier. An alternative would be to close the car park at the same time as Guildhall Car Park and forego the evening tariff of £2 currently levied after the standard tariff becomes free elsewhere but the loss in income as demonstrated above would be significant.

Councillor Ruffle thanked Councillor Denham for her comprehensive report and requested a written copy. He accepted the revised figures of £162.30 over 15 nights or £10.81 a day. He hoped to have the opportunity to meet with the Portfolio Holder to discuss and investigate other occurrences.