

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel

DATE: 28th January 2008

RE: Parking strategy

Purpose

To advise the Scrutiny Panel of the proposed revisions to the parking strategy following general feedback from the wider consultation exercise.

Report Detail

The panel will recall receiving an update on the development of a draft parking strategy at its meeting 2nd August 2007. The panel will further recall the proposal to undertake wider public consultation prior to the draft strategy being presented to cabinet for formal adoption.

The consultation exercise has now been completed and in general terms very little feedback has been received. However, two important elements have been consistently commented upon.

Revised parking standards

Under the draft strategy a new approach to parking provision for new developments was suggested. The future level of parking provision allowed through the planning process would be more closely reviewed in light of accessibility to public transport, but retain the flexibility to assist with regeneration development where appropriate for the benefit of the borough as a whole.

This element of the strategy has raised a number of concerns particularly in relation to the subjectivity of methods used for assessment of accessibility to public transport, the ever changing nature of accessibility and the departure from nationally recognised base line parking standards.

Given the level and nature of objections it is proposed to remove this element from the initial parking strategy. It is still felt that benefit could be gained from a revised approach, however further evaluation will be necessary before incorporation into the parking strategy at a future date.

Strategic location of town centre parking facilities

A consistent view has been expressed that existing Walsall town centre car parking facilities are poorly located, inadequately signed and offering poor customer facilities. This view supports the draft strategy proposals to work more closely with partners in order to maximise opportunities for strategic relocation of car parks, to introduce strategic car park directional signage and to invest in improved customer security facilities such as lighting and CCTV.

Surprisingly there has been little comment on the proposal to introduce on street pay and display charges in order to more effectively management traffic congestion. The main comments have been from the local press seeking clarification of the rationale for its introduction, details of the proposed charges and the timescale for implementation.

The Council has since made it clear that on street pay and display charges will not be introduced although we will keep this under review.

The draft parking strategy will be amended removing the proposal to introduce revised parking standards and to introduce on street pay and display charges. Reference will be made to the proposal to further evaluate the need for revised parking standards and to keep under review the need to introduce on street pay and display charges in order to manage traffic congestion.

The revised parking strategy will be presented to Cabinet 16th April 2008 recommending formal adoption.

Recommendations

- (1) That the scrutiny panel note the proposed amendments to the draft
- (2) That the views of the scrutiny panel are invited

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