



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Agenda Item 4 Strategy and Resources Committee

Questions from Martin Clarke	Questions to Councillor Doina Cornell, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee
<p>I ask this as Co-Chair of Under the Edge Arts, The Chipping Hall, Wotton under Edge</p> <p>Q1 “Regarding the proposal to introduce car parking charges I am very concerned at the effect on users of the Arts Centre during charging hours. We provide a number of Day-time sessions through teachers and tutors aimed primarily at mothers and children and crafters. Our charges increased recently as our rent has increased. Inevitably the class costs have risen as well. To add further car park charges will put at risk the future of these courses and classes. Along the Ropewalk just 80 metres away is the Coop car park which has no charges and little supervision. Charges in the Chipping car park will send people including our customers into the Coop car park. This certain congestion will have as its unintended consequence a tightening up by the Coop with checks that cars belong to Coop customers. The knock-on effect will ripple through Wotton and will be very serious, reducing the spaces available. The question for the Committee is ‘will the knock-on effect of car park charges on the Chipping vis a vis the Coop car park be considered , and discussed with the Coop , before any decision is made ?”</p>	<p>Although the Co-op are not statutory consultees, we will speak to them to ensure they are aware of any pending change and as such, can make any arrangements they deem necessary. There is a similar scenario in Dursley with Sainsburys, Nailsworth with Morrisons, Stratford Park with Tescos and again we will make contact with them during the 6 week consultation period. A review of the effects of charging is mentioned in the report.</p>

<p>Q2 asked in my personal capacity</p> <p>“What has been the income to SDC from parking fines in Wotton under Edge for each of the last three years? What have been the costs of wardens carrying out inspections in the same periods, together with other costs including back office and unrecovered fines?”</p>	<p>The income to SDC from penalty charge notices issued in Wotton-under-Edge over the past 3 years is £958.</p> <p>We do not apportion the costs of enforcement to specific car parks, or areas and therefore figures relating to Wotton-under-Edge specifically, are not available.</p>
<p>Q3 asked in my personal capacity</p> <p>Would SDC please provide copies of the lease agreements for the Wotton Car Parks that they manage?”</p>	<p>SDC own Potters Pond Car Park and have a lease agreement with regards to The Chipping Car Park.</p> <p>A copy of the existing lease will be sent to the questioner.</p>

Questions from Victoria Clarke	Questions to Councillor Doina Cornell, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee
<p>With regard to the proposals to introduce car park charges in Wotton under Edge</p> <p>Q1 “Please can you confirm whether the express aim of these proposals is to deter residents from parking in the three SDC managed car parks in Wotton under Edge?”</p>	<p>No. Residents will still be able to use the car parks overnight, free of charge as well as all day Sunday and bank holidays.</p> <p>At present residents have to adhere to the maximum stay regulations anyway, so any impact will be limited.</p>
<p>Q2 Where do you anticipate expelled residents parking - for example residents on Symn Lane with no off street parking when the streets surrounding Symn Lane are already at capacity?</p>	<p>As above, residents that use the car parks overnight will not be adversely affected. Those that park in the car parks during the day can apply for a permit within the proposed long stay car parks.</p> <p>We will be consulting formally with Gloucestershire County Council, who control ‘on street parking’ as part of this process.</p>
<p>Q3 How do you propose to address residents' concerns about personal safety if compelled to park a long distance from their home - for example a lone woman returning late at night/after dark?”</p>	<p>As above, free overnight parking will not be affected, but residents will need to pay for parking if they don't move their vehicle before the commencement of the proposed charging period. Payment can be done remotely via our ‘pay by phone’ service, also available via a phone app.</p>

Questions from Neil Truelove	Questions to Councillor Doina Cornell, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee
<p>I write with regard to the proposal to introduce car parking fees in Dursley, specifically, but I suspect my comments and questions apply equally to the other towns in which it is under consideration.</p> <p>A recent article in the Gazette stated that "The council commissioned an independent report which states that charging for car parks can increase turnover, and make more spaces available for shoppers and visitors throughout the day."</p> <p>Q1 "The first statement is obvious - charging car parking fees must produce more turnover than not charging car parking fees - the question is how much do you calculate you will raise annually through such fees if they are introduced (net of the cost of administering them?)</p>	<p>In the areas where new charging regimes are proposed, we estimate to produce a net income of £66k per annum, i.e. the total gross income £149k illustrated in Table 4, minus the total additional annual costs £83k detailed in Table 3 of the committee report.</p>
<p>Q2 The second statement - that it will make more spaces available - can only be true if fewer people use the car parks. Is that the intention? And is there any evidence that this will, contrary to the obvious interpretation, be beneficial for the town? Surely this must have a negative impact on local trading. What does the evidence from similar schemes elsewhere in the district, and in other districts, demonstrate?</p>	<p>Both the committee report and associated report from Arup touch on this.</p> <p>Generally, charging for parking will increase turnover, allowing more people to visit for shorter periods. This is against the current situation where long term parking is blocking the availability of spaces, creating uncertainty for visitors hoping to park.</p> <p>There are case studies from other towns that free parking does not have a positive impact on trading as shoppers and visitors cannot find a space and may even stop going to a town at busy times. Town centres are finite and only a certain number of cars can ever find spaces there, it has to be ascertained who the spaces are primarily intended for, commuters and traders, or visitors and shoppers.</p>

Questions from Neil Truelove	Questions to Councillor Doina Cornell, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee
<p>Q3 If high streets continue to die this leads to a spate of hollowed-out and neglected town centres with increasing behavioural issues from some younger residents and fewer amenities and a sense of isolation among the older population. Is that what we want? Shouldn't we be doing everything we can to help declining rural towns like Dursley?</p> <p>I do not support the introduction of car parking fees in Dursley or elsewhere across Stroud district. “</p>	<p>As the health of town centres is a national concern, studies have been done on what factors contribute to the health or decline of towns – a complex set of factors affect towns, and there is no clear evidential link that it is free car parking that determines this.</p> <p>Evidence indicates that the introduction of charges can have a positive effect on towns, in that people will be able to access car parking spaces with more certainty, rather than searching multiple car parks for spaces. This, combined with more local visits on foot and by bike, and increased use of bus services to maintain their sustainability, will also have a positive effect on the physical environment for visitors.</p>

Question from Andrew Watton	Questions to Councillor Doina Cornell, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee
<p>Q1 “Assuming (purely for this question) that the final Resolution following the outcome of this consultation process is for car parking charges to be introduced and levied in Dursley, Nailsworth, Stratford Park, Stroud and Wotton under Edge in 2019 that any future changes/increases in respect of those towns will be subject to full public consultation at that time?”</p>	<p>The proposals in this report relate to the introduction of charges in Dursley, Nailsworth, Stratford Park and Wotton-under-Edge.</p> <p>Should the charges be introduced, further charge increases can be made without public consultation. However, we will always aim to ensure that the tariffs remain appropriate and proportionate. The report benchmarking shows that rates are much lower than neighbouring authorities.</p>

Questions from Lynn James	Questions to Councillor Doina Cornell, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee
<p>Q1 "Who supplied the council with the commissioned "independent report" which says " <u>that charging for car parks can increase turnover, and make more spaces available for shoppers and visitors throughout the day.</u>" ?</p>	<p>Ove Arup and Partners</p>
<p>Q2 What costs £50K in running the 37 car parks currently ?</p> <p>(I would like to see the breakdown of these costs - it is probably the 9 which <u>do</u> charge which incur this cost [in salaries of the wardens, policing, maintenance of ticket machines and so on.] Any cost of asphaltting/ notices needs to be spread over many years and I cannot believe it costs that much to provide open free spaces to encourage the use of the towns we are all keen to see have greater footfall.)</p>	<p>The currently 'non-charging' car parks, totalling 28 car parks, have approved budgets for 2018/19 of £35k without service support charges.</p> <p>This is spent on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rates • Electricity • Water • Grounds Maintenance • Resurfacing and relining • Lighting repairs/installation <p>General repairs – damaged walls, signage, posts etc</p>
<p>Q3 Honestly, who is actually going to benefit from the revenue of the charging?"</p>	<p>SDC residents and those visiting SDC from elsewhere.</p>

Questions from John Pettit, Vice-Chair of Nailsworth Chamber of Trade and Commerce	Questions to Councillor Doina Cornell, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee
<p>Q1 The analysis of parking in Nailsworth indicates a reasonable flow of vehicles in most car parks how does the committee think that charges will change this. If time restricted methods were reviewed without charging it would have the same affect. This indicates that the plan is purely a revenue gathering exercise for SDC. Can this be considered please?</p>	<p>The analysis of parking illustrates that occupancy levels are high and that greater regulation is required. There is anecdotal evidence that people are now deterred from visiting following previous failures to find spaces. Limited waiting times have been adjusted previously to try and operate the car parks as efficiently as possible. We believe the most appropriate method of further regulation is to propose to introduce charges.</p>
<p>Q2 Considering that this plan is purely a method of raising funds for SDC which we all agree are operating under extreme financial constraints. How does the council justify subsidising Stroud Farmers market? I am led to believe that this private enterprise is funded by the council to the tune of £150k per annum.</p> <p>Nailsworth runs a once monthly, albeit smaller market and we make a small profit which is used to support other town events such as the Nailsworth Noel Christmas evening. If we can operate and make a profit why can't Stroud? The Stroud Market subsidy (if it exists) is the same amount of money that we all know the council wants to raise. Cancel the subsidy and there is no need to introduce parking charges. Or is Stroud being given special treatment?</p>	<p>SDC do not subsidise Stroud Farmers' Market.</p> <p>The existing operator has a licence granted by SDC, for which an annual fee is payable to SDC by the operator.</p>
<p>Q3 The Arup survey and the council has stated that "it is considered" that parking charges will have no effect on footfall but Nailsworth is already under threat as a shopping destination due to all the banks having closed and now the proposed Aldi development with 150 FREE parking spaces. Plus the threat of Forest Green Rovers being moved and the increasingly worsening retail environment which will all have a</p>	<p>The consultation gives opportunity to offer formal feedback on proposals.</p> <p>SDC have an obligation to consider all of the objections put forward.</p> <p>See above answer to your Q1</p>

<p>serious effect on the town and could turn it in to a ghost town. It is unique in the area. Will the council look at methods other than charging to avoid this happening?</p>	
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<p>Questions from Jonathan Duckworth, Town Mayor of Nailsworth on behalf of the Town Council</p>	<p>Questions to Councillor Doina Cornell, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee</p>
<p>Q1 The officers' report confirms that legal powers to set parking charges are to 'secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicles and other traffic in the locality' along with air quality, amenity, access to premises, access for emergency vehicles. (2.4), why is no direct evidence provided to demonstrate that any of this is a problem in Nailsworth?</p>	<p>The occupancy surveys clearly illustrate that the car parks are at, or close to capacity. This has direct implications for the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicles, as cars trawl multiple car parks to find a space. This has an inherent knock on effect to both access issues and air quality.</p>
<p>Q2 Given there is a lack of supporting information, such as details of the Car Park Surveys and their methodology, assessment of the nature of visits to Nailsworth, the importance of car borne shoppers to the town, the effect charges would have on on-street and private car parks, the effect parking charges would have on vehicle movements as drivers search for free spaces, the effect on non-retail and catering activities, any evidence of an impact assessment, how can the Committee make a decision to go for consultation without this information being available to them?</p>	<p>The car park survey results and methodology are available in the committee report and associated Arup report.</p> <p>We believe these documents provide a clear and concise basis on which a decision on consultation can be taken.</p> <p>A review of the effects of charging is mentioned in the report.</p>
<p>Q3 In Nailsworth a substantial proportion of the population lives at the top of a long steep hill and public transport is derisory, the likelihood of charging significantly influencing modal split in favour of walking and cycling is very small, in addition there is no station or commuter hub, or major publicly provided facility such as swimming pool, music/arts venue, museum,</p>	<p>We recognise that no two towns are the same and that all towns will have an element of uniqueness.</p> <p>However, the car park occupancy surveys in Nailsworth show that there is limited parking to cope with demand and therefore further regulation is proposed to ensure the provision is best placed to cope.</p>

<p>sports, leisure centre etc. however in this report most of the limited evidence presented derives from different, much larger places, it is not demonstrated that this reads across to Nailsworth, so why have the specific and unique circumstances of Nailsworth not been considered?</p>	<p>There are regular bus services into the town centre and back from Forest Green.</p>
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<p>Questions from Carole Allen, Development Worker, Dursley Tabernacle URC</p>	<p>Questions to Councillor Doina Cornell, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee</p>
<p>Q1 Will volunteers working on our church site (eg Foodbank) be awarded concessionary parking permits if the parking charges are implemented? Churches such as ours with limited private parking in the town are going to have more people abusing the church drives and parking randomly. For churches this will impact on access for funerals etc. We will have to implement measures to protect these spaces and challenge people parking inappropriately in them which will cost us money and time. What help will we be given with that?</p>	<p>Volunteers won't be granted concessionary parking permits, although limited short term, on street, free, parking will remain via Gloucestershire County Council provision.</p> <p>We wouldn't anticipate these changes causing particular problems for the church, but as part of our consultation process we will be liaising with the County Council to discuss any potential for an increase in illegal parking on the streets.</p>
<p>Q2 What is being done to improve the (recently reduced!) bus services to support the growing population of Cam in getting in to Dursley without using their cars?</p>	<p>As bus service provision comes under the remit of the County Council, again this is something that can be discussed during the consultation phase.</p>
<p>Q3 What is going to be done to stop all the disgruntled drivers from parking along the residential roads (The Knapp/Windsor Road/Cedar Drive etc) when car parks are fee paying? Is there going to be an introduction of resident parking permits and monitoring of parking infringements in these areas? If so, surely that will cost more than the revenue from the car parks?</p>	<p>Again this falls under the remit of the County Council and will be discussed with them as part of the consultation.</p>