

CABINET

FRIDAY, 12 JUNE 2020

PRESENT: Councillors David Cannon, Andrew Johnson (Chairman), David Coppinger, Samantha Rayner, Stuart Carroll (Vice-Chairman), David Hilton, Gerry Clark and Ross McWilliams

Also in attendance: Councillors C Da Costa, Hill, Del Campo, Bhangra, Sharpe, Tisi, Singh, Baldwin, Hill, Taylor, Knowles and Werner.

Officers: Hillary Hall, Fatima Rehman, Ben Smith, Louisa Dean, Adele Taylor and David Cook.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rayner.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

APPOINTMENTS

None.

CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS

A) COVID-19 RECOVERY: PARKING CONCESSION TO SUPPORT RETAIL AND TOWN CENTRE REOPENING

Cabinet considered the report that recommended that Advantage Card holders were able to park free of charge for up to 3 hours in Royal Borough car parks from Monday 15th June to Sunday 12th July 2020.

The Lead Member for Public Protection and Parking informed Cabinet that the purpose of the report was to assist the recovery of our town centres and retail outlets. Parking enforcement was recommencing as more people are traveling to work and furlough was being relaxed. There was a need to keep roads safe by enforcing yellow lines and allowing residents to be able to park near their homes. The government's third phase of recovery was allowing more retail stores to open and there was a need to support residents being able to visit town centres. It was proposed that Advantage Card holders could display their cards on their dashboards for 3 hours free parking. He believed that this was a realistic, beneficial and affordable move for the first month.

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Resident & Leisure Services, HR, IT, Legal, Performance Management & Windsor said that she supported the proposals as Windsor was an important shopping and tourism centre. There was a need to support retail by shopping local and staying local, it was important to support businesses as part of our partnership with them.

The Lead Member for Transport and Infrastructure endorsed the paper as the right measures at the right time to stimulate residents and support business. There would also be measures being put in place for roads and pavements to assist social distancing.

The Lead Member for Planning and Maidenhead reported that prior to C-19 there were signs of growth and development within Maidenhead and this would now continue, for example a few days ago there had been an application for the Nicholson's Centre.

The Leader reiterated what had been said and informed that during these times we had to be flexible and act accordingly to support local businesses and hence the urgency of this report. He believed that this was the best for residents.

Cllr Werner reported that he was supportive of plans to help residents and business, however he did raise concerns of the financial viability and that it was only for 4 weeks. He questioned if savings would have to be made to support the proposal and raised that the Section 151 officer did not support the report and asked if this brought her closer to issuing a Section 114 notice.

The Lead Member replied that they had been clear that this was for a 4 week period and that it was affordable and that if the opposition think it should be for a longer period he welcomed their plans to how it would be financed. There was a balance between revenue and supporting our residents.

The Section 151 officer informed that she had not endorsed the paper as it had not yet been identified where the money to cover the costs would be coming from. It had been suggested that the money from central Government to support our highstreets could be used but this had not yet been confirmed.

The Lead Member for Finance and Ascot said he supported the views of the Section 151 officer as when there was proposals for additional spend the funding should be identified. In this instance there was a balance between the budget pressure and supporting local business and he believed the actions would pay back the £35,000 many times.

Cllr Price said that she supported the initiative to help the local economy, however stores would reopen slowly and restaurants and pubs were not due to open until July 2020. She suggested that instead of the proposed free parking Advantage Card holders could be given a discount as this would allow them to continue to use their card in stores to get discounts and allow flexibility on the length of time. The Lead Member replied that it had been considered but it would have cost more to reprogram the parking machines and taken longer to introduce.

Cllr Jones questioned why the costs could not be covered by the council's reserves long term and as this was a policy decision it would not be covered by the Government's grants regarding C-19. She found it difficult to see where the money was coming from if not reserves. The Lead Member informed that the £35,000 was a revenue that would not be coming in, this was an assumption of costs that may be lower.

The Lead Member for Finance and Ascot said that there was about \$4.9 million in the C-19 bucket and it could come out of this. He supported the views of the Section 151 officer that if we wished to spend money above the budget then the funding should be identifiable.

Cllr Jones also raised concern that the proposals had been put on social media before information had been sent to councillors to help them understand the proposals.

Cllr Sharpe said that it was important that we support our highstreets and that this was being done in an open and transparent way.

Cllr Hill said that he also had concerns where the funding was coming from and suggested that the proposals be delayed until funding had been identified.

The Chairman noted the concerns but said that the administration wanted to get the proposal adopted in line with the town centre opening.

Resolved unanimously: that Cabinet notes the report and approves the implementation of free parking of up to 3-hours for Advantage Card holders in all Royal Borough operated car parks from 15th June 2020 to 13th July 2020 (inclusive).

The meeting, which began at 1.00 pm, finished at 1.36 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....