

We have only been allocated 5 minutes for this issue which is very important to both residents and businesses and is as unrealistic as 20 minutes free parking. I apologise now if this takes longer than 5 minutes and therefore would appreciate that any responses be put forward at the end. It is important to highlight that we only had one month to get public opinion and as you can see from the number of people who have signed the petitions in that time - this is proof of the strong feeling of the community.

Basis For Petition

Penalising businesses and residents after very difficult year

Businesses struggling as still in partial lockdown - some have only just re-opened

Residents will go elsewhere to shop ie Fosse Park with free parking

What other options have OWBC looked at and dismissed as potential break even or are you actually looking at this as a revenue stream -

Questions

Meeting 6th July 2017

Item G - confirms better enforcement is needed on carparks as it is sporadic across car parks - What evidence is there that this has been done and what are results

Meeting 5th December 2017

What evidence does OWBC have to determine impact on local businesses and viability of town centres as they advised that this should be undertaken in these minutes.

Budget Meeting 18/2/2021 - It states in item 3.8 "The aim of the Authority is to provide improved levels of service, whilst reducing costs and this is recognised in the savings already allocated"

How can this be the case - Table gives these savings which are costs mostly transferred to residents - Especially to a community who has been hit with covid 19, reduced working hours and/or redundancy, Shop closures, reduced facilities within the district ie leisure centres, Increase in garden waste charges, introduce car parking charges, refuse collection ? moving to fortnightly. HOW ARE THESE IMPROVED LEVELS OF SERVICE.

Budget Meeting 18/2/2021 3.9

To address budget deficit - two key items of policy were agreed to be delivered

Car Park Charges & Refuse collection moving to fortnightly (vermin control ???)

So, these two items have already been agreed in some form or another so what is consultation period for, other than a tick box.

It makes no sense having garden waste collections over 12 months. Oct to March cannot be productive other than employees and lorries being used to collect very little during these months. Cannot be cost effective and impacts on carbon footprint

?? Reduced costs and reduced collection over winter months

We understand the one option is for Number Plate Recognition - most drivers pay over the amount they expect to use - this gives the opportunity for someone else to use up any

surplus on the ticket. With NPR OWBC are looking to get double payments in some cases which cannot be right especially if this is a cost neutral exercise. If a space has been paid for for a certain amount of time then the ticket should be valid for that space whichever car is displaying the ticket. This proves that this option is just to create profit regardless of just covering the costs.

What feasibility study has taken place regarding any option other than than how much profit the council are hoping to make.

Businesses require footfall to survive in this difficult time. You are looking to charges for car parking on land owned by the council. If people decide to go elsewhere where parking is free - how will businesses be able to afford their business rates. Let alone make some sort of living. In reality you will have the opposite affect to what you are trying to achieve.

Car parks are a service like parks are a service - are you going to charge to enter parks.

Electric Charging Units

I understand a number have been installed in car parks - at what cost????

I do not imagine anyone would be visiting Wigston/Oadby shopping areas on a day out like Fosse Park. Anyone visiting would be within range of their own home. What was method to determine these were a necessity at this point.

Or is this a government scheme which is subsidised.

If so - how long is the subsidy for

what cost is OWBC contributing

what research was undertaken to indicate this would benefit the community.

what was consultation process & results

Conclusion

Based on our responses there is strong feelings from residents & businesses that Wigston/Oadby will become ghost towns if car park charges are implemented. Businesses will close, residents will go elsewhere where there is free parking to enjoy the shopping experience.

Reading between the lines it would seem that OWBC want to cut costs, at the same time somehow provide better services - by transferring the cost implications to the residents implying it is because of covid costs when in fact this was suggested in the 2017 minutes.

What happened to money saved from Furlough

Concern regarding payouts to staff and non disclosure payments. It appears legal costs far out way original payouts.

Once the petition took off seems ironic a Lib Dems Newsletter is sent out detailing the issue.

Residents are now asking whether OWBC are transparent in their undertakings, Fit for Purpose and able to run services which are Value for Money.

In particular, when car parking charges did not seem to be at the forefront of the election campaigns in 2019 & 2021 and the present government & covid is being blamed now - for a

decision made in 2017 to implement car park charges for resources deficits managed & controlled by OWBC as indicated in Minutes stated above. So - it appears nothing has changed since 2017 in this regard.

Our feedback has indicated that there are many unhappy residents who have indicated if this had been apparent at the time they may have voted differently. So again transparency comes into question.

As a finishing remark we have been informed that several shops in Blaby have closed and the Council have revised their parking to 2 hours 30p charge, 3 hours 50p , 4 hours £1.50

Suggestions

Depending on what OWBC have already looked at:

What findings have there been in other areas where this has been implemented. costs, overheads, impact on footfall & local businesses etc

What scheme has been introduced

Feedback from businesses and residents

Look at savings elsewhere

What else is currently running at a loss

Moving of premises - if this had been implemented in 2017 savings would now be available.

Look at alternative revenue streams that are not funded by residents in addition to what they already contribute to - which is what you are trying to do.

Partnerships or outsourcing with other authorities and/or businesses to provide services

Any income from car parking is "ring fenced" for spending on car parks only