



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

To:
Mark Thomas
Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

Please ask for: Michelle Roberts
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Date 20 November 2014
Dyddiad:

Dear Cllr Thomas

Car Parks Scrutiny Working Group Feedback – 6 November 2014

The Panel have met twice in the last two months to look at the provision of car parking services in Swansea. Officers Gavin Newman, Stuart Davies and Mark Thomas have attended these meetings and provided us with an overview report and the information we requested. We would also like to thank you for attending our meeting on the 6 November which we found very helpful.

We were interested to hear about the systems thinking work that is being carried out across the service and especially the work in relation to enabling direct payments of Penalty Charge Notices. We were also pleased to hear that these Notices have been simplified for users.

We were informed that the Parking Service is currently undertaking a period of reorganisation which will involve changing from two shifts to three with supervisors on the ground. We were told that this should deliver a greater enforcement presence and more flexibility than before. We were keen to see this improvement but did feel that the service would still benefit from more enforcement officers, but we did recognise that numbers were based on level of income. We were informed that the Parking Enforcement Car will be in service shortly and that would help especially with targeted work.

There is a perception that there is not enough car parking in the city centre the panel did not agree believing as they were informed that that the parking is adequate but not necessarily in the right place. The Panel recognise that there is very little that could be done to change that but did feel that a good signage strategy would help address this perception especially good signposting. The use of electronic message boards would also alleviate some of the issues especially at busy times by giving 'current time messages' to drivers showing when car parks might be full and identifying where spaces can be found.

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The lower floors in the High Street car park were highlighted as an issue particularly in relation to the fear of crime. The Panel found that only the top two floors of the car park are used consistency due not only to the perceived safety issues but its less convenient location. We felt that consideration should be given to looking for different uses for this space.

We were pleased to hear that all car parks across Swansea have now been fitted with new ticketing machines which can collect and produce more management data and potentially enable more flexible pricing policies.

The Panel were informed of some of the reasons behind certain processes that are often misconceived by the public, for example, why we ask for the car registration numbers when you purchase car park tickets. That this was not done to stop ticket sharing but to be able to trace and contact purchaser if any problems arise with for example the payment machine etc. We felt it important to communicate such things to the public more widely.

It was generally recognised that there are specific 'hot spots' where parking issues regularly arise, for example, at the liberty stadium on match days. We believe that many of these could be addressed by working with the local councillor to do targeted work in these areas.

We discussed the safety and public's behaviour towards Civic Enforcement Officers. We were informed that they work in an environment where they often receive abuse on a daily basis and at times their safety is threatened. The Panel would like to see more use of body cameras to act as a deterrent and for evidence gathering purposes. The Panel were also informed that we have approached the Police about having a 'direct to the station' panic button. The Panel would like to see this pursued further.

We were informed that the current Residents Parking Policy will be reviewed and we discussed the possible implications of this, recognising that because of the significant pressures to reduce budgets, that we must seek options to increase revenue. We supported the need to review this policy but felt that it was vital that we work with and clearly communicate to communities affected.

We therefore recommend that:

1. A signage strategy for car parks is developed (this should include more use of flexible and variable signage like electronic message boards).
2. A different use for the four lower floors of High Street multi storey car park is considered.
3. A more flexible pricing policy for car park charging is used now that we have the new more flexible ticketing machines.

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4. There is more publicity around the reasoning for certain charges and processes.
5. Consideration given to more targeted work with local councillors around problem areas including for example around the Liberty Stadium on match days.
6. Improving safety with more use of body cameras and working with the police to enable a direct to the station panic button.
7. You consult with and communicate/publicise the outcomes with communities around changes to resident parking (particularly around changes to zones)

We look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

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