



**To/
Councillor Mark Thomas
Cabinet Member for Environment
Services**

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BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from the Car Park Charges Scrutiny Working Group to the Cabinet Member for Environment Services following the meeting of the working Group on 28 November 2017. It is about Car Park Charges.

Dear Councillor Thomas,

Car Park Charges Scrutiny Working Group on 28 November 2017

Thank you and officers from the Transportation Section for attending the Car Park Charges Scrutiny Working Group on 28 November 2017 and answering our questions.

As you will recall four members of the public attended the meeting to make submissions. They were from the local business community in Mumbles/Langland/Caswell about the shoreline car parking at Bracelet Bay, Caswell and Langland. Thank you for addressing the concerns at the meeting, we have noted these as follows:

The increase in winter car park charges at foreshore car parks

You said that this increase has raised income to help maintain car parks more widely and to address many of the issues mentioned today. The increased charges have upped our revenue intake but usage has decreased. You said you acknowledge that the local businesses on the foreshore feel that trade has been affected by the increase in winter charges. You agreed that we need to find a solution that works for everyone. There were a number of suggestions made by the public and the Working Group about winter charges in relation to the foreshore at Bracelet Bay, Caswell and Langland Car Parks including: reducing the charge to £1 for 2 hours, allowing longer for the current charge or free for the first hour and/or a residents seasonal/yearly permit. You said that piloting one of these suggestions will be the best way to find a solution.

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We recommend that a pilot study is had at Bracelet Bay, Caswell and Langland Car Parks in the first instance.

Foreshore Car Parks

As you will recall we discussed a number of issues relating to foreshore car parks including markings, lineage, fencing, litter, toilets and lighting. You said that car parks should have regular maintenance but that funding to do this is an issue however we need to ensure that we have a good basic standard for safety in particular. We suggest that asset transfers of toilets are looked into, particularly after the success of the public toilet asset transfer in Southgate. This could be a way of saving the council money and providing a higher standard of cleaning and facilities. You said you would follow up on the issues raised.

We raised the issue of lighting within foreshore car parks. You said that there has never been lighting in those car parks and it would be expensive to install especially given the current financial climate but you will look into it possibility of having lighting around/above ticket machines.

Meeting of modified cars in Bracelet Bay Car Park and associated anti-social behaviour

You recognised that this is a police matter and it was suggested that ward members liaise with PCSOs in the area to arrange additional patrols. You agreed to look into the possibility of installing an entrance gate that can be used to close the car park at night when issues arise.

Ticket Machine problems

You agreed that there have been issues with the ticket machines and that these need to be resolved. The Council is working with the manufacturers to find a solution. The Working Group had concerns about the time this is taking and you agreed to follow up on this.

Possible leasing/selling of some car parks

There are no current plans for the Council to lease or sell its car parks but Cabinet Member will look into the legality and viability of that possibility.

We then moved on to the rest of the agenda looking at car parking more widely in Swansea. See below our thoughts:

The changing landscape of parking in the City Centre

Concerns were raised about the reduction in the Car Park spaces available due to the different developments being proposed across the city. We recognise that it is important to encourage people to get out of their cars but even with that we need to be realistic about the spaces that will be required. We felt that the number of spaces will need to grow rather than be reduced as developments progress. You informed us that a commissioning review including development of a strategic approach to parking requirements for the city centre changes is currently underway. Scrutiny Councillors will have the opportunity to complete pre-decision scrutiny on this before it goes to Cabinet. This will be completed by the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Panel on the 9 March 2017.

The science used to set car park charges

We heard that the Council looks at what other local authorities charge including benchmarking our charges against others. We felt that it is important to emphasise and to recognise the wider effects to business and communities in Swansea when charges are increased. We must do our best to ensure we understand the wider impacts when changing our car park charges.

Multi storey car parks and usage

We were pleased to hear that there has been improved usage especially in High Street multi storey car park. We asked about the standard of any car parks that will be built within the new developments within the City Centre and you assured us that they will be designed to a high standard so they are more attractive to park in, have wider spaces, will be well lit and have electric charging points.

We also felt that when constructing any new multi storey style car park that thought is given to being able to change its use should the demand for parking be reduced in long term be reduced with the introduction of new emerging car technologies.

Mumbles car park capacity

The Working Group recognised that there is an issue with regard to parking capacity within Mumbles. The idea of a multi storey car park was raised but the Working Group recognised it would be prohibitively expensive. We recommend that car parking capacity in Mumbles is specifically reviewed as part of the commissioning review. We also heard that in the longer term there could be the opportunity to have dual use Park and Ride for the west part of Swansea.

Future proofing our roads for self-drive cars and installation of electric charging points

We heard that these are things that the industry is currently grappling with and we recognise that the landscape in relation to transport as a whole will change dramatically in the medium to long term. We recognise at this point you cannot do much more than keep up-to-date with best practice and keep a watch as things develop. We did feel, however, that when the development plans in the City Centre are advanced it will be important to start to consider future proofing the city centre with, in the first instance a city centre drop off and collection point.

Your response

We are interested in hearing your thoughts about the issues raised in our letter and would ask that you respond to the following issues by the 9 January 2017.

1. That you use Bracelet Bay, Caswell and Langland foreshore car parks to carry out a pilot study that will preferably reduce car park charges in Winter to £1 for 2 hours with the aim of increasing footfall and also tourist footfall/usage of these car parks.
2. That car parking capacity in Mumbles is specifically reviewed as part of the commissioning review. Also that you ensure that the state of the foreshore

car parks as exemplified at Bracelet Bay are addressed including particularly the entrance in and out markings, the lineage, the fencing.

3. That you look into the possibility of asset transfer for foreshore toilets.
4. Install an entrance gate at Bracelet Bay car park that can be used to close the car park at night when issues arise.
5. Look into the possibility of having lights above ticket machines in foreshore car parks.
6. Follow up on progress with finding a solution to the issues being experienced with ticket machines across Swansea as a matter of urgency.
7. That you look at the viability and legality of leasing out some car parks as part of the Councils asset disposal programme and consider as part of the commissioning review.
8. Consider the inclusion of a city centre drop off and collection point for self-drive vehicles in any city centre regeneration plans.

Yours sincerely,

COUNCILLOR WILL THOMAS

Convener, Car Park Charges Scrutiny Working Group

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