
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE
ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD ON 2 DECEMBER 2010

EEOSP.82/10 BUDGET

c) Review of Charges 2011/12

• **Local Environment**

Report CS.28/10 was submitted, setting out the proposed fees and charges for the services falling within the responsibility of the Local Environment Directorate.

The Executive had on 22 November 2010 (EX.181/10) considered the report and decided that the report be noted and referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for their consideration.

Car Parks – Officers had reviewed the short and long stay car parks and had proposed changes to maximise income and create a shoppers car park at Upper Viaduct. It was proposed to maintain the differential in costs between short and long stay car parks. That would take account of the changes expected by the increase in VAT in January. Contract car parking charges would be maintained at current levels plus VAT.

Bulky Waste/Special Collections – a flat rate would be introduced as the current system was confusing for customers, officers and Members. The new system would assist customers who wished to use the internet although customers would still be able to contact the Council by telephone. However it was expected that there would be a decrease in demand due to the changes in charges.

Purple Sacks – it was proposed that the provision of purple sacks would cease and that residents would be required to purchase sacks. Recycling rates had been successful and therefore the number of purple sacks being left for collection had reduced.

Bereavement – charges would be increased to cover the cost of replacement of the cremators.

- *When the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group was presented to the Executive, it was stated that the recommendations were accepted and that the relevant proposals would be included in the budget recommendations. In many cases that had not been done, eg pro rata contracts for car parking, possibly charging different rates for less popular car parks.*

The Local Environment Portfolio Holder advised that many of the recommendations had been agreed and would be put into the budget. That had not been done due to a lack of time. He had considered the car parks and functions with Ms Culleton and they were looking at options. Car parks would be reviewed and they were looking at a system of paying by mobile phone. With regard to people losing money due to machines not providing change, it had been agreed to round the charges up to £1.

In response to a Member's query the Local Environment Portfolio Holder advised that the Panel may wish to make a recommendation that all car parks were similarly round up. However that would not encourage commuters to park outside the city centre and could result in commuters filling shopper car parks. .

- *The Executive had said they were looking at linear parking charges. Was there a timetable for that charging or would it be part of the ongoing car parking review?*

The Local Environment Portfolio Holder stated that the Executive would like to implement pay by phone but they were being guided by officers. While Parking Connect was underway it would be best to wait until all the information had been gathered then implement all the changes at once.

Ms Culleton advised that there would be a lot of change if Parking Connect was implemented but that a lot of good work had been done.

In response to a Member's query the Local Environment Portfolio Holder advised that there would not be any concession for Cathedral users.

The revenue from Talkin Tarn would be ring fenced for woodland and leisure maintenance. Income from the car park and restaurant helped but next year the Council would lose the £40,000 concession from the County Council.

- *What was happening with the Green Travel Plan?*

The Local Environment Portfolio Holder advised that parts of the Plan had been introduced. People were using cycles more to get around and staff were sharing cars. Members did not believe the time was right to start charging staff and Members for car parking but that it may be considered in the future.

- *Would it be possible to provide the removal of bulky waste free of charge for elderly residents?*

The Local Environment Portfolio Holder advised that there would be no free collections but that if people had bulky items they could contact Centre 47 who would remove it free of charge if it could be reused. All items for removal by the Council would be charged and the Portfolio Holder recognised that the wording in the report would need to be amended to clarify the situation.

There was further discussion around the provision of purple sacks to residents. A Member was concerned that he was provided with a wheelie bin while other residents

would have to pay for sacks. The Portfolio Holder explained that people who used wheelie bins put their refuse in sacks that they had purchased so the situation was no different for people purchasing purple sacks.

- *If people bought their own sacks there would be no guarantee that they would be good quality. The cheaper sacks would be more likely to be ripped by cats, dogs or birds. That would lead to a litter issue. When looking at a saving in one area officers should consider the impact in other areas. Would the saving in not supplying purple sacks be taken up by the need to clean up litter from torn sacks?*

The Local Environment Portfolio Holder advised that the purchase of the sacks cost the Council £30,000. There were two options in the report regarding purple sacks and the Executive recommendation was to cease providing sacks to residents. A Member believed that people on low income would not be able to afford to buy sacks and requested that the Executive consider the matter again and present further options and recommendations to the Panel. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that there was insufficient time to re-consider the proposals but that the Executive would take on board the suggestions made by the Panel. Sacks could be made available to be collected at the Civic Centre at a charge.

RESOLVED – (1) That the observations of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel, as outlined above, be conveyed to the Executive.

(2) That the status quo be maintained regarding the supply of purple sacks

- **Economic Development**

Report ED.37/10 was submitted, setting out the proposed fees and charges for the services falling within the responsibility of the Economic Development Directorate.

The Executive had on 22 November 2010 (EX.183/10) considered the report and decided that the report be noted and referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for their consideration.

RESOLVED – That the decision of the Executive be noted.