

Extract from Cabinet minutes 12 September 2016

31. The Parking Strategy – Year 1 Recommendations

A report was received from the Head of Regeneration and Development. A task and finish group had been set up through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the Parking Strategy Year 1 works in relation to the allocation of kerb side parking space within the Town Centre/Ring Road.

Councillor Scudder, Chair of the Parking Strategy Task Group, introduced the report and explained that it had been a short timescale task group working on a specific brief from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Working from the consultants report the task group had looked at phase 1 of the parking strategy inside the ring road in order to maximise the potential use of kerb space. The consultants had identified 11 areas of focus. The task group then looked at plans along with officers' suggestions. Proposals were drawn up for each of the 11 areas and a set of recommendations produced which included more taxi space and blue badge parking and further provision for electric vehicles. Most recommendations did not require significant expenditure. There was one recommendation which would require more expense which was a blue badge space in Church Street near the church car park. There would still be work required on some recommendations involving consultation around the Met Quarter area with regards to the businesses and taxis, and also in the area around George Street. Councillor Scudder thanked fellow members and officers on what had been an effective exercise which he would recommend for the second phase of the parking strategy.

In response to questions, the Transport and Infrastructure Section Head commented that the recommendations would address the balance of the type of parking available in the town centre. He explained that Watford was leading the way with electric car provision and had doubled the number of charging units in the town and there were now over 600 electric vehicles registered in Watford. This demonstrated that if the infrastructure was there then it would be utilised.

The Mayor commented that there were potentially over 50 new spaces available for a range of users. There would be a time restriction on blue badge spaces of 3 hours stay maximum to allow turnover in the spaces.

Cabinet discussed that the task group had been helpful and it would be useful to repeat the approach again as the parking strategy was taken forwards. All the recommendations would be subject to Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO). Cabinet was being asked to agree to use the parking reserve for some of the changes and it was commented that this was a strong message for residents that the money from parking services was reinvested in the town.

Councillor Hastrick, as Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented that due to timescales it had not been possible for the task group's report to go to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee before it came to Cabinet. Councillor Hastrick had offered to take forward any objections from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet but none had been received.

Cabinet thanked the task group for a good piece of scrutiny.

The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head responded to questions regarding timescales to explain that normally the TRO process took 4-6 months.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. agrees that the task group's proposals and comments in each of the locations listed in the schedule be progressed.
2. agrees that further task groups be considered in future years for the parking strategy recommendations.
3. agrees that the parking reserve budget may be used for the proposed changes.