

Briefing Note for Strategic Place Making Scrutiny Committee Meeting- 26 July, 2018

'Parking Pricing Policy'

On 26th July 2018, Strategic Place Making Scrutiny Committee is considering the topic 'Parking Pricing Policy'. Specifically the purpose of the review is to understand the impact of parking policy on the local economy and on parking income and the use of the surplus, what is being achieved and what is planned to be achieved by its use and make any recommendations as to potential uses of the surplus.

This is a complex subject. There are many variables that impact on the local economy of which Parking Policy is indeed one and it is certainly a topic that businesses within Central Milton Keynes raise with the Council on a regular basis.

The number of people parking in Central Milton Keynes has been falling over recent years despite the continued growth of the city. This was considered by a Council Task and Finish Group in 2017, which identified a number of factors including changes in retail habits (more online shopping and increased out-of-town retail), changes in employment patterns (i.e. more flexible working practices encouraged by many employers, including the Council), pricing policy and also the perceived complexity of parking in Milton Keynes.

Due to the aging systems and technology that the Council uses to manage its parking stock, it is very difficult to assess how demand has varied over time and therefore what are the main factors affecting demand. For example the elasticity of charges is not well understood, it is difficult to predict how any changes in tariff will impact on demand and therefore income.

The new parking enforcement and technology contracts commences in September 2018. This is intended to transform the parking experience within Milton Keynes. The new contracts will be accompanied by new ticket machines which will enable bank card payments and payment on departure. It will also provide a much richer data source and analysis tools for us to understand which vehicles are parked where, when and for how long so that we can establish a more sound evidence base on which to base future parking policy decisions.

To accompany the new contracts we have also commissioned a specific study to develop a future Parking Strategy for Milton Keynes, as outlined as a deliverable within the Mobility Strategy. This will take an evidence based approach to develop some proposals around how we can optimise use of the parking stock within Milton Keynes, across all locations and customer types (e.g. shoppers, employees etc.). This work is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2018. The proposals will consider areas and times where there may be oversupply, areas and times where there may be undersupply and how this balance can be redressed either through fiscal measures or other initiatives, both utilising technology and other more traditional approaches (e.g. better signage).

In terms of the use of the parking surplus, there are legal restrictions that limit what this can be used for. The council identifies priorities for funding in Transport and Highways through the budget making process, which link to the Council Plan and other Strategies and Policies (e.g. the Mobility Strategy). The parking surplus is then applied to those measures which are eligible to be funded from that revenue stream.

Steve Hayes, Head of Transport
12th July 2018