

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

**County Council
13th July 2017**

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Liam Fitzpatrick, Portfolio Holder for Highways

SUBJECT: Question from County Councillor John Morris

Question

We have learned through a press release that you intend to review the decision to make charges in 9 council owned car parks that were previously free. There is presently an inconsistency across Powys with some car parks being pay and display and some free. In the interest of fairness and equality for all council tax payers across Powys and to support the economy will you extend your remit to review the car park charging policy across the whole of Powys?

Answer

Thank you for your question and I am grateful that you asked it when it is important that our decisions are equitable and fair throughout the entire county.

It is the intention of my review to look initially at the viability of the nine car parks which the previous Cabinet decided should no longer be free. This review will look at the particular issues raised by the communities (the social value component) as well as the predicted income compared to costs (cost benefit analysis component). Once this review is completed I will instigate a further review of all car parks to determine the future use and viability of these parking areas and how best they are managed, again based on the social value to the community and the cost benefit analysis. This is "Smart Thinking" and enables us to make much better decisions for our neighbourhoods and our many residents as the effect on a community is taken into consideration alongside the financial considerations – a new concept that my cabinet colleagues are aware of. It is the best way I can think of which will allow us to come up with an equitable and fair solution.

Every pound coming into Powys in car parking benefits our entire economy. A pound in Hay-on-Wye car park helps the brand new school indirectly in Hay-on-Wye - something perhaps we don't think about enough as politicians in Powys.

The Parking Service forms a vital part of the Council's budget and unless income can be maintained or increased in other areas I represent, any reduction in income may impact upon other services provided by the council. Like many services in my

responsibility - such as street cleaning , public conveniences , pot holes , repair of our roads bridges and buildings - these are services we take for granted in our neighbourhoods every day and are noticed daily by all of our residents including myself . These services, which I now represent, have been **the hardest hit within the council and in two years in Powys has suffered a 53.6 per cent cut when other similar services throughout the U.K have suffered an average of 20 per cent** . This is not a problem but an opportunity for all of us and I am grateful to councillors' input so far as to how the service can improve the neighbourhoods that they represent. This new cabinet is now fully aware of how essential these services are to our Neighbourhoods.

You will of course be aware that I have had to start off tough in my new role to ensure that essential services are delivered to the standard we all expect, and took for granted up to two years ago, even though the grass cutting service was dramatically cut back .Therefore much as though I would like an immediate review of all existing pay and display car parks, it will not be undertaken at this time but I look forward to doing it in the near future. However I am pleased to announce that I am currently looking across my entire service to increase revenue and I can assure you that if revenues increase it would be my intention to consider this at a much earlier date based on the "smart thinking " I outlined above .