

Environment Committee – 10 March 2022

AGENDA ITEM 5 – PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – ORDER IN WHICH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL WILL INVITE QUESTIONS BELOW RECEIVED IN WRITING IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING

1. From Councillor Glen Hewlett to the Chair of the Environment Committee, Councillor Edwards

THE FULL DETAIL OF THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED IS DETAILED BELOW

NOTE: The Chair will:

- Invite questions from members of the public who have submitted in writing their questions in line with the Council's Constitution.
- Explain that the questions received will be answered by the appropriate Members of the Committee.
- Confirm that Public Question Time allows Members of the public to ask one question at a time and that a maximum of one minute is allowed for each question.
- State that questions will be invited in the order in which they have been received and that if there is time remaining from the 15 minutes allowed for Public Question Time, questioners will be allowed to ask a supplementary question.

QUESTION ONE

From Cllr Glen Hewlett to the Chair of the Environment Committee, Councillor Edwards

Felpham Parish Council has for a number of years paid ADC for the provision of free car parking in the parish. Since payments began approximately £100,000 has been paid for this provision. No formal consultation has been held with the Parish Council, a key stakeholder, regarding proposals to charge for car parking in Felpham despite assurances to the contrary.

The Parish Council discovered the proposal in committee minutes and, since then, has asked Arun's officers 14 questions on 3 different occasions regarding the matter. These have either been ignored, or inadequately answered.

So, we are now asking how can you proceed with this scheme without a detailed business case and without a proper consultation? Can you demonstrate the financial benefits, taking into consideration the introduction, running and administration of the proposed scheme (also taking into consideration the potential loss of our contribution), versus the impact on residents and businesses? What understanding does the committee have of car park usage in Felpham? What knowledge of the impact this proposal will have on local businesses and organisations? Has any impact on the safety of roads and verges been adequately considered?

Response

All the Parish and Town Councils including Felpham Parish Council have been informed about the proposal to increase parking charges and also the proposal to introduce charging into some car parks which are currently free of charging which includes Links Ave and Grassmere car parks. The Environment Committee agreed in November to put out for consultation these proposals as it would have been wrong for Officers to start any sort of consultation on this matter without the agreement of this Committee to do so.

With regards to the funding received from the Parish Council the annual sum has remained at the same amount for at least the previous 15 years, and is used to contribute towards the maintenance as set out in the report. The report notes that the car park is in annual deficit and is subsidised by income from other car parks.

The Officers have responded to the communications received from the Clerk of Felpham Parish Council but cannot answer the questions raised on predicted usage, income and cost. This can only be answered once a charging regime is in place.

The proposed scheme in Felpham continues to be free to users for the first 2 hours of use; only after this period would a charge be applicable. The management of the ADC car parks is already in place there are therefore minimal additional costs involved in this proposal. We have put the proposals out for consultation and we have received a large amount of responses on this matter which the Committee now has to consider. On the point regarding the impact on the highway any decision to charge in a free car park requires approval of West Sussex County Council and it would be something they would have to take into account.

Supplementary Question

With knowledge now of the Parish Council's sizeable contribution what will be the impact on this proposal if this contribution is withdrawn? Could it be that this proposal then could cost ADC more money than it alleges it currently could generate?

Response

As noted above, and within the report, the income received for these car parks does not meet the current running costs. These proposals are identified as a fair and reasonable way of generating additional income to meet these costs whilst still allowing for free parking for many users. If the Parish choose to withdraw their funding this will increase the pressure on the costs for managing the car parks into the future.

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