

## **Redesign Board Workshop 28.5.18: Action Note**

**Board Members present:** Cllr Lobban (Chair), Cllr Reiss (Vice Chair), Cllr Christie, Cllr Davidson, Cllr Jarvie, Cllr Louden, Cllr MacKinnon, Cllr C Smith, Paul MacPherson, and by VC - Cllr Sinclair, Cllr Bremner and Cllr MacKie.

**Apologies:** Cllr Caddick, Cllr Cockburn, John Gibson, Cllr Fraser, Cllr MacKenzie, Cllr M Smith, Cllr Wilson,

**Other Members present:** Cllr Gray, Cllr Henderson, Cllr L MacDonald, Cllr Finlayson, Cllr Rixon and Cllr Thompson (by VC), Cllr J Campbell, Cllr Heggie, Cllr Saggars

**Staff present:** Steve Barron, Carron McDiarmid, David Haas, Alasdair Bruce, Robbie Bain and William Gilfillan

1. **Action note from 15.5.18** – confirmed as accurate.

2. **Matters arising noted from the action note:**

- a. The Chair fed back that following advice from the Head of Corporate Governance the Council budget decision on car parking did stand in terms of the overall income target to be achieved. There could be flexibility on how some elements of the target could be raised locally.

3. **Peer review of car parking**

A paper setting out the financial options for car parking redesign had been circulated previously and was presented by the review team leader. It set out 3 options for discussion at the workshop, including the team's assessment of the pros and cons of each option. The options included were:

- Option 1: the current model;
- Option 2: Limited Local Budget Control; and
- Option 3: Extended Local Budget Control.

In discussion the points raised by Members and responses included:

- Clarifying that it would be the Council that sets the corporate income target for car parks.
- Under option 3 any additional income raised (above the target) is used as the local Committee decides and as part of the wider disaggregation of Community Services budgets.
- Devolving control to local committees means Members locally decide and there could be scope to take option 3 further and disaggregate more budgets and decisions.

- Acknowledging that income assumptions are assumptions and that the final out-turn figures must be used for decisions – so decisions are made on the previous year's income.
- There could well be difficult local choices to make given the Council's budget situation but that these decisions were best made locally – the local Committee would make decisions about where charges would occur and what level to set the tariffs and in the context of the income target set by Council and the income can be used to protect local Council services.
- Some Members were keen to press on with option 3 because of local pressures, especially around Mallaig where traffic management issues arose especially in the tourist season. Local communities were now looking to take on the ownership of Council car parks to raise charges and improve traffic management themselves.
- Option 3 was seen as the fairest option, not just for local choices to be made and better equity across the region, but also because the more income that is raised by extending car parking charges, the lower the overall corporate target can be.
- There is a fear of charging in new places, but the experience of Fort William shows that charges can be accepted and especially if the link can be made with how the income will be used and that is possible through option 3. In Caithness there has been no charging by the Council and that can't continue, especially when local communities show they can generate income from car parking that support amenity improvements. The Latheron Wheel beach was a good example of this, where Ward Discretionary Funding had been awarded through participatory budgeting to support a community group to provide parking. The honesty box installed for the car park had raised £1500 in less than year, demonstrating that people were willing to pay. Maybe explaining car parking charges as an environmental levy, where income is used for local maintenance could help promote it. Also some shopkeepers complain to Members about people parking all day which could block access to potential shoppers.
- Some concern was expressed at the abuse some Members had received on social media about car parking but others said localism meant taking local praise and lock flack. Others said it's best to ignore abuse received by social media and with better engagement with the public on this matter this should be easier to handle.
- Parking fine income is not proposed for disaggregation at this time.
- Keen to explore how option 3 can help with new provision for camper vans. There should be scope to charge more because of their size, as ferried do, and this can be part of the local discussion on setting tariffs and developing new sites.
- Option 3 seemed to offer more scope to engage with partners locally.
- It is important for Members to have an open mind about car parking locally and to consider the evidence around opportunities and impacts before taking stand points.

- It was confirmed that the Council set an income target for rolling out car parking charges for 2018/19 of £210k, however this income would be needed to also cover the costs of the roll out (e.g. installation of charging machines) so that the income available in the first year to off-set savings elsewhere was £67k.

In conclusion, and consensually, option 3 was preferred by the Board to proceed as a team's recommendation.

It was agreed that a formal Board meeting should be set to enable the Board to take its recommendations to Council for the June meeting. One further workshop would be planned to ensure all Member queries had been considered.

