

## Overview & Scrutiny Budget Working Groups – O&S Board findings and recommendations

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### Key Lines of Enquiry

The Working Group undertook a deep dive into the budget associated with **Car Parking** and the **Resident's Card**, raising detailed data and information requests. These are detailed in the Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) background document (available upon request).

Working Group Findings and Recommendations – Part 1, Car Parking	
Question for consideration	Working group conclusions
How much is in the budget?	<p>The Working Group considered information on the overall parking budget including the quarterly parking income and expenditure, which highlighted the seasonal summer increase in income and significant expenditures on business rates and employee costs in its first meeting. The Group raised a number of detailed questions which were responded by officers and addressed further in its second meeting. The year-on-year parking budget was presented to the group, which showed an increase in both income and expenditure.</p> <p>In its second meeting the group considered the responses to the questions raised regarding the Car Parking Budget and the issues which impacted this. It was noted that the current budget proposal for 2025/26 was that all fees and charges would rise in line with inflation. However, it was noted that work to further investigate localised changes to parking charges had not yet taken place and there therefore may be some exceptions to this.</p> <p>The working group found that the recent changes in parking, including tariff increases, the impact of vandalism on cash payments, and the transfer of the bypass car park in Christchurch to Christchurch Town Council had impacted the parking budget.</p>
What does the data tell us about demand or unmet needs?	<p>The group considered car parking provision and noted the different forms of payment options and processes across BCP car parks and on street parking. The Group noted card payment transaction fees, and that cash remains the most expensive method for the Council, with 56% of charges incurred for collecting cash, despite only 12% of income coming from cash payments. The income from PCNs was also considered. The group noted that the PCN cost had not increased for many years and was not considered to be a significant deterrent. The Council was already lobbying central government on this issue.</p>

<p>Is the council meeting its aims and objectives?</p>	<p>The working group didn't specifically consider this issue but looked at a number of related issues including car park locations, types of payment methods for different car parks and the car parking strategy.</p>
<p>Do we have any recommendations?</p>	<p><b><u>Recommendations to the O&amp;S Board</u></b></p> <p><b>That the O&amp;S Board recommend to Cabinet:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. That the principle of an inflationary increase across all parking charges be endorsed for the 2025/26 budget. *</b></li> <li><b>2. That it requests Officers to take into account the suggestion that an assessment be made on using a proportion of surplus income to accelerate the parking charging machine replacement programme prioritising the best value machines in order to reduce future costs (subject to the necessary procurement processes).</b></li> <li><b>3. That it requests that Officers evaluate the retention and recruitment of Civil Enforcement Officers to ensure a robust and resilient workforce to provide an appropriate level of resource and promote safe and appropriate parking.</b></li> <li><b>4. That Officers be requested to explore options to reduce costs for the Council and make the process easier for the public to pay for car parking, in particular an option to be able to pay in advance/on Council website.</b></li> <li><b>5. That Officers be requested to ensure adequate resourcing of parking enforcement to reduce inappropriate parking around schools.</b></li> </ol> <p><b>* This recommendation was a majority decision, alternative options were discussed including endorsing differing changes to parking charges in order to help rejuvenate town centres or in different areas.</b></p>

<b>Working Group Findings and Recommendations – Part 2, Resident Card</b>	
<b>Question for consideration</b>	<b>Working group conclusions</b>
How much is in the budget?	The Working Group considered the proposal to introduce a Resident Card and noted the expected benefits that it would introduce. It was hoped that the card would support local businesses and promote sustainable economies. It was noted that the estimated set up costs were in the range of £35,000 to £60,000, with annual running costs between £20,000 and £60,000. However, the group noted that this would not be going forward into the budget as a substantive item due to the card being in a development stage and that there are no costs to be absorbed within the 2025/26 budget. The Working Group did raise a number of questions around the card and made a number of suggestions in regard to what should be included in its development. The Working Group agreed that the possibility of grant funding for the card, already in hand by officers, should be explored.
What does the data tell us about demand or unmet needs?	The Working Group felt that there should be parity between the physical and digital options and that a nominal charge for both would be appropriate to ensure fair access for all residents. The Group also felt that ideally all council services should be included with the Card and that the possibility of integrating payment options for council services within the card should be explored, whilst recognising that it may be more practical to start with a smaller offer initially.
Is the council meeting its aims and objectives	The Working Group noted that the Administration of the Council had a manifesto commitment to introduce a Resident Card, there was currently a draft business case under development. There was concern raised that there was currently low resident satisfaction with Council provided services overall and that the introduction of a Resident Card would not contribute positively towards this.
Do we have any recommendations?	<p><b><u>Recommendations to the O&amp;S Board</u></b></p> <p><b>That the O&amp;S Board recommend to Cabinet:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. That any Resident Card offering is made fully accessible to all those who are not digitally enabled.</b></li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. That there should be an application process for the card with a small financial contribution for the cost of processing and that the card should be a valuable offer that residents are willing to pay a small cost for, so that it can be sustainable in terms of administrative costs.</li><li>3. That any charge levied for the card should be the same regardless of the format and that consideration should be given to concessions for disadvantaged groups.</li></ol>
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