

**Finance & Assets Policy Development Advisory Group**  
**6 MARCH 2023**

Present: Councillors: Paul Clarke (Chairman), Tony Bevis, Martin Boffey, Michael Croker, Ray Dawe, Brian Donnelly, Tony Hogben and Stuart Ritchie

Apologies: Councillors: Matthew Allen and Richard Landeryou  
Absent: Councillors: Nigel Jupp

9 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the Finance & Parking PDAG held on 16 January were received.

10 **PARKING: RURAL CAR PARKING E-DISCS 2024**

The current rural annual parking discs were used in 12 village carparks and were popular, with approximately 22,500 being sold in 2022/23. These were rolled out annually in July, with a fixed rate of £18 for the year (£11 for up to two additional discs per household).

The Parking Manager briefed the Group on a proposal for a phased introduction of electronic 'virtual' parking permits to rural carparks. The scheme would remove the need for physical discs by making use of handheld ANPR software carried by Civil Enforcement Officers. The cost of producing and distributing the discs would be removed, and the e-disc would last for a full year from purchase, unlike the current scheme.

The Group were advised that physical discs would be issued in July 2023 as in previous years, with a phased introduction of e-permits for those applying later in the year; this would allow a relatively small number of e-permits to be issued as a pilot scheme.

The Group noted that it would only be possible to purchase e-permits online and they were concerned that the proposal could disadvantage a small percentage of residents who owned a car but did not have access to the internet. There were some reservations as to how convenient it would prove and that there could be some customer resistance. The Group raised other questions about practical details relating to allocation and use of e-permits.

The Cabinet Member thanked the Group for their feedback and advised that the proposal was at an early stage of development, and the Director of Resources emphasised that the pilot scheme would be an opportunity to develop aspects of the scheme and iron out any issues before July 2024.

11 **PARKING: MIPERMIT FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS - JULY**

The Parking Manager briefed the Group on the rollout of virtual permits for the seven controlled parking zones (CPZs) in Horsham District. The system, known as MiPermit, enables customers to manage their parking permits online. Virtual permits were already being rolled out within the district as part of WSCC's county-wide Integrated Parking Strategy. It was noted that there had been positive customer feedback.

The anticipated date for the MiPermit system to go live was 3 July 2023 and advance communication with residents was being finalised.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that this system was more secure and less subject to misuse than at present. The Group all expressed their support. The Parking Manager asked Members to email him if they had any further comments regarding the rollout.

12 **ENERGY BILLS SUPPORT SCHEME - ALTERNATIVE FUNDING**

The Director of Resources briefed the Group on two Energy Bills Support Schemes (EBSS) recently launched by the Government; (i) EBSS Alternative Funding, a £400 payment directly supplied to households and (ii) EBBS Alternative Fuel Payment, a £200 payment for households using alternative fuels and/or not connected to mains gas.

The Group were informed that in most cases these payments are being automatically made through the customer's direct bill. However, some residents could not be automatically paid through their bills (eg those in multiple occupancy). These households would need to apply via the Government's gov.uk website and then be processed by the Council's Revenues and Benefits department.

The timescales were tight as the deadline for applications was 31 May, with processing by the Council to be completed by 30 June before payment by 7 July. The Director of Resources reminded the Group that the Revs and Bens department were particularly busy at this time with annual billing.

The Group were advised that the Government were running a communications campaign to raise awareness. The Cabinet Member stated that it was important HDC also raised awareness of the schemes with advice on how to apply. The Group noted that the Government was not sending a direct link, to try to reduce the risk of scams.

13 **FORWARD PLAN EXTRACT FOR THE FINANCE AND ASSETS PORTFOLIO**

The Forward Plan extract was noted.

*The meeting closed at 6.35 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm*

CHAIRMAN