

Christine Boyd; Statement to Cabinet 7th February 2018

BANES is mandated by Defra to improve air quality – **‘in the shortest possible time’** The directive came as you were poised to consult on this long awaited Parking Strategy.

The council knows that parking is one of the most effective levers it has to influence driver behaviour and improve air quality, but strangely the Defra intervention did not cause you to pause.

Instead you stuck to a plan made earlier, by those now departed, and included in the Transport Strategy and key planning policy.

- To close city centre car parks to enable development,
- To relocate long-stay commuter parking into P&R, and,
- To use the vacated space for more short-term parking to preserve the ‘vitality’ of the city.

This plan that was derived before;

- The BMA pointed out that commuters don’t use P&R
- Before it was known that expanded P&R spaces would result in no automatic take up, and most significantly,
- Before the Defra directive.

The only apparent departure from the original plan is the resident’s discount. A political sweetener, ahead of an election, that risks further damage to the environment and to public health.

And the attitude to evidence has not shifted either. Once again the council has sought evidence to support policy rather than test it.

The Council admits that more short-term parking in the city has the potential to INCREASE traffic movement. But there is no air quality impact assessment as recommended by Scrutiny

We see no analysis of how the strategy might change travel behaviour for good or ill, or even how it impacts parking income.

You ask residents if they would like more short –term parking, but you don’t ask commuters if they would move to P&R to enable this.

You didn’t ask, but we did.

Early last Thursday morning Andrew Lea and I surveyed 53 people using Charlotte Street car park, 52 were commuters. Andrew will speak more to this but here are the headlines;

- 58% used a permit - they can continue parking in Charlotte street for £6 per day, not £15
- 37% came from within the BANES area – they wont see any increase at all, so why change behaviour?
- 63% would continue to park in Charlotte street no matter how much the cost went up - 17% had their parking paid by an employer
- Of the 37% who said they would move if the cost of parking went up, over 50% said the this would need to increase by £10 a day or more.
- Only 12% (6 people) would consider moving to P&R

Results from this small test sample suggest no great stampede towards P&R and few spaces freed up for short-term parking.

Meanwhile you have created an expectation amongst residents that they can 'pop into town' more often and at 2010 prices – creating more traffic churn at the very time you should be encouraging people out of the car and offering real alternatives.

It could be argued that driving to hell in a handcart at least less damaging than arriving in a 4 x 4. But really Councillors, don't you think its time for change?