

STAFF COMMENTS RECEIVED ON BUDGET PROPOSALS

Introduction

Attached are

- 1 Comments received from Trade Unions.
 - Comments from Tony Warr, Regional Officer GMB
 - Comments from Unison (see E-Mail dated 1 August, 2006, from Martin Nolan, Branch Secretary, Harrow Unison).
 - Notes of meeting with GMB/Unison 3 August 2006.
 - Letter dated 2 August, 2006, from Aspect (not recognised for collective bargaining purposes)
- 2 A summary of comments received from staff.

Copies of detailed comments are contained in file available for Cabinet Members to view

Summary of Comments Received from Staff

The majority of comments received from staff relate to two issues: -

- The proposed charge for staff parking
- The proposed move of pay date.

1 Staff Parking

The majority of comments received are opposed to the proposed change. Comments include:

A. Opposition to Scheme

- Essential users who need car for work should not have to pay.
- Any charge is "breach of contract of employment".
- Does not support people who have child care responsibilities, and have to use car to pick up/drop off children.
- It's a pay cut.
- It's a punishment to hard working staff.
- It's not fair.
- Council should consider effect on staff morale and ability to recruit.
- Need car to do job - especially when dealing with emergencies or out of hours working.
- 'If I have to park some distance from Civic Centre - will be impractical as carrying heavy/bulky equipment.'
- 'Can't get to work by public transport.'
- '£500 per year is considerable deduction from lower paid staff.'
- 'Being punished for political/managerial incompetence'.
- If charge £2 per day - doesn't parking then become a taxable benefit?
- Will Mayor/Councillors have to pay?
- Will Mayor no longer be driving round in "gas guzzling" car used at present?

- Can't understand how will reduce parking congestion.
- 'This is a money making exercise that penalises staff.'
- People won't be able to get home quickly if emergency, if no longer use car to get to work.
- Subsidising the Council by taking a pay cut.
- 'Why not charge me for using my computer as well.'
- 'It's a kick in the teeth.'
- 'It's the only benefit we get.'

B. Implementation of Scheme

Helpful suggestions as to how the proposed charge could be implemented include: -

Charges

- Flat rate charge discriminates against lower paid staff so have; -
 - sliding scale according to salary or
 - apply % to apply to all
- Implement charge through deductions from Payroll.
- Implement charge through something like Oyster card.
- Implement charge based on how close staff use to Civic Centre.
- Exempt disabled employees/pregnant employees
- Charge public for use of car parks at weekends/evenings.
- Apply to all Council buildings - not just Civic Centre.
- Reduce charge for those who car share

Essential Users

- Car park spaces allocated to essential users only.
- Remove essential user allowances from those who don't claim mileage.
- Have reserved bays for essential users.
- Scrap all essential user allowances.

Other Suggestions

- Introduce pool cars.
- Make use of residents only parking.
- Make parking free for first hour.
- Extend controlled parking zone.
- Improve facilities for cyclists - including showers and motorcyclists, including secure parking storage.

C. Support of Proposed Charges

A minority of comments received supported the anticipated changes. These included: -

- 'I am in full agreement that the time has come to charge staff for car parking'.
- 'The charge is a reasonable one'.
- 'I support the introduction of car park charges, and suggest charge be a daily one rather than weekly or monthly.'

- 'I am very supporting of the measures to introduce car parking charges for staff. Every day we see customers struggling to find car parking space, and as our customers - they are our priority.'

Comments on Proposed Change of Pay Date

The comments received are universally opposed to the proposed change of pay date.

Comments include: -

- Don't see how will generate a recurring saving.
- Will lower staff morale.
- Will cause great inconvenience.
- Has huge implications for paying mortgage and changing direct debits.
- Will result in delays in Council receiving Council Tax payments direct from salaries.
- Changing direct debits etc is very difficult.
- Will result in bank etc., making admin charges.
- Will cause financial problems and stress for staff, as a result of delay in staff receiving their pay.
- Will cause real problems for staff whose bank account and mortgage lender are not the same.
- Will cause problems for staff who have fixed repayment date for loans.
- Will have greater impact on part time staff, who need income to meet financial commitment.

Jill Rothwell
Acting Chief Executive