

Council: Tuesday, 12 July 2011

Opposition Business Item – 3.2: Councillor Kath McGuirk

The Parking Service in Barnet

Council notes the ongoing chaos in the Parking Service in Barnet culminating in a "no assurance" rating by the council's auditors, and the second lowest satisfaction rating in the recent Residents' Perception Survey.

In particular, Council notes that:

- pay and display machines do not work (at times last year only about half worked)
- signs and lines are not clear resulting in enforcement difficulties
- enforcement capacity is at an all time low and sickness amongst Civil Enforcement Officers has been high
- income from parking is falling resulting in the recent decision to increase CPZ and parking charges by up to 300%
- there is a legal challenge by residents to the increase in parking charges
- the increase in parking charges seems to have resulted in empty council car parks
- the privatised cashless parking service has been given a "limited assurance" by the council's auditors
- the plan to move to an entirely cashless parking service has been met with criticism by elderly residents and raises equalities issues that have not yet been addressed by the council
- the parking service only manages to answer the phone within 5 rings 12% of the time
- residents have recently been unfairly, and with no notice, issued with PCNs for part-parking on pavements where the practice has been allowed for many years
- Business Management Scrutiny requested in December that the proposed privatisation of the Parking Service should be delayed due to a lack of robust financial evidence in the plans

Council notes that there is a recovery plan in place, and, given the high-profile nature of the service, asks the Cabinet Member to explain the reasons for the failure in the service and comment on that recovery plan.