**Proposed new parking policy**

**UNISON collective response**

**0.0 Introduction**

0.1 West Sussex County Council (WSCC) issued a draft parking policy for consultation over the period Wednesday 12th – Wednesday 26th July. This document sets out UNISON’s response to the proposals after extensive consultation with members and non-members.

0.2 The response is necessarily a long one (as a thousand staff have contributed to its development), but we trust that both the council, UNISON members and staff who are not yet members will read it and give full consideration of its contents due to the importance of the issue to all staff and the stability of the services they provide to residents.

0.3 A number of issues are covered within the UNISON collective response and these are grouped into themes:

1. **Concerns about the formulation of the policy**
2. **Concerns about the conduct of the consultation**
3. **Concerns about the proposed parking policy itself**
4. **Counter-proposals, to find a workable solution for all staff**

0.4 UNISON conducted an online survey over the period Thursday 13th July to 9am on Monday 24th July, using the ‘Smart Survey’ online survey tool, to capture member feedback. In the email which notified UNISON members of the survey, members were invited to share the survey with non-member colleagues. Because of the large response to the survey, no reminder emails were sent to members.

0.5 792 staff completed the survey.

0.6 92% did not agree with the proposed new parking policy; 8% did.

0.7 71% of respondents were UNISON members; 29% were not yet UNISON members. There was no statistically appreciable difference between the views of UNISON members and non-members.

0.8 82% of staff were also concerned about the potential for adverse changes to staff travel policies.

0.9 585 respondents to the survey left qualitative feedback, much of which was extensive.

0.10 UNISON also held six member meetings to which non-members were invited, at which verbal feedback was recorded. Two were in Horsham, one in Worthing, one in Crawley, one in Bognor and one in Chichester. Over 200 members and non-members attended these meetings. Given the short notice of only one day before the first meeting, and that only one email was sent to notify members of the dates, UNISON is satisfied with this turnout. UNISON is pleased with the overall response it has received to both the online survey and meetings and believes the data it provides is robust and an authentic representation of the staff view.

0.11 This collective consultation response has been compiled by Dan Sartin, Branch Secretary. UNISON’s Staff Side Executive Committee (a sub-committee of the [Branch Committee](http://unisonwestsussex.org.uk/about/branch-committee/)) has commented on the draft and approved it. The UNISON response is based on the feedback provided by members and non-members collated using the above methods. It should be noted that feedback includes that from UNISON members and non-members employed by Capita. UNISON has not sought to differentiate between the two employers’ staff (and nor did the council).

**1.0 Concerns about the formulation of the policy**

1.1 UNISON has been involved in parking negotiations for several years and helped achieve the ‘settlement’ which saw a comprehensive eligibility criteria rolled out in Horsham alongside investment in Piries Place parking places. UNISON understands the current system is still not working optimally at the Horsham pinch point. This is in part due to lack of enforcement by WSCC of what should have been a viable system. Outside of Horsham the issues are not of the same severity and in many WSCC sites (including the hub buildings) there are no problems. There has previously been no suggestion of parking being an issue at any of the hundreds of smaller sites the county manages or controls (e.g. libraries, youth facilities, children and family centres).

1.2 The Chief Executive responded to continuing staff concerns about parking by establishing a ‘Parking Forum’ which included staff volunteers who had expressed an interest on ‘The Big Conversation’ forum. UNISON was to be excluded from this but argued strongly for a place on the forum, which was agreed.

1.3 The remit of this Parking Forum then expanded to include staff travel in its entirety. Our understanding is that there was no consensus at the ‘Staff Parking and Travel Forum’ that charging staff to park at work was the best way forward, and it was taking some time to view the issues and propose solutions, for what are undoubtedly complex matters. The Staff Parking and Travel Forum was subsequently disbanded by the council, and its members received an email to confirm that. The Staff Parking and Travel Forum did not see the final proposed parking policy before it was issued.

1.4 UNISON understands that the ‘Culture Board’ did see the parking policy before it was issued. It is a matter of regret and concern that the Culture Board did not recognise that the proposed policy was not fair and equitable, nor ready for the purpose for consultation given its lack of clarity on key matters.

1.5 UNISON would normally have seen draft proposals in advance. This did not happen this time. Parking was at a late stage ‘split off’ from changes to Staff Travel and our understanding from feedback from members who attended the Chief Executive’s staff briefings is that he wrote the policy himself.

1.6 UNISON did not see the policy before it was issued to staff, so had no chance to comment or seek amendments. It also meant that UNISON had to respond at speed to the proposals, establishing a survey and meetings at very short notice.

1.7 UNISON has serious concerns about this way of developing policy, as it has the potential to bypass the recognised trade union. Staff volunteers who play a role at the Culture Board are not representative of staff in the way that UNISON reps are; nor are they accountable; nor are they trained for the purpose; nor do they have access to the wider support available in the UK’s largest trade union of 1.3million members.

1.8 UNISON is concerned that it may not be easy for all staff to speak out and raise their concerns with the Chief Executive, either at the Culture Board or all staff briefings. UNISON reps are trained to do this and elected for the purpose, and as such have an equal or similar status to the Chief Executive and authority to speak for staff. Staff will often have a gulf in status and authority between themselves and the Chief Executive and this may at times inhibit the honest exchange of views in face-to-face settings. UNISON received feedback from several staff in the parking meetings it organised that the atmosphere at the final Chief Executive Staff briefing was not conducive to, or enabling of, an honest exchange of views. This feedback also suggested that ‘only the bravest’ staff would raise honest feedback at a Chief Executive briefing or on the ‘Big Conversation’ online forum.

1.9 UNISON believes this had a direct impact on the nature of the content put forward to staff in the consultation. Many staff told us that they found the document ‘DRAFT Staff Car Parking Policy’ confusing to read and missing much of the detail which one would expect to see. As such the proposed policy did not make sense to many staff and they were left to interpret key matters within the policy. It was difficult to see the policy as workable when the detail required was not available. Section 3 of the UNISON response raises these questions and seeks clarity on key areas.

1.10 UNISON believes a lot of time and effort of staff has been expended on a consultation for a document which is to a large extent unclear. This is time staff can ill-afford. In addition, the consultation has raised serious anxieties amongst staff, many of whom actually fear the imposition of the policy as far as they are able to understand its likely impact on them. The raising of collective stress and anxiety levels amongst staff is a matter of regret, and could have been avoided if a more pragmatic and traditional approach to the formulation of policy had been taken. UNISON plays a supportive role in the development of policy, and could have helped ensure the draft policy put out to staff was better in key respects.

1.11 It should be noted that some staff have told us that the parking consultation has already prompted them to take personal decisions on their futures at WSCC, with some staff now actively seeking alternative employment. This suggests it is a serious matter that the parking consultation was handled in the way it was. UNISON requests that similar undertakings are handled differently in future and will be making that representation to WSCC.

**2.0** **Concerns about the conduct of the consultation**

2.1 The consultation document was not issued in a hard copy format. This limited its reach, particularly to staff who work in practical, customer-facing roles, for example in the county’s day and residential care centres, and relief staff in libraries. These staff are often not regular users of email, and sometimes never use it. But they tend to be lower-paid staff and as such could be expected to have views about a £300 per year charge to park at work. Previous exercises in gathering the staff view (including the annual staff survey) recognise the existence of these ‘hard-to-reach’ groups and issue hard copy surveys which are then extensively promoted. Because this did not happen with the parking survey, a swathe of staff will be under-represented in the council survey. This is unlikely to be so in the UNISON survey as it is emailed to members’ home email addresses and they are often provided for the purpose by these members. These staff feel aggrieved that they were not included with the same ‘sense of priority’ as other staff.

2.2 It was also the case that the staff of key partners working in buildings controlled or managed by the council were not included in the council’s consultation. This meant the views of another swathe of staff will not be represented within the council’s survey. This is with the exception of Capita staff who use westsussex.gov.uk suffixed emails. UNISON was contacted by staff working for partners who use council buildings who were not asked for their views, such as police staff at the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, Aspire adult education staff, Elior catering staff and so on. It is a matter of regret that these staff’s views were not sought and they have told us in many cases this makes them feel devalued as partners of the council. It appears to UNISON that at least in some cases nor was the management at these employers informed of the potential impact on their staff. Council staff also expressed the view to UNISON that this partnership working was sometimes difficult to achieve and could be unnecessarily endangered by the policy. Would police in the MASH return to their stations rather than continue to work alongside their colleagues if they had to pay £300 a year to park?

2.3 The consultation does not make clear the next steps. Usually there would be more clarity about the timetable for the consultation, the management response and its communication including any changes to the proposals, and the implementation of any proposals thereafter. This was missing from the consultation and so caused a sense of frustration arising from lack of clarity.

2.4 It was also commented that the proposed charging period in the policy (‘April to March 2017’) was incorrect and begged questions about what was envisaged for an implementation start date, and if backdated charges would apply.

2.5 Staff were concerned that the consultation was trailed and launched in the Chief Executive’s One Voice emails, which are not usually used for the purposes of staff consultation. It was considered that these are not as widely read as they might be due to their frequency, and some staff missed out on the start of the consultation until they heard from other sources. It was considered that this was such an important policy consultation it should have had its own unique communication.

2.6 The timing of the consultation during a period when many staff take annual leave was a concern raised, as was the length of the consultation (two weeks).

2.5 UNISON also received feedback that the questions asked in the council’s survey were not the most helpful ones to ask.

**3.0 Concerns about the proposed parking policy itself**

3.1 92% of staff were against charging staff to park at work. Views of staff which resulted in this survey answer varied:

1. £300 was unaffordable, particularly as lower-paid staff were more likely to be affected as they tend on average do more of the ‘static’ jobs;
2. This was unaffordable due to years of sub-inflation or non-existent pay rises, meaning staff’s disposable income has fallen by around 20% in real terms;
3. The charge of £300 would be viewed as a substantial pay cut for staff who are already struggling to make ends meet. Staff spoke of the need to make choices between paying to come to work and affording a modest annual family holiday. Staff who head up single income households spoke often about a damaging financial impact;
4. The charge would particularly adversely impact apprenticeships, some of which are paid at the statutory minimum rate for apprentices in partner organisations;
5. The charge would particularly adversely impact social work students;
6. The charge would impact adversely on the council’s reputation as an employer and make it harder to attract high-quality staff to roles;
7. The charge would lead to higher staff turnover, which would cost the organisation more money in recruitment and training;
8. This would lead to higher staff turnover, which would impact adversely on the quality of services provided to residents;
9. It was iniquitous, as the charge took no account of the person’s income, so a lower-paid staff member would pay substantially proportionately more than a higher-paid staff member;
10. The council had made considerable savings through its strategy of buildings divestment and so should view some limited investment in parking facilities for staff as necessary to facilitate those savings;
11. Some staff have no choice but to use their private car to get to work (for various reasons e.g. lack of viable public transport, caring commitments) and so held the charge to be unfair on those grounds;
12. Some staff had had parking arrangements agreed with managers at the time they took on a particular role for the council, and the charge was held to be a contravention of those agreements;
13. Some staff were relocated to a particular council building against their wishes as part of a restructure. Relocation policy arrangements had long since expired, leaving staff with a sense of grievance that they had to travel further than they wished and bear the cost of this, because of the preference of the employer. The parking charge was therefore an additional, unfair imposition;
14. Staff who already paid £10 per month in Chichester saw the increased charge to £25 as unjustifiable;
15. Some staff having roles which did not facilitate home-working or flexible working, which meant an increased likelihood of being impacted by the charge dependent on your role;
16. Part-time staff were additionally unhappy as the policy states they would pay the same as any other (full-time) member of staff;
17. The charge was viewed as divisive, separating the single council into several competing, unrelated entities based on role or team and the perceived importance of that role or team to the council. Staff argued that the council’s teams are an interdependent whole and should not be divided in such a manner. There was concern that work done to address the WSCC/Capita division would be undone;
18. There would be a major and long-lasting negative impact on morale.

3.2 The difference between Priority 1 and Priority 2 users is unclear, in part due to the language used in the draft policy. It was not clear to staff exactly who is likely to be in a Priority 1, 2 and 3 role category or how it will be determined. Staff said that any policy needed clearer eligibility criteria so staff were clear themselves who was allocated to each priority and why. The policy as written only said that the Director of TCSS was responsible for this allocation, and there was considerable concern that this represented an arbitrary use of power when no clear eligibility criteria had been published. Who determines the criteria for these priority groups and how it is applied formed a large part of staff concerns.

3.3 The policy refers to staff for whom it is “essential to drive to fulfil your role and responsibility to our customers”. WSCC has no ‘essential’ car users since it abolished the essential car user allowance many years previously. WSCC only has ‘casual’ car users. Staff who do not wish to use their own private vehicle for council business are not obligated to. The policy does not make this clear, and is confusing because of its use of the term ‘essential’.

3.4 It is not accurate to say in most cases, as the draft policy does, that “loss of driving licence will result in the inability to fulfil your role and responsibilities”. Staff may use public transport as they are not essential car users. Under the Equality Act it would be potentially discriminatory to staff who were not medically permitted to drive to determine that they were unable to fulfil their role. There should be adjustments made to the role.

3.5 There was a lack of clarity on some aspects of the draft policy which led to staff asking questions of UNISON through the survey and meetings. These are reproduced here so a formal response can be sought:

1. It is not clear how quickly someone whose job role changed could be re-designated into a different category;
2. There is no information on the appeal process staff would use to challenge their designation if they feel a mistake has been made;
3. The mechanism for the council to receive payment is unclear;
4. It was held to be unclear if staff visiting council buildings which are not their main workplace would be charged (for all priority categories). Staff are able to claim for parking if not doing so at their work base, and the policy should state this;
5. There is no mention made of whether pro-rata charges would apply to part-time staff;
6. It was not clear that Priority 1a staff (disabled staff) would be prioritised for spaces within their main workplace location. The draft policy states that staff may be assigned to spaces “close to” their main workplace location if there are insufficient spaces. This lack of clarity was not acceptable for disabled staff, who are of course often also Blue Badge holders;
7. It is unclear if there will be transitional arrangements so as to phase in any additional or entirely new parking charge;
8. It is unclear if current permit holders in Chichester and Horsham will be ‘put back into the pot’, and so it was felt uncertain whether or not they would continue to qualify for a permit after the policy was introduced;
9. It is unclear if there would be transitional arrangements for staff who lose their current car park permits;
10. It is unclear what will happen to the charge if staff are on sickness absence leave (including long-term sickness absence) or on annual leave, and whether refunds would be issued for those periods;
11. It was felt to be unclear if a £300 a year charge would guarantee staff that a parking place would be available at all times, given the substantial cost. Staff viewed that the charge was large enough to warrant a guaranteed space, and some questioned the legality and appropriateness of charging staff for a service which they might not receive on any given day;
12. It is unclear as to whether some school sites are included in the definition of council-managed or –controlled buildings;
13. Whether any impact assessment had been made on recruitment and retention rates if the policy was implemented;
14. Would the charge be applied out of hours, or could staff use the permit at evenings and weekends;
15. Does the charge apply in full to motorbikes;
16. Does the charge apply to volunteers;
17. It was unclear how the policy would apply to staff who regularly work out of different bases due to having countywide roles;
18. What arrangements if any would apply to casual staff;
19. It is not clear as to the reasons why visitors would be exempt from parking charges.

3.6 It was suggested by staff that the proposed policy was not sufficiently respectful of residents who are neighbours to council buildings. It was pointed out that at many of the council buildings where there is not currently a parking problem, charging would displace staff into residential parking areas. This was thought to mean a high degree of likelihood of worsening community relations.

3.7 Staff at Centenary House, Durrington pointed out that relations with residents are currently benign but that this is not always so. It was recounted that residents had previously sought to block the main visitor entrance with their own parked vehicle; that cars had been significantly vandalised; and in one instance wheel wingnuts had been loosened. Staff held that their health and safety should not be compromised through any parking policy, and that the one under consultation would lead to that outcome.

3.8 Staff asked what liaison had taken place with local district and borough councils to discuss the practicality of the WSCC proposals. There was a concern that residents groups would proliferate to combat the expansion of staff into residential parking zones, and that borough and district councillors would respond by seeking the extension of Controlled Parking Zones. This could bring the county into conflict with boroughs and districts. Where CPZs were agreed, this would displace staff further and further away from their place of work, and this brings its own health and safety consequences (e.g. personal safety, carrying of heavy loads). As well as exacerbating health and safety issues, this would also prompt some older workers to bring forward decisions to retire.

3.9 Similarly, staff at Durban House, Bognor asked what liaison had taken place with Tesco, with whom there is a mutually agreed solution which allows council staff to park in the Tesco carpark. It was held that if numbers of staff using the Tesco option were to proliferate, this option would be cut off by Tesco, exacerbating parking issues further (where there had previously been none) and damaging relations with Tesco which had previously been neighbourly and productive.

3.10 Health and safety arrangements for staff were raised. As above, this included concerns arising through conflict with local residents, but also in relation to the fact that staff who are unable to park on campus under the new arrangements, but work late and then need to walk to offsite car parks some distance away at night, will not have their health and safety protected. This issue was highlighted at Horsham where staff operate an Out Of Hours duty roster until midnight, and Crawley where the alternative local carparks are held to be unlit and potentially unsafe. Staff stated that the policy as written devolved this to staff as matters of individual responsibility. Staff rejected this and view the duty of care of the employer as extending to protect them from such eventualities, particularly when the status quo option does not put them in harm’s way.

3.11 The policy would create problems in some county buildings where there are none. At Durban House some staff who operate the WSCC Contact Centre must be at work for 8.00am when there are insufficient public transport options available at that time of day. The effects of charging would be to prompt some staff to take up alternative positions with other local employers (these staff earn £16,000 per annum gross), or to park in residential areas which will bring its own problems for local residents and staff.

3.12 Charging staff who are temporarily disabled was not held to be appropriate and should be removed from the policy. If staff suffer temporary disabilities through no fault of their own, dealing with the consequences (which can often mean additional costs falling to the person) was felt to be enough of a challenge without the imposition of a parking charge in addition. This was felt to be counter-productive at a time when a member of staff might be on a phased return, and so the council had an interest in making the phased return as productive and stress-free as possible. Temporary disability should be assessed under the Equality Act and treated in the same way as permanent disability.

3.13 Staff with caring responsibilities were disappointed that their requirements were not acknowledged within the policy. Some staff set out in great detail the nature of their substantial caring responsibilities for disabled relatives and children, and how parking at work enabled them to meet work and caring commitments.

3.14 There was concern that no reference was made to car sharing or the overall Green Travel Policy of the council. Staff who do car share felt that there should be some recognition of that contribution to the council’s green agenda. There was also a view held that some account should be taken of engine size and the fuel effectiveness of the vehicle when alighting on the charging structure.

3.15 There should be a thorough Equality Impact Assessment of the policy prior to implementation. There are major concerns at this stage that the proposed policy cannot be equality-compliant. UNISON believes it is likely to be discriminatory against women workers. The charge is not set at different levels for part-time workers, who disproportionately tend to be women. The charge is not set at different (lower) levels for the lowest paid workers, who disproportionately tend to be women. The charge will impact adversely on staff with caring responsibilities, who disproportionately tend to be women.

3.16 The proposals were held to be difficult to implement as there are complex arrangements in some buildings where some partners have purchased spaces and other partners have not. To be equitably applied, a charging scheme would have to be applied equally to all users of a staff car park e.g. WSCC, NHS, Capita, Police, Public Health England, Horsham District Council. It was not held to be equitable to charge a social services administrator at Glebelands, without also applying the charge to the equivalent NHS admin worker at Glebelands by the same amount. This was thought to be very difficult to administer and to be a source of potential friction to those with whom daily cooperation should be fostered rather than endangered.

3.17 The proposed policy exempts councillors from charging, which does not feel fair or equitable to staff as councillors can be reimbursed for all the parking charges they incur in the course of their duties. The insertion of this exemption has strongly implied to many staff that they are seen as less important than councillors. This if implemented would be a considerable cause of friction between staff and councillors.

3.18 If the parking charges were to be extended to all council sites (and not just the larger hubs at Worthing, Horsham, Chichester, Bognor and Crawley) this would have an even greater impact on staff than anticipated. The council controls or manages hundreds of sites, and many more staff would be adversely affected and charging would likely be a substantial revenue raiser for the council. Many staff objected in principle to being used as they saw it as a ‘cash cow’ for the council, raising revenue when the central government grant is being reduced. It is also unclear how the income generated would be used, providing a further sense of grievance.

3.19 It was unclear who would be implementing such a scheme, and there would be substantial infrastructure costs to introduce, maintain and enforce such a policy. These costs would not just be in the assessment and allocation of spaces, but more so connected to the need for parking barriers, attendants, permits, maintenance and so on. The cost and scale of such infrastructure works and investment were held to be prohibitive and make the policy not practicable or proportionate to the size of the problem.

3.20 Staff mentioned that West Sussex is blessed with outstanding natural beauty and diversity of environment, but that on the flipside this is also its greatest challenge as it means that the large geographic size of the county and rural nature makes it difficult to get around. It was pointed out that bus routes have reduced in number and frequency in many cases, and that Southern Rail is not an effective rail operator. It was held that this would impact adversely on staff punctuality, if more staff were pushed from the private car to public transport.

3.21 The cost of public transport was also cited. The UK does have the most expensive public transport in Western Europe, and the council needed to take this into account when promoting solutions. The additional time taken using public transport was also cited by staff who feared a longer working day and a detrimental impact on family life.

3.22 It was also suggested generally that the council might like to invest more in the Easit scheme, to push up the discount offered to staff from its present 15% which was not held to be high enough to influence behaviours.

3.23 It was held to be a concern that the proposed policy would push more staff towards home-working options to avoid parking charges. This would have a negative impact on team-working and team dynamics, especially in teams where peer and emotional support from colleagues is important. It was also held that some emergency situations may be more difficult to manage, such as care home evacuations.

3.24 Police on site at Centenary House Durrington currently use the main car park. It is not clear how the provision of parking enforcement to keep WSCC spaces available for WSCC staff will be forced on police staff. An additional factor at this site is that a barrier is not appropriate due to the Police Custody Suite needing clear access at all hours.

3.25 Staff at libraries often work split shifts and need to work at libraries which are poorly served by public transport. Extra time will be taken spent travelling between libraries.

3.26 Larger libraries are responsible for smaller satellite libraries where there are staff lone-working. If there is an incident, the procedure is to call the buddy system at the hub library, whereupon a member or members of staff will drive to the satellite library to support the lone worker. If staff are discouraged from driving to work, rather than driving to the satellite library (which is the quickest way to get to a lone worker requesting support), staff will use public transport which will take significantly longer. The agreed buddy system is part of the duty of care agreed to those lone working staff. Health and safety of those workers will be compromised, and at a minimum the health and safety of staff will need to be revisited and a new system agreed or staffing levels increased at satellite libraries.

3.27 There are insufficient pool cars at the great majority of the hundreds of buildings which the council manages or controls. A larger hub such as Durban House which would have been thought to have a good supply only has six pool cars, which will be insufficient if staff stop bringing private cars to work.

3.28 Some council staff are not always peripatetic but do sometimes need to make emergency visits to residents. The effectiveness of these visits would be compromised if staff had to make them by public transport (there are no pool cars stationed on many council sites where these staff work). This could endanger the health and wellbeing of customers.

3.29 It was held that the county council, when advising organisations currently bidding for its contracts which would require external staff to be based at council sites, should make it clear that a potential charge of £300 per annum per staff member is being consulted on. Margins for staffing costs are very tight, and bids could be made which include insufficient cost for staffing, given that the £300 charge will also affect their ability to recruit and retain staff.

**4.0 Counter-proposals, to find a workable solution for all staff**

4.1 UNISON has set out staff feedback and views on the consultation and its proposals. UNISON sees those proposals, as do our members, as unacceptable on the grounds that they are unworkable and iniquitous, and will have detrimental impacts on staff, the services they provide and the local community in numerous ways.

4.2 UNISON holds that the problem is not universally as bad as the Chief Executive believes it to be. This is certainly the case in the hundreds of council-managed and -controlled sites where no parking restrictions or charges exist. It is also the case in most of the larger hub buildings. The severity of the proposed policy and the wide-ranging impact it would have implies that the problem must be of the same magnitude of severity in at least some of the council’s buildings. UNISON contends that even there the situation is not as bad as to warrant such drastic action.

4.3 However, UNISON does acknowledge that there are continuing difficulties in some specific sites. We therefore provide the following counter-proposals, which we hold to be proportionate and achievable and ask WSCC to give due consideration to:

1. Focus where there is a problem of the highest severity, Horsham. After progress has been made with Horsham, look to resolve issues at the much more limited number of other sites where problems can be evidenced and action is warranted. Work in partnership with UNISON to achieve this;
2. Alight on a system whereby the needs of peripatetic staff to park are met as fully as possible, but that these are taken into account alongside the needs of other staff. Assign on-site parking places to priority users determined by transparent eligibility criteria which staff understand. The need to travel during the working day should be only one factor within a system of weighted eligibility for a parking place, alongside several others:
	* disability;
	* temporary disability;
	* proximity of home to public transport;
	* distance of home to work;
	* caring responsibilities;
	* need to carry heavy loads;
	* car sharing status;
	* [need to travel during the working day].
3. The investment in additional Piries Place spaces in Horsham should continue, and be expanded if necessary. WSCC has saved money by divesting buildings. In addition to this cash saving on physical buildings and income from sale, the council’s current parking costs at Horsham are currently less than before the programme of buildings divestment. WSCC should take the view that some additional investment in parking solutions is reasonable and a necessity, given this history combined with the peculiar geographic conditions and paucity of reliable public transport in West Sussex;
4. Look at the rationale for the days on which team meetings are held in Horsham;
5. Review and monitor under-utilised parking spaces that arise and re-allocate these as necessary;
6. The above scheme should be properly policed and managed, and this may require investment (the absence of this was the significant weakness of the previous scheme);
7. Achieve equity by removing charging at County Hall Chichester, the only council site where a charge is levied;
8. The continuation of allocated parking for councillors is a very poor use of scarce resources causing real operational problems, often at short notice; Councillors can claim back all parking expenses, so the council should bite the bullet and have these difficult conversations with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet, and the Chairman of the Council, so as to maximise available space at building hot spots;
9. Consider more communications to promote public transport options to staff, and investment in schemes to make public transport economic;
10. Consider more communications to senior managers who it was stated often travel by car when visiting Horsham only to return to Chichester, when rail options are more suitable;
11. Consider whether an effective ‘job-swap’ scheme might be trialled e.g. in circumstances where one social worker lives in Bognor and works in Horsham, whereas another social worker works in Bognor and lives in Horsham;
12. Consider a more equitable spread of pool cars across the WSCC estate to free up parking spaces. As part of this, consider if pool cars could be effectively located on-street.

There is a need for a speedy response to the consultation – not necessarily on the whole parking settlement which in UNISON’s view needs time and thought to ensure the right plan is implemented – but specifically the matter of charging requires a quick response. The prospect of charging for parking has caused staff a great deal of anxiety and distress (and in some cases anger) and has already begun to influence staff decisions on where their long-term futures lie. It will help to have charging ruled out, if that is the council’s decision, as soon as possible even if the council decides it needs more time to consider the whole parking settlement.

In conclusion, there are particular circumstances in West Sussex which come together to mean that staff do require their cars to get to and from work, and to service customers and fulfil their roles efficiently. Public transport is insufficient in regularity or convenience across the county for a variety of reasons, and is often more expensive than travel by private car. If the council requires staff to use their cars for council journeys and considers them to be ‘essential car users’ (as set out in the proposed policy), then the council should reintroduce the essential car user allowance. If the council does not intend to reintroduce the essential car user allowance but instead rely on the goodwill of staff to use their private cars to conduct council business, it should not introduce a system of charging for parking and should positively address the supply issues as suggested in Section 4.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

UNISON response compiled by:

Dan Sartin
Branch Secretary
UNISON West Sussex

01243 777636
office.unison@westsussex.gov.uk

[www.unisonwestsussex.org.uk/join/](http://www.unisonwestsussex.org.uk/join/)

A selection of illustrative quotes:

A selection of illustrative quotes:

A selection of illustrative quotes:

A selection of illustrative quotes:

A selection of illustrative quotes:

A selection of illustrative quotes: