

**MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
(PARAGRAPH 5.20 OF PART 4 (EXECUTIVE) OF THE CONSTITUTION)**

- a) In-depth Scrutiny - Report of the Parking Working Group (*Minute 31, Scrutiny Committee – 4 February 2014*)

The Chairman of the Parking Working Group introduced its final report and its proposed recommendations for Cabinet. The working group had met on a further 3 occasions since the interim report submitted to the Committee on 21 November 2013.

He advised that the report was focused on possible improvements rather than any criticism of the existing position. It concentrated on Sevenoaks, in the town and near to the railway station, as these accounted for 61% of on-street parking revenues and 95% of off-street parking revenues. The Council had become dependent in its budget upon achieving a yearly increase of 3.5% in parking revenues but this created a perception of expensive parking and put some shoppers off coming to Sevenoaks. Parking played an important role in community and economic development.

He highlighted that parking was not just the responsibility of the Council and he had attended a meeting of the Sevenoaks Town Partnership on the matter. Other councils worked with local supermarkets to provide Park and Ride services. It was important for the Council to work with its partners. There was a perceived shortage of 220 long stay spaces and 40 to 50 short stay, but identifiable demand was required before informed planning could take place.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic and Community Development felt the report was a good example of how scrutiny can work. He asked whether it would have been helpful to have had input from Edenbridge Councillors although car parks there were not run by the Council. The Chairman of the Working Group agreed it would, especially given the high number of tourist attractions in the area.

The Vice Chairman asked whether the Group had considered schemes for flat payments or schemes where refunds were provided if a certain amount were spent in local shops. The Group had not focused on details.

A Member was concerned that half of the Council-provided off-street parking places in Swanley were at Bevan Place and that this site may become subject to a planning application for redevelopment into housing. She suggested that this car park be retained.

A Member noted some neighbouring authorities provided parking free to visitors.

Resolved: That the final report of the Parking Working Group be referred to Cabinet for consideration.