

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

26 NOVEMBER 2009

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Regeneration & Transport – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor R Cook

YARM CAR PARKING CONSULTATION

1. Summary

Yarm has a long history of parking problems as a popular market town. The businesses and shops continue to enjoy a healthy trade and the demand for residential property attracts many people and mixed uses to the High Street, all of which have a demand for parking.

In June and July of this Year, the Borough Council led a consultation exercise to seek opinion on how we can move forward in resolving parking issues on Yarm High Street and the immediate vicinity. The objective of the exercise was to stimulate debate and capture ideas from Residents, Businesses and Shoppers of Yarm, together with that of the wider community.

This report outlines the process undertaken and the results of the recent public consultation on car parking in Yarm High Street. The consultation results provide an emerging way forward for the Council to pursue positive actions in developing solutions for Yarm.

2. Recommendations

1. Members note the content of the consultation results for Yarm Parking.
2. Members endorse the following actions:
 - (i) The Council will work to develop ideas for an additional long stay car parking facility in Yarm.
 - (ii) The resources to support the development of car parking sites, when identified, be funded from developer contributions as a result of planning approvals and the introduction of charging for short stay car parking in Yarm High Street. However in the short term, there is no intention to introduce charging.
 - (iii) The introduction of a residents permit parking scheme if charging for short stay car parking were introduced.
 - (iv) The existing disc parking zone currently used to control car parking durations on Yarm High Street be retained at its current 2 hour maximum.
3. Authority be delegated to the Head of Technical Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport to pursue the investigation and development of suitable sites for long stay car parking.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

To provide clarity on the Borough Council's position with regard to looking for long term solutions for the car parking issues in Yarm.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

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SUMMARY

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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DETAIL

1. Yarm has a long history of parking problems as a popular market town. The businesses and shops continue to enjoy a healthy trade and the demand for residential property attracts many people and mixed uses to the High Street, all of which have a demand for parking.
2. It is a popular misconception that the traffic congestion Yarm suffers is due to the heavy traffic having to negotiate the small High Street. The junctions and road links all actually carry less traffic than they have capacity for. One of the main causes of the hold ups is due to the constant manoeuvring of traffic in and out of the side roads and parking areas. Limited availability of short and long stay parking mean that users are slowing down looking for spaces, which has been attributed to the main cause of slow moving traffic.

Current position

3. The High Street is currently divided into two areas for short and long stay. The long stay is located at each end of the High Street with 126 spaces and no controls. The short stay section is in the middle of the High Street with 196 spaces and is controlled by the use of disc parking with a maximum stay of 2 hours and no return within two hours.
4. The disc zone is enforced by SBC Civil Enforcement Officers. The current arrangements and the Council's role in enforcement have come under criticism recently and the Town Council and Chamber of Trade have led calls for changes to be made.
5. Investigations over recent years have retained a consistent conclusion. Additional long stay provision needs to be made elsewhere so that short stay numbers can be increased and reduce the amount of unnecessary vehicle turning movements. A charging regime to support this would help to regulate and provide clarity on usage.
6. In June and July of this Year, the Borough Council led a consultation exercise to seek opinion on how we can move forward in resolving Parking issues on Yarm High Street and the immediate vicinity. The objective of the exercise was to stimulate debate and capture ideas from Residents, Businesses and Shoppers of Yarm, together with that of the wider community. The consultation sought views based on four key principles, these were:
 - **Long Stay Parking.** Should a new separate facility be provided for free long stay parking?
 - **Charging for Short Stay Parking.** To fund a new facility, charging would have to be introduced. The suggested charge was 20p for first 30 minutes, 50p for first 2 hours and then £1 for each hour thereafter. A Resident's Permit Parking Scheme would also be introduced.
 - **Location of a new Long Stay Facility.** Some suitable sites were identified as initial ideas. These were: Land behind Yarm Health Centre (Brickyard Allotments), Worsall Road Allotments and Land East of Yarm Cemetery Access Road (partly Brickyard Allotments). The consultation also invited views on other suitable sites.
 - **Extended Disc Parking.** Should the current disc parking be extended in the short-stay parking spaces from a maximum of 2 hours to 3 hours? In addition, the restrictions could begin from 10 am and end at 4 pm
7. The consultation ran for some four weeks and included doorstep leaflet drops, web pages, manned exhibitions and face-to-face meetings with key community groups.
8. The consultation exercise did stimulate debate and many areas of the community were vocal for and against the principles during the exhibitions that were held. At the close of the consultation, the Council had received a total of 888 email, web and postal returns, with respondents providing views on the above key principles as well as bespoke comments.
9. In summary, the statistical results are reported below. As the consultation was wider than Yarm itself, the analysis was split, using postcode data, into the following categories:

Yarm Central – Those living/operating from addresses within the Yarm High St area.

Yarm Outer – Those responding from within the Parish of Yarm.

Other – External to addresses within the Yarm Parish.

% in Support				
Key Principle	Yarm Central	Yarm Outer	Other	Total
The need for a new Long Stay car park facility?	69%	54%	74%	62%
Introduction of Residents Permits	68%	44%	51%	48%
Introduce charging on High Street for short stay parking?	46%	27%	33%	31%
Possible location of a new car park facility:				
• Health Centre (Brickyard)	37%	24%	35%	26%
• Worsall Road Allotments	7%	5%	9%	6%
• Cemetery Site	9%	12%	19%	16%
• Other	21%	40%	21%	29%
Extend existing Disc Parking from 2hrs to 3 hrs?	21%	38%	34%	35%

10. Key messages from the results are summarised as:

- There is widespread clear support for an additional long stay car parking facility needed in Yarm.
- The support for charging for short stay car parking in Yarm had a mixed reception, but in order to be able to deliver a 'new' long stay car park and a residents permit parking scheme, charging in the High Street would be necessary. It would also provide greater flexibility and clarity than the current Disc Zone regulations. However in the short term, there is no intention to introduce charging.
- The introduction of a residents' permit parking scheme has majority support, particularly from those within the Central Yarm area, whom are directly affected by on street commuter parking.
- The sites identified in the consultation showed that the land behind the Medical Centre (Brickyard Allotments) was the most favourable, of those listed. However, the Council is keen to pursue all options available, particularly other potential central Yarm sites.
- The consultation suggests there is no desire to extend the current disc parking form 2 hours to 3 hours maximum.

The Next Steps

11. Officers will develop an action plan in recognition of the results received. The action plan will underpin a process that can be followed over the coming months to help look for solutions for parking in Yarm. This process will:

- Actively look for positive solutions, and provide regular feedback to all partners/stakeholders.
- Look to identify sites that may be suitable to accommodate piecemeal or a full 200 space car park. The Borough Council will actively work with landowners, public bodies and other stakeholders to bring these into use, if at all possible. Issues that may need to be considered are layout/access arrangements, proximity to local amenities and any

other highway/environmental concerns coming to light as we work through the details. In the short term, charges for existing car parking in Yarm will not be introduced. As sites are identified that are deliverable, charges may be introduced together with developer contributions from planning approvals which will fund bringing them into use.

- Ensure appropriate consultation is carried out with the wider community on emerging options.
- Make available a list of other sites that have been discounted on technical grounds of size, location or access so that it is clear why they cannot be considered further.

12. Details of this consultation response were provided to Yarm Town Council on 22 October 2009.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. Any new car parking facility identified that would be suitable would require capital investment. Pump prime funding would need to be used to bring any such sites into use, but a charging regime would also need to be introduced for short stay parking on Yarm High Street. Depending on the level of capital investment needed, the payback period would need to be calculated.

14. Any future charging regime introduced would likely be 20p for first 30 minutes, 50p for first two hours and £1 for each hour thereafter. This gives the flexibility for ultra short stays and those slightly longer at 3 hours or so. This is based on the Stockton Town Centre on street charging and would still be cheaper than Stockton, and the Hambleton DC parking charges introduced in October 2009 in Northallerton, Thirsk, Bedale and Stokesley. Charges in Hambleton range from 40p per hour short stay and £1.50 all day in Northallerton and Thirsk, to £1.50 long stay in Stokesley and 50p long stay in Bedale.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

15. Any modifications to parking controls on Yarm High Street would be subject to a legal process under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, with due consideration given to the needs of owners and occupiers of adjoining property.

16. Any new long stay car parking facility that would be within Council control, would be subject to an 'Off Street Car Parks Order' in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and consultation with disabled organisations.

RISK ASSESSMENT

17. Yarm Parking Consultation Feedback report is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk."

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Regeneration and Transport

18. A strategy to ease congestion in Yarm will promote more efficient transport links for both buses and private motorists. Additional car parking spaces will support local businesses, shoppers and residents.

Safer Communities

19. None.

Children and Young People

20. None.

Health and Wellbeing

21. A reduction in congestion in Yarm High Street will contribute to a reduction in emissions.

Environment and Housing

22. A reduction in congestion in Yarm High Street will contribute to a reduction in PM10 emissions, of which Yarm High Street has the worst in the Borough. Any future residents parking scheme would protect residents ability to park near to their homes.

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

23. This report is not subject to an Equality Impact Assessment because the report is only noting consultation results.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

24. Yarm and Eaglescliffe Ward Councillors were consulted prior to the public consultation exercise and were also provided with details of the results prior to public release.

25. Yarm Town Council was provided with the details of the public consultation exercise and was also provided with details of the results prior to public release.

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Background Papers

None.

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Councillors Beaumont, Sherris and Earl -Yarm Ward.

Property

N/A