

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....10th January 2013

1. Title of Item/Report

Borough Wide Car Parking Review Update

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report on the Borough Wide Car Parking Strategy Review.

Cabinet approved the borough-wide car parking strategy in December 2011 and an update was provided on progress in February 2012 following the call in by Executive Scrutiny of the original decision. This strategy arose from the report to Cabinet from the Environment Select Committee that identified that it was inequitable not to charge in three town centres when charges were applied in Stockton Town Centre. Cabinet agreed the principle of charging for car parking specifically in Yarm, but stated that it should be introduced as part of a borough wide review of parking charges that would include charging blue badge holders in Council owned off street car parks.

The report updated Cabinet on the work that had been carried out on the strategy in respect of Billingham, Norton, Thornaby, Yarm, Stockton Town Centre and the approach to charging blue badge holders for parking. There had been a great deal of activity particularly in Billingham, Stockton and Yarm town centres around the car parking agenda and a clear plan had been developed to ensure that the original Cabinet decision was under implementation. In summary, Billingham had seen proposals brought forward for extra care provision adjacent to the town centre which would impact on provision of car parking and the report set out the options to offset this impact. In Stockton construction work at the south end of the High Street was well underway and a range of incentives had been identified to help support visitor numbers during disruption. In Yarm a legal dispute had delayed original intentions for the introduction of pay and display however, this was concluded and a clear plan of implementation was set out in the report which included engagement with affected residents groups and the Chamber of Trade for Yarm. This engagement had provided some very useful feedback in designing the details of the proposals going forward.

The Borough wide car parking strategy considered the issues that were evident in each of the town centres, the current parking provision and actions to be taken where appropriate to improve the situation. Taking each of these town centres in turn a review of progress was presented within the report.

With regard to Yarm the report detailed the recommendations that were approved by Cabinet 2011.

A clear plan for changes to car parking arrangements in Yarm had been developed since December 2011. This had included clear engagement with residents groups and the Chamber of Trade to understand how the changes would impact on them and how their needs could be taken into consideration. A plan of the existing car parking arrangements in Yarm was attached to the report.

In March 2012 Yarm Town Council applied for a Judicial Review of the decision to introduce parking charges in Yarm.

The Judicial Review concluded in Leeds High Court over two days on 23rd August and 28th September 2012, with judgement being handed down on 10th October 2012. The application of judicial review by Yarm Town Council was dismissed which enabled the original Cabinet decision to introduce pay and display to proceed.

During the period of legal challenge engagement with the Town Council continued and at a meeting with the Town Council members on 28th June 2012 they agreed to submit an alternative proposal for car parking in Yarm and this would be available by the end of September 2012. This was received, eventually after a final request, on 30th October 2012 and was attached to the report.

The Town Council proposal had been evaluated against a series of criteria and objectives consistent with both the borough wide strategy and the finding of the market research, the results were detailed within the report.

There were areas where the Town Council scheme differed significantly in approach but it was refreshing to see that the principle of charging had been accepted at least for long stay car parks.

Dialogue with the Chamber of Trade for Yarm continued in November 2012 and their views were captured with regard to possible long stay provision on sites that the Council did not control and the period of free parking at the start of a visit. It was quite clear that the Chamber of Trade would like to see an increase from the proposed 10 minute free period

beyond 20 minutes free. This had been given considerable thought but a period of up to 30 minutes would become difficult to manage and would require a labour intensive enforcement regime similar to that currently in use with the disc zone. However, up to or close to a 20 minute window could possibly be managed more effectively and it was proposed as a result of dialogue with the Chamber of Trade that up to the first 20 minutes could be free. The tariff beyond the free period of 20 minutes remained subject to further detailed consultation through the statutory process of a new Traffic Regulation Order, however, a charge of £1 for the first two hours and then £1 per hour thereafter was a reasonable measure at this stage and this charge was similar to the tariff of Stockton off-street car parks. The likely time for charges to apply would be between 9.00am and 5.00pm which would mean that the successful evening economy in Yarm would benefit from free parking outside of these hours. It was noted that a range of incentives were in place for parking arrangements in Stockton town centre and any charging regime in Yarm would also benefit from the same flexibilities and incentives used in Stockton town centre.

It was proposed to move forward with the design of the charging arrangements in Yarm, taking into consideration the input from residents and business meetings before embarking on the statutory consultation process.

Consultation on the proposal would help shape the detail for the residents permit scheme, the charges applicable, hours of operation etc. At this stage these details had not been formulated.

There would be a need to bring forward a range of parking restrictions to address existing indiscriminate parking and to manage the inevitable displacement that would occur as a result of introducing charging.

Any objections to the proposed Traffic Regulation Order would be considered by the Appeals and Complaints Committee before the Order is confirmed. The process for bringing a Traffic Regulation Order in place is likely to take around six months.

As a result of discussions with residents and the Chamber of Trade and the Town Council's alternative proposal officers were continuing to pursue the acquisition of new sites for long stay car parking provision. Several of these sites remained in private ownership and discussions with the owners over lease or purchase arrangements had stalled for some time. As the implications for not providing additional long stay car parking remained of concern Members were advised that the Council may need to use its powers of compulsory purchase under the Highways Act 1980 to help secure this provision from the private sector.

Feedback from the community had also included complaints about a number of Yarm School pupils who park vehicles on the High Street and a commitment had been given to work with the school to secure ways to help reduce the impact of this potential problem on the High Street.

Many Councils were charging blue badge holders for parking in off street car parks. The principle was agreed at Cabinet in December 2011, since then consultation with disability groups had taken place. One concession that was to be introduced was the extra time for no extra cost to allow disabled drivers/passengers to do what they need to in the town centres and to facilitate the extra time it could take to get in and out of their vehicles.

5 emailed responses to the pay and display proposals in Yarm were circulated to Members and the Head of Technical Services detailed the responses. The Head of Technical Services then responded to the issues that had been raised within the emails.

Members then discussed the report and agreed that those elements of the alternative car parking proposal submitted by Yarm Town Council that compliment the delivery of the objectives be supported and included where appropriate in the car parking strategy.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The progress in respect of delivery of the borough wide car parking strategy be noted.
2. The alternative car parking proposal submitted by Yarm Town Council be noted, and those elements that compliment the delivery of the objectives be supported and included where appropriate in the car parking strategy.
3. The Head of Technical Service in conjunction with the Head of Legal Services be authorised to pursue the acquisition of suitable land to provide a long stay car park for Yarm, if necessary by using a Compulsory Purchase Order.
4. Under the Council's Scheme of Delegation the Head of Technical Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport be endorsed to proceed through the statutory process for the implementation of the agreed changes to the parking arrangements in Yarm.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The implementation of changes to car parking arrangements across the Borough are moving at various stages and in the case of Yarm have been subject to a legal challenge. The report therefore updates Cabinet on the progress in each of the towns. In the case of Yarm an alternative proposal to the agreed Cabinet position has been submitted by Yarm Town Council and this has been considered by Cabinet. With regards to recommendation 3 in Yarm there are a number of suitable sites for additional long stay car parking provision that remain outside of the Council's control. Approval is sought to invoke compulsory purchase powers to enable the Council to be in a better position to acquire additional provision for long stay.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The alternative car parking proposal submitted by Yarm Town Council was considered and noted, and the elements that complimented the delivery of the objectives would included in the car parking strategy.

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

none

6. Details of any Dispensations

none

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Friday, 18th January 2013

Proper Officer  
14 January 2013