

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Thursday, 19th January, 2012.

Present: Cllr Ken Lupton (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Miss Barbara Inman, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Jean Kirby, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Terry Laing, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Mick Womphrey (vice Cllr Mrs Womphrey).

Officers: Mike Chicken, Richard McGuckin, Bill Trewick (DNS); Julie Grant, Nigel Hart, Fiona McKie (LD).

Also in attendance: Cllr Mike Smith (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport); Cllr Ben Houchen, Cllr Mark Chatburn, Cllr Andrew Sherris (Yarm Ward); Cllr Phil Dennis (Eaglescliffe Ward); Cllr Maureen Rigg (Former Chair of Environment Select Committee); Cllr Norma Stephenson; Chris Johnson (Yarm Town Council); Peter Bell (Yarm Traders Association); Marjorie Simpson (Willey Flats Residents Association).

Apologies: were submitted on behalf of Cllr Tina Large, Cllr Mary Womphrey.

EXC 51/11 Evacuation Procedure

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

EXC 52/11 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mike Smith declared a personal/prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 5 Borough Wide Car Parking Strategy due to him being a Member of the Cabinet that had taken the decision that was the subject of the call-in; and he therefore left the meeting room before a decision on the item was deliberated.

Cllr Julia Cherrett declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 5 Borough Wide Car Parking Strategy due to being an Eaglescliffe resident and Ward Councillor.

EXC 53/11 Call In Procedure

Members of the Committee noted the Call in Procedure.

EXC 54/11 Borough Wide Car Parking Strategy

The decision of Cabinet, taken on 8 December 2011 in relation to the Borough Wide Car Parking Strategy had been subject to a valid call in. The call in applied to resolutions 1 – 8 and resolution 10 but did not include resolution 9 (proposed charging of blue badge holders).

The reasons for call in related to the following principles of decision making:

- Proportionality
- Due Consultation
- Equality
- Clarity of Aims and Objectives

Members were provided with the following papers:-

- Report on Borough Wide Car Parking Strategy considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 8th December 2011, together with the resultant Decision Record;
- Call in form and papers, which included the reasons for call in;
- An additional submission prepared by Yarm Ward Councillors in support of the request for call in;
- A response paper to the call in, prepared by the Head of Technical Services.
- A number of letters received from members of the public objecting to the parking proposals in Yarm.

The Head of Technical Services summarised the main elements of the report that had been submitted to Cabinet and made reference to the fact that the Council were actively pursuing options in respect of the provision of long stay parking. It was also confirmed that if pay and display was introduced in Yarm High Street and residents parking permits were allocated that they would be at the same cost as other residents car parking permits throughout the Borough which was a nominal fee of £10 per annum. Consultation would also take place with all affected residents as to the detail of the scheme. Members present were given the opportunity to ask questions and/or seek clarification.

Councillor Mrs Rigg highlighted the Environment Select Committee's EIT Review of Built and Natural Environment and Members reasons for the recommendations relating to a parking review within the Borough.

Councillor Houchen, Yarm Ward Councillor, provided a presentation on behalf of Yarm Ward Councillors that detailed the reasons for calling in the decision of Cabinet, the main elements of which were included within the submission before members. The main points highlighted within the submission and presentation related to:-

- Lack of adequate consultation with Borough and Town Councillors;
- Extension of the Short Stay Car Parking Zone in the High Street would remove capacity for long stay visitors, and potentially displace those using long stay places to adjacent residential streets in Yarm and Eaglescliffe;
- Lack of provision for Residents Parking;
- No firm proposals for a Long Stay Car Park;
- Issues related to the findings of the NEMS research.

Councillor Dennis (Eaglescliffe Ward) was in attendance at the meeting and spoke regarding his concerns about the effects of the introduction of pay and display parking on trade, particularly the potential decline in numbers of people wanting to visit for short periods of time; and also the potential parking problems that may result for the surrounding residential areas as a consequence of many people, particularly workers, parking in the surrounding areas including Eaglescliffe, and walking into the High Street.

Chris Johnson (Yarm Town Council) was in attendance and spoke on behalf of the Town Council who were against the pay and display proposals and supported the call in request that the matter be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration. Mr Johnson questioned the results of the market research with regard to the level of trading activity and commented on issues concerning parking enforcement.

The Committee also heard from Peter Bell, on behalf of the Yarm Traders Association, who felt that in the current climate it would be inappropriate to introduce pay and display as it may discourage shoppers from coming into Yarm. They also felt that a long stay parking solution needed to be found before introducing any changes to short stay parking on the High Street.

A number of Yarm residents were also present at the meeting and the Committee heard from several who spoke of their concern regarding the introduction of the car parking proposals; as well as hearing from a representative of Willey Flats Residents Association who were generally in support of the proposals.

Members and officers present were given the opportunity to ask questions and/or seek clarification following each speaker.

The Head of Technical Services and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport were then given a further opportunity to respond to the request that the matter be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration, the main elements of which were set out before members in Appendix 4 of the papers .

Councillor Smith, having earlier declared a personal, prejudicial interest, then left the meeting room.

A proposal was put before Committee that the matter be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration for the following reasons:-

- To allow consideration of the results of the proposed consultation with Yarm High Street residents and traders particularly relating to the details of proposals for possible residents permit parking permits.
- To determine the impact of the possible displacement of those employees residents and visitors requiring long term parking provision into the surrounding wider communities.
- To determine the feasibility of long term parking provision within the vicinity of Yarm High Street and to allow negotiations with land owners and Rail Track to be completed.
- To allow Cabinet the opportunity to consider the details of the independent report by “Mary Portas” into the future of our High Streets and to determine if any of the recommendations were pertinent to the High Streets within Stockton Borough.

A vote was taken and the proposal was defeated.

RESOLVED that the original decisions taken, relating to this matter, should not be referred back for reconsideration by Cabinet and therefore may be implemented with immediate effect.