

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET DECISIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting.....8 December 2011

1. Title of Item/Report

Borough Wide Car Parking Strategy

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet considered a strategy outlining proposed parking management strategies including flexible charging tariffs where appropriate across the Borough to support the planned and on-going economic growth of the Borough's town centres.

Members were reminded of the Environment Select Committee report to Cabinet in December 2010 that applied the EIT (Efficiency Improvement Transformation) process to car parking. Cabinet accepted the principle of charging for car parking on Yarm High Street but stated that it should be introduced as part of a wider review of car parking charges across the Borough. This Borough Wide review and suggested action plan was subsequently agreed as a basis for consultation by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport in August 2011.

Cabinet also asked that further work be undertaken in order to consider the structure of car parking charges in Stockton Town Centre, which would also include the impact on Blue Badge holders.

The report sought to update Cabinet on progress made in the last 12 months demonstrating how the EIT process could be practically applied to car parking in the following locations including specific proposals regarding car parking provision in each location; the details of which were summarised :-

- Billingham Town Centre
- Thornaby Town Centre
- Norton High Street
- Stockton Town Centre
- Yarm Town Centre

The report highlighted how the proposals would also compliment the regeneration of Stockton and Billingham and could assist in supporting local businesses to maintain or improve the economic positions of Yarm and Norton. The regeneration of Thornaby town centre had improved the ability of Thornaby to compete with other town centres in the Borough and had hopefully secured it's longer term economic viability. Parking was privately owned and managed in Thornaby although the strategy included the town centre in order to prepare for the consequences that would be incurred by local residents should the private owner of the centre introduce parking charges at some point in the future.

As part of Cabinet's consideration of regeneration plans for Stockton town centre later at this same meeting, members were asked to note the results of independent market research recently completed by the independently commissioned NEMS Market Research to gain an understanding of how better management of car parking demand in both Yarm and Stockton town centres could contribute to improved business performance in each location. A representative of NEMS Market Research was in attendance at the meeting, along with ward and town councillors, members of the public and local businesses from Yarm.

Cabinet considered objections to the proposals regards Yarm from both a ward councillor, the Mayor of Yarm Town Council, and representatives of local businesses. Clarification was also sought and provided regarding the methodology and conclusions reached by the market research.

It was noted that a recommendation to charge Blue Badge holders for off-street parking in Council's owned and managed car parks was recommended by the Environment Select Committee in December 2010. There were approximately 12,000 registered Blue Badge holders in the Borough. Blue Badge holders were able to park for free and with unlimited duration of stay in the Council's car parks, where parking charges were applicable on-street and also for up to 3 hours on single or double yellow lines (except where there was also a ban on loading/unloading activity). The Blue Badge scheme only applied to on-street parking (kerbside parking on adopted highway). Parking charges were already applicable in the two privately managed car parks in Stockton town centre. A consequence of introducing parking charges for Blue Badge holders in off-street car parks was their potential displacement to on-street locations, including on single or double yellow lines for up to 3 hours. A review of the existing waiting restrictions around the town centres, particularly Stockton where parking charges currently only apply, was therefore recommended to determine if parking on those restrictions would cause obstruction to traffic movements or cause adverse impact upon road safety. Cabinet was asked to accept the principle of charging Blue Badge holders for off-street parking in Council managed car parks subject to further engagement with key stakeholders.

In supporting the proposals contained within the proposed Car Parking Strategy, members requested that they be accompanied by a 12 month evaluation of their success with the details reported back to Cabinet once completed.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The introduction of parking controls in Council managed, off-street car parks in Billingham Town Centre be supported but should only be introduced in support of economic regeneration initiatives led by Stockland.
2. The Council continues to seek a solution to long stay car parking problems in Thornaby town centre in support of local businesses.
3. The Council commission a survey to assess issues and car parking provision in Norton.

4. Cabinet support a strategy of flexible parking tariffs and car parking promotions to support the economic development and regeneration aspirations for Stockton Town Centre and the detailed arrangements be delegated to the Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport.
5. Cabinet agree that the Council continue to prioritise the provision of additional long stay car parking in Yarm.
6. Cabinet note the results of the independent market research in Yarm, which suggest that the economic performance of Yarm is being restricted by long stay parking by commuters.
7. Cabinet approve that the research be utilised to design car parking solutions for Yarm which will include 'Pay and Display' on the High Street and increase the provision of short stay parking spaces to improve the availability of spaces.
8. The proposals in respect of Yarm be approved and that details regarding further consultation, charging tariffs and the practicalities of extending the Disc Zone be delegated to the Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport.
9. Cabinet accept the principle of charging Blue Badge holders for off-street parking in Council managed car parks and that further engagement will take place with the key interest groups as the scheme progresses.
10. Cabinet note the need to evaluate the change in arrangements and that the impact is considered after 12 months. New parking machine technology will allow trends and impacts to be recorded electronically and evaluated to help the Council and businesses understand visitor trends.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The development of a comprehensive parking strategy is necessary for the future provision, management and maintenance of parking facilities within the Borough at a time when the economic performance and regeneration of its town centres are at a crucial stage. Members should also be aware that although Norton is not one of the Borough's four town centres, it was essential to include it within the context of this report since it was specifically identified as an area for early assessment by the Environment Select Committee.

Important market research intelligence for Yarm and Stockton town centres has recently been provided and needs to be utilised to drive forward new car parking management strategies to underpin improved economic performance of these two centres.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillors Mrs McCoy, Nelson and Smith each declared a personal, prejudicial interest in respect of the item entitled Borough Wide Car Parking Strategy and, specifically, consideration of the proposals regarding blue badge holders, as each either held a blue badge or had a family member that held one. Each of the Councillors left the meeting prior to a vote being taken on the proposals relating to blue badge holders.

6. Details of any Standards Committee Dispensation

N/A

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

Midnight on Friday 16 December 2011

Proper Officer  
D E Bond  
12 December 2011