

ENVIRONMENT AND ACCESS PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE**15 March 2004****Attendance:**

Councillors:

Bailey (Chairman) (P)

Bidgood
Busher (P)
de Peyer (P)
Fothergill
Hatch (P)Mather (P)
Merritt (P)
Nunn (P)
Verney (P)
Wright (P)**Deputy Members:**

Councillor Pearce (Standing Deputy for Councillor Bidgood)

Others in Attendance:Councillor Beveridge (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Access)
Councillor Cook (Portfolio Holder for Environment, Economy and Development)
Councillor Bennetts and Davies

County Councillor Dickens

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Bidgood and Fothergill.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meetings of the Committee, held on 22 January 2004 and 11 February 2004, be approved and adopted.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Canon Deeds addressed the Committee in respect of the review of public car parking provision in Winchester. As a resident of Chesil Street, he requested that Members should consider additional concessions for local residents who purchased a season ticket for off-street parking. Whilst he did not object to the policy that encouraged greater use of the Park and Ride for commuter parking, he considered that the proposed price increase unfairly penalised residents who used the Chesil Street multi-storey as they had no other practical alternative.

The Chairman thanked Canon Deeds for his comments and explained that they would be debated further under the relevant item on the agenda (report EA20 refers, below).

4. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

It was noted that the Chairmen of all the Performance Improvement Committees were due to meet with the Chairman of the Principal Scrutiny Committee and the political group leaders on 18 March 2004 to discuss future work programmes. It was agreed that Members should forward any suggestions into this process through the Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.

5. **REVIEW OF PARKING ISSUES**

(Report EA20 refers)

The Director of Development Services tabled a list of recommendations amended in the light of comments made at the Parking Review Informal Group. The majority of Members agreed the recommendations to Cabinet as set out below.

In regard to the proposal that season tickets should no longer be available for Friarsgate multi-storey car park, Members were concerned about the possible effect this would have on the doctors who currently used this car park. The Director of Development Services indicated that doctors on call would normally be expected to use available parking at their place of work, where possible. The proposal was therefore agreed, subject to further investigation of the doctors' need to hold season tickets at Friarsgate.

The Committee discussed the proposal to increase the season ticket charges in a single stage (as detailed in Appendix A of the report) so as to encourage more commuter parking at the Park and Ride sites. Following a discussion, Members agreed to this proposal but advised that customers should be fully informed as to the reasons why the increase had been agreed.

Members noted the comments made by Canon Deeds in the public participation element of the meeting. In response, the Director recommended that further discounts in the price of season tickets should not be available to residents. He explained that season tickets were more expensive than the on-street residents' parking permits because they supported the cost of the City Council's car parks whereas the residents' permits did not contribute to road maintenance. He further advised that to extend a 15% discount to the existing 18 residents who purchased season tickets would cost the Council £1358. However, Members noted the potentially large future cost of this additional discount as a consequence of Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 and the Council's policy to refuse on-street parking to new town centre developments.

The City Secretary and Solicitor advised that to introduce the reduction requested by Canon Deeds could result in challenges from others (such as local businesses or residents of other towns) who might seek a similar discount. In response to questions, the Director confirmed that there was no such additional discount at Chichester, Salisbury, Portsmouth or Southampton.

Whilst Members were sympathetic to Canon Deeds' request, the majority agreed that no additional discount should be offered to residents for the reasons stated above. However, the Chairman stated that a comprehensive review of residents' parking was last undertaken in 2001 and anticipated that this would be re-visited by 2005.

In response to a Member's concerns regarding the proposed discounts for environmentally friendly cars, the Director explained that no LPG vehicles were included within the AA taxation band, and that the vehicles which were included tended to be the smallest engined and cheapest new cars available.

RESOLVED:

That it be recommended to Cabinet that:

1. Season Tickets should no longer be available for Friarsgate multi-storey car park.
2. The season ticket charges for Groups B, D, E, 1 and 2 car parks be increased in a single stage as shown in Appendix A of the report.
3. Further reductions in season ticket rates should not be available to residents in the town at present.
4. There should be no changes to the short stay and on-street pay and display charges.
5. There should be no changes to the long stay parking charges or the Park and Ride charges.
6. The cost of on-street guest-house permits should be increased from £10 to £15 per annum.
7. Discounts on season tickets of 50% for vehicles in VED band AA and 75% for vehicles in VED band AAA be implemented for the pay and display car parks when the season ticket charges are increased.
8. A scheme be prepared in conjunction with the County Council for an upgraded system of variable message signs for the town car parks.
9. The City and County Councils should progress their Work Travel Plans as soon as possible and should encourage employees to either use the Park and Ride car parks and/or to car share where appropriate.
10. The Air Quality Management Informal Member/Officer Working Group take into account the possible impact of vehicles loading and unloading on the air quality in the centre of Winchester.
11. That authority be delegated to the City Secretary and Secretary to process the necessary advertisements and alterations to the Traffic Orders.

6. **PUBLIC CAR PARKING POLICIES (THIRD DRAFT)**
(Report EA27 refers)

The Committee considered and the majority of Members agreed with the Public Parking Policies Draft as set out in the appendix to the report.

In response to a question on paragraph 3.4, the Director of Development Services explained that the expansion of existing car parks in the town centre could only be

facilitated through the erection of additional decks, but there were currently no proposals for this.

It was agreed that the draft be amended to avoid any confusion concerning the locality of town centre car parks.

At the invitation of the Chairman, County Councillor Dickens addressed the Committee. She explained that the County was considering the effect on Jewry Street businesses if there was any loss of spaces resulting from the re-development of the library car park. She suggested that there should be similar consideration by the City Council should it decide to close central car parks and encourage more use of Park and Ride.

In response, the Director confirmed that it was the Council's policy to retain short stay spaces in the town centre and to encourage the use of Park and Ride by long stay customers. He added that customers and delivery drivers were permitted to load and unload goods on-street for short periods.

RESOLVED:

That the policies contained within Appendix A be recommended to Cabinet for approval.

7. **PROMOTION OF PARK AND RIDE**
(Report EA22 refers)

The Director distributed a leaflet designed to promote the Park and Ride facility and Members welcomed the initiatives contained within the report.

However, Members suggested that more should be done to promote Park and Ride to rail users and visitors to the courts. In response to comments that the bus services should run later in the evening, the Director of Development Services reported that this would be uneconomic based on current usage patterns.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Davies commented on the proposed Bushfield Park and Ride site, and the Director explained that the area should be protected from other development pressures by the countryside and local gap policies of the Local Plan.

RESOLVED:

1. That the current actions to promote Park and Ride be noted.
2. That it be recommended to Cabinet that the proposal to offer a free two week trial of the Park and Ride facility to existing season ticket holders at the end of the expiry of their current season tickets be approved.
3. That the City Secretary and Solicitor be granted delegated authority to arrange the necessary advertisements and alterations to the Traffic Orders.

8. **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME**
(Report EA25 refers)

Members noted with concern the lengthy delays that had occurred on some of the traffic management requests and discussed the staffing levels within the Department. It was agreed that the next report on this subject should refer back to report EA25 for comparison and monitoring purposes.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

9. **ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**
(Report EA26 refers)

Members congratulated the Director of Development Services for securing the Engineering advice to the Planning Development Control Committee and endorsed the proposals within the report.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

10. **REVIEW OF PLANNING GRANTS**
(Report EA30 refers)

The Director of Development Services introduced a report that set out proposals to deal with the cut in Planning Grants that had recently been agreed by Cabinet. Following a preliminary discussion in which Members indicated a preference for the "intermediate option" of awarding grants of approximately £150,000 per annum (which would gradually reduce the Planning Grants reserve over a period of several years), it was agreed that an additional meeting of the Committee should be called to consider in further detail the issues within the report.

However it was suggested that, prior to that meeting, Denmead Parish Council should be consulted on whether they would be able to contribute to Phase Two of the Denmead Village Centre Improvement Scheme. It was also agreed to further discuss the likely effects of reducing grants to the historic buildings fund and to countryside organisations and the other funding options which might be available to these groups.

RESOLVED:

That consideration of the report be deferred to an additional meeting of the Committee and that officers report on the options for reducing total planning grant funding to approximately £150,000, taking account of the Council's Corporate Strategy.

NOTE: subsequent to the meeting, this was set as Wednesday 14 April 2004 at 4.30pm.

11. **PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT**
(Report EA23 refers)

The Director of Development Services distributed additional appendices to the report that detailed the Government's announcement on this year's Planning Delivery Grant.

Members noted that the Council had received a grant of £570,445 which exceeded that given to Chichester, Oxford, Southampton and Portsmouth City Councils. The grant was based on performance within the Department and Members passed on their congratulations to all the staff involved.

The Director explained that proposals to spend the grant would be considered by Cabinet on 21 April 2004, but stated that the key spending areas would be enforcement, design statements, externalising appeals, urban design advice, legal reserves, recruitment and retention, administration support, a compliance officer, information technology and Local Development Frameworks.

Members approved the proposals but were concerned about increasing the staff establishment with funding purely from a one-off grant, but it was noted that the Government had indicated an intention to phase out the grant system and enable local authorities to charge higher planning fees and were consulting on this proposal.

RESOLVED:

That the Development Services staff be congratulated for their work and that the spending item proposals within the appendix of the report, tabled at the meeting, be recommended to Cabinet.

12. **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2004/5**
(Report EA24 refers)

The Director of Development Services explained that the report had been prepared in accordance with the new corporate guidance for business plans.

In response to comments, the Director stated that the conclusions of the Best Value Review on People and Work in relation to the local economy would be incorporated into the Plan, after its completion and approval by Cabinet in May 2004.

Councillor Beveridge, as Portfolio Holder for Transport and Access, suggested that a local performance indicator should be established to monitor the progress of traffic management schemes.

RESOLVED:

1. That it be recommended to Cabinet that the Draft Development Services Business Plan be approved.

2. That it be recommended to Cabinet that the budget and proposals for spending the Planning Delivery Grant be approved.

13. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

RESOLVED:

That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business because it is likely that, if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

<u>Minute Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description of Exempt Information</u>
#	Planning Enforcement	Information relating to a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of, or a particular office-holder, former office-holder or applicant to become an office-holder under the authority. (Para 1 to Schedule 12A refers).

14. **PLANNING ENFORCEMENT**
(Report EA29 refers)

The Committee welcomed the above report that recommended improvements to the planning enforcement service (detail in exempt minute).

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.45pm.