

ENVIRONMENT AND ACCESS PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE**1 December 2004**Attendance:

Councillors:

Verney (Chairman) (P)

Bidgood (P)
Busher (P)
de Peyer (P)
Higgins (P)
Jackson (P)Jeffs (P)
Love (P)
Mather (P)
Nunn (P)
Wright (P)Others in Attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Beveridge (Portfolio Holder for Planning)

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no questions asked or statements made.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meetings, held 12 July and 20 October 2004, be approved and adopted.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES ETC

The Committee noted that the Planning Grants Informal Scrutiny Group had held its first meeting and had agreed to hold subsequent meetings at 11.00am on 6 January and at 2.00pm on 11 January 2005.

4. DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT BUDGET 2005/06

(Report EA46 refers)

The Director of Development Services explained that from January 2005 the Building Control Team was under a duty to verify all major electrical work undertaken in private properties. Whilst it was likely that this work would be undertaken by qualified consultants, he explained that the cost would be passed onto the homeowner through fees.

Following a Member's comment, the Director agreed to supply information on what percentage of all planning applications involved the Building Control Team.

The Director clarified a number of issues including changes to the consultation arrangements with the Environment Agency and staff changes as a response to the new Customer Service Centre.

Following debate on the Parking Reserve account, the Director agreed to clarify before Cabinet's consideration of the recommendation how the estimated transfer from the Parking Reserves of £309,420 (identified at paragraph 5.2 i of the report) had been calculated.

In response to comments concerning the success of the trial evening bus services to the Park and Ride car parks, it was agreed that take-up could be improved through better promotion. Whilst Members recognised that the trial had been promoted through leaflets at the station, the Winchester Chamber of Commerce, Parish Councils, at the Park and Ride sites themselves and through advertisements in the local press; it was suggested that the possibility of a free trial and promotion at the town centre long-stay car parks should be investigated.

The Committee discussed the need for the Department to scan paper documents and the Director explained that whilst the Council encouraged the submission of electronic planning applications and representations, this option was not used by most customers.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approve the detailed budget for 2005/06 and the revised budget for 2004/05, as set out in the report, subject to further clarification from the Director of Development Services with regard to the £309,430 estimated transfer from the Parking Reserves (identified at paragraph 5.2 i of the report).

5. PARKING REVIEW
(Report EA45 refers)

The Committee considered the report which set out the conclusions of the first meeting of the Parking Review Informal Scrutiny Group held on 15 November 2004.

The Director of Development Services explained that the Group had accepted the recommendations as set out except for a number of minor changes aimed to make the level of charges more convenient for customers. These changes were included in a revised table of the recommended charges (set out as an additional appendix to appendix of Appendix C of the report) that was circulated to Members at the meeting. The Director also advised that these alterations changed the predicted annual income from off-street parking charges, excluding season tickets, from £3,142,000 to £3,151,000 (paragraph 5.1 of appendix C refers).

After consideration of the revised appendix that was circulated at the meeting, Members made a number of comments and amendments. It was requested that the Director of Development Services further amend the appendix to reflect the Committee's alterations and that the appendix be submitted to Cabinet to assist in its consideration of this item. Subsequent to the meeting, these alterations were reflected in a revised Proposed Parking Charges Chart, which has been submitted to Cabinet under report reference CAB966.

The Committee considered a request from a member of the public, submitted prior to the meeting that for a trial period the enforcement of residents' parking permits should be reduced from 8am-6pm to 10am-4pm. It was suggested that whilst this would still deter commuter parking in residential areas, it would benefit residents with occasional overnight visitors to the extent that they may not need to purchase a visitor's permit. However, following a debate the Committee rejected this proposal as

they considered that its effect was likely to reduce the number of spaces available to holders of residents' permits.

Following debate, the Committee agreed by 6 votes to 3 (with two Members having left the meeting and with 1 abstention), that the proposed percentage increase in the cost of the first permit was too great and should therefore be reduced from £25 to £20. The Committee agreed that the costs of subsequent permits to be as set out in the report and discussed the possibility of increasing the cost of the first permit to £25 in spring 2006.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Committee agreed that a more thorough review of the on-street parking arrangements in Winchester should be undertaken to include a consultation with residents and a review of the parking policies of other similar local authorities. Following a Member's suggestion, this review would include an examination of possible savings, such as the time period permits were validated and the period when parking restrictions were enforced. However, the Director advised that whilst the demand for permits exceeded the number of available on-street parking places, any changes to the parking zones system would require careful consideration to ensure that it benefited more residents than it would disadvantage.

The Committee also agreed that the parking permits charges should be reviewed annually.

RESOLVED:

That it be recommended to Cabinet that:

1. That the on-street parking permits scheme be modified so that the first permit for each household is issued at a lower cost than any additional permits.
2. That the charges for annual residents' and visitors' permits be increased to £20 for the first permit for each household and £50 for each additional permit; guesthouse permits be increased from £15 to £25; amenity permits be increased from £10 to £15; and business permits be increased from £30/£200 to £50/£300.
3. That no change be made to the existing system of issuing annual visitors permits.
4. That the charges for on-street parking permits should in future be reviewed annually.
5. That the proposed on-street and off-street parking charges be approved as set out in the appendix to Appendix B, subject to the following amendment:
 - i) That the proposed charge of £2.10 for up to three hours be reduced to £2.00 and that the proposed charge of £2.80 for up to four hours be increased to £3.00.
6. That the proposed parking permits, on-street and off-street charges be introduced in spring 2005.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.00pm.

Chairman