

REPORT TITLE: EXTRACT OF MINUTES OF CABINET HELD 7 DECEMBER 2016

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 JANUARY 2017

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: THE LEADER

REPORT OF HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

This report sets out an extract of the minutes of Cabinet held on 7 December 2016, with regard to consideration of the outcomes and recommendations of the Mid-Term Refresh of the Parking Strategy (CAB2874).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That The Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the matters set out in the minute extract below.

1. **MID-TERM REFRESH OF THE PARKING STRATEGY**

(Report CAB2874 refers)

Councillor Byrnes introduced the Report and drew Members' attention to the current issues due to central Winchester car parks being at capacity. The Report was a refresh of the existing Parking Strategy and the Report recommended a number of measures in order to assist with continued implementation of its agreed aim and objectives. Councillor Byrnes emphasised that if a car park was at 85% capacity then spaces were so few and difficult to locate that people wishing to park there tended to give up and drive on to try and find another car park with more space, consequently adding to congestion around the centre. In operational terms therefore 85% was full.

The Assistant Director (Environment) advised that Recommendation 2 of the Report should be amended to refer to the correct Paragraphs in the Report. This was agreed as set out in Resolution 2 below.

During discussion, Cabinet noted that the Strategy should aim to balance the sometimes differing requirements of residents, visitors and businesses. Councillor Pearson confirmed that the recommendations outlined in the Report were in line with the Council's proposals regarding the Air Quality Action Plan (as considered under Report CAB2869 below).

During public participation, Chris Gillham (Winchester Friends of the Earth), Chris Holloway (WinACC) and Kate Macintosh addressed Cabinet and their comments are summarised below.

Mr Gillham believed that the proposed Strategy was not based on reality and that the survey conducted by the Council was biased. He expressed concern about the lack of mention of air quality and believed that the Strategy was far too focussed on economic benefits. It did not therefore address the serious impacts upon people's health and longevity caused by air pollution. He also considered it went against the Council's previous undertakings in the Town Access Plan to reduce city centre car parking. He requested Council conduct more research and collect further evidence.

Ms Holloway agreed that it might not be an appropriate time to undertake a complete review of the current Strategy before the publication of the County Council's emerging City Of Winchester Movement Study. She also welcomed a number of measures proposed, such as improved signage and investigating the possible provision of another Park and Ride site. However, she expressed concern about the apparent lack of reference to the environment or tackling air quality issues and also lack of reference to the Walking Strategy. Finally, she suggested that the recommendations at Paragraph 8.22 be amended to reflect environmental and health considerations.

Ms Macintosh also expressed concern about the apparent lack of joined up thinking with tackling air quality issues. She believed the Strategy was overly biased towards Winchester BID and their request for parking close to shops. However, she believed that other surveys showed that pleasant, safe and pollution free areas would encourage more shoppers. She also queried the legitimacy of the Council survey, as a recent WinACC survey showed a substantial proportion of respondents favoured restricting vehicle access to the centre of the town.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Thompson addressed Cabinet on behalf of Councillor Porter who was unable to attend the meeting. In summary, Councillor Porter expressed concern that the Report appeared to concentrate on the city centre and not market towns which, without good quality public transport, relied on effective car parking. The Report also did not refer to recent restrictions introduced in other cities to ban diesel cars. She also believed that “non peak months” (as referred to in the Report) were becoming less frequent with the increase of one-off and longer events. There was a seven-day economy in Winchester and car parking should reflect this: the Park and Ride service should be available seven days a week from 6am until late. Councillor Porter highlighted that full Park and Ride buses which were unable to collect additional passengers deterred passengers from using them in the future. The Strategy should include walking as an option for Park and Ride users. Councillor Porter also made a number of other detailed comments regarding suggested improvements to car parks in the city centre, which had been forward to Officers outside of the meeting. Finally, Councillor Thompson requested that the first bullet point of Paragraph 8.22 should be amended to reflect the Inspector’s proposed change to Policy WIN4.

The Assistant Director (Environment) advised that the Report included a section on parking in market towns and outlined a number of recent improvements that had taken place, including in Wickham and Bishops Waltham. The Report focussed on Winchester Town as that area was facing the greatest challenges.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Bell also addressed Cabinet and in summary also believed the Strategy should reference the seven-day economy, the substantial increase in the number of visitors to Winchester and the Air Quality Action Plan. She welcomed continued support for the three-ring approach to parking in Winchester and additional support for Park and Ride (which should operate every day and for longer hours).

In response, Councillor Byrnes emphasised that the Report contained a refresh of the existing Strategy rather than a completely new Strategy. The Council was working with the County Council regarding the Movement Strategy and a number of the other matters mentioned. Approximately 300 car parking spaces had been lost in the city centre which had resulted in capacity issues which the Report sought to address. He emphasised that the proposals resulted in approximately the same number of car parking spaces in approximately the same locations.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the aim and objectives of the existing Winchester District Car Parking Strategy 2014-2018 be confirmed.

2. That the recommendations made in paragraphs 8.22, 8.29, 8.33, 8.37 and 8.41 of the Report (which relate to the Council's approach to car park charges, signing, parking capacity in central Winchester and park and ride on the north side of town, use of technology (including measures to support Ultra Low Emission Vehicles)) be approved in order to assist with the continued implementation of the Strategy.