

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Waste Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 28 March 2017 at Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.30 pm
Concluded 7.15 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	GREEN
A Ahmed Berry Thornton	Love Warnes

NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

Nicola Hoggart – Environment Agency
Julia Pearson – Bradford Environment Forum

Observers: Councillor A Ross-Shaw, Councillor S Cooke

Apologies: Councillor Rosie Watson, Councillor Naveed Riaz and Councillor Brendan Stubbs

Councillor Warnes in the Chair

63. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received

64. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meetings held on 20 December 2016 and 31 January 2017 be signed as a correct record.

65. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS



There were no appeals submitted by the public to review decisions to restrict documents.

66. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.

67. CALLED IN ITEM

BRADFORD CITY CENTRE – PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO ON-STREET VEHICLE CHARGES AND CHANGES TO SOME DESIGNATED PAY AND DISPLAY AND LIMITED WAITING BAYS

At its meeting on 7 March 2017 the Executive had received a report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Executive Document “BP”**) which had considered objections received to the proposals to extend the hours of on-street parking charges to 8a.m – 6p.m on Monday to Saturday (currently 10a.m – 4.30p.m) and to introduce a fixed £1 charge on Sundays in pay and display bays within Bradford city centre.

The report had also considered the objections received to introduce pay and display bays on Canal Road, Valley Road, Bolton Road and Mill Street, which were currently designated as limited waiting parking bays, and to a proposal to provide a bus bay on Upper Piccadilly.

The Executive had resolved –

- 1. That the introduction of the revised on-street parking charges as described in Document “BP” be approved, with the exception of the implementation of a £1 Sunday flat rate charge to some “top of town” streets, namely North Parade, Northgate, Rawson Road, Godwin Street and Darley Street, where regeneration proposals may affect on-street parking provision, as referred to in section 2.5 of Document “BP”. The proposed bus bay on Upper Piccadilly be approved.**
- 2. That all objectors be notified of the Executive’s decision.**

The decision of the of the Executive had been called in by Councillor Cooke. The reasons for the call in had been:

- 1. The impact of the proposal, on City Centre retailers, especially those at the 'top of town', is obviously going to be detrimental, potentially undermining efforts to regenerate the City Centre.*
- 2. There is a specific failure to consider the predictable economic impact on the Oastler Centre.*



3. *The Council purports to promote footfall in order to augment the regeneration and prosperity of the City Centre and new charges will foreseeably do the opposite.*
4. *As a result of reasons numbered 1 to 3 above, the Council is encouraging the use of out of town shopping centres, at the cost of the City Centre.*

In accordance with Paragraph 8.6.9 of Part 3E of the Constitution Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were advised that they could, following consideration of the matter, resolve to:

- (1) Release the decision for implementation.**
- (2) Refer all or part of the decision back to the Executive to reconsider it in the light of any representations the Committee may make. The decision may not be implemented until the Executive has met to reconsider its earlier decision.**
- (3) Refer the decision to full Council for consideration, in which case the decision may not be implemented until the Council has met to consider the matter.**

Members were also aware that if the Committee made no resolution, in accordance with paragraph 8.6.9 of the Constitution, the decision may be implemented.

Members raised a number of questions in relation to Executive Document BP including:-

- Had any quantitative evidence been produced to support the statement at paragraph 2.2 to Document BP which suggested that many premium on street spaces were being taken up by owners and workers at the adjacent businesses for convenience parking reducing availability to visitors for shopping purposes?
- Following the feedback to the consultation process suggesting that the charges would have an adverse effect on the commercial viability of businesses in the “top of town” had any assessment of that impact been undertaken?
- The table listing objections received and corresponding officer comments, contained at Appendix 2 to Document BP, did not appear to provide a direct response to some of the objectors concerns around the increase to on street pay and display charging hours. Was it usual to respond that the decision conformed to the decision of full Council made on 25 February 2016?
- The solution to preventing owners and workers occupying premium on



street spaces all day thereby reducing the availability to visitors for shopping could be the introduction of a “no return” within a number of hours’ policy.

A Member also raised concerns that on dark evenings it would be safer for employees to park close to their workplace. He reiterated concern about the lack of evidence that such practices were taking spaces from shoppers and of the cumulative impact on the businesses which it was hoped would thrive was once again questioned.

In response to the questions/comments received it was explained that:-

- There had been no quantitative evidence produced to support the statement at 2.2 to Document BP, however, Wardens operating in the city centre had regularly observed that owners and workers were taking up premium on street spaces.
- A very high level assessment of parking charges had been undertaken. There had been a survey conducted in 2014 involving 1,000 shoppers and 251 non shoppers considering their travel to the city. Of those surveyed 20% used a car and 14% of those used on street parking.
- It was normal practice to take account of the views of objectors. Meetings had been held with the Chamber of Commerce to discuss their opinions and their views had been taken on board. Objectors had also been informed of the meeting of the Executive on 7 March 2017.
- It would be very difficult for the Wardens to enforce a “no return” policy. There were a limited number of Wardens and they would have to log information on all vehicles parked and return to each parking space every two hours. Members then questioned why there was a suggestion to incorporate such a scheme in the original proposals and were advised that this was to allow a focus to be made on particular problem areas. To operate that policy on a consistent, city centre wide, basis would be difficult.

Councillor Cooke addressed the meeting to clarify and expand on the reasons for him calling in the decision.

He referred to responses to the consultation process which stated that the Executive decision conformed to the decision made by full Council at the budget meeting on 25 February 2016. He believed that the legitimate concerns of businesses in the “top of town” had been dismissed on the basis that a decision had already been made. It was maintained that the environment was not static and the decision had been made for purely financial reasons.

It was stated that the closure of Wm Morrison’s Supermarket in the “top of town” had impacted considerably on the mix of businesses and that trade could plateau in that location. It was stressed that the decision under discussion should be



made in the context of the changes since the budgetary decision was made.

Paragraph 2.5 in Document BP referred to a streetscape regeneration scheme for the “top of town” which was currently being developed. In that report it was acknowledged that the nature of the regeneration proposals being considered may have implications for the revision to parking charges proposed and Councillor Cooke stressed that the parking arrangements should be considered following the proposals in that scheme.

Members were aware that work had been undertaken by the Council to look at the future of Bradford’s Markets. Decisions were yet to be made on that scheme and it was stressed that tactical decisions on the car parking arrangements should be made once arrangements on that scheme emerged.

The lack of evidence to support the decision was raised along with a view that only anecdotal evidence statements had been considered. The survey undertaken three years previously had not been conducted for the purpose under discussion.

Councillor Cooke concluded by acknowledging the financial position of the Council, however, he maintained that the decision should go back to the Executive for a decision to be made in light of the entire proposals for the “top of town” area. He urged that the Executive delay the decision until work on the regeneration and plans for the area had been concluded.

A local business owner addressed the meeting to discuss the potential impact of the decision on his business and the lack of evidence which had informed that decision.

He reminded Members that it had been subsequently acknowledged that commuters were not occupying parking spaces in the “top of town” on a Sunday and the recommendation for a charge on those days had not been approved. He believed that the entire report was based on the same ‘flawed’ evidence and should also be revised.

He explained that he was not objecting to car parking charges if there was a genuine offer available to customers, however, he believed that the area should not be considered in comparison with locations such as Manchester and Leeds as there was no comparison with the “top of town” area. He was concerned that the proposals would be detrimental to the businesses in that area as footfall was already in decline due to reduced parking charges in other areas such as the Broadway Shopping Centre. He maintained that trading in the “top of town” was tough and businesses needed to do all they could to attract customers to that area. It was believed that customers who were attracted to the area would return, however, increased parking charges would not help to attract customers initially.

It was claimed that the area had completely changed since the survey conducted in 2014. Mid week footfall had declined and the area was changing from a day time to night time economy. It was hoped to increase the day time and tea time



trade but businesses considered that the introduction of a charge after 4pm would deter custom at that time. He had spoken to other businesses in the area which were of the same view. It was acknowledged that private businesses were reducing parking charges to attract custom and it was maintained that the Council should do the same. The proposals went against all the attempts to regenerate the area. No trade was in the area at 8am and it was suggested that if the Council wanted to increase revenue it should increase the charges from 70p to £1.00 during the existing hours only.

The Portfolio Holder with Responsibility for Regeneration, Planning and Transport, responded as follows:-

He explained that to increase parking charges had not been an easy decision to make and he understood the concerns which had been raised. The Council was in a tough position and must maximise revenue, change its methods of operation and work more efficiently. It was agreed that anecdotal evidence had been considered but this had not been disputed and he personally had seen business owners/employees occupy car parking places to the detriment of shoppers. It was cheaper to park on the street in the “top of town” than use the nearby car park. It was envisaged that increased charges would encourage a change in the behaviour of workers in that location. The Council did want to support businesses but it was felt that the impact of the changes would not be detrimental. Free parking at the nearby Oastler Centre had not had a huge impact on usage.

A review of Bradford Markets was being conducted and an announcement was forthcoming. The Council was not acting as if the regeneration of that area was complete but it was the only authority not to charge for parking between operating hours of 8am to 6pm and it provided the cheapest parking in West Yorkshire. It was felt that the decision could not be put on hold because of longer term regeneration plans.

The reduction in car parking charges in the Broadway Shopping Centre had been made as the price had initially been too steep.

Members acknowledged and appreciated that the decision of the Executive had been made in light of the current, difficult, financial position of the Council but believed that the viability of businesses must be protected.

The options available to Members were considered. A view that the decision should be deferred until the streetscape regeneration scheme for the “top of town” had concluded was suggested. No issues with proposals other than those at the “top of town” were raised.

The Portfolio Holder responded that the regeneration scheme would consider the future of the markets and the street scene. The operating hours were not being considered. In response to questions about any potential pedestrian schemes it was confirmed that an announcement would be made at the appropriate time but that such arrangements were not being considered.



Resolved –

That the decision be referred to the Executive with a request that the comments expressed at this meeting by businesses about the impact of the parking charges on their future commercial viability be taken into account.

ACTION: Strategic Director, Place / City Solicitor

68. UPDATE OF THE PREVIOUS TWELVE MONTH REVIEW OF THE DISTRICT'S CASUALTY REDUCTION PROGRAMME

Document “AF” provided an update to the previous recommendations around the management of the District's Killed and Serious Injuries (KSI's) on the highway.

The report also updated Members on the Inter-Departmental Agreements between Planning, Transportation & Highways Service and Public Health around the Road Safety Team and Active School Travel.

Document “AF” referred to the budget announcement that the current Inter-Departmental Agreement between PT&H and Public Health, financially supporting the district's road safety team would be reduced by 50% over a two year period commencing in 2018/19. The report also revealed that the current Inter-Departmental Agreement between PT&H and Public Health, financially supporting the districts Active School Travel Programme would be subject to cessation over a two year period commencing 2018/19.

Members questioned if funding had been identified to mitigate the impact of those cuts and it was explained that, at the time of report writing, the situation was not clear. Since that time it had become evident that funds could be available from the Local Transport Plan. It was also considered that a business case for support for the services could be made to the West Yorkshire Safer Roads Executive.

A Member referred to the evidence in his ward of the success of the road safety services and suggested that pressure from the Committee may be required on the commissioning groups to convince them to support the Road Safety Team and the Active School Travel Programme

The success of the Active School Travel Programme, in helping thousands of children and their families to live a more active lifestyle through the promotion of walking and cycling, was commended. The difficulties in persuading parents to walk to school were acknowledged and it was agreed that an understanding of the catchment areas and the ability to ensure children were allocated schools within their local community was required.

It was acknowledged that, with the cuts which had been made to school budgets,



that schools would be less able to support the Active School Travel Programme financially. It was agreed that the allocation of primary school pupils to schools close to their homes would enable parents to walk their children to school.

The previous prevalence of child injuries in the district and the evidence which revealed the accomplishment of the Road Safety Team and Active Travel Programme was discussed. It was agreed that now was not the time to reduce those programmes which were beginning to produce real results. It was agreed that efforts should be made to retain those services and the good practice which had been developed be continued.

In response to questions about the ability for schools to teach road safety it was explained that with the volume of statutory elements in school curriculums it was difficult for schools to include non core subjects. Training to schools was provided in priority area with the areas of greatest need being approached first. A strong case had been made to schools to encourage them to accept the training available and School Governors had been directed to take up the training.

Resolved –

- 1. That the successful work of the Council and its partner schools in promoting safer walking and cycling in recent years be acknowledged.**
- 2. That Members trust that Council officers will do all they can to ensure that the work in promoting safer walking and cycling be continued.**
- 3. That the Strategic Director, Place, be requested to provide an update in 12 months time to include casualty performance and a financial update.**

ACTION: Strategic Director, Place

69. ILKLEY MOOR MANAGEMENT PLAN - UPDATE

The Strategic Director, Place, presented a report (**Document “AD”**) which summarised the main comments arising from the public consultation which had taken place in respect of the draft Ilkley Moor Management Plan that the Committee had considered in June 2016.

Members were advised that the Plan was currently being updated to respond to comments received and that a final draft would be prepared for consideration by the Committee.

Members felt the report revealed a more sophisticated approach to the management of the moor and questioned if grouse shooting was detrimental to the objectives of the management plan. In response it was explained the plan attempted to set out the future of the management of the moor taking account of



the benefits that the moor provided. If it was felt that grouse shooting was not consistent with those objectives the issue would be considered in June 2018 when the current licence was to be reviewed.

Document “AD” included aspirations to support the habitat of the moor; less intensive bracken control, less intensive heather management and increased tree cover. It was questioned if that would result in the moor becoming a forest and it was explained that historic management did discourage trees on higher slopes.

In response it was explained that allowing natural regeneration on lower slopes would help biodiversity and flood mitigation. The area would not be allowed to become a woodland but the benefits of trees was now recognised. It had been realised that removal of all bracken was not achievable and expensive. There were some benefits of bracken and the focus of bracken control would be to ensure footpath routes were cleared.

It was explained that the final plan would be completed and the process for adoption of the final plan was discussed. It was agreed that legal advice would be sought to ascertain the plan’s formal approval process and that the final version of the plan would be presented prior to its submission to Natural England for consent.

Resolved –

- 1. That the comprehensive approach being developed in relation to the management of Ilkley Moor be welcomed.**
- 2. That the Strategic Director, Place, be requested to present to this Committee the final draft of the Ilkley Moor Management Plan before it is submitted to Natural England for consent.**

ACTION: Strategic Director, Place

70. BRADFORD DISTRICT RAIL UPDATE

The Strategic Director, Place presented a report (**Document “AE”**) which provided the Committee with an update on patronage, timetable changes, Northern Powerhouse Rail and other initiatives that would improve the provision of rail services within the District.

The investment in new trains and the removal of the pacer units was welcomed. The train frequency at Low Moor Station was questioned and it was explained that a week day service from Northern Rail would be hourly although discussions were being held to increase the frequency to two per hour. Those services would be supplemented by four daily Grand Central services from Leeds to Manchester.

Proposed station improvements were questioned and Members were assured that the plans included new ticket machines to meet the demand. Trials of a modular building were being conducted in Ravensthorpe but it was not yet known



if those buildings, when utilised in Bradford, would include waiting facilities.

In response to questions about the decrease in passenger numbers at Frizinghall Station it was suggested that the numbers for the previous year may have been overestimated. That station continued to be well used and was not under any threat.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that businesses were keen to see increased frequency and links towards Manchester and those views would be added to the Northern Powerhouse Rail case. It was stressed that cost benefit analysis undertaken would need to be more robust than that traditionally undertaken when demand forecasts were cautious and conservative. The added value to the city's economy, traffic reduction, air quality reduction and access to the Manchester job market together with the benefits to the whole of the North of England should be included.

Resolved –

(1) That the content of Document “AE” be noted.

(2) That Members fully endorse the need for a Bradford City Centre station to be included as part of the proposed Northern Powerhouse Rail network, for the wider benefit of the North as well as the Bradford District and urge that the electrification of the Calder Valley Line be implemented as a priority.

(3) That a further report in relation to rail strategy be provided in spring 2018.

ACTION: Strategic Director, Place

71. WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

Document “AG” presented the Committee's work programme 2016/17. A Member raised concern about air pollution in the district and was advised that the issue was scheduled to be considered in May 2017.

No resolution was passed in respect of this item.

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Environment and Waste Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER

