

CAMBRIDGE CITY JOINT AREA COMMITTEE (CJAC) : MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 1st November 2016

Time: 4.35pm – 5.20 pm

Present: County Councillors Cearns, Kavanagh, Manning, Scutt (Chairwoman) Taylor and Walsh;
City Councillors, Baigent, Bird, Blencowe (Vice-Chairman), Robertson and Tunnacliffe.

Apologies: Councillor Adey

45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

46. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 7th JUNE 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman.

With reference to Minute 43 'Parking Policy Review' and text in the second from last paragraph reading "... That the current plan was to present the working groups findings to the Joint Area Committee (AJC) on 25th October (*Note: the original date for the current AJC meeting*) then to the County's Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee " as this had not been achieved there was a request for an explanation for the delay, for a revised timetable and confirmation on who would approve the final document.

In response Democratic Services understood that the report would now come forward to the next meeting of CJAC scheduled for 24th January 2017. As follow up and to provide more detail, Councillor Blencowe clarified that the report from the Member Working Group would initially come back to CJAC for its comments in January before going on to a later meeting of the County Council's Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee. He explained that having assessed some of the responses received, it was apparent that there was still a lot of work to be undertaken and the Draft Policy, as originally drafted, was not considered robust or effective to deal with the necessary challenges. The Chair of the Working Group therefore did not feel it was in a sufficiently advanced form to bring forward to the current meeting to able to recommend its adoption. He thanked the various residents groups' for their participation and confirmed that the intention would be for a report back to the January meeting.

Referring to concerns expressed as to delay generally the Chairwoman made reference to legal advice having been sought on aspects of the proposed Policy (in relation to whether it was possible to establish schemes for just a few hours a day) explaining that it would not have been appropriate for a written report to be presented without all potential legal issues having been resolved.

47. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

a) On-Street Parking in Cambridge: a request for co-ordinated action

Although there was not a relevant report on the agenda, as there had originally been the expectation that a report on the proposed Parking Policy was to come to the current meeting, the Chairwoman indicated that she had used her discretionary powers to accept a question and accompanying oral statement on the above topic.

Nicki Marrian from 'Smarter Cambridge Transport' (who had also provided a business card for each member of the Committee) highlighted the issue of unrestricted free parking contributing to congestion and air pollution. She highlighted that the problem of commuter parking was now acute in many parts of the City and required urgent action, calling upon Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge City Council and the Greater Cambridge City Deal to work together to:

- 1) Implement city-wide neighbourhood parking schemes to address the problem of unrestricted free parking on Cambridge streets.
- 2) Allow communities to choose the most suitable parking controls for their area from a menu of options to cover days and hours of operation, including one or two hours per day.
- 3) Trial new schemes for six months, making any adjustments needed in further consultation with local communities.

She stated that On-Street parking control was not just about residents being able to park close to their homes: but concerned safety, fair access to a limited communal asset, and the right to clean air. Their view was that free commuter parking contributed to congestion and pollution and undermined public transport, including park-and-ride and rural bus services. She suggested that if the relevant bodies get parking controls right, this would reduce congestion and pollution.

She highlighted that Smarter Transport had published a paper setting out how new neighbourhood parking schemes might be developed and trialled with the active involvement of communities and asked if the Committee members had read it.

On behalf of the many citizens who had signed their petition and who attended the consultation meetings and who had supported the City Deal promise to tackle the issue, she expressed her dismay that the delay to the Parking Policy Report was just being announced, although the Minutes of the July CJAC meeting stated that: *"...the working group [would] test its draft policy with the RAs it had already been in contact with; this would give some indication of whether the proposals had any support. To do this it would be necessary for the working group to develop its proposals well in advance of the October Committee meeting, to allow the group time both to consult the RAs and to evaluate the responses"*; this had not happened, and she suggested that it must have been obvious some time ago that the October deadline would not be met, further stating that they had expected changes to on-street parking to be announced the previous January, not the forthcoming January. She ended by asking when the relevant bodies were going to act and how they could help make it happen.

The Chairwoman in response highlighted the phrase the spokesperson had used "to

get it right” explaining that as already stated, the reason for the report not being on the agenda was the need to get it right before bringing it forward.

Councillor Blencowe made the point that the Working Group needed to have confidence that a Policy they were recommending would be able to deal with Commuter congestion. The Working Group also wanted to ensure a bottom-up approach was used, whereby residents associations and local people’s views were taken into account when shaping the final version. Currently the Policy was only a work in progress document and the Working Group could not justify putting forward a document that was not accepted in some neighbourhoods. The aim would be to consult further and receive feedback from residents associations when a finalised draft was available and before coming back to Committee.

In answer to a question on whether the Working Group would prefer that the Policy applied across the City or met the needs of individual neighbourhoods, the reply was both, and this should be on the basis that consultation was undertaken with all neighbourhoods. It was clarified that until a new policy was adopted, the current policy remained in force.

As there was no report on the agenda, the Chairwoman indicated that the spokeswoman would receive a written response to the questions raised within ten working days.

b) Question regarding comprehensive parking controls

Having received it in advance, the Chairwoman indicated that she was also allowing a further question using her discretionary powers from Malcolm Schofield having noted that it was directed for a response from the Committee itself.

In his introduction he apologised for being late and, as he had missed the beginning of the meeting, if anything he was asking had already been answered earlier. He indicated that while the City Deal had consulted on congestion measures, the control of residents parking had been understated and he wished to ensure that the Committee recognised that what was being called for by ‘Smarter Transport’ was the development of a comprehensive residents parking scheme with on-street parking Controls

In response, the Chairwomen explained that the City Deal Board had made clear that it was relying upon this Committee to bring forward a comprehensive parking policy covering the whole City. This would then go on the County Council’s Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee for approval.

As a follow up, Mr Schofield sought to clarify whether this represented a top down approach and whether the Committee was aware of and was taking into account the City Deal stated objectives asking if the Committee recognised the new context - congestion elimination, and the critical role now to be played by one comprehensive Residents Parking Scheme? In reply the Chairwoman clarified that the approach was ‘bottom up’, involving consultation with residents groups and confirmed that the aim was to achieve a comprehensive residents parking scheme, as opposed to one based on a ward by ward basis. The City and County Council were working together towards the achievement of the City Deal objectives, taking into account resident’s concerns and the importance of benefit to Cambridge and Cambridgeshire, hence

being fully aware of City Deal Policies with the work on the proposed Parking Policy being undertaken in parallel with 'City Deal' measures.

48. OFF STREET PARKING

Mr Sean Cleary the Commercial Operations Manager from the City Council spoke to the report, making himself available to answer questions. The City Council's budget for the financial year 2017/18 required the income from car park charges to meet the operational costs and continued investment to ensure that car parking and other services funded by the City Council's Environment Committee, could continue to be supported. The Committee therefore received a report inviting their comments and to ensure a joined up view emerged from the City and County Councils on proposals for changes to off-street car parking charges, to be implemented from 1st April 2017.

It was highlighted that the proposals aimed to be consistent with the Strategic objectives set out in paragraph 1.3 and to contribute to the medium term objective of reducing Cambridge's carbon footprint and the City deal's objectives of reducing congestion and improving air quality and encouraging the shift away from on-street parking to off-street parking and from car parking to Park and Ride services and other sustainable alternatives to car use. Proposals for 2017/18 aimed to maintain the following particular policy principles:

- (a) To discourage long-stay parking in car parks
- (b) To maintain affordable, value for money costs for short-stay parking
- (c) Discounting the cost of parking at off-peak times, such as evenings, overnight and low peak days such as Monday and Tuesdays
- (d) To maintain differential pricing between Saturday and the other days of the week
- (e) To maintain differential pricing on Saturday and Sunday and the other days of the week
- (f) To maintain differential pricing between Grand Arcade and other car parks to reduce queuing
- (g) To bring Sunday pricing in line with Saturday pricing given the very busy nature of the city on Sundays

The proposals recognised the continuing high demand for peak time parking, especially at the Grand Arcade and in Cambridge's historic centre during weekends. The proposed charges were aimed to discourage queuing and to tackle congestion at peak times where demand was greatest or growing. The main features of the proposals for 2017-18 were that:

- (a) Prices on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at all of the multi-storey car parks would remain frozen at 2015 levels.
- (b) Prices on Mondays and Tuesdays at all multi-storey car parks were to be reduced from the current levels to those generally in line with 2012 prices; to make the low peak periods of the week more attractive to visitors and shoppers.
- (c) To bring Sunday pricing in line with Saturday pricing at all multi-storey car parks to reflect the very busy nature of the city on Sundays.
- (d) Charges for evenings and overnight to remain frozen at 2014 levels for all car parks.

- (e) Prices remain frozen at 2015 levels Castle Hill, Adam and Eve, Riverside and Gwydir Street car parks.
- (f) New rates for business parking were being introduced, ranging from standard office hours parking during the week to 24/7 across several car parks.

In discussion questions raised and views expressed included:

- In respect of Saturday / Sunday charging asking whether the City Council had undertaken research in consultation with the retail sector regarding the impact on low paid shop workers of there being no public transport provision early on Sundays and whether they supported the proposed Sunday pricing changes. As a response it was indicated that a consultation letter to retailers had resulted in 26 responses, of which 6 were positive, but the rest were negative towards the proposed pricing change proposals. It was indicated that officers had met with Cambridge Business Improvement District (BID) the previous day to explain the rationale for the pricing changes (in respect of seeking to reducing congestion / vehicle emissions and improve air quality) and they recognised the arguments put forward. The officer provided details of the high ranking for Cambridge as a City in terms of emissions. In terms of public transport provision this was a commercial decision of the bus operators who recently confirmed that there would be no increase in service delivery unless there was an increase in passenger numbers which justified additional provision.
- In reply to a question on who would make the final decision on the proposed charges, this was decision for the City Council's Environment and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Blencowe added that the timetable for approval was to enable the charges to be agreed by the City Council budget making meeting in February and could also possibly involve the report going to the City Council's Finance and Strategy Committee.
- Whether the officers had undertaken any surveys with shoppers which provided evidence that increasing charging on Sundays would lead to them changing their shopping habits and to shop on Mondays and Tuesdays instead. In response it was indicated that it was clearly difficult to change shoppers habits and the drive was to reduce congestion / air pollution. Sunday was now often the biggest day for shopping which was shown by historical data and while there was not the statistics for the type of survey referred, to the need to move forward on the City Deal objectives required such measures.
- One Member expressed the view that the changes to the charging structure for Sundays, which was no longer a special day, were long overdue.
- Asking what the Business Community's view were on the proposed charging changes, citing previous retail sector feedback where they had raised concerns about their perceived impact on footfall and dwell times in Cambridge shopping centres. In response, reference was again made to the 26 responses received to the consultation for which the closing date was the following day and so currently it had not been possible to assimilate all the responses.
- Members highlighted more detail on the responses received should be included as part of an updated version of the same report.

- With reference to paragraph 3.2 stating that if shoppers' habits did not change, the proposed increase in car parking charges might generate around £300k additional revenue, a question was raised on how confident officers were of this sum. In reply the officers indicated they were not confident at all and in fact, if it was not raised, it showed that the deterrent effect of some prices increases was working.
- Another Member suggested that it would be a great idea to help the overall city congestion strategy if the park and ride sites dropped their parking charges. This generated a discussion regarding the City Deal proposals being in hiatus and that if a congestion charge was introduced and additional income generated, this could enable the parking charge levied at the park and ride sites to be discontinued.
- It was suggested that the paper should have an option for increased parking income being used to help offset the park and ride charges. In response, the officer indicated that this would need to be included as part of a single Transport Policy, but that officers and the councils were not at that point yet.
- As the result of the officer reply above, there was a call for a recommendation to be included on the need for a joined up multi council collaborative approach to transport, which included parking as an integral part.
- There was a request for more data on the evidence of whether increased charging led to a decrease in the hours car parks were used e.g. data on the effect on congestion from parking for one, two or three hours. Further to this, a question was raised on whether officers had data identifying how long motorists stayed in car parks and whether it was publicly available. It was confirmed that this data could be extracted.
- Councillor Robertson the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources for Cambridge City Council spoke in support of the rationale behind the car park charges review and the resulting proposed charges.

On the conclusion of the debate, having been asked to comment and advise on a package of proposals for changes to off-street parking charges to be implemented from 1st April 2017 as set out in Appendix A to the report, the Chairwomen proposed the following as the recommendation to go forward which was seconded by Councillor Manning:

“That the Committee appreciates the opportunity of responding to the proposals and directs that the Minutes of the meeting on this item be provided to the relevant Cambridge City Council officers and the responsible Executive City Councillor for their consideration”.

Having discussed the proposed recommendation,

It was unanimously resolved

That the Committee appreciates the opportunity of responding to the proposals and directs that the Minutes of the meeting on this item be provided to the relevant Cambridge City Council officers and the City Council's

Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport for their consideration.

Chairwoman