

Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 October 2005

Present: -

Members of the Committee: Councillor Ken Browne (Chair)
“ Richard Chattaway (ViceChair)
“ Gordon Collett
“ Jose Compton
“ Eithne Goode
“ Richard Hyde
“ Katherine King
“ Nina Knapman
“ Joan Lea
“ Bryan Levy
“ Helen McCarthy
“ Ray Sweet

Also Present: Councillors Martin Heatley, Portfolio Holder, George Atkinson and Mike Perry.

Officers: Roger Bennett, Strategic Traffic Projects, PTES.
John Deegan, Director PTES.
Graeme Fitton, Head of Transport & Planning Unit, PTES.
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Dept.
Peter Endall, Senior Solicitor, Chief Executive's Dept.

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

None.

(2) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Declarations of interest were expressed as follows –

- (a) Councillor Richard Hyde declared a prejudicial interest as a Member of Stratford-on-Avon Area Committee on 27 July 2005, but remained in the meeting for the purposes outlined in paragraph 11 (2) of the Code of practice;
- (b) Councillor Nina Knapman declared a personal, non prejudicial, interest because she had abstained from voting at the July Area Committee meeting;
- (c) Councillor Jose Compton declared a personal, non prejudicial interest, as a Member of Warwick District Council's Decriminalisation Working Party;

(d) Councillor Helen McCarthy declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest, as a Member of the Area Committee.

2. Public Question Time

None

3. Consideration of Called-in Matters.

At its meeting on the 6th October the Cabinet considered reports relating to the following matters: -

(1) Review of Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement in Stratford on Avon District.

The Stratford on Avon Area Committee had considered a report by the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy relating to a review of the decriminalisation of parking enforcement in the District.

The Area Committee recommended that in pay and display streets, the free waiting period should be 30 minutes (as opposed to a recommendation that a charge of twenty pence should be made for the 30 minutes period) and that on-street charges on Sunday should be abolished before 12 noon.

The Cabinet decided that in those streets in Stratford-upon-Avon with pay and display the 50 pence charge for 40 minutes and the free 20 minute period be abolished and replaced with a 30 minute period free of charge and that on-street charges on a Sunday in Stratford-upon-Avon be abolished before 12 noon.

(2) Stratford Park and Ride.

The Cabinet was asked to consider the letting of a single contract for the operation of the Park and Ride site and the bus services.

The Cabinet decided that the management of the Park and Ride car park and the provision of the Park and Ride bus services should be let as a combined contract to Johnsons (Henley) Ltd.

Councillor Ken Browne, Chair of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, called in both decisions, in accordance with Standing Order 11 for the following reasons: -

“That this is against agreed principles of decriminalisation and will scupper park and ride in Stratford and undermine decriminalisation across Warwickshire.”

Review of Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement in Stratford on Avon District.

The Chair explained the reasons for his call-in, which related to the Cabinet decision breaching the general principles of parking enforcement in Stratford and Countywide and the impact that decision would have on the financing the Stratford Park and Ride Scheme.

Graeme Fitton outlined the main issues which related to the decision made by Cabinet in January 2005 that any shortfall in the early years of operation in the Stratford Park and Ride being met from surplus revenue from on street parking fines and charges in Stratford.

The Chair then moved the following motion, seconded by Councillor Richard Chattaway -

“That those streets in Stratford-upon-Avon with pay and display the 50 pence charge for 40 minutes and the free 20 minute period be abolished and replaced with a 30 minute period charged at 20 pence and that on-street charges on Sundays in Stratford-upon-Avon be abolished before 12 noon but only if Stratford-on-Avon District Council agree to a similar arrangement in their off-street car parks in keeping with the partnership agreement between Warwickshire County Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council and the agreed principles underpinning decriminalisation of parking enforcement in Warwickshire”.

In reply to questions Graeme Fitton confirmed that –

- Funding from the Integrated Transport Budget (ITB), which was used for the introduction of decriminalisation in Stratford was not available for use elsewhere in the County. The ITB settlement had decreased over the last 2 years;
- If further funding were taken from the ITB then this would have an impact on Local Safety Schemes and impact on other areas.
- The surplus income was to fund prudential borrowing and to enable the decriminalisation schemes to be self-financing as they were rolled out across the county.
- The report considered by Cabinet in November 2001 had been referred by Stratford-on-Avon-District Council when decriminalisation of parking enforcement was just starting to be considered and things had moved on considerably. Cabinet had subsequently resolved that a robust business case would include on-street charges;
- The £220k projected annual surplus in Stratford was based on actual figures achieved in Stratford and not the business case.

During discussion Members commented in support of the Cabinet decision as follows –

- That the free parking periods in Stratford had been the catalyst for the scheme being supported and had been well received by residents and businesses;

- That the free 30 minutes parking was crucial to the success of the scheme in particularly for the benefit of the elderly and the local community.
- That concern about “green transport” and motorists circulating until a free parking space was found was unsubstantiated.

Members further commented as follows –

- That the original proposals for Park and Ride had been on-going for 4 years and had two party support
- 20p was a minimal charge for parking;
- the 20p charge was crucial to help fund extension of the scheme throughout the county;
- the scheme had been a success in Stratford and would encourage both local visitors and tourists.

Following discussion it was –

Resolved, 10 Members voting in favour and none against, that Cabinet be recommended that those streets in Stratford-upon-Avon with pay and display the 50 pence charge for 40 minutes and the free 20 minute period be abolished and replaced with a 30 minute period charged at 20 pence and that on-street charges on Sundays in Stratford-upon-Avon be abolished before 12 noon but only if Stratford-on-Avon District Council agree to a similar arrangement in their off-street car parks in keeping with the partnership agreement between Warwickshire County Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council and the agreed principles underpinning decriminalisation of parking enforcement in Warwickshire.

Stratford Park and Ride

The Chair moved the following motion, seconded by Councillor Richard Chattaway -

“That the management of the Park and Ride car park and the provision of the Park and Ride bus services should be let as a combined contract to Johnsons (Henley) Ltd., subject to adequate revenue support arising from the previous recommendation being accepted by Cabinet”.

Following discussion on the financing of the Park and Ride Scheme it was -

Resolved, 10 Members voting in favour and none against, that Cabinet be recommended that the management of the Park and Ride car park and the provision of the Park and Ride bus services should be let as a combined contract to Johnsons (Henley) Ltd., subject to adequate revenue support arising from the previous recommendation being accepted by Cabinet.

.....

Chair of Committee

The Committee rose at 3:15 p.m.