

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY, FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
HELD AT WIGSTON ACADEMY, STATION ROAD, WIGSTON, LEICESTERSHIRE, LE18 2DT
ON TUESDAY, 29 JUNE 2021 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM**

PRESENT

Dr I K Ridley Vice-Chair, in the Chair
G A Boulter Acting Vice-Chair



COUNCILLORS

N Alam
G A Boulter
J W Boyce
Mrs L M Broadley
F S Broadley
Miss P V Joshi
J Kaufman
Mrs L Kaufman
K J Loydall
D W Loydall
Dr I K Ridley

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

C Campbell Head of Finance / Deputy Section 151 Officer
D M Gill Head of Law & Democracy / Monitoring Officer
Ms M A Kind Corporate Asset Manager
A Thorpe Head of Built Environment
S Tucker Democratic & Electoral Services Manager / Deputy Monitoring Officer
J Wells Senior Environmental Health Officer / COVID-19 Lead

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

J Salmen Petitioner

37. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillors L A Bentley, R F Eaton, D A Gamble and Mrs S Z Haq.

In Councillor D A Gamble's absence, by affirmation of the meeting it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor G A Boulter be appointed as acting Vice-Chair for the duration of the meeting.

38. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES

None.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

40. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 March 2021 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

41. ACTION LIST ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

There was no Action List arising from the previous meeting.

42. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

42a. 'KEEP CAR PARKING IN OADBY & WIGSTON FREE TO SUPPORT BUSINESSES AND YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY'

The Committee gave consideration to the two submitted petitions concerning the Council's Car Park Strategy (2021-26), which were published in advance of the meeting on the Council's website and change.org. respectively.

Mr J Salmen, on behalf of the petitioners, was invited by the Chair to address the Committee. A written copy of the submission is attached to the meeting minutes at Appendix 1. Members of the Committee were then invited to question Mr Salmen, after which a general debate was held on the matter.

At the conclusion of the debate, Councillor J W Boyce thanked the petitioners for raising their concerns about the proposals and proposed a motion that:

- (i) the consultation responses be noted and considered by Officers;
- (ii) the Car Park Strategy (2021-26) be amended where appropriate to take account of the responses; and
- (iii) a draft order including detailed charges be published for further consultation.

The motion was seconded by G A Boulter and carried by affirmation of the Committee.

43. PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT (Q4 2020/21)

The Committee gave consideration to the report as set out on pages 7-13 of the agenda which asked it to note the overall Council position for the financial year 2020/21 at the end of the fourth quarter for both Revenue and Capital Expenditure.

A correction to paragraph 1.1 of the report was requested, to clarify that government grant funding had offset some, but not all costs associated with Covid-19.

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The content of the report and appendix be noted.

44. STANDARDS & ETHICAL INDICATORS (Q4 2020/21)

The Committee gave consideration to the report as set out on pages 14-23 of the agenda, which asked it to note the figures for local determination of complaints and the ethical indicators for the fourth quarter of 2020/21.

By affirmation of the meeting it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The content of the report and appendix be noted.

45. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (2021)

The Committee gave consideration to the report as set out on pages 24-41 of the agenda, which asked it to note the timetable for the Council's new Local Plan process.

It was moved by J W Boyce, seconded by Mrs L M Broadley and

RESOLVED THAT:

- (i) The content of the report be noted; and**
- (ii) The Local Development Scheme 2021 be approved.**

Votes For: 10
Votes Against: 0
Abstentions: 1

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.40 PM



Chair

Tuesday, 14 September 2021

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Minute Item 42a.

We have only been allocated 5 minutes for this issue which is very important to both residents and businesses and is as unrealistic as 20 minutes free parking. I apologise now if this takes longer than 5 minutes and therefore would appreciate that any responses be put forward at the end. It is important to highlight that we only had one month to get public opinion and as you can see from the number of people who have signed the petitions in that time - this is proof of the strong feeling of the community.

Basis For Petition

Penalising businesses and residents after very difficult year

Businesses struggling as still in partial lockdown - some have only just re-opened

Residents will go elsewhere to shop ie Fosse Park with free parking

What other options have OWBC looked at and dismissed as potential break even or are you actually looking at this as a revenue stream -

Questions

Meeting 6th July 2017

Item G - confirms better enforcement is needed on car parks as it is sporadic across car parks - What evidence is there that this has been done and what are results

Meeting 5th December 2017

What evidence does OWBC have to determine impact on local businesses and viability of town centres as they advised that this should be undertaken in these minutes.

Budget Meeting 18/2/2021 - It states in item 3.8 "The aim of the Authority is to provide improved levels of service, whilst reducing costs and this is recognised in the savings already allocated"

How can this be the case - Table gives these savings which are costs mostly transferred to residents - Especially to a community who has been hit with covid 19, reduced working hours and/or redundancy, Shop closures, reduced facilities within the district ie leisure centres, Increase in garden waste charges, introduce car parking charges, refuse collection ? moving to fortnightly. HOW ARE THESE IMPROVED LEVELS OF SERVICE.

Budget Meeting 18/2/2021 3.9

To address budget deficit - two key items of policy were agreed to be delivered

Car Park Charges & Refuse collection moving to fortnightly (vermin control ???)

So, these two items have already been agreed in some form or another so what is consultation period for, other than a tick box.

It makes no sense having garden waste collections over 12 months. Oct to March cannot be productive other than employees and lorries being used to collect very little during these months. Cannot be cost effective and impacts on carbon footprint

?? Reduced costs and reduced collection over winter months

We understand the one option is for Number Plate Recognition - most drivers pay over the amount they expect to use - this gives the opportunity for someone else to use up any

surplus on the ticket. With NPR OWBC are looking to get double payments in some cases which cannot be right especially if this is a cost neutral exercise. If a space has been paid for for a certain amount of time then the ticket should be valid for that space whichever car is displaying the ticket. This proves that this option is just to create profit regardless of just covering the costs.

What feasibility study has taken place regarding any option other than than how much profit the council are hoping to make.

Businesses require footfall to survive in this difficult time. You are looking to charges for car parking on land owned by the council. If people decide to go elsewhere where parking is free - how will businesses be able to afford their business rates. Let alone make some sort of living. In reality you will have the opposite affect to what you are trying to achieve.

Car parks are a service like parks are a service - are you going to charge to enter parks.

Electric Charging Units

I understand a number have been installed in car parks - at what cost????

I do not imagine anyone would be visiting Wigston/Oadby shopping areas on a day out like Fosse Park. Anyone visiting would be within range of their own home. What was method to determine these were a necessity at this point.

Or is this a government scheme which is subsidised.

If so - how long is the subsidy for

what cost is OWBC contributing

what research was undertaken to indicate this would benefit the community.

what was consultation process & results

Conclusion

Based on our responses there is strong feelings from residents & businesses that Wigston/Oadby will become ghost towns if car park charges are implemented. Businesses will close, residents will go elsewhere where there is free parking to enjoy the shopping experience.

Reading between the lines it would seem that OWBC want to cut costs, at the same time somehow provide better services - by transferring the cost implications to the residents implying it is because of covid costs when in fact this was suggested in the 2017 minutes.

What happened to money saved from Furlough

Concern regarding payouts to staff and non disclosure payments. It appears legal costs far out way original payouts.

Once the petition took off seems ironic a Lib Dems Newsletter is sent out detailing the issue.

Residents are now asking whether OWBC are transparent in their undertakings, Fit for Purpose and able to run services which are Value for Money.

In particular, when car parking charges did not seem to be at the forefront of the election campaigns in 2019 & 2021 and the present government & covid is being blamed now - for a

decision made in 2017 to implement car park charges for resources deficits managed & controlled by OWBC as indicated in Minutes stated above. So - it appears nothing has changed since 2017 in this regard.

Our feedback has indicated that there are many unhappy residents who have indicated if this had been apparent at the time they may have voted differently. So again transparency comes into question.

As a finishing remark we have been informed that several shops in Blaby have closed and the Council have revised their parking to 2 hours 30p charge, 3 hours 50p , 4 hours £1.50

Suggestions

Depending on what OWBC have already looked at:

What findings have there been in other areas where this has been implemented. costs, overheads, impact on footfall & local businesses etc

What scheme has been introduced

Feedback from businesses and residents

Look at savings elsewhere

What else is currently running at a loss

Moving of premises - if this had been implemented in 2017 savings would now be available.

Look at alternative revenue streams that are not funded by residents in addition to what they already contribute to - which is what you are trying to do.

Partnerships or outsourcing with other authorities and/or businesses to provide services

Any income from car parking is "ring fenced" for spending on car parks only