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**REPORT TO:** COMMUNITY SERVICES & LICENSING COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 27 NOVEMBER 2008

**REPORTING OFFICER:** CORPORATE DIRECTOR (s151)  
Paul Cresswell

**SUBJECT:** OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW  
OF WENTWORTH STREET CAR PARK TRIAL

**WARDS AFFECTED:** MALTON

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## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform members of the Community Services and Licensing Committee of the outcome of the review undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny committee.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that members receive the report for comment and note the conclusions of the committee within the report.

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In considering its work plan for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee it resolved at its meeting on the 7 August 2008:

*(a) That Members consider a review of car parking as part of the Committee's work plan*

*(b) That the scope of the review be:*

*The review of the Wentworth Street car parking trial be that the decision of the Community Services & Licensing Committee of the 31 January 2008 be examined with focus on:*

- The report on fees and charges presented to the meeting of the Community Services & Licensing Committee held on 29 November 2007.*
- The results of consultation with businesses in Malton*

- *Ticket sales analysis for the trial period, highlighting the reduction in demand over the trial period despite the low tariff charge of £1.50 for all day parking*
- *The total car parking offer close to Malton Town Centre, including free parking and permit use*
- *The Yorkshire Forward Renaissance Market Towns Programme, Car Parking Research document*
- *The representations of The Car Park Fees Action Group*
- *The Car Parking Strategy Document approved by the Community Services & Licensing Committee in 2006*
- *The Lockwood Survey 2002*

*(c) The outcome of the review be reported to the Community Services & Licensing Committee when it met on 27 November 2008.*

3.2 A series of meetings have been held as detailed below:

***1 October 2008***

Presentation by Phil Long, Head of Environment.

After this the following individuals were provided with a copy of the slides and asked to make written submissions on their views of the trial by the 17 October 2008.

- James Stephenson
- Malcolm Chalk
- Denys Townsend
- David Lloyd Williams and Jason Fitzgerald Smith
- Roddy Bushell

***23 October 2008***

The Committee met to consider the written representations, it was agreed that Roddy Bushell, Denys Townsend and Malton Town Council be invited to make a presentation to the Committee followed by a question and answer session and that no other individuals needed to be asked to provide representations.

***10 November 2008***

The Committee received formal presentations:

Roddy Bushell – the significant issues raised were that the occupancy of the car parks was not adequately reviewed at the end of the trial as was required in the initial resolution passed by the Committee. The implication being that users of the car park stayed longer as a result of the trial which was beneficial to the traders. Issues around ticket income with the long stay rate reducing from £4.50 to £1.50 with little fall in income implied significantly higher take up during the trial.

Denys Townsend - the significant issues raised were based on detailed evaluation of the income in line with the relevant officers. This

showed that there had been some decline in place prior to the trial. Whilst it was difficult to argue it had been a success or failure either way, the benefit as noted by the traders in their survey response provided sufficient basis to regard it as a success. A suggested scheme for future charging was proposed for the Town.

David Lloyd-Williams – a significant issue raised was the uniqueness of Malton compared to other Ryedale Towns and the need for car parking charges to reflect local conditions. It was also advanced that additional free parking which became available in the town could also have impacted on the trial evaluation. Support was provided to the suggested revised charging proposed by the Car Park working group.

A presentation was also made by Councillor Paul Andrews outlining statistical basis for the evaluation of the scheme taking into account the previous trend on income at the car park, stating that the trial was a success.

#### **4.0 REPORT**

4.1 Clearly any review of this kind can lead to polarised views on some aspects. However the following were unanimously agreed statements from the Committee:

- There may be a number of factors which impact on the number of people visiting Malton, one of which may be car parking.
- There is within Malton a significant amount of free parking in close proximity to the Town Centre which impacts on car parking usage and income. Likewise the sale of permits distorts the issue.
- Whilst over the period of the trial, the figures show some decline in overall revenues across all Malton car parks, there was evidence from previous years that there was a trend of declining income: the rate of decline reduced during the trial, but it was not apparent that this was as a result of the trial.
- During the period of the trial, taking all factors into account, it is difficult to argue either way with certainty as to the success of the trial.
- The review of the car parking did not adequately reflect the occupancy of the car park although usage and ticket sales were reviewed. There were no adequate measures of occupancy available although if it were measured it would be distorted by free parking for the markets users, the permits and free permits for Community House. It is likely that the average length of stay during the trial was higher.

- Whilst traders will often point to car parking as a deterrent to visitors, the Committee felt that there were a number of other issues including the retail offer.
- It is difficult to ascertain the impact of car parking charges for potential shoppers as the people who need to be consulted are those who do not presently use the Town. These individuals are nearly impossible to identify in order to ascertain whether it is in fact the cost of parking is a factor which impacts on their decision.
- Malton is different from the other market towns although it has been identified as a service centre for the rural hinterland, its tourist offer is not as great.
- Due to the poor return rate from the traders to a questionnaire, the impact of the trial could not be evaluated fully. The indifferent response indicating that they had little noticeable impact on increasing turnover and footfall and therefore no conclusions can be made on increased turnover or footfall.
- External reviews of car parking provided some information about the impact of car parking charges and demand. However, much of the analysis was from other towns in other areas drawing contradictory conclusions

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Members felt that they had successfully reviewed the trial as outlined in the scope with no significant issues arising. It was not felt possible for the committee to make recommendations on future charging proposals without considerable further work on demand and sales after the trial. The Committee is not able to accommodate this in its work programme at present.
- 5.2 Council Andrews asked that it be noted that he was not in agreement with the decision that members were unable to make positive recommendations on future charges for parking in Malton, based on the review undertaken.

**Background Papers:** None.

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