



Ryedale District Council

REPORT TO: Overview & Scrutiny Committee

DATE: Thursday 7 August 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Paul Cresswell
Corporate Director (S151)

SUBJECT: Scoping of car park review

WARDS AFFECTED: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider the Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertaking a review of car parking as part of its work programme. This report outlines a possible scope for such a review.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

That members consider:

- (i) Whether to undertake a review of car parking as part of the Committees work programme; and
- (ii) That if (i) above is approved the scope of the review should be:

The review of the Wentworth St car parking trial be that the decision of the Community Services & Licensing Committee (CS&L) of the 31 January 2008 be examined with focus on:

- i) the decision, to re-instate general tariffs on Wentworth St Car Park, Malton in line with the agreed Car Park Strategy as amended by the 2008/9 budget setting process. To include:
 - 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 usage.
 - 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 outcome of the review be reported to the Community Services & Licensing Committee when it meets on the 27 November 2008.

3.0 BACKGROUND

Following a major review, the Car Parking Strategy was approved by Community Services & Licensing Committee on the 26 January 2006. Full Council subsequently approved the Car Parking Strategy on 16th February 2006.

The Strategy concluded that:

- Prices have little affect on demand 'per se' being just one element of the retail mix.
- Residents are attracted to the towns for the specific shops or because of the town's proximity to the customer.
- The three main factors that affect demand are:
 - The relative strength of the attraction offered.
 - The amount of available space to park.
 - The close proximity of parking.

However at a meeting of Policy & Resources Committee on the 2 February 2006 a reduced price parking trial was proposed in Wentworth Street car park, Malton to establish the potential of a very low tariff to attract demand and this was referred back to CS&L for consideration. This followed:

- Representation by the Car Park Fees Action Group that low tariffs would not only stimulate demand but also increase income (£30K on Wentworth St) believing that "these trends would become apparent within a twelve month period" (CPFAG document CS&L 26 January 2006).
- A 2005 Gazette and Herald campaign to reduce parking charges to 2004/5 levels.

At CS&L April 2006 the concept was approved and a trial of reduced price parking (£1.50 for all day parking) was introduced on Wentworth Street car park from July 2006 to July 17 2007. The purpose of the trial "was to establish the potential of a very low tariff to attract demand" (Minute 6 April CS&L 26 July). Given the background, the criteria of success were very specific;

- Increased demand and occupancy in Wentworth Street car park relative to the effects on other car parks, on street parking and, if possible, any indicators regarding economic upturn and additional footfall (CS&L 6 April 2006).
- The trial was to be evaluated on the basis of income generation, ticket demand and occupancy for Wentworth Street, taking account of the effect on Water Lane and Market Place car parks relating to usage/displacement in order to allow a full evaluation of the impact and influence of the trial on demand in all car parks in Malton.

Following Full Council (12 July 2007) it was further agreed that the trial be extended for 2 months to 17 September 2007 with businesses in Malton being consulted as part of the 14 month evaluation process, to see if they had benefited from reduced rate parking.

4.0 REPORT

A report on the Wentworth Street trial was considered by the Community Services & Licensing Committee at its meeting held on 31st January 2008. It was agreed:

- a. That tariffs on Wentworth Street car park remain as those currently in operation in other car parks for the year 2007/08, and amended as agreed by the budget setting process for 2008/09 (CS&L 29 November 2007).
- b. That the option of businesses selling permits be explored as part of the review of criteria of permit usage as agreed at Community Services & Licensing Committee in November 2007.
- c. That the Car Park Strategy be implemented.

The reasons supporting these decisions included:

- a. The results of the analysis of sales and the consultation undertaken show that the trial did not achieve its objective, which was to establish the potential of a very low tariff to attract demand, with demand falling during the trial period.
- b. The contribution to the delivery of the aims and objectives of the Car Parking Strategy.
- c. 65% of all cars parked within 3 minutes of the main shopping centre, park free of charge. During peak periods, not including permit holders, only 23% of car drivers pay to park.
- d. The low rate of return of the questionnaire (20.5%).. Of these, 83% of respondents had not noticed or did not know if there had been any increase in their turnover as a result of the trial.
- e. 77% of respondents had not noticed or did not know if there had been any increase in their footfall as a result of the trial.
- f. The latest car parking research undertaken by Yorkshire Forward suggests that tariff increases should not affect retail performance, reiterating the findings of the Car Park Strategy Review (2006) and the conclusions drawn from the evidence presented in this report i.e.:

“There appears to be no evidence to link retail performance to parking tariffs and length of stay restrictions”. “Parking is not the primary factor affecting performance. Rather it is what the town has to offer” (p9. Car Parking Research, Yorkshire Forward. 2008).

Following the decision of CS&L, Councillor Andrews subsequently requested that the report of the 31 January 2008 be reviewed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, together with all reports referred to therein.

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Members will be aware that though outside the proposed scope of the review, work is currently on-going regarding the development strategy for Malton.

The suggested reporting timetable, that the review's conclusions be reported to the Community Services & Licensing Committee when it meets on the 27 November 2008, would broadly fit with the 2009/10 Budget process.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a budget of £5,000 that it can use to assist in undertaking any review.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 The issues relating to car parking are wide in their range. The time available to the Committee to undertake this review is limited and the review needs to be very focussed if it is to report in time to influence (should it need to) the 2009/10 Budget Process.

Background Papers:

None

OFFICER CONTACT:

Please contact Paul Cresswell, Corporate Director, if you require any further information on the contents of this report. The officer can be contacted at Ryedale House on 01653 600666 ext 214 or e-mail paul.cresswell@ryedale.gov.uk