



Environment and Transport Select Committee
19th December 2011

**Call-In of the Cabinet Response to the recommendations of
the On Street Parking Task Group**

Purpose of the report: Scrutiny of Services and Budgets/ /Policy
Development and Review

To scrutinise the Cabinet decision of 29th November 2011 in response to the
recommendations of the On Street Parking Task Group.

Introduction:

1. On 29th November 2011, Cabinet made a decision in relation to the
recommendations of the On Street Parking Task Group. The full response
of the Cabinet setting out this decision is attached to this report as Annex
1.
2. The Chairman of the Environment and Transport Select Committee, Mr
Steve Renshaw, has called in the decision regarding this item.

Background

Reconvening of the Task Group

3. At the meeting of the Environment and Transport Select Committee held
on the 15 September 2011, Members agreed to reconvene the On Street
Parking Task Group in order to consider issues surrounding the finances
and business cases for the proposals to introduce on street parking
charging schemes.
4. At the meeting of the Council held on 10 October 2011, the newly
appointed Leader of the Council, Mr David Hodge, announced a change
to the proposals to introduce on street parking charges, and was quoted
on the Surrey County Council website as stating the following:

“...the single countywide policy for on-street parking ends today.

Local committees – working with the boroughs and districts – are far better placed to make these decisions. From today, local committees will have the freedom to decide without interference from us. They will not refer decisions to the Cabinet. We trust them to make the right choice for their communities.”

5. Following the Leader’s announcement, the purpose of the Task Group meeting was therefore to discuss the implications of the changes to the policy in the light of their previous recommendations and any concerns with the business cases for on street parking charging schemes.
6. The Task Group made a number of recommendations which were considered at the meeting of the Environment and Transport Select Committee which was held on the 10th November 2011.
7. The Committee discussed the findings of the Task Group and made one minor amendment to the recommendations. It was suggested that recommendation 2, as set out below, required further clarification.

“2. Local Committees are allowed to set parking charges where, and at what cost, they consider appropriate”

8. It was agreed by the Committee that this recommendation should make clear that Local Committees would be expected to set the prices for on street parking permits as well as pay and display charges. Apart from this amendment, the recommendations were unanimously agreed by the Committee.
9. The findings and recommendations of the Task Group, including the amendment to recommendation 2 are attached to this report as Annex 2.

Cabinet Response

10. At the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 29th November 2011, the report of the Task Group was considered. The Cabinet response to the report is listed below:

“Response:

1. *The detailed work undertaken by the Environment and Select Committee Task Group is appreciated and will contribute to ensuring that on-street parking operations are properly managed within Surrey.*
2. *Cabinet firmly supports the recommendation that the decision to implement, or not implement, on street parking charges will be taken solely by Local Committees without the possibility of call in from the Cabinet. It is expected that Local Committees will give due consideration to the advice of Officers in making these decisions.*

3. *Earlier this year the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment wrote to all of our District and Borough agents involved with on-street parking enforcement. The suggestion was to look at joint working between the districts and county, to minimise costs for all parties. This was enthusiastically endorsed by our agents, hence over the autumn there has been a considerable amount of progress in developing proposals for joint working. This may impact on operational details, such as how surpluses and deficits are managed. These are being finalised and will be reported to Cabinet and the Select Committee in the New Year.*
4. *In view of the ongoing work, Cabinet is unable to formally endorse all recommendations at this time. Full assessment and consideration of the joint working proposals need to be completed before formalising Cabinet's position.*

Summary and proposed way forward

5. *The decision to introduce on-street parking charges will be the responsibility of the appropriate Local Committee. Cabinet will not call in these decisions as there is no longer a countywide programme to consider on-street parking charges.*
6. *The final proposals from the Districts and Boroughs will be reviewed and reported in the New Year. “*

Reason for Call-In

11. The Chairman of the Environment and Transport Select Committee, Mr Steve Renshaw has given the following reasons for calling in the decision:
12. i) “The decision of the Cabinet to proceed with finalising enforcement arrangements appears to be contradictory to the Leader’s statement at Council that Local Committees would:

“have the freedom to decide without interference from us. They will not refer decisions to the Cabinet. We trust them to make the right choice for their communities.”
13. The Task Group considered that for Local Committees to make decisions free from interference, it would be necessary for them to have influence over what their enforcement arrangements would be.
14. However, The response of the Cabinet implies that the Cabinet and Officers are negotiating a position with ‘their enforcement agents’ that could result in a ‘take it or leave it’ option that will subsequently be presented to the Local Committees. Consequently the Call-in is required to clarify what role Local Committees will have in deciding upon enforcement arrangements.”

15. ii) "The Task Group gave consideration to the announcement by the Leader of a change in approach on the issue, and consequently it made recommendations which it felt were consistent and complementary to this new approach. The response from Cabinet does not give a clear enough response to the recommendations of the Task Group on the way forward and greater clarity from the Cabinet is needed."
16. iii) "Further to recommendation 6 of the Task Group, as set out below:

"Any surpluses remaining from on street parking charging revenues within a particular District or Borough, after enforcement, administration and servicing charges have been deducted, should be allocated to the respective Local Committee to decide how they should be spent. Surpluses must only be spent in accordance with Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act."
17. The Task Group felt strongly that Local Committees which choose to introduce on street parking charges should be allocated any surplus revenues which are raised within their area.
18. Consequently it is necessary for the Cabinet to clarify their position with regard to enforcement arrangements to ensure that cross subsidy between areas does not occur, as this is a fundamental principle which underpins the recommendations of the Task Group."

Purpose of Call-In

19. The purpose of the Call-in is for the Committee to review the decisions taken and decide whether or not it wishes to refer the matter back to the Cabinet for further consideration. If the Committee decides to refer the matter back to the Cabinet for reconsideration, the nature of the Committee's concern must be stated.

Recommendations

20. That the Committee reviews the decision of the Cabinet in response to the recommendations of the On Street Parking Task Group. If the Committee disagrees with the decision, it may refer the decision back to Cabinet for reconsideration. If the Committee supports the decision of the Cabinet, the decision will stand and no further action will be taken.

Next Steps

21. If the decision is referred back to the Cabinet, a meeting of the Cabinet shall be held within seven working days. The Cabinet can then decide to amend the decision or not, before adopting a final decision.

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Sources/background papers:

- Decision of the Cabinet meeting of the 29th November 2011 in response to the recommendations of the On Street Parking Task Group – **Attached as Annex 1.**
- Recommendations of the On Street Parking Task Group, as considered by the Cabinet meeting of the 29th November 2011 – **Attached as Annex 2**
- Original Report of the On Street Parking Task Group, as considered by the Cabinet meeting of the 24th May 2011.
- Surrey County Council Website – “A transcript of David Hodge, the Leader of Surrey County Council’s speech to full council.” October 11th 2011
<http://news.surreycc.gov.uk/2011/10/11/a-transcript-of-david-hodge-the-leader-of-surrey-county-councils-speech-to-full-council/>