

MINUTES of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 11.00am on Monday 19 December 2011 at County Hall, Kingston upon Thames.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Select Committee at its meeting on 12 January 2012.

Members:

- * Steve Renshaw (Chairman)
- * Mark Brett-Warburton (Vice-Chairman)
- Mike Bennison
- * Stephen Cooksey
- * Will Forster
- * Chris Frost
- * Pat Frost
- * John Furey
- * David Goodwin
- * Simon Gimson
- Frances King
- Geoff Marlow
- * Chris Norman
- * Tom Phelps-Penry
- * Michael Sydney

Ex officio Members:

Mrs Lavinia Sealy (Chairman of the Council)
Mr David Munro (Vice-Chairman of the Council)

* = Present

PART 1

IN PUBLIC

49/11 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]**

Apologies were received from Frances King, Mike Bennison and Geoff Marlow. Dr Zully Grant Duff, Denise Le Gal and Mel Few substituted. Peter Martin deputised for David Hodge.

50/11 **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS [Item 2]**

None.

51/11 **CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION 29 NOVEMBER 2011 [Item 3]**

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: Richard Bolton (Local Delivery and Customer Service Group Manager)
Trevor Pugh (Strategic Director for Environment and Infrastructure)
Jason Russell (Assistant Director, Highways)

Peter Martin (Deputy Leader of the Council)
Ian Lake (Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment)

Key points raised during the discussion:

- The Chairman briefly outlined the history of the proposals for on-street parking charges and informed Members and officers that the Committee was seeking clarity as to the future arrangements for the enforcement of on-street parking, in the context of these deliberations. The Committee did not agree with the Cabinet suggestion that ‘how surpluses and deficits are managed’ could be considered as operational detail. The Committee instead believed that this was a fundamental point of principle for Local Committees in deciding whether to introduce on-street parking charging – particularly for those considering doing so for the first time - and was an important consideration for their electorate. The ability of the Local Committees to spend any surplus in the area from where it arose, was seen as a potential local benefit, whereas were this not to be the case, it would be viewed as just another tax. Concern was expressed therefore, that Cabinet had forgotten its endorsed positions of May 24 2011, of maximising the involvement of Local Committees and in recognising the considerable differences across the County.
- The Chairman asked Officers for assurance that enforcement of on-street parking charges would be cost neutral on an individual District/Borough basis (as is currently the case), and that there would be no cross subsidy by Surrey County Council from an area with any surplus, to a different area which may be running at a loss.
- Officers stated that work had taken place to date, which sought to reduce the historic enforcement deficit in the County, and that cost neutrality would be achieved at the County level, with the aim of this being the case at Borough and District level. The committee recognised the work that officers had undertaken to get to this point, but whilst noting that there were a number of reasons as to how the deficit had arisen originally, agreed that SCC needed to move forward from this point.
- It was suggested that because it is unlikely all Boroughs and Districts will decide to implement on-street parking charges, a countywide enforcement network might not be appropriate. Local Committees should either decide how they wish to enforce the policy on an individual basis, or at least agree with any proposal put forward by SCC in this regard.
- Concern was expressed at the proposal that 20% of any surplus raised in a Borough or District be given to the County. Although Members were not entirely opposed to the use of a percentage, it was suggested that the 20% figure was too high and was not representative of the additional costs involved.

- The Deputy Leader of the Council responded that the Cabinet suggested this figure because there were implementation costs that needed to be recovered by the County, and that a final decision on this matter had not been made. Members accepted that there was an additional cost, but that it was a cost, best identified and financed as such, rather than by a percentage.
- Whilst Members acknowledged that they would prefer that this cost was identified and paid for as an evidence based figure, if this was not practical in the detail, then Members did not discount the concept, that this could be covered by a much smaller percentage, which was more representative of the additional costs incurred, and that this should be capped at an agreed level with the Local Committee. Keeping this percentage at a sensible, capped level was necessary in order to avoid the perception that there might be a profit element for SCC as opposed to cost recovery.
- Concern was expressed regarding the recovery of costs from Boroughs and Districts that would not be participating in the policy. Specifically, that areas which are enforcing on-street parking charges effectively will have a proportion of their surpluses spent in Boroughs and Districts that do not have efficient enforcement and areas that are not participating in the policy at all.
- As such, the Committee strongly disagreed with the concept of cross-subsidy, and felt that it was not acceptable. The Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment acknowledged this view and confirmed that Local Committees will have the opportunity to make agreements with the enforcement consortia that will determine the level of enforcement, and that this decision will not be made by SCC.
- Officers informed the Committee that current enforcement arrangements are in place until 1 April 2012 and that while they are cost neutral at the current time, there cannot be an assurance that this will be the case following the renegotiation of enforcement agreements. The Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment stated that the use of consortia in this case would save money.
- It was suggested that Local Committees be given the power to decide how much to charge for on-street parking and resident's permits in their own Districts and Boroughs.
- It was suggested that Local Committees would have significant responsibility regarding the implementation of the policy following the recommendations of the Task Group, and concern was expressed that their current meeting cycles, together with the diminished administrative support would not afford them the capacity to manage the situation as effectively as possible. Local Committees had no wish to manage the day-to-day operational detail, so it was therefore emphasised that a proper relationship between Local Committees and enforcement authorities needed to be developed, to regularly review enforcement requirements and the performance of the enforcing agents against the agreed Key Performance Indicators and that a clear infrastructure be put in place.

- The view was expressed that the final policy be made simple and clear, and that costs and income be dealt with as one sum, with any surplus being spent by Local Committees as they see fit within Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
- The Deputy Leader acknowledged the concerns of the Committee and agreed that Local Committees should retain 100% of revenue. However, he suggested that an alternative view was that people throughout the County used the parking areas in individual Boroughs and Districts and that the concept of cross-subsidy was therefore fair. The Committee strongly disagreed with this view and expressed concern that Districts and Boroughs that implement the policy will find it very difficult to justify to residents in raising money from on-street parking charges and only to have it spent elsewhere. If this logic was accepted, the rationale could be extended to benefit people from outside the county, in border parking areas. The Committee made it crystal clear that it did not support, this 'alternative view'. It was also stated that the majority of surpluses currently received from parking enforcement are a result of income from parking permits, whereby local residents are willing to pay parking charges with a view to the income being spent on improvements to local parking schemes.
- In addition, the Committee also sought clarity from Cabinet as to exactly which decisions they believe should be made centrally and which are to be made by the Local Committees.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Resolved:

- The Committee agreed to refer the decision back to Cabinet for reconsideration.
- The Committee acknowledged that there is a short timeframe for within which the Cabinet is able to respond, and therefore asks for a detailed and considered response to be provided to the Committee in early 2012. The comments of the Committee will be appended to the report to Cabinet for reference.

52/11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 4]**

The next meeting of the Committee will be on 12 January 2012.

[Meeting Ended: 12.30pm]

Chairman