

DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 30th November 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

- Present: Councillors John McDowall (Chair), Eddie Bulik, Stan Fisher, John Hampton, Mary Kilpatrick, Mairi Low and Mike Peddie.
- Apology: Councillor Ann Galbraith.
- Also Present: Councillors Peter Convery and Margaret Toner (Portfolio-holders), Sandra Goldie, Bill Grant, Elaine Little, Helen Moonie, Philip Saxton and Tom Slider (for Call-in items).
- Attending: L. Bloomer, Executive Director – Development and Environment; M. Newall, Head of Planning and Enterprise; R. Macdonald, Head of Community Development; K. Dalrymple, Roads Manager; E. Monson, Neighbourhood Services Manager; C. Cox, Planning Manager; P. Linton, Performance and Change Management Manager; C. Gardner, Senior Strategic Planning and Performance Management Officer; G. Lauder, Environmental Health Officer; T. Simpson, Chief Accountant; and A. Gibson, Committee Administrative Officer.

1. Item for Call-in – Renewal of On-Street Parking Charging Method.

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Leadership Panel of 23rd November 2010 (Page 601, paragraph 7) when that Panel, having considered a report of 15th November 2010 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment, had decided

- (1) to approve the award of a contract for the distribution and collection of parking vouchers and associated income for a period of two years and to note that the contract would be reviewed after one year;
- (2) to approve the introduction of a pilot project for the use of Pay-by-Phone as a method of applying parking charges and to note that a progress report would be submitted on this matter to a meeting of the Leadership Panel in six months; and
- (3) to agree that the Executive Director – Development and Environment consult local Elected Members on the on-street parking charging method.

The Chair invited Councillor Slider to explain his reasons for the call-in.

Councillor Slider advised that he was disappointed that the request to award a contract for the distribution and collection of parking vouchers and associated income for a period of two years had not been submitted to the Leadership Panel for consideration sooner.

The Panel, having heard Councillors Slider, Grant and Little, various Officers responded to the Question detailed in the call-in as follows:-

- Question 1** it was noted that although a two year period was requested in respect of the award of contract for parking vouchers and associated income, a six month period would be more appropriate with the current timescale not meeting public expectations.

Answer 1 the Executive Director – Development and Environment intimated that it was not ideal that the contract had been awarded for a two year period and agreed that the current voucher parking scheme was unpopular.

Having heard the Head of Planning and Enterprise state that he would provide the Leadership Panel with an update of the award of contract in six months time, Councillor Slider intimated that it would have been desirable to have an alternative parking payment be in place by that time.

The Head of Planning and Enterprise further stated:-

- (a) that the Council was currently developing a new Parking Charter;
- (b) that until decriminalisation of parking became the role of this Council, it was difficult to control parking provision within Ayr town centre; and
- (c) that progress meetings with the appointed contractor would be held on a monthly basis and that efforts would be made to improve the provision of and the number of vendors that sold vouchers.

Councillor Grant stated that the vast majority of the public did not know where the vouchers could be purchased from.

Question 2 why was there no reference to a “Holistic approach” to parking in South Ayrshire?;

Answer 2 the Head of Planning and Enterprise stated

- (a) that currently there was a Parking Charter and South Ayrshire Parking Strategy was being developed and after consultation had taken place and once in force, there would a more holistic approach to parking in South Ayrshire; and
- (b) that although the Council’s Roads Service did not have responsibility for all the car parks in South Ayrshire, once the Charter was in force, this matter would be resolved.

Councillor Grant indicated that the above information should have been provided in the report that had been presented to the Leadership Panel.

Question Pay and Display:-

Question 3(a) since pay and display was perceived to be more popular than the current voucher scheme and was already tried and tested in South Ayrshire, what were the timescales for rolling out the current pay and display system in Council car parks to cover all on-street car parking?

Answer 3(a) The Head of Planning and Enterprise advised that introduction of a pilot project for the use of Pay-by-Phone as a method of applying parking charges was about to be introduced and should the pilot project be successful, this would provide a range of payment options for parking customers. The introduction of new machines would be determined by the outcomes of the public consultation process.

Question 3(b) could the £141,500 capital investment to purchase machines be met at the current time?

Answer 3(b) the Head of Planning and Enterprise advised that the £141,500 capital investment to purchase machines could not be met at the current time.

Question 3(c) what work has taken place into the option for leasing the machines and what is the likely length and cost of any lease?

Answer 3(c) the Head of Planning and Enterprise advised that the cost of leasing a pay and display machine was approximately £2,750 per year with any lease lasting for five to seven years.

Question Pay-by-Phone Pilot:-

Question 4(a) what areas would form part of the three month trial?

Answer 4(a) the Head of Planning and Enterprise stated the areas that would be involved in the three month trial were Charlotte Street car park, Kyle Street car park and Barns Crescent car park.

Question 4(b) what was the expected cost of replacing traffic signs?

Answer 4(b) the Head of Planning and Enterprise advised that there would be no cost to replace traffic signs.

Question 4(c) would handheld enforcement equipment be purchased or leased?

Answer 4(c) the Head of Planning and Enterprise advised that there was no requirement to procure or lease enforcement equipment for the Pay-by-Phone pilot.

Question 4(d) what training would be required for parking attendants to work the handheld enforcement equipment? If training was necessary, how many hours training would be required? At what cost, both financially and in terms of working hours lost?

Answer 4(d) The Head of Planning and Enterprise stated that no training would be required.

Councillor Slider commented on the unpopularity of the Pay-by-Phone parking and stated that should this be provided, pay and display machines should also be provided.

Councillor Convery, Portfolio-holder intimated that pay by phone parking was beneficial to the disabled.

Following further discussion regarding the other costs associated with the Pay-by-Phone scheme, it was noted that surveys of those using the car parks would be conducted when the pilot was underway.

Question **Voucher Parking:-****Question 5(a)** what consultation had taken place with retailers?**Answer 5(a)** the Head Planning and Enterprise stated that no consultation had taken place with the retailers.

Councillor Grant stated his disappointment in this.

Question 5(b) how many retailers had signed up to provide vouchers for years 2011/12, with details and the location of these retailers?;**Answer 5(b)** the Head of Planning and Enterprise stated that currently there were fifty-seven retailers signed up to provide vouchers for years 2011/12 and provided details of the outlets both in the town centre and those further afield in Ayr.**Question 5(c)** what consultation had taken place with Elected Members whose Wards were in the controlled parking zone?**Answer 5(c)** The Head of Planning and Enterprise stated that no consultation had taken place with Elected Members whose Wards were in the controlled parking zone.

There followed further discussion on issues relating to tax paid on car-parks, the need for better signage in shops of those retailers who sold vouchers and the number of retailers who sold vouchers who were not located on the High Street.

Decided: to agree

- (i) following review, that the decision of the Leadership Panel in respect of this matter be confirmed and implemented; and
- (ii) that a project plan be provided to the next meeting of the Panel, which would deal with the pilot Pay-by-Phone project and the move to end voucher parking provision and reflect a number of points that were raised at this meeting.

2. Item for Call-in – Vehicular Access to High Street, Ayr.

Reference was made to the Minutes of the Leadership Panel of 23rd November 2010 (Page 602, paragraph 8) when that Panel, having considered a report of 10th November 2010 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment, had decided to authorise the Executive Director – Development and Environment to arrange for the implementation of a permanent Traffic Regulation Order in respect of vehicular access in High Street, Ayr, before the experimental Traffic Regulation Order expired in May 2011.

The Panel was advised that the report had been the subject of a call-in for the following reasons:-

- (1) an explanation relating to what consideration was given to Best Value; and
- (2) the proposal to spend additional money when there was no identified benefit.

The Chair invited Councillor Moonie to explain her reasons for the call-in and, thereafter, the Panel heard Councillor Moonie ask:-

Question 1 how could this Council justify spending £2,000 in promoting this permanent Traffic Regulation Order given there were no identified positive or negative impacts stated in the report?

Answer 1 the Head of Planning and Enterprise advised of the benefits of the Order's implementation and that the costs of £2,000 related to advertising expenses.

Following discussion, Councillor Moonie stated that the report should have stated what the cost would have been to the Council if the Order were not to be implemented, together with the additional benefits of its implementation. She further intimated that the Council required to improve the manner in which it conducted its business.

There followed a discussion and comments arising from the Call-in.

Decided: following review, that the decision of the Leadership Panel in respect of this matter be confirmed and implemented.

3. Minutes of previous meeting.

The Minutes of the previous meeting of 2nd November 2010 (issued) were submitted and noted.

4. Implementation of Planning Policy Report No. 4: The Provision of Private and Public Open Space and Play Areas within New Residential Areas.

Reference was made to the Minutes of 2nd November 2010 (Page 574, paragraph 3) when a report regarding the implementation of Planning Policy No. 4: The Provision of Private and Public Open Space and Play Areas within New Residential Areas as it related to the maintenance of open space land had been requested and there was submitted a report (issued) of 22nd November 2010 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment in this respect.

Following a number of questions from Members in relation to concerns arising from the report, various officers responded accordingly.

Decided: to note the contents of the report.

5. Work Programme of Reviews.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 15th November 2010 by the Executive Director – Development and Environment advising of the current position relating to this Panel's Work Programme of Reviews.

Decided: to note

- (1) the current position relating to the previous Work Programme of Reviews by this Panel, as detailed in the report; and
- (2) that this Panel would consider its forward programme of Reviews at its meeting on 22nd February 2011.

6. Progress Against the Council Corporate Plan to 30th September 2010.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 16th November 2010 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication outlining the progress which had been achieved to date against the Council Corporate Plan in relation to the Directorate objectives and tasks which had fallen within this Panel's remit.

The Performance and Change Management Manager referred to the recent workshops attended by Members and invited comment on the content of the Plan.

A full discussion took place and various points were made by Members of the Panel in relation to:-

- (1) the contribution to the Ayr Renaissance Project through regeneration of the Gaiety Theatre;
- (2) the management and maintenance of the road network in a fit for purpose and safe condition for the social and economic benefit of the people of South Ayrshire;
- (3) a secure and safer environment by carrying out assessments of air quality, emissions, hazardous substances and potentially contaminated sites; and
- (4) the preservation and enhancement of public access to the countryside by developing, maintaining and promoting access network for pedestrian, cycle, equestrian and other appropriate users.

Various detailed questions were raised, to which the relevant officers responded accordingly in respect of specific Directorate objectives and tasks.

Decided: to note the progress achieved to date against the Council Corporate Plan as detailed through the updates provided against its Directorate Plans to 30th September 2010.

The meeting ended at 12.30 p.m.