

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**

**CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee  
held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012 at 6pm  
in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.**

**PRESENT:**

Councillors C Joyce (Chairman)  
B Ayres, J Collop, S Collop (substitute for A Tyler), A Lovett, I Mack (Vice Chairman),  
T Manley and G Sandell

**Other Members Present:**

Councillor Daubney, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate/Strategic Issues and Resources  
Councillor Mrs Nockolds, Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A Tyler

**CSC45: MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**CSC46: URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7**

There was no urgent business to report.

**CSC47: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**CSC48: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor Mrs M Wilkinson for Item CSC52.

**CSC49: CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chairman had no correspondence to report.

**CSC50: RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

There were no previous Committee recommendations.

**CSC51: MATTERS CALLED-IN PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 12**

There were no matters called-in pursuant to Standing Order 12.

**CSC52: CAR PARKING PROMOTIONS**

On behalf of Councillor Gourlay, the Chairman questioned whether any other type of car parking machines had been considered along with the option to allow the public to pay for parking using credit/debit cards and mobile phones. Providing signage on the approach roads indicating how many spaces were available at the Multi Storey and whether it would be possible to have digital signs for all car parks had also been raised by Councillor Gourlay.

In response, the Portfolio Holder, Health and Wellbeing explained that a number of different systems in relation to car parking payment machines had been considered including the ability to pay by credit/debit cards and via mobile phones. The issue of signage on approach roads displaying the number of car parking spaces that were available in the Council owned car parks was being considered but was an issue for Norfolk County Council Highways Department.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Mrs Wilkinson questioned whether consideration had been given to introducing a top up card system which would help guarantee income up front for the Council. The Business Manager stated that there was very little demand for such systems and technology had changed. Councillor Mrs Wilkinson also referred to the withdrawal of the evening charge in Hunstanton and compared it the cost of car parking in King's Lynn. The Portfolio Holder, Health and Wellbeing explained that the two towns were completely different. The charge had been withdrawn in Hunstanton as it was considered to be damaging trade for local businesses. King's Lynn offered 3 hours parking for the price of two at £2.10 which she considered to be reasonable.

Councillor Mrs Wilkinson also questioned the "anomaly" of the £1 car parking charge that came into force from 6pm which sometimes made it difficult if people were attending events that actually commenced at 6pm. In response, Martin Chisholm explained that the machines were programmed and capable of dealing with different permutations to get around this problem.

In response to a question raised by Councillor J Collop as to whom had been consulted on the plans, the Portfolio Holder, Health and Wellbeing explained that as part of the submission for Portas funding, the proposals had been discussed. The Council's action had been positively received by local businesses, King's Town Centre Partnership and Hunstanton Chamber of Trade. The Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel (REC), which was an open meeting that members of the public could attend, had also considered the proposals which Cabinet had subsequently took into consideration.

Councillor J Collop also questioned the reasoning behind the decision to freeze the car parking charges to 2014 given the current financial climate. The Portfolio Holder, Health & Wellbeing explained that the impact of the three hours for two hours initiative had resulted in an increase in the number of tickets sold, helping to retain footfall levels. The Leader also explained the budget implications had been considered and freezing car parking charges to 2014 was not unreasonable and would assist both the Council and the town centre. Councillor Lovett stated he felt the charge of £2.10 was reasonable and referred to the price charged by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Councillor I Mack queried how influential had the Portas report been when considering the proposals in terms of being of benefit in the current economic climate. The Portfolio Holder, Health & Wellbeing stated that the Portas report had made people more aware of the problem in terms of potentially declining town centres. All issues had been considered including various different charges for different times of the day and the introduction of new software (i.e. paying by mobile phone and logging of number plate details during ticket purchase on selected machines).

In response to a further question from Councillor Mack, the Portfolio Holder also explained that car parking charges had been benchmarked against other comparable

places. Councillor Mack also referred to the fact the Portas report had consulted, not just with businesses but conducted surveys with local shoppers to ascertain their views and questioned whether there were any plans to carry out a market assessment. The Business Manager explained that a number of initiatives were being considered. The new machines were able to incorporate changes that the Council may wish to make in the future.

Councillor Mrs S Collop queried whether the free parking referred to in the report for the Christmas light switch on related to all the late night shopping evenings in the run up to Christmas. It was confirmed that it did, although it was not applicable to parking in the multi storey car park.

In response to a further question from Councillor J Collop, the Leader confirmed that consideration had been given to any impact that the new out of town store may have on car parking income, although no exact figures were known. The Chief Executive also explained that retail impact assessments had been conducted in relation to both the new Sainsbury and Tesco stores and it had been deemed that any impact would be fairly modest. Sainsbury's had committed to have a presence in the town centre for at least a further 10 years and had also committed to a S106 agreement which would support improvement plans for both the bus station and Tuesday Market Place. He stated that the income generated from car parking fees would be monitored and a further report would be presented for consideration by the appropriate Panel/Cabinet.

In the absence of Councillor M Tilbury, the Chairman, on his behalf, raised the issue of the new car parking machines having the facility to give change (similar to those in Norwich) or whether consideration had been given to making them more user friendly by reducing the 3 hour charge from £2.10 to £2. In response, the Leader explained that it was unlikely, because of budget constraints, that this would be a realistic option.

**CSC53: PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' DECISIONS MADE UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

The following Portfolio Holders' Decision were noted:

Financial Assistance Capital Grants  
Financial Assistance Revenue Grants

**CSC54: CABINET SCRUTINY TRAINING**

The Chairman asked whether Members felt that they would benefit from some scrutiny training. The Leader explained that he supported any development opportunities that were available to Members.

**AGREED:** That in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, officers arrange some appropriate scrutiny training for Members of the Committee.

**CSC55: DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to be held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2012 at 6pm.

**Meeting closed at 6.55pm**