

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Service Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Panel

16 March 2022

TITLE:	Call-in of the Cabinet Decision - Car Parking Strategy
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Andrew Hart - Portfolio Holder for Property and Tourism
CONTACT OFFICER:	Sally Hampton – Democratic Services Officer
WARDS INVOLVED:	(All Wards);

Appendices Attached

Appendix A – Cabinet Report 8 February 2022

Appendix B – Call-in Procedure

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 To consider the Call-in request of the Cabinet decision in relation to the Car Parking Strategy

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 For the Call-in request to be considered in accordance with the Council's Call-in Procedure. (Appendix B)

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 At its last meeting, Cabinet received the newly drafted Staffordshire Moorlands Car Parking Strategy, after it had been debated in detail by the Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 26 January 2022. This followed consideration by the cross-party Car Park Working Group at a number of meetings during 2021. The Strategy and associated investment plans were generally supported by the Panel. Members did however recommend that Cabinet should review the Strategy 12 months after implementation to evaluate its impact and that consideration be given to defer the changes relating to the revised charging period in Cheadle.

3.2 The decision made was: -

Cabinet approved the adoption of the Car Parking Strategy, subject to: -

- The Strategy being reviewed 12 months after implementation to evaluate its impact.

- That the proposed charge period (8:00 am to 6:00 pm) and the associated free half an hour / one hour concessions be deferred in Cheadle. The present charge period to be retained (9:30 am to 3:30 pm) subject to a further review later in the year when the outcomes from the High Streets Task Force / Masterplan Development are known.

3.3 The key findings, recommendations and action plan within the Strategy were noted and the following actions approved:

- a. That the tariffs set out in section 8.13 of the report for the new financial year be implemented.
- b. That a tourist parking pass be created and permits be reviewed to ensure more flexibility for customers.
- c. That Pay by Phone across SMDC car parks to facilitate cashless and contactless payments be implemented as soon as possible.
- d. That the current ticket machines be replaced on a phased base, reducing where possible, to include contactless and card payment options.
- e. That a bespoke SMDC EV strategy be progressed and developed working collaboratively with Staffordshire County Council and their consultants.
- f. That short stay and long stay areas on Cheadle Tape Street car park and tariff changes be created, updating the SMDC parking order accordingly.
- g. That the creation of a new officer position within the Assets Service to strategically manage car parking across the Alliance and implement the action plan and strategy over the course of the next 5 years be noted.
- h. That appropriate funds be allocated to improve signage and wayfinding on the car parks.

3.4 Following this decision, call-in requests have been received from Councillors: - M. Gledhill, K. Hoptroff, L. Page, D. Price, C. Atkins, L. Swindlehurst, B. Cawley, P. Taylor and S. Coleman.

3.5 The call-in request confirmed the following principles of decision making which they believed had not been adhered to and the reasons they had not been followed:

- Taking due regard of all relevant considerations and disregarding irrelevant considerations- The decision to implement the strategy at this time does not sufficiently take into account the local economic circumstances for businesses and residents at the beginning of the COVID recovery.

- Taken on the basis of due consultation and professional advice from Officers - The outcomes of the consultation done in Feb 21 by the consultants regarding Leek seem to contrast sharply with public opinion being expressed now. Also, the consultants state that “ the biggest response came from Cheadle”. Covid restrictions meant that there were no public face to face consultations and that attendance at workshops could well have been affected. These points cast doubts on the assumptions made at that time. This should be revisited.
- Respect for human rights and equalities - The lack of the ‘free half hour’ in the leek car parks closest to the centre discriminates against those with walking difficulties, who do not have a disability blue badge
- A presumption in favour of openness - At the Jan 22 meeting of Services Scrutiny, The Chair did offer a subsequent meeting to have further discussion. This has not happened but we feel that this would be beneficial. A call in will facilitate that.

3.6 During the meeting of Council on 23 February 2022, a petition to oppose the charge period (8:00 am to 6:00 pm) and the increased parking tariffs in Leek was received.

The Leader advised that the Strategy had been altered and free parking would be available in Leek before 9:30am and after 3:30pm. However, the new short free parking periods on certain car parks within the Strategy in Leek would be abolished and the new tariffs implemented.

3.7 The Panel is asked to consider the call-in request, in accordance with the Council’s call-in procedure (Appendix B).

Neil Rodgers
Executive Director (Place)

**Web Links and
 Background Papers**

Cabinet report attached

Contact details

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