

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) held in the Corporate Training Suite, Eastfield House, 6 Latham Road, Huntingdon, PE29 6YE on Tuesday, 2 March 2010.

PRESENT: Councillor P M D Godfrey – Chairman.

Councillors M G Baker, K M Baker,
Mrs M Banerjee, P J Downes, P Godley,
D Harty, A Monk, M F Newman, and
J S Watt.

Messrs D Hopkins and M Phillips.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors K C Churchill, D B Dew, R S
Farrer, T V Rogers, T D Sanderson and Ms M
J Thomas.

92. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

93. CAR PARKING REVIEW UPDATE

(Councillor D B Dew, Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport and Councillor T D Sanderson, Chairman of the Car Parking Working Party were in attendance for this item).

The Panel received a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the call-in procedure and the reasons why the Cabinet's decision on the Car Parking Review 2009 had been called-in for scrutiny by the requisite three Members of the Panel.

The Transportation Team Leader circulated a map (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to Members showing the vicinity of the town centre car parks and the associated proposed charging rates. Members were advised that the rates were set in such a way to discourage long-stay parking in the town centre. It was explained that charging less for spaces outside of the town centre was intended to reduce traffic congestion and pollution on the High Street.

The Panel acknowledged the dual use of the Riverside Park Car Park by users of both the park and the town centre. However Members felt that the Cabinet's decision to provide 38 spaces offering two hours free parking in a demarcated area at Riverside Car Park for leisure usage could result in the free spaces being dominated by shoppers, which would reduce their availability for those wanting to use the park for leisure and recreational purposes. The Panel noted that there was no way in which use of the proposed free spaces could be restricted to park users. Members suggested that, not only were 38 spaces insufficient for a free period for parking, but that two hours was

insufficient before charging began as this was not long enough for users of the park, nor those who wished to walk into the town.

Local Members pointed out that there were limited play opportunities in St. Neots west of the river which, together with the distances involved in travelling to the Riverside Park and the inadequacies of public transport locally, meant that parents had little option other than to travel by car to permit their children to use the play facilities at the Riverside.

In response to questions, the Panel was advised that monitoring of the 38 spaces would be conducted by street rangers through hand-held technology, and that the cost of monitoring these spaces would reduce the net forecast income from the introduction of charges by approximately £10,000. It was reported that implementation of a pay on exit barrier system would be costly to maintain.

In light of their concerns, the Panel requested the Cabinet to reconsider allowing three hours free parking in the whole of the Riverside Car Park which would benefit shoppers who wished to park for short periods and assist those who wanted to use the park for leisure and recreational purposes. The Panel suggested that the charge be set in line with that proposed for the car park at Cambridge Street for those who parked longer than three hours.

RESOLVED

that decisions of the Cabinet on the car parking review update be referred back to Cabinet for further consideration in light of the Panel's views.

Chairman