

## NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - CALL IN PANEL

**MINUTES of the meeting held at LB32 - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 11 September 2014 from 11.02 - 12.00**

#### **Membership**

##### Present

Councillor Brian Parbutt (Chair)  
Councillor Thulani Molife (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Glyn Jenkins  
Councillor Carole-Ann Jones  
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan

##### Absent

Councillor Ginny Klein

Councillor Georgina Culley ) attending as Call-in  
Councillor Roger Steel ) Signatories

#### **Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

Councillor Jane Urquhart - Portfolio Holder Planning and Transport (decision signatory)  
Jason Gooding - Parking Manager  
Angelika Kaufhold - Senior Governance Officer  
Cath Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

#### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Ginny Klein

#### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Parbutt declared an interest as his employer pays the Work Place Parking Levy. This did not prevent him from consideration of the call-in as a member of and as the Chair of the Call-in Panel.

Councillor Urquhart declared an interest as her employer pays the Workplace Parking Levy. This did not prevent her from contributing to the Call-in Panel on this issue.

#### **3 CONFIRMATION OF VALIDITY OF CALL-IN**

Councillor Brian Parbutt, Chair of the Panel, welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the procedure for the hearing. He detailed the reasons for call-in and requested the Panel to confirm its validity.

#### **RESOLVED to**

**(1) confirm the call-in request as valid on the following grounds:**

- (a) Inadequate consultation relating to the decision:**
    - (i) the decision does not indicate any consultation has taken place with businesses that will be affected by this trial;**
    - (ii) the decision does not indicate that any further consultation will take place with businesses regarding their views on future CCTV enforcement;**
  - (b) Relevant information not considered;**
    - (iii) there is inadequate evidence of potential administrative savings to both the Council and affected businesses;**
  - (c) Viable alternatives not considered:**
    - (iv) there is inadequate evidence that the 'do nothing' option is untenable.**
- (2) the following is not considered as valid:**
- (v) to consider the cessation of the Workplace Parking Levy as an alternative option.**

#### **4 CONSIDERATION OF CALL-IN REQUEST**

Councillor Jane Urquhart, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation, presented the Panel with the following information in relation to the reasons for taking the decision:

- (a) the decision to spend £66,516 for a trial of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras is to aid the enforcement of the WPL and is expected to reduce the ongoing cost of enforcement. The cameras will be used at sites of multiple employers with shared car parks and retail parks which is labour-intensive and costly to monitor. This technology is projected to reduce the ongoing costs of enforcement for these sites and offer long-term savings;
- (b) ANPR cameras are not the same as CCTV and will only be used to monitor vehicles regularly parked at sites during working hours. This will enable the Council to talk to employers and determine if their calculations for staff parking are correct. This pilot is not intended to identify individuals, car owners or employees, as employers are liable for the WPL. The data will be evaluated to identify the regular patterns of longer term (over 3 hours) parking on these sites which may be attributable to employees parking on these sites. Any data gathered will not be shared with the Police;
- (c) the WPL is a lower cost scheme than congestion charging activities carried out by some other authorities. The Council needs to ensure that this enforcement activity is carried out efficiently and in the most cost effective manner possible. This pilot will enable colleagues to analyse the data and evaluate more effectively the predicted savings;

- (d) an ANPR camera car is already being used to assess parking duration and patterns in undifferentiated (where there is no demarcation of spaces specifically for employers) car parks but is staff and time intensive which is why this pilot is being proposed;
- (e) the income from the WPL also supports other transport schemes in the City, including the tram and link bus network. Income from the WPL ensures that expenditure for the above schemes and supporting businesses in developing travel schemes can be met. If the Council had not implemented the WPL it would have meant that the cost of meeting these contracts would have added approximately £100 per annum to the council tax bills of Nottingham's residents.

Councillor Georgina Culley, co-signatory to the call-in request, presented the Panel with the following information in relation to her concerns with the decision:

- (f) there are significant misgivings regarding WPL beyond opposition to the tax, and this trial will have wide reaching implications. The decision does not include information relating to any responses to any consultation carried out and there is no mention of where the ANPR cameras will be sited. There is nothing in the decision to say what will or will not be considered a successful trial. This does not provide helpful or transparent information for citizens;
- (g) the decision is said to have a 'citywide' effect and yet the trial appears to be entirely based in the Bridge Ward. If the impact is citywide then citywide consultation should be undertaken. Assurances are needed that proper consultation with businesses will take place and that evidence of such consultation can be provided;
- (h) the WPL is predicted not to generate the expected income, with a shortfall of £4 million. The intention of operating the pilot scheme is to determine if savings to administrative costs can be made, but the decision does not provide any information or evidence to support this;
- (i) within the section of the decision of 'other options considered', no evidence has been provided in the decision that to 'do nothing' was not an option;
- (j) the WPL has already impacted on businesses which are considering relocating and it is believed that this tax is deterring businesses from locating to Nottingham.

Councillor Jane Urquhart provided the following information in response to the points made by Councillor Culley:

- (k) the WPL is a lawful arrangement which requires employers to apply for licenses. The Council communicates with thousands of employers across the City. Information relating to this trial has been communicated to employers at the sites where this type of enforcement may be used. This will also be useful for employers as it will reduce administration and provide accurate data to ensure companies are licensed for the correct number of spaces. Once the

cameras are operating at the undifferentiated (where there is no demarcation of spaces specifically for employers) car park sites, there will be no need for the Council to manually check parking spaces. If the scheme is implemented, employers in the affected areas will be contacted again;

- (l) the WPL has to be administered appropriately and there is no requirement to consult with employers on the method of enforcement being used by the Council;
- (m) Riverside Retail Park is the intended site for the pilot but there are similar sites across the City. The Council will communicate with employers of other sites across the City where this method of enforcement will be used;
- (n) The Council is confident that the levy will raise approximately £12 million per year and fund the contractual obligations supporting transport schemes in the City. It is believed that significant savings can be made from operating ANPR cameras so to 'do nothing' is not an option. Since the implementation of the WPL millions of pounds of inward investment and new business has been attracted to the City.

Jason Gooding, Parking Manager, added the following information:

- (o) the ANPR camera car recognises number plates and registers times but it is slow and has to drive continuously around the car park. The proposed fixed cameras will register number plates of vehicles entering and exiting a site and be more cost effective;
- (p) it can be difficult to tell which vehicles belong to customers and which may be employees so this monitoring will take place 7 days a week, 7.5 hours a day over a 21 day period for sites such as the Riverside Retail Park. The assessment is based on the level of time and frequency cars are parked on the site during a working week. Cars regularly parking over four hours during the working week are likely to be employees whilst those parking for a shorter period of time are likely to be customers;
- (q) the fixed ANPR cameras enable large amounts of data to be recorded and analysed in a short period of time. The cost of staffing the camera car with 2 officers for 7.5 hours per day over 21 days is approximately £9,000. There are 6 undifferentiated car parking sites across the City. This results in an approximate annual cost of £54,000. The two fixed ANPR cameras are under warranty for 7 years so there is a potential saving of approximately £312,000 over a seven-year period.

When invited to summarise her final comments, Councillor Jane Urquhart confirmed that she had nothing to add to her previous comments.

In summarising, Councillor Steel, co-signatory to the call-in request, highlighted the following points:

- (r) cameras should be used to catch criminals and not making money; the cameras will capture the number plate of every car using the site and this

information will be added to a database; this equates to the control and punishment of drivers;

- (s) it is not clear how the installation of fixed cameras can help businesses save money on administration;
- (t) if the mobile camera vehicle is to be retained, it is unclear how this can be considered a saving;
- (u) if employers are encouraged to have dedicated employee parking areas it would save a lot of time and effort.

Jason Gooding responded to Councillor Steel's comments as follows:

- (v) if employee parking areas were established, there is no guarantee that employees would use them, in preference to public parking areas;
- (w) it is proposed that the fixed cameras, which can be relocated to different sites using existing highways resources, operate for at least one 30 day period at each of the 6 relevant sites during a year, however there is flexibility if needed;
- (x) no technology achieves 100% but these cameras provide a 90% ANPR success rate;
- (y) to deter people from parking and then travelling into the City, the Riverside Retail Park landlord is enforcing a 4 hour parking limit for customers. This is encouraged by the Council's Parking Management Team;
- (z) businesses are expected to manage their car parks by maintaining visitors books and recording details of conferences etc to ensure that any assessment by the WPL Team gathers the correct information;
- (aa) business and travel scheme support by the Council is available to all WPL customers;
- (bb) businesses complete the license applications and the Council's Enforcement Team then checks to ensure that the number of licensed parking spaces is correct;

Councillor Jane Urquhart added:

- (cc) the City Council already operates ANPR cameras at some of its ordinary car parks and has considered how they can be used elsewhere. Nottingham City Council is pioneering the WPL and therefore is not able to refer to any other authority for comparative data although other authorities are showing interest in implementing similar schemes.

The panel expressed the following views;

- (dd) the technology is a reasonable way of gathering information to enforce the WPL;

- (ee) the decision is affordable as the cameras are not permanently fixed and can be re-sited;
- (ff) this option is cheaper than employing officers who have to drive on sites for specific periods of time;
- (gg) the assumption of costs can reasonably be determined through the pilot scheme;
- (hh) the WPL is a self-funding scheme and so any savings can be spent elsewhere.

**RESOLVED to agree that the delegated decision 1605, 'Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) Fixed Camera Trial Project' does not need to be reconsidered and can be implemented for the following reasons:**

- **the use of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras is a reasonable method of enforcement and has already been widely tested and used;**
- **the potential savings can be tested during the operation of the pilot.**