

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 24 MAY 2023**

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT Margaret Greer (Chair), Mahmut Aksanoglu (Vice-Chair), Maria Alexandrou, Nawshad Ali, Kate Anolue, Hivran Dalkaya, James Hockney and Michael Rye OBE

STATUTORY CO-OPTees: *1 vacancy (Church of England diocese representative), vacancy (other faiths/denominations representative), vacancy (Catholic diocese representative), Alicia Meniru & 1 vacancy (Parent Governor representative) - Italics Denotes absence*

OFFICERS: Doug Wilkinson (Director of Environmental & Operational Services), David B Taylor (Head of Traffic & Transportation), David Morris (Head of Parking Services) and Stacey Gilmour (Governance & Scrutiny Officer)

Also Attending: Cllr Rick Jewell (Cabinet Member for Environment), Cllr Alessandro Georgiou (Call-In Lead), Simon Allin (Local Press Reporter)

1

WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

The Chair explained that the purpose of the meeting was for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to consider the reasons the decision had been called-in in relation to the following item:

Item 3 – KD 5588 On & Off-Street Parking Charges. Councillor Rick Jewell, Cabinet Member for Environment was present in relation to this item. Officers were also present.

The Committee noted that Councillor Alessandro Georgiou would present the reasons for the call-in as the Lead Member.

2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3

DECISION CALLED-IN-KD5588 - ON AND OFF-STREET PARKING CHARGES

Details of the decision taken and issued on 2 May 2023, had been included on the Publication of Decision List No. 57/22-23. The report also set out officer responses to the reason for call-in.

The decision had been called in for review by 7 Members of the Council; Councillors Alessandro Georgiou (Lead), Andrew Thorp, Chris Joannides, Paul Pratt, Elisa Morreale, Chris Dey and David Skelton.

3.1 REASONS FOR CALL-IN-KD5588 - ON AND OFF-STREET PARKING CHARGES

The reasons for the call-in were presented by Councillor Alessandro Georgiou as Lead Member.

3.2 RESPONSE TO REASONS FOR CALL-IN-KD5588 - ON AND OFF-STREET PARKING CHARGES

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Rick Jewell, responded to the reasons for the call-in and explained that there were clear reasons for the proposed change. On and Off-Street parking charges were last reviewed in 2018, since when there have been significant developments in respect of the approach to private vehicles in London as set out in regional planning and transport policies. Cllr Jewell disagreed with Cllr Alessandro's claim that the Council was forcing people out of cars and stated that the proposed changes were standardising parking rates with other boroughs and managing the churn of traffic through the borough's town centres.

Doug Wilkinson, Director of Environmental & Operational Services reminded the Committee that the Council is both the statutory Highway and Traffic Authority for all public roads in the Borough, and as such has a responsibility to manage the highway and kerb space, and the report sets out the Council's duties under Highway Legislation. There are very strict regulations within the Highways Act around why and how prices are increased, and the criteria set out in law and the regulations around managing kerb side space and parking space is to encourage the turnover of use of spaces and discourage long stays, which would benefit as many people as possible.

Some Members raised concerns regarding the proposal to harmonise charges across the borough as it was felt that this would have a bigger impact on more deprived areas therefore a "ward-by-ward" approach was called for. Officers advised that on and off-street parking charges are currently higher in Enfield Town and, whilst this reflects the higher demand for parking in Enfield Town, there are wider benefits in having a single tariff structure across the whole borough, particularly in terms of clarity for motorists. It will also allow motorists to use their paid for time to park in other areas if they have time remaining.

Whilst the current pressures on cost of living were recognised, the Council nevertheless has a duty to actively manage its network, which includes reviewing parking charges to meet wider strategic objectives. The impact of

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 24.5.2023

proposed charges on people who are disadvantaged due to socio-economic factors is considered in the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). This acknowledges that there could be some impact on people on low incomes, but also highlights that there are times when parking remains free and outlines alternative options to car use. David Morris, Head of Parking Services added that Officers had considered the impact on all residents and proposed a fair level of charges that would increase turnover.

Officers reassured Members that a great deal of thought had been given to the impact the proposed changes would have on people who share one of the different nine protected characteristics, which included the potential impact on pregnant women, as this was a particular concern raised by several members of the committee. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) had been completed fairly with knowledgeable colleagues across the Council. It was also reviewed by legal experts to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

Members expressed dissatisfaction that the 'stress test' to gauge the demand for parking spaces took place in December, when town centres were likely to be busier with Christmas shoppers and therefore felt that the test being done during this period was unfair and seeks to deliberately skew the results. Officers advised that the tests had taken place early in the month, on 3rd and 7th December, when there were fewer shoppers and Members noted that these were among the only dates available for the company that carried out the tests.

Under further questioning Officers disagreed that the increased charges were designed to boost income for the Council and advised that any extra money would be spent on subsidising concessionary travel costs. It was acknowledged however that there was a risk that the hike in charges could lead to a drop in revenue, therefore continued monitoring will include conversations with Town Centre Team colleagues.

Responding to a question from a Member, Officers explained that they were not required to consult with traders on the changes but added that they would monitor the impact on businesses. They also said traders generally welcomed greater turnover of spaces.

In summary, Officers acknowledged that there was never a good time to increase charges, however Members were reminded that this report is not having any more detrimental impact on the most protected characteristics as the numbers of parking spaces available are not being decreased or increased. Monitoring will continue and the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) will be reviewed at the end of the year.

The Call-In Lead, Councillor Alessandro Georgiou summarised the points made during the discussion and called for the decision to be referred back to the Cabinet Member to be looked at again as he felt that his concerns had not been adequately addressed.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 24.5.2023

The Chair, Cllr Margaret Greer called on Officers to consider all the points that had been made at this evening's meeting and to monitor the impact of the charges. She also suggested the topic would be discussed again at a future meeting of the Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the reasons provided for the call-in and responses set out in the Officer's report. Having considered the verbal responses and information presented by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Officers, the Committee **AGREED** to confirm the original decision made by the Cabinet Member for Environment.

4 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

NOTED that the next business meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place at 7pm on 21 June 2023 at the Civic Centre, Enfield. This would be the Work Programme Planning meeting.