

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2017 at 3.30 pm**

**Present:**

Councillor P H Murphy .....Chairman  
Councillor N Thwaites .....Vice-Chairman

Councillor G S Dowding  
Councillor R Woods

Councillor J Parbrook

**Members in Attendance:**

Councillor M Chilcott  
Councillor M Dewdney

Councillor K Mills  
Councillor A Trollope-Bellew

**Officers in Attendance:**

Finance Manager and Deputy S151 Officer (J Nacey)  
Car Park Manager (T Biss)  
Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny (M Prouse)  
Democratic Services Officer (C Rendell)

**SC 70 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors I Aldridge, R Clifford, B Maitland-Walker and K Turner.

**SC 71 Minutes**

(Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 19 January 2017 – circulated with the Agenda.)

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 19 January 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

**SC 72 Declarations of Interest**

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a County, Parish or Town Council:

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Personal or Prejudicial or Disclosable Pecuniary	Action Taken
Cllr N Thwaites	All items	Dulverton	Personal	Spoke and voted

**SC 73 Cabinet Key Decisions and Actions**

(Copy of the Cabinet Key Decisions published 4 January 2017, circulated at the meeting)

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet Key Decisions published on 4 January 2017, be noted.

**SC 74 Cabinet Forward Plan**

(Copy of the Cabinet Forward Plan published 1 February 2017, circulated at the meeting)

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet Forward Plan published on 1 February 2017, be noted.

**SC 75 Chairman's Announcements**

Councillor Woods had attended the inaugural meeting of the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Joint Scrutiny Panel with Councillor Maitland-Walker. She reported that Councillor Julian Taylor (Sedgemoor District) had been appointed as Chairman and Councillor Simon Coles (Taunton Deane) had been appointed as Vice-Chairman. The Members received background information on the SRA and the key points on how they operated. Their key priorities were to:-

- Reduce the frequency, depth and duration of flooding.
- Maintain access for communities and businesses.
- Increase resilience to flooding for families, agricultural businesses, communities and wildlife.
- Make the most of the special characteristics of the Somerset Levels and Moors.
- Ensure strategic transport connections in Somerset and to the South West peninsula were continued.
- Promote business confidence and growth.

Concern was raised that the Council Tax precept was still paid to the District Councils and this should be paid directly to the SRA to ensure they received their own funding.

It was noted that the Waste Scrutiny Members would report back, as appropriate, at future meetings of the Committee.

**SC 76 New Traffic Regulation Order (Off Street Parking)**

The report WSC 17/17 was presented by Councillor Mills.

The report made reference to the revocation of the West Somerset Council (Off Street Parking Places) Order 2016 and to operate from June 2017 the West Somerset Council (Off Street Parking Places) Order 2017.

The purpose of the order was:-

- To bring in line the Dulverton Permit Cost with those across the District and modify the car parks covered by the permits.
- To consolidate the 'Named' parking permits for Watchet into one permit to cover all car parks in the town.
- Introduce an overnight parking tariff for Motor Homes in selected car parks.
- Incorporate both the Boat Trailer Parking area in Watchet and the car park area to the north of Quay West in Minehead to the Order to regularise their use.

Nine letters of objections, which had been received from local residents and Councillors against the parking proposals in Dulverton, were read out to the Committee.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Dulverton was not being treated any differently to other villages in the District. Porlock, Dunster, Watchet and Williton had the same sort of parking issues, due to the lack of on-street parking. Dunster had recently had issues due to Somerset County Council who had added restrictions to the on-street parking in Park Street.
- The lease between Dulverton Town Council and West Somerset Council had lasted twenty years and residents had benefited from the low cost of parking during that time.
- Members were interested in how many permits West Somerset Council had issued. They had requested figures for six monthly, twelve monthly and the 'Shoppers' Permit. They thought the 'Shoppers' Permit was the main seller.
- The 'Shoppers' Permit was offered to Dulverton Town Council when they had first been introduced but this had been declined. These were now available to users of Dulverton Car Parks.
- Some Members agreed that the 'shock factor' was the price increase and suggested the cost difference between £90 and £210 was too steep.
- A staged increase approach had not been looked into. The prices would not affect the Dulverton residents until their permits were due for renewal in April 2018. Thus giving them a twelve month notice period. If a staged increase was incorporated in the Order, this would be at an additional cost of £2000 to the Council.
- Visitor numbers should not be affected. They would be paying the daily parking charges and not the permit prices.
- Dulverton Town Council had no choice but to come out of the lease.
- They did not believe they were being treated equally. Reduced bus services in the area and the absence of a bus service to Dulverton meant that residents and visitors had to use their cars to travel to and from Dulverton.
- Did not understand how West Somerset Council justified the 133% price increase.
- Dulverton Town Council had requested that the Lion Stables Car Park should be designated as a short stay car park back in December 2015. All short stay car parks in the District were not included in the permit scheme.

- Summerland Car Park in Minehead was restricted to two hours parking and was not included in the permit scheme because it was a short stay car park. Why should Lion Stables be exempt from these rules?
- Members were all in agreement that the income made by parking charges should be used to maintain the car parks in the District.
- Overnight parking was already in use by Motor Home owners. Why not regularise it and charge users.
- Use of Motor Homes was increasing.
- Taunton Deane Borough Council had been highlighted in a publication for their support of parking for Motor Homes. West Somerset Council had however been highlighted for their lack of parking for Motor Homes.
- Concerns were raised that it would cause disruption to local residents. A Member was already aware of issues in the Warren Road Car Park and complaints received from the residents of the Blue Skies Apartments. It was thought that it might also attract Travellers to the area. Due to these concerns, the Parking Officer would look at which car parks were used for overnight parking.
- Negotiations had been made to employ additional enforcement officers to patrol the car parks used for overnight parking.
- Motor Home owners would hopefully use the local amenities and help the local economy.
- Concern was raised about the additional waste caused by Motor Home users. This would be monitored and action taken if figures relating to fly tipping increased.
- Currently there was no enforcement for the boat trailer parking area in Watchet. The barrier was often illegally removed and there had been problems with parking along the West Pier.
- The parking charges in Watchet were all the same and the car parks were all centrally located. It therefore made sense to combine the permits to make one 'Named' permit for Watchet.
- Queries were raised why Watchet could combine their permits to make one for the town and why Dulverton could not? Was there an urban and rural difference? None of the car parks in Watchet were short stay car parks.
- The inclusion of the 'Shoppers' Permit had increased the use of the Anchor Street Car Park, which allowed visitors to use the central car parks in the town.
- Concerns were raised that the area used for pay and display parking along Quay West in Minehead was confusing and abused by customers.
- Due to the mixture of 'pay and display' machines along Quay Street, customers were paying for their parking, but this was often via the Somerset County Council machines for on-street parking. This meant that West Somerset Council was losing income.
- The land north of Quay West Car Park belonged to West Somerset Council and therefore should be part of the Order to allow it to be regularised and enforced.

**RESOLVED** that:-

(a) The Scrutiny Committee noted and supported:-

- 1) The use of increased revenue created to support the maintenance of the car parks;
- 2) The removal of the Lion Stables (short stay) Car Park from the Dulverton Permit;
- 3) The introduction of a tariff which allowed Motor Homes to park overnight in designated car parks for a maximum of 48 hours with no return within 7 days;
- 4) The incorporation of the Boat Trailer Park area at West Pier, Watchet, within the Order and to combine the payment of daily slipway fees and trailer parking charges;
- 5) The consolidation of the Watchet Named Permit to one Watchet Permit which allowed parking in all Council Car Parks within Watchet; and
- 6) The incorporation of the land north of Quay West, Minehead car park within the Order; and

(b) With regard to recommendation 2.1 which proposed bringing Dulverton (6 and 12 month) Permits in line with "Named" permits across the District, the Scrutiny Committee opted not to make a recommendation on a preferred course of action.

**SC 77**     **Scrutiny Committee Work Plan**

**RESOLVED** that the Scrutiny Forward Plan published on 8 February 2017 be noted.

The meeting closed at 5.10pm.