

CALL-IN REQUEST - CHANGES TO SHORT AND LONG STAY SPACES IN WINSOR ROAD, CIVIC CENTRE AND WESTFIELD ROAD CAR PARKS AND THE INTRODUCTION OF CHARGES IN CIVIC CENTRE AND WESTFIELD ROAD CAR PARKS, TOTTON

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 For the last 18 years Totton and Eling Town Council have paid New Forest District Council (NFDC) an annual sum to keep the NFDC owned Civic Centre and Westfield Road car parks in Totton town centre free. This amount covered the business rates on these two car parks but did not cover any of the other costs associated with providing public car parking.
- 1.2 This payment did not provide any financial reimbursement for the loss of parking income which would have been received by the District Council since car park charges were introduced district wide in 2003. Thus, a proportion of the annual revenue from all the other NFDC car parks had to be used to pay for the upkeep, maintenance, inspections and enforcement patrols of these two town centre car parks to enable them to remain free.
- 1.3 Totton and Eling Town Council withdrew from this annual payment in March 2020. It was therefore considered right and proper to address this inequality and ensure that all the town centre car parks in Totton fit into the charging regime in force throughout the district.
- 1.4 A survey carried out in 2018 highlighted a need to address the balance between long and short stay car parking spaces in Totton. This proposal addresses this by providing additional short stay parking which supports the local businesses by ensuring spaces are available to the public throughout the day, unlike long stay spaces where vehicles tend to park all day.
- 1.5 Councillor Edward Heron made a Portfolio Holder's Decision on 11 September 2020 (see Appendix 1 of the Portfolio Holder Decision dated 4 December 2020 attached as Appendix 1 to this report). This decision set out that proposed amendments should be made to the Council's car parking arrangements in Totton through changes to short and long stay spaces in Winsor Road, Civic Centre and Westfield Road car parks, Totton and the introduction of charges in Civic Centre and Westfield Road Car Parks, Totton. Within the call-in period applicable to that Portfolio Holder Decision, Councillor Caroline Rackman called the decision in for review. Councillor Rackman stated that:

"This decision will be detrimental to businesses in Totton and is not in line with my understanding of the results from previous discussions with the town council".
- 1.6 In accordance with Council procedures, as no other call-in notices were received, the decision stood but Councillor Rackham was given the opportunity to express her concerns about the decision to this Panel. The relevant meeting of the Panel took place on 15 October 2020 and Councillor Rackman addressed with Panel. The Panel conducted that:

- “i) that the decision was within the Council’s policy and budget; and*
- ii) that it was not necessary for the policy and budget to be reviewed as a result of the decision; and*
- iii) that the Portfolio Holder decision taken on 11 September in relation to short and long stay spaces and to introduce charges to car parks in Totton was supported”*

The minutes for this item are attached as Appendix 2.

- 1.7 As part of the statutory advertisement process related to the proposed changes, on 20th October 2020 letters were sent identifying the proposed changes to the Totton car parking arrangements to all statutory consultees and, in addition, 21 businesses in the vicinity of the car parks. The proposals were advertised in the local newspaper on the 23rd October 2020 and signs placed in and adjacent to the affected car parks on the same day. In addition, the proposals also received extensive local media coverage which resulted in social media comments and discussion.
- 1.8 Following the Portfolio Holder’s Decision made by Councillor Edward Heron on 4th December 2020 to introduce Car Parking Charges in the two car parks in Totton and changes to short and long spaces in three of the car parks in Totton, Councillor Caroline Rackham has given formal notice that she wanted the decision made by Councillor Edward Heron to be called-in. Her reasons are set out in paragraph 2.3 of this report.
- 1.9 In accordance with Council procedures, as no other call in notices have been received, the decision stands and Councillor Caroline Rackham will have the opportunity to express her concerns about the decision to this Panel.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council operates car parks across the district and sets the appropriate car parking charges for the use of those car parks.
- 2.2 Councillor Edward Heron made a Portfolio Holder decision on 4th December 2020 and Appendix 1 of this report sets out the Portfolio Holder Decision which is the subject of this call-in. In the Portfolio Holder Decision Councillor Edward Heron considered the comments made as a result of the consultation process.
- 2.3 Within the call-in period Councillor Rackham gave formal notice to call-in the decision and stated that:

“The consultation regarding this decision has been inadequate and goes against the wishes of anyone who did express a view. Removing long stay car parking spaces makes the situation even more difficult for residents who live in the outer areas of Totton and surroundings, and need to catch trains or to work in the town centre. This decision will create further issues for local residents as those unwilling to pay for parking or unable to find a long stay space will try to park in residential streets.”
- 2.4 Councillor Rackham has been invited to attend the meeting in order to discuss her concerns with the Panel.
- 2.5 As set out in the Council’s Constitution, where only one member of the Council has called-in a decision, the Panel should consider whether:

- a) The decision was within the Council's policy and budget; and
- b) If it was, whether the policy or budget should be reviewed

The views of the Panel shall then be reported directly to the Leader and the Council.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The financial implications of the Portfolio Holder's decision are set out in Appendix 1, section 9. It is estimated that making the Civic Centre and Westfield Road car parks pay and display will provide enough revenue to cover business rates, maintenance, inspection and enforcement costs.

4. CRIME AND DISORDER, ENVIRONMENTAL, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The decision to change car parking arrangements in three Totton Car Parks is expected to continue to support the town centre economy by providing enough short stay parking in the centre of the town whilst maintaining the provision of Long Stay spaces which will encourage commuter parking thus reducing emissions in the Totton area.
- 4.2 The current parking clock system which allows short stay parking for up to 3 hours at 7 pence per day will continue to provide support to local businesses. It is not anticipated that these changes will have a detrimental effect on the local economy, including shops, gyms and other businesses in the town centre.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Portfolio Holder Councillor Edward Heron made a decision on the 4th December 2020 which has now being actioned.
- 5.2 Councillor Rackham gave formal notice that she intended to call in the decision, but as no other Councillors gave formal notice of call-in the Portfolio Holder decision stands.
- 5.3 Councillor Rackham has been invited to attend the meeting on the 14th January 2021 of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel to address the Panel.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 That the Panel consider Councillor Rackham's call-in submission.
- 6.2 That the Panel determine whether the decision was within the Council's policy and budget and whether the policy and budget to be reviewed.

For further information please contact:

Background Papers:

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