

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2010**

Councillors Councillors Bull (Chair), Browne (Vice-Chair), Alexander, Ejiofor, Newton, Winskill and Meehan

Apologies Councillor Basu

Also Present: **Councillors:** Canver, Engert, Gorrie and Weber
Officers: Frank Quigg (Assistant Director - Frontline Services (Interim)), Kevin Bartle (Lead Finance Officer), Ann Cunningham (Head of Parking Services), Terence Mitchison (Senior Project Lawyer - Corporate), Rosemary Lansdowne (Assistant Head of Legal Services – Commercial), Paul Dennison (Liberal Democrat Group Political Assistant), Melanie Ponomarenko (Scrutiny Officer), Natalie Cole (Committee Clerk)
Also Attending: 5 members of the public and press

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION
OSCO131.	<p>WEBCASTING</p> <p>The meeting was not web-cast.</p>
OSCO132.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Councillor Dhiren Basu (substituted by Councillor George Meehan).</p>
OSCO133.	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>As it was a special meeting no urgent business was permitted.</p>
OSCO134.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Councillor Canver declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 6 (Call-in of Decision of the Cabinet of 16th November 2010 regarding CAB75 Parking Charges Report) as she was present at the Cabinet meeting on 16th November where the original decision had been agreed. Councillor Canver left the meeting at the appropriate time.</p>
OSCO135.	<p>CALL-IN OF DECISION OF THE CABINET OF 16 NOVEMBER 2010 REGARDING CAB75 PARKING CHARGES REPORT</p> <p>The Committee received the documentation in relation to the Call-in of the decision of the Cabinet of 16th November 2010 regarding CAB75, Parking Charges report, and the comparison of existing and new parking charges document tabled by Councillor Lyn Weber, representing the Councillors who had called-in the decision.</p> <p>Councillor Weber addressed the Committee to introduce the reasons for the call-in including that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no evidence that the decision was taken with all the

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relevant evidence and facts.

- The Council failed to carry out a full impact assessment of how an increase in parking charges will impact local residents, businesses and shops including the potential effect on the local economy, particularly the increase of 114% on stop and shop charges
- The change might affect residents with lower income and could push more shoppers away from Haringey's businesses.
- Many of Haringey's shopping centres had an array of independent shops. Crouch End, Muswell Hill and Green Lanes had unique characters and many relied on passing trade as well as local footfall. Increasing parking charges will impact on the character of the Borough's town centres and harm, to a greater extent the independents shops and businesses.
- Shoppers could move to larger, out of borough shopping centres or supermarkets who offered free parking rather than stopping and paying leading to less trade for our shops and businesses, a fall in money in our local economy, a possible reduction in local employment and a knock to traders at the worst possible time when they were only starting to recover from the recession.
- The Council failed to undertake any consultation with traders.
- An increase in visitor permit charges that may mean less visitors to the borough. Yet the Council has failed to take any of this into consideration during their decision to increase parking fees.
- The report stated that "small businesses which employ less than 24 people account for 42.5% of the total employment in the borough". Therefore the local economy was not comparable to the London average, which the charges were based on.

Councillor Weber urged the Committee to consider recommending to the Cabinet that a full impact assessment be carried out on the affects of the parking charges. She recommended that a review should take place after 3 months to assess the impact on local businesses, shops and town centres with a commitment to adjust the charges if they were found to be damaging the local economy.

In response to questions to Councillor Weber it was noted that:

- Councillor Weber was not opposed to parking charges being raised in general but emphasised the need for a more detailed impact assessment to be conducted to ensure clarity about the impact the charges will have on traders and the local economy.
- Councillor Weber had sought the views of shop keepers herself and was not aware that the Council had conducted any consultation with traders in Crouch End or with the Ward Councillors of Muswell Hill and Fortis Green. Methods such as focus groups, Haringey's established area assemblies and street surveys were suggested as ways to engage with the relevant people.
- The feedback from residents surveyed was that when charges had previously risen people stopped shopping in the local town centres and went to bigger stores with free car parking spaces. They had gradually started returning to the local town centres but the new hike in prices will deter people further.

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- Green Lanes, Muswell Hill and Crouch End town centres were frequented by families who needed time to go in and out of the different shops. They will be deterred from visiting.

Councillor Gail Engert informed the Committee that she had also canvassed the views of local traders and was informed that none had been consulted about the parking charges. A Muswell Hill trader had informed her that people had stopped shopping at their Hampstead branch due to parking charge rises and the trader had been forced to close this branch of their business as a result. Many traders feared closure of their businesses as a result of the parking charges rising in Muswell Hill.

The Committee noted the statement of Councillor Canver, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, in response to the reasons for the call-in, including:

- The charges would bring Haringey in line with the London Average and this was considered by officers to be suitable and manageable for the local economy.
- Officers had conducted an impact assessment and considered the trends and patterns of previous years and how other boroughs operated.
- Councillor Canver was a St Ann's Ward Councillor and she had spoken with Green Lanes traders who had expressed support for the increase in pay and display parking charges as this would ensure a higher turnover of parking bays and a greater capacity for shopping.
- Councillor Canver stated that the process had been transparent and an annual plan was produced every year detailing the Council's income and expenditure with a separate trade account for the revenue raised by the Parking Service.

In response to the Committee's concerns Councillor Canver confirmed that the Cabinet had agreed to review the rises in parking charges in 6 months. She stated that if, as a result of the increase in charges, there was evidence of a drastic reduction in trade activity in the town centres the parking charges would be reduced accordingly.

The Assistant Director - Frontline Services (Interim), Frank Quigg, reported that there had not been a review of parking charges for many years and much of the revenue raised by the increase in charges would be spent on highways improvements and concessionary fares. The Committee noted that despite the current surplus in the Parking Services Revenue Account there was a shortfall in the budget and the increase in charges would meet the shortfall.

Committee Members expressed concerns that Green Lanes would see a parking charge rise from £1.40 to £3 per hour and suggested that a 30 minute stay would encourage a higher turnover of shoppers. The Head of Parking Services, Ann Cunningham, advised that pre-2008, there had been cheaper parking for shorter stays but traders had complained and a subsequent review resulted in a move away

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from that system.

Ms Cunningham emphasised that there was a demand for parking in the areas affected by the increases, which had not changed since the economic downturn and there was no evidence that parking patterns would change as a result of the increases. Car parking was cheaper in Wood Green town centre but there was no evidence that people shopped there instead of Green Lanes and Muswell Hill.

In response to concerns about the lack of consultation officers explained that there was no legal requirement to go through a costly and timely consultation process.

The Committee noted the concerns of the Chair of Haringey Green Lanes Traders Association including that traders did not support the increases in banding of pay and display or the on-street charges and that trade would be lost as a result.

Clerk's note: The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods left the meeting before the Committee began its debate.

Committee members concerns included:

- Budget constraints were acknowledged and the Committee generally did not oppose a rise in parking charges but expressed that it was unfair to increase charges by 114% without consultation with residents and traders, which could have taken place at the Council's Area Assemblies.
- Committee Members did not consider the 21 day statutory notice to be adequate engagement with residents and traders.
- Haringey's parking charges should not be in line with the London Average as parking usage was different to boroughs nearer to central London.
- There was no evidence to suggest the proposed increase in charges would not have a negative effect on traders and residents.
- The demographics of Green Lanes, Muswell Hill and Crouch End were very different and the increases would impact poor families and could cause a displacement of cars in controlled parking zone (VPZ) areas. There was no logic to the three areas being given the same banding of pay and display charges.
- Two Committee Members expressed disappointment that the points raised in the call-in had not been adequately addressed and more details of the impact assessment should have been provided.
- There had been no discussion by the Cabinet on 16th November about a 6 month review taking place after the decision had been implemented.

Councillor Bull then MOVED a motion that the matter be referred back to the Cabinet. A vote was taken and by unanimous decision it was:

RESOLVED

- i. That the decision of the Cabinet of 16th November 2010 –

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	<p>CAB75 Parking Charges Report – be referred back to the Cabinet for reconsideration, and;</p> <p>ii. That a transparent equalities and economic impact assessment be undertaken, in consultation with local traders, and should include comparisons with other London Boroughs and the effect of similar rises in pay and display charges on their local shops, and;</p> <p>iii. That the banding structure be reconsidered in order to address the concerns raised by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, particularly that Green Lanes, Muswell Hill and Crouch End were each unique town centres and should be considered as such and that such a steep rise in banding levels should be made in increments.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 19:20hrs.</p>	
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COUNCILLOR GIDEON BULL

Chair

The meeting ended at

Chair

SIGNED AT MEETING.....DAY

OF.....

CHAIR.....