



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY
SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2022 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Joel (Chair)
Councillor Sandhu (Vice Chair)

Councillor Fonseca
Councillor Porter

Councillor Singh Johal
Councillor Valand

Also in attendance:

Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Clarke
Councillor Rae Bhatia
Councillor Solanki

* * * * *

63. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Malik.

64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sandhu, Vice Chair of the Commission, declared that he ran a small family business in the city centre which did not provide parking to its employees and would be considering the item with an open mind.

Councillor Porter declared that he had spearheaded a campaign against this proposal.

65. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Chair noted that the email representations that had been received in relation to the Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) from school teachers would be considered as part of the main item.

66. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer noted that none had been received.

67. WORKPLACE PARKING LEVY

The Chair noted that the Chairs and Vice Chairs of other Scrutiny Commissions had been invited to attend and participate in the discussions.

The Deputy City Mayor for Environment and Transportation introduced the item as a manifesto commitment. It was noted that this was radical action to the climate emergency, consideration of public health and the need for an improved infrastructure for public transport with the growth in population. Extensive engagement had been carried out with stakeholders and the concerns raised had been highlighted.

The Director for Planning Development and Transportation delivered a presentation providing the Commission with an overview of the Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) consultation.

As part of the presentation the Director of Planning Development and Transportation gave a summary of what the WPL was and detailed the future benefits of a WPL in Leicester.

It was noted that the consultation had launched on 16 December 2021 and would end on 13 March 2022. This process had allowed for engagement with key stakeholders, extensive cover through various media outlets and over 2700 responses on the consultation to date.

It was further noted that the next steps following the end of the consultation would be to consider the responses received in detail. Ultimately a business case would need to be submitted to the Secretary of State who would be the final decision maker and the earliest date the proposal could be introduced would be the spring of 2023.

As part of the discussion with the Members of the Commission it was noted that:

- A survey team would engage with employers to identify who had more than 10 parking spaces provided and who would qualify for the WPL
- Nottingham City Council took an early decision and adopted the WPL in 2012, this took a number of years to develop and measure the levels of success
- Officers would provide Members of the Commission information on the ratio of the funds that would be generated from the WPL from different organisations
- Vast majority of the objections to the WPL had been received from schools in the city
- Officers were confident that the business case developed was robust and the consultation process had allowed for wide responses from the public
- Some members of the Commission recognised the need for a WPL and suggested it was overdue.
- Support from Nottingham City Council was available to help avoid any

potential issues and with the new technology available, the delivery of the WPL would be made easier

- The analysis of parking spaces would be done through a targeted approach focussed on the larger businesses in the city. It was suggested that at least 80% of textile industries in the city would receive the small employer discount and this would help protect small businesses in the city
- Support would also be available to businesses, and all liable businesses in the city would be able to licence their workplace parking online.
- Based on what would be possible from contributions from the government and bus operators, the potential £450 million would be invested in funding bus infrastructure, cycle and pedestrian routes
- The Leicester Bus Partnership would help deliver a more frequent and reliable bus service that took into account including local neighbourhoods across the city
- A new fleet of electric buses with investment from the central government, the bus companies and the local authority would allow for improved services
- Members of the Commission suggested reconsidering the 10-parking space figure that would qualify businesses for the WPL, it was suggested that some of the smaller businesses were more profitable than the larger businesses
- Concerns were raised on the impact that the WPL would have on residential parking and on local jobs
- It was noted that hotspots of displaced parking in residential areas were being considered and the introduction of new measures to tackle these issues were in consideration
- It was suggested that the aim for the WPL was to create an environment for the future and that in a previous study a 10th of businesses in cities were looking to relocate as a result of congestion
- Nottingham City Council had stated that there were no tangible negative impacts on investment following the introduction of the WPL

In further discussions, a Member of the Commission raised concerns on why the scheme was unfair and being considered at an inappropriate time. As part of the discussions, it was noted that:

- The De Montfort University (DMU) Business School reports including an Economic Impact Study showed that Leicester City had adopted a fair and proportional approach and Members were invited to read the study that had been developed by DMU
- The 2011 Census Report highlighted that 40% of households across the city didn't have access to a private car. The introduction of the new infrastructure would potentially increase new employment opportunities for those in low-income employment without access to a car and that additional arrangements for shift workers could also be considered with employers
- 25% of carbon emissions come from transport and the requirement from government was to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030 and objectives had been provided to achieve the net 0 target.
- Although substantial evidence was not available on the modal shift away from the private car, one study in Nottingham showed that 8.6% of commuters had changed their mode of travel at least partly because of the WPL. The WPL

modelling suggests that in real terms the roads would look like how they are during the school holidays at peak times

- Although the tram service had been beneficial in support of the WPL in Nottingham, it would be more cost effective and easier to implement the use of electric buses in Leicester with additional electric buses that are best suited to local neighbourhoods and that an alternative option for a congestion charge had also been considered

In further discussions it was noted that charge for the WPL would only increase in line with inflation and that the council were bound to the initial cost and indexation. The objective of the proposal was to be fair to both employers and employees and that concerns raised of the retention of staff in the medium and smaller sized businesses had been considered.

The Vice Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission raised the concerns of local schools and whether the consultation had reached further into local communities. It was noted that the consultation had been most effective and had a far reach where engagement with many people had been made possible and that schools across the city had also provided feedback.

Officers also noted that the aim of the proposal was not to deter business or investment away from the city and rather to attract future investment with investment in a much-improved city transport system.

It was also noted that the engagement process with the NHS had started at an earlier date to address any inequalities and mitigate any unintended impacts.

The Chair of the Commission took the opportunity to thank everyone for their contributions and raised concerns on the accessibility of the consultation and whether the consultation would be reaching as many people as possible. The Chair suggested that the consultation process should ensure that a diverse set of voices were heard from across the city.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Director of Planning, Development and Transportation be requested to revisit the Equality Impact Assessment.
- 2) That the Director for Planning, Development and Transportation be requested to give due consideration to the level of engagement and the challenges highlighted.
- 3) That the Director of Planning Development and Transportation be requested to provide the Commission with an update report in the future; and
- 4) That the report be noted.

68. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other items of urgent business, the meeting closed at 7:33pm.