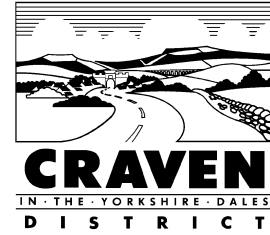


## Policy Committee – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015



# Select Committee Chairman's Report Car Parking Matters

## Introduction

Members of the Policy Committee will recall that in August 2014 the Committee resolved to refer to Select Committee the proposed introduction of charges on the Council's car parks at Grasmere Drive, Bentham, Hall Street and Milligans Field, Cross Hills and North and West Street, Gargrave. Members will also be aware from my statement to Council that the Select Committee has also undertaken a review of the operation of the civil parking enforcement arrangement. This report is intended to formally present to Policy Committee the outcome of Select Committee's work on both issues.

### a. Extension of Pay and Display Parking Charges

The Committee was very much aware the need to fully engage with the relevant parish councils and other interested parties if consideration was to be given to extending pay and display parking charges to Bentham, Cross Hills and Gargrave. Members therefore took the view that, before embarking on a process which could potentially have taken up a considerable amount of time, it would be prudent to first establish the position of the County Highway Authority and North Yorkshire Police; in particular the Highway Authority which had previously indicated concerns at the prospect of extending charges.

North Yorkshire Police stated that it had no comment, but the following response was received from the Highway Authority:-

"The County Council must pay due regard to the Traffic Management Act 2004, which places a duty on every local traffic authority to manage its road network to secure the expeditious movement of traffic on their road network. Consideration therefore needs to be given to the transport policy implications of the proposed changes along with the road safety and traffic management impacts on the local highway network.

Gargrave (North Street (30 spaces) and West Street (17 spaces) Car Parks)

We recognise that the proposals will introduce extra pressure on on-street parking. We consider that the existing waiting restrictions are sufficient to mitigate this

problem to manageable levels with respect to charging in the North St car park **or** the West St car park, but not both. We would therefore object to charging being imposed in both these car parks.

Bentham (Cleveland Square and Grasmere Drive Car Parks)

We would object to this order.

The issues mentioned above regarding the problems caused by parking displacement are a matter of degree and the effects at each location need to be considered on a site-specific basis. The effects on the highway network surrounding these car parks will be difficult to manage due to the number of residential streets immediately adjacent, which have few waiting restrictions and no off-street parking available to most residents. The additional pressure on on-street parking is likely to result in inconsiderate parking to avoid paying the charges, which will result in congestion and obstruction, which could be a particular problem at the fire station (and the doctors' surgery).

Crosshills ( Hall Street ( 23 spaces) and Milligans Field Cars Parks (41 spaces) )

We would object to this order.

The effects on the highway network surrounding these car parks will be difficult to manage due to the number of residential streets immediately adjacent, which have few waiting restrictions and no off-street parking available to most residents. The additional pressure on on-street parking is likely to result in inconsiderate parking to avoid paying the charges, which will result in congestion and obstruction, with consequential effects on highway safety.”

In light of the Highway Authority's stated position on Bentham and Cross Hills, the Committee took the view that there was little to be gained from progressing a consultation exercise with the relevant parties in those areas, but concluded that there was scope for possibly introducing charges on either North Street or West Street car parks in Gargrave. The viability of introducing charges would need careful consideration, bearing in mind the costs associated with operating a pay and display car park and, although not discussed in any depth by the Committee, a point worth noting is the availability of on street parking in the North and West Street area, and the associated potential impact on income should pay and display charges be introduced.

It does of course remain open to this Council to explore with the Highway Authority its objections in relation to Bentham and Cross Hills to establish whether any scope exists for overcoming or mitigating its concerns. The Select Committee remains available to assist on this matter.

In summary the Committee's conclusions were as follows

1. That, Policy Committee be recommended not to introduce charges on the Cross Hills and Bentham car parks due to the objections of the Highways Authority.

It should be noted that in recommending that charges not be introduced on the Cross Hills and Bentham car parks at this time due to the objections of the Highways Authority, it would be my view as Chairman of the Select Committee that, if at some future point discussions result in the Highway Authority withdrawing its objection, a consultation exercise should be carried out with the relevant parish(es) and other interested parties.

2. That, Policy Committee is recommended to introduce car parking charges on one of the two car parks (North Street and West Street) in Gargrave.

3. That, should Policy Committee be minded to accept the recommendation at (2) above, it should first satisfy itself that it would be financially viable to introduce car parking charges and also consult Gargrave Parish Council.

### **b. Civil Parking Enforcement**

In compiling its work programme for the current municipal year the Committee resolved to include a review of the civil parking enforcement arrangement and related matters. Having been scoped in July 2014, the Committee conducted its review at meetings held on 10<sup>th</sup> September and 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015. The following information was requested by the Committee:-

- the service level agreement for delivery of the parking enforcement service (off street).
- copy of the agreement with North Yorkshire County Council underwriting certain losses to this Council.
- performance data on service delivery in 2013/14 (off street).
- briefing paper presenting the background to the arrangement together with a copy of the report to Policy Committee 13 November 2012 seeking agreement to enter into the civil parking arrangement.
- income and expenditure statement for off street enforcement in 2013/14.
- excess charge income 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2013/14.
- a table presenting a summary of the location, condition, installation date, age and planned replacement date of each pay and display machine.
- amount of time spent on machine maintenance in 2014.
- car parking income from pay and display and permits in the period from 2011/12.
- a monthly breakdown of the number of excess charge / penalty notices issued in the period 2012/13 to September 2014.
- details of the contract for collection of cash from the pay and display machines.

In conducting its review the Committee had been particularly keen to establish the impact of entering the enforcement arrangement on the remainder of the Council's parking service. The Committee heard that there were no outstanding issues associated with implementation of the arrangement. However the transfer of enforcement to Harrogate Borough Council had resulted in some resilience and capacity issues relating to the delivery of the car parking service. The Committee was reassured that those issues had been identified prior to implementation, together with the need to implement a programme of updates to, and replacement of, ticket machines and means of cash collection. Issues identified had been / were being addressed and managed. Officers had some ongoing concerns regarding the operation of a contract entered into for the collection of cash from

the ticket machines, and discussions were ongoing with the contractor. The contract period would expire in 2015/16 and as such is likely to be the subject of a procurement exercise during the course of the next 12 month period.

Concerns were raised with the Committee under public participation regarding the legality of signage on some car parks and the implications thereof in relation to aspects of the enforcement activity. The Policy Committee can be assured that those concerns were referred to Harrogate Borough Council's Parking Service which had confirmed that it was satisfied that parking enforcement on the Council's car parks was being carried out legally.

The net cost of the car parking enforcement arrangement in the first year of operation had amounted to £14,482, as compared to a net cost when delivered internally of £23,496, and although there had been an increase in excess charge tickets issued it was difficult to evidence that more people were now using the Council's car parks as a result of on street enforcement activity.

In conclusion I am pleased to be able to report that although some resilience concerns remain in respect of the car parking service itself, having considered the information presented during the course of this review the Committee was satisfied that the parking enforcement arrangement with Harrogate Borough Council was operating to a satisfactory standard. Operation of the cash collection arrangements has given rise to some reservations, but the Committee was satisfied that action is not required on the part of Policy Committee at this time as those concerns are being addressed by officers. It was also understood that as part of the Internal Audit Plan 2014/15, the Internal Audit Service would be reporting to the Audit and Governance Committee on parking management and enforcement. On behalf of the Committee I would also thank the Assets and Projects Manager for her assistance in enabling the Committee to conduct this review.

Councillor John Roberts  
Chairman Select Committee