
Meeting	Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee (Calling In)
Date	23 February 2015
Present	Councillors Galvin (Chair), Burton, D'Agorne, Fraser, Horton, King, Potter, Runciman (Vice-Chair) and Steward
Apologies	Councillors McIlveen and Hyman

26. **Declarations of Interest**

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the register of interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they might have in respect of the business on the agenda.

Councillor Potter declared a personal non prejudicial interest in relation to the called-in item: A Congestion Commission for York, as Manager of York Wheels, in terms of congestion on Tadcaster Road.

Councillor D'Agorne declared a personal non prejudicial interest in relation to the called-in item: A Congestion Commission for York, as a member of the Cyclists' Touring Club.

27. **Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Paul Hepworth spoke on behalf of the Cyclists Touring Club, asking Members to reject the call-in and support a Congestion Commission with cross party membership to pursue the goal of York's current Transport Plan.

28. **Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 19 January 2015 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

29. **Called In Item: A Congestion Commission For York**

Members received a report which asked them to consider the decision made by the Cabinet on 10 February 2015, in relation to the establishment of a Congestion Commission for York. Proposals for a city-wide conversation building on known expertise in the field had also been proposed in an effort to bring forward strategic recommendations for Council to consider.

Details of the Cabinet's decision were attached at Annex A to the report and the original report of the Director of City and Environmental Services to the Cabinet, attached at Annex B.

The original decision had firstly been called in by Councillors Richardson, Healey and Doughty on the following grounds:

- *It is difficult to see how such a large new look at congestion can be embarked upon given the refusal of the cabinet to look into lessons learned from the Lendal Bridge trial;*
- *It is wrong for the council to commit to fund a major committee, select its members, including paid independent experts, and set out the committee's operating criteria and timeline three months prior to local council elections, which may well result in a change in the priorities of the council;*
- *There is an issue of democratic accountability and it lessens the chance of having an outcome which will realistically be implemented, that the panel will have more non-elected than elected members;*
- *It is naive to suggest that such decisions could possibly be made without taking into account the political calculations of all members of the council, which this close to an election would not necessarily be conducive to creating an independent committee seeking long-term solutions;*
- *The costs of the proposed committee are well beyond the budget set for internal scrutiny committees and too high given the other pressures on council funds.*

The original decision had secondly been called in by Councillors Aspden, King and Watson on the following grounds:

- *These proposals involve spending £135,000 - mostly on expensive external consultants – but fail to demonstrate that this expenditure offers value-for-money for residents.*
- *The report says that “officers have reviewed a range of such bodies” but these options on the size/structure/cost of the committee have not been presented to opposition members.*
- *Appointments (including the Chair) and various approaches have been made without any reference to the views of opposition members.*
- *The report does not specify direct resident and business involvement on the committee only the creation of a vague sounding Citizen’s Jury.*
- *The report does not properly show how existing council staff/resources/previous studies will be properly utilised.*
- *The report fails to give a clear commitment to an achievable timeframe or tangible, realistic and cost-effective outcomes.*

Councillor Richardson addressed the meeting on behalf of the first group of Calling In members. He highlighted their principle concerns as the timing of the Commission, and the commitment to funding, prior to the election in May. He also referred to signage in the city which he felt was not user friendly and requested that work was undertaken to resolve this issue prior to the allocation of any additional funding for congestion.

Councillor Watson, also addressed the meeting on behalf of the second group of Calling In members. He expressed concern that previous cross party comments reported to Cabinet appeared to have been ignored and to the reference, in the report, to examining what was likely to work before an assessment would be made of how it would be paid for. He therefore questioned whether the Commission would provide value for money, also pointing out that there was no information

as to how Officers views and previous congestion work and studies would be used by the Commission.

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning and Economic Development, spoke in response to the points made for the call-in of the decision. He pointed out that the decision taken to establish a Congestion Commission had been put forward to show a commitment to the city, prior to the election. Also that there was cross party support to examine ways in which tackle the issues of congestion. He confirmed that a final decision in respect of any Commission recommendations would require Council approval. He reminded Members that earlier work, including that undertaken by scrutiny committee's had not resulted in solutions to the city's traffic problems, however the information collated would be used in any work subsequently undertaken.

Members questioned the Chairing and membership of the Commission and referred to the funding required whilst budget cuts were being made to front line services. They also questioned how this work would be different to that undertaken previously

The Director of City and Environmental Services and Assistant Director for Transport, Highways and Fleet provided further information in answer to Members questions and in support of the Cabinet's decision. They highlighted the work that had already taken place in the city, with the provision of Park and Ride sites, support for cycling and sustainable transport, however, despite this work, congestion and air quality remained a major challenge. They confirmed that changes had been made to earlier reports to Members on congestion and that the current proposals would include a large community engagement exercise, as any recommendations would require behavioural and infrastructure changes.

Following further lengthy discussion Councillor Potter moved, and Councillor Horton seconded, that approval be given to option A, that the original decision of Cabinet be confirmed, as there were no grounds to refer the decision back. On being put to the vote this was lost.

Councillor Galvin, then moved and Councillor Steward seconded, and on being put to the vote it was

Resolved: That Option B be approved and that the decision of the Cabinet be referred back with a recommendation that Cabinet defers any consideration of the setting up of a Congestion Commission until after the local election in May 2015.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of the Council's Constitution.

CLlr J Galvin, Chair
[The Meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.30 pm].