
Meeting	Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee (Calling In)
Date	17 December 2018
Present	Councillors Galvin (Vice-Chair), N Barnes, D'Agorne, Fenton, Gates and Reid
Apologies	Councillors Williams, Brooks and Looker

6. 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 may have in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared

7. Public Participation

It was reported that there had no been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

8. Called-in Item Post Decision: Changes to Permit Emission Charges

Members considered a report which set out the reasons for the call-in and the role of the Committee, together with options available to it under the agreed post-decision call-in arrangements. In accordance with those arrangements Councillors D'Agorne, Kramm and Craghill had called in the above item for the following reasons:

“a) The effect of this decision is unlikely to have a beneficial impact on air quality because the residents in ‘Respark’ areas will not be able to buy an appropriate vehicle that qualifies for the discount, in the absence of on-street electric charging facilities. The proposed removal of any discount rate for ‘low emission’ smaller cars also means that there will no longer be an incentive for residents to replace vehicles with a low emission vehicle in the range 75g/km- 120g/km and thus fails to support the One Planet York principles and the Clean Air Strategy.

b) The paper on which this decision was based contradicts itself and does not accurately reflect changes to VED on which the current discount rate is based:

Paragraph 8 states ‘...however it should be noted that the tax rate changes only apply to vehicles registered after 1 April 2017’. However elsewhere it states that the proposed change is needed to ‘bring discount criteria into line with the Government changes’ when it is only the newest vehicles that are affected. Paragraph 26 states that ‘the proposed change would affect approximately 1100 households’ and 200 season ticket holders whereas Annex A shows 815 qualifying permits without explaining the discrepancy. The final paragraph of the report again wrongly states ‘If this change isn’t implemented the council would be out of step with the Government road tax policy... as this is now out of date... this change needs to be implemented as soon as possible given the lack of national policy this is now based on.’ This is despite paragraph 8 statement acknowledging that VED bands A-C still apply to all vehicles registered between 2001 and 2017. Some change may be appropriate, but the policy is still valid for most permit holders and could be adapted to continue to offer discount for the revised low emission bands.

c) The ‘reason’ given for the recommended change (paragraph 7) also contradicts the situation described above: ‘To update the council’s outdated policy ‘

d) The reason given states that the change will ‘seek to encourage ULEV car ownership’. The paper fails to substantiate how this will be the case. The only vehicles that meet the proposed criteria are in fact alternative fuelled electric or hybrid electric vehicles. Lack of provision of on-street charging was discussed at the Decision Session in response to a representation from a resident wanting an on-street charging facility to enable them to buy a ULEV car. In the absence of any policy to enable installation of such charging provision (as confirmed by officers at the meeting), it is not logical to suggest that residents who need a permit to park on the public highway outside their home will be incentivised to buy such a vehicle in order to qualify for the new discount criteria. Also, there has been no reference to any additional provision of electric charging points for season ticket holders in council car parks to enable them to switch to a ULEV vehicle.

e) Given the above, there is no evidence to support paragraph 29 that 'this meets the council's sustainable transport policy by encouraging sustainable transport usage and ULEV uptake' since there is no provision for residents to charge such ULEV vehicles within Respark areas of the city, and the absence of a discount for low emission vehicles is just as likely to lead to them being replaced with a higher emission conventional vehicle.

We therefore call for the decision to be referred back to the Executive Member to consider Option 4, acknowledging that bands A-C continue to apply to vehicles registered before April 2017 and for the discount to be applicable to the new (post-2017 registration) bands below 110g/km CO₂ emissions.

The effect would be that both ultra low emission vehicles (ULEV) and low emission (LEV) vehicles would continue to qualify for the discounted rate after April 2019, thereby continuing to incentivise residents to purchase lower emission vehicles appropriate to the facilities available to them where they live.

Budgetary adjustment would need to be made in the City of York Council 2019-20 budget to reflect this reduction in savings from April 2019."

Cllr Craghill spoke on behalf of the calling-in Members, to explain why this item had been called-in by the Green Group.

The Assistant Director of Transport, Highways and Environment and Head of Parking Services attended the meeting to answer Member questions. It was explained that the called-in decision related to the implementation of a policy change that had actually been decided at Full Council in February 2017.

It was also stated that the reasoning behind removing VEDB from the new permit system was simplification. Due to VEDB ratings (A,B,C etc) differing between pre and post 2017 vehicles, removing this aspect and referring only to the g/km of CO₂ emissions, would ensure that all residents were easily able to see if they qualified for the discount.

Members questioned the impact of the permit discount on population purchasing behaviour and it was agreed that this was very difficult to prove one way or another. Officers explained

that the theory behind this type of policy was the 'nudge' element of behavioural change theory and was seen as good practice.

Members also questioned whether during the four year grace period (for residents who currently own a vehicle that receives a discount) the scale of Council spending on electric vehicle infrastructure would increase to match the policy. Officers stated that this would be for members to decide at Full Council.

Cllr D'Agorne moved option 6b, to refer this item back to Executive. It was not seconded and therefore the motion fell.

Cllr Galvin then moved, from the Chair, option 6a to confirm the decision made by the Executive and it was seconded by Cllr Fenton. On being put to the vote this motion was carried and it was

Resolved: That there were no grounds to make specific recommendations to the Executive in respect of the report. The original decision taken on the item by the Executive Member on 15 November 2018 would be confirmed and would take effect from the date of the CSMC (Calling-in) meeting.

Reason: To enable the called-in matter to be dealt with efficiently and in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Constitution.

Cllr J Galvin, Chair in the absence of Cllr Williams
[The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 6.50 pm].