

SIGNED ELECTRONICALLY BY COUNCILLORS STEPHEN CROWE,
SUZANNE GROCOTT AND DANIEL HOLDEN

Merton Council - call-in request form

1. Decision to be called in: (required)

Tariff changes to the On Street Pay and Display Parking Machines

2. Which of the principles of decision making in Article 13 of the constitution has not been applied? (required)

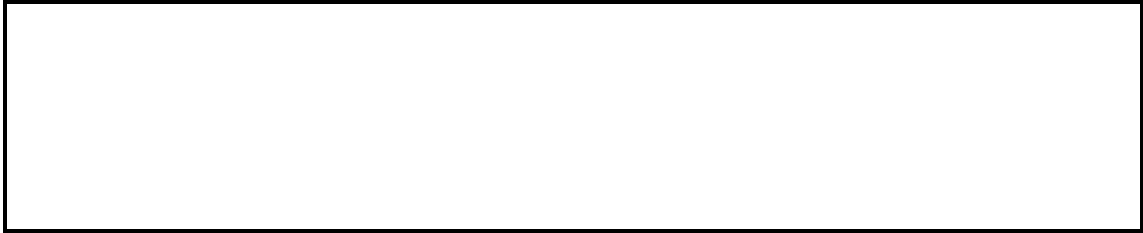
Required by part 4E Section 16(c)(a)(ii) of the constitution - tick all that apply:

(a) proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);	
(b) due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;	X
(c) respect for human rights and equalities;	X
(d) a presumption in favour of openness;	X
(e) clarity of aims and desired outcomes;	X
(f) consideration and evaluation of alternatives;	X
(g) irrelevant matters must be ignored.	

3. Desired outcome

Part 4E Section 16(f) of the constitution- select one:

(a) The Panel/Commission to refer the decision back to the decision making person or body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns.	X
(b) To refer the matter to full Council where the Commission/Panel determines that the decision is contrary to the Policy and/or Budget Framework	
(c) The Panel/Commission to decide not to refer the matter back to the decision making person or body *	
* If you select (c) please explain the purpose of calling in the decision.	



4. Evidence which demonstrates the alleged breach(es) indicated in 2 above (required)

Required by part 4E Section 16(c)(a)(ii) of the constitution:

We are all in favour of the simplification of parking tariffs. Whenever parking in certain parts of the borough, the complexity of charges is incredible, especially with various minimum charges and minimum increments.

However, it is not clear that the council's decision will address this issue. The simplification seems to involve nothing more than increases in headline hourly prices across the board.

(b) due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers; and (d) a presumption in favour of openness;

This change to parking tariffs will affect a large number of residents, businesses and visitors to Merton and yet there has been no consideration in public of what is proposed and no opportunity for any pre-decision scrutiny by the Sustainable Communities panel, despite the fact that this panel has previously considered reports on the results of the various parking surveys that have taken place in recent years and would therefore be in a good position to consider and add value to these proposals.

The report states at 4.1 that no consultation is 'required for the purpose of this report' yet that does not mean that consultation is not desirable. The council seems to be taking the Town Centre Parking Surveys as a 'carte blanche' to increase tariff prices even though that is not in fact the course of action supported by the outcome of those surveys.

Furthermore, there is no reference in the report or decision sheet to other relevant parking surveys, such as the parking capacity study in Wimbledon and Morden town centres commissioned by the council in June 2012 from the Vincent Knight consultancy. This included an in depth look at Wimbledon on-street parking and yet the conclusions of that study do not appear to have informed this decision or even to have been considered. Similarly there is no reference anywhere to the results of the survey carried out between 12 April and 30 April 2013 on parking in Merton's neighbourhood shopping parades.

Finally, at 9) of the decision sheet, the Director states 'email documents /...'. This suggests there are other documents as well as emails upon which he has relied in making this decision and yet it is not clear what these are.

(c) respect for human rights and equalities;

The cost implications of this decision will be more heavily felt by residents and businesses in the west of the borough since the vast majority of on street Pay and Display parking machines are located in Wimbledon, Wimbledon Village, Wimbledon Park, South Wimbledon, Raynes Park and parts of Morden and Colliers Wood. This is clearly evidenced by the Appendix to the report.

Also, no consideration seems to have been given to the impact of the proposed cost increases on elderly and disabled residents who may be more reliant on using on street parking to visit shops and other local amenities.

(e) clarity of aims and desired outcomes; and (f) consideration and evaluation of alternatives;

With regard to clarity of aims and desired outcomes, the recommendations presented purport to be based on the outcome of the Town Centre Surveys carried out between July and October 2012. According to the report, the two general concerns that arose from that consultation were:

- a) The high cost and lack of available parking
- b) The number of different tariffs at Pay and Display bays which causes uncertainty for motorists.

However, the report does not indicate which, if any, of these concerns this decision is trying to address and it actually appears to compound concerns by generally increasing charges across the board. The Appendix clearly shows that, of all the many tariff changes that are proposed, only in the following 5 streets is it planned to reduce tariffs:

Home Park Road

Arthur Road

Worple Road

Leopold Road

Lake Road

In every other street, tariffs will rise. Although denied in section 7) of the report, this nevertheless suggests that, the intention – at least in part - of these changes is to target the motorist for ever higher parking charges in order to raise revenue for the council. Otherwise why not simply leave the

majority of tariffs (apart from those which are out of sync) the same?

Moreover, in terms of the financial and resource implications of this decision, whilst the report outlines the cost of implementing the tariff changes, it provides absolutely no information or projections for the revenue that will be generated in future years from increasing the majority of tariffs.

This decision unfortunately shows a complete lack of imagination on the part of the council. Given that one of the purposes of the 2012 parking review was to address "the high cost of parking", now just to increase parking charges seems a perverse response. Indeed it shows a complete lack of regard for all those businesses and residents who responded to the 2012 survey. Significant majorities of respondents (54% in Raynes Park, 80% in Wimbledon and 77% in Wimbledon Village) said they were dissatisfied with the cost of parking and yet these are the very areas where it is proposed parking tariffs should now increase thereby simply further compounding the problem.

The Director may state on the decision sheet that the tariff increases are 'minimal' but that is not borne out by the figures in the Appendix. For example, in Francis Grove it is proposed that tariffs will increase by 50% in one go (from £2.00 to £3.00).

In addition, the report states that there are no alternative options. However, various other options do exist which would help address the concern regarding the high cost of parking:

- i) Include charging based on 15minute periods rather than full hours (which need not involve 5p coins)
- ii) Offset hikes in headline tariffs by getting rid of incremental 1 hours
- iii) Extend free parking time
- iv) Provide refunds where requested (online or by phone now that cashless parking has finally been introduced in the borough)
- v) Consider contact-less payment whilst new meters are being implemented

The Director himself states on the decision sheet that there is an 'infinite range of alternatives'. Yet there is no evidence that the alternatives above or any others were ever considered and, if they were, no explanation as to why these other options were disregarded.

The fact is that simply increasing tariffs does not address the problem of the complexity of parking tariffs currently in place in Merton. If the council

was really serious about listening to residents and addressing this complexity (which is the real issue here), they would surely have considered other alternatives too.

This decision is unfortunately an anti- business response to what was a request from residents for a pro-business solution. As such, we would ask that the decision is reconsidered and the council seeks to employ a more imaginative approach to simplifying parking tariffs and deploying investment so as to better serve residents and properly help energise Merton's high streets and neighbourhood parades for the future.

5. Documents requested

All papers provided to the Director of Environment and Regeneration, Director of Corporate Services and relevant Cabinet Member(s) prior to, during and subsequent to the decision making process.

All emails, reports and associated documentation relating to On Street Pay and Display Parking Tariffs provided to the relevant Cabinet Members, Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, Director of Environment and Regeneration, Director of Corporate Services and other council officers.

The detailed financial analysis of a) the projected costs to the council of these tariff changes i.e. how the £39,000 is broken down; and b) the revenue projected to be generated for the council over each of the next 5 years as a result of these tariff changes.

The detailed analysis of the impact of the proposed tariff changes on the future health of Merton's high streets and neighbourhood parades.

The Equality Impact Assessment (or any other equalities analysis carried out) on the impact of these tariff changes.

All correspondence not only between the relevant Cabinet Members, Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, Director of Environment and Regeneration, Director of Corporate Services and other council officers themselves, but also with business representatives, residents associations and other community groups on the proposed tariff changes.

6. Witnesses requested

Chris Lee (Director of Environment and Regeneration)

Councillor Judy Saunders (Cabinet Member for Environmental Cleanliness and Parking)

John Hill (Head of Public Protection)

Paul Walshe (Parking Services Manager)

Paul McGarry (Future Merton Manager)

Relevant representative from Merton Chamber of Commerce

Representatives from local business groups in the borough affected by the proposals e.g. Wimbledon Village Business Association, Love Wimbledon etc.

7. Signed (not required if sent by email):

8. Notes – see part 4E section 16 of the constitution

Call-ins must be supported by at least three members of the Council.

The call in form and supporting requests must be received by 12 Noon on the third working day following the publication of the decision.

The form and/or supporting requests must be sent:

- **EITHER** by email from a Councillor's email account (no signature required) to democratic.services@merton.gov.uk
- **OR** as a signed paper copy to the Head of Democracy Services, 8th floor, Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX.

For further information or advice contact the Head of Democracy Services on 020 8545 3864