

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP SCOPING DOCUMENT

Review Topic	
Reduction in Car Parking Income	
Origins of Review Group	Review Group Membership
Budget Scrutiny Committee – 23 March 2017 Approved by Scrutiny Management Committee Planning Group – 24 July 2017 Membership approved by Scrutiny Management Committee Planning Group – 11 October 2017	Cllr E Bald (C) Cllr J Bint (C) Cllr R Bradburn (LD) Cllr V McPake (LD) Cllr P Wallis (L) Cllr K Wilson (L) - (Chair)
Overview & Scrutiny Officer	Initial Scoping of Review
Elizabeth Richardson	11 September 2017
1. Purpose	
<p>To investigate the reasons behind the current drop in car parking income and whether this could / should have been predicted and allowed for when income projections were being included in the 2016/17 draft budget proposals.</p>	
2. Rationale	
<p>What does the Review hope to achieve An understanding of why car parking revenue in Milton Keynes is falling and what impact this will have on future budgets</p> <p>Why is the Review taking place? <u>“Car Parking Income (£1.130m overspend) – overall income from on-street and off-street parking was down by £0.920m and costs were £0.210m over budget due to additional NNDR charges and one-off car parking machine upgrades. This was partly offset by £0.300m from the parking reserve and revenue funding of £0.330m set aside to repay borrowing for the new multi-storey car park in future years.”</u> <i>(2016/17 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report as at 31 March 2017 – presented to Cabinet on 13/06/17)</i></p> <p>What is the community importance and benefit? Although parking income is ring-fenced and can only be spent on certain services, the fall in income impacts on the Council's ability to deliver these services</p> <p>How does it fit in with the Council's Key Priorities (Council Plan 2016-2020) <u>“Budget - in the light of ongoing significant Conservative government funding reductions, securing a balanced medium-term budget that mitigates as far as possible against impacting adversely on the most vulnerable;”</u> <u>“Transport - tackling our transport issues and improving public transport;”</u> <i>(as published in the Milton Keynes Council Plan 2016-2020 – approved by full Council</i></p>	

on 13/07/16)

How will the review influence what the Council does?

By understanding trends in the flow of parking income, develop better income forecasting skills to ensure big shortfalls in projected income are less likely.

3. Proposed Outcomes

What are the proposed outcomes of the review?

An understanding of why parking income is falling, eg increased use of public transport, which is one of the Council's objectives set out in the Council Plan, or people just not coming to MK, which has a knock-on effect on the local economy as a whole.

Recommendations, if appropriate, on possible future income forecasting, including how much reliance should be placed on estimated income when trying to balance the budget.

4. Background

The need for the review came about because:

“Car Parking Income - Overall the forecast remains unchanged at a shortfall in parking income of £0.830m. This is offset by the use of the (£0.300m) from the parking reserve and (£0.330m) from the alternative budget provision and £0.200m being reflected in the forecast. Any further changes to the parking income forecast are likely to be small in the remaining forecast period, however should the downward trend continue into 2017/18 there will be an impact on the Parking Account surplus and potentially the General Fund Position.

(Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report to end of February 2017 – reported Budget Scrutiny Committee 23/3/17)

How does the issue relate to the Scrutiny Work Programme?

ToR for the Budget Scrutiny Committee include:

“To review periodically the savings forecast in previous draft budget proposals in order to assess whether or not the forecast savings have been achieved, what the impact (positive or negative) on service users has been and what lessons have been learnt in the process.”

Are there any relevant community views to refer to? e.g. any previous consultation?

There is anecdotal evidence that the residents of Milton Keynes think that local car parking charges are too high

5. Timetable

Establish a clear timetable:

How frequently will the Task and Finish Group need to meet?

3 meetings:

Meeting 1: Evidence from MKC Officers

Review of paper based evidence eg time-line of increases in parking charges, Parking Space Occupancy Reports, etc

Meeting 2: Evidence from Cabinet Member: Place / external bodies / organisations eg MKCCM, Centre:mk / Intu / Arriva / CMK Town Council etc

Meeting 3: Review of what has been learnt and make recommendations

What are the key deadlines?

The TFG needs to be able to report in time to feed any findings in to the 2018/19 budget setting process

Who needs to see the analysis?

Corporate Director: Place

Service Director: Public Realm

Head of Transport

Strategic Lead Parking and Taxis / Parking Services Manager

Strategic Finance Business Partner for Public Realm

Cabinet Member: Place

Cabinet

Who needs to contribute to the review?

Head of Transport

Service Director: Public Realm

Strategic Lead Parking and Taxis / Parking Services Manager

Strategic Finance Business Partner for Public Realm

Cabinet Member: Place

External Witnesses

When will the Task and Finish Group report back to the Committee / Cabinet / Council?

By December 2017

Proposed End date?

By end of November 2017?

6. Methodology / Approach

What method of enquiry will be most suitable for the review?

Consider some of the following:

- Desk-based review of papers ✓
- Site visits / observations - possibly
- Comparisons with other authorities ✓
- Interviewing officers ✓
- Calling witnesses to give evidence ✓
- Workshops / Focus Groups

7. Evidence Sources

What types of evidence will be needed. Consider some of the following:

- Performance Indicators ✓
- Evidence from other reviews ✓
- Independent research articles and papers ✓
- Budget / Finance Reports ✓
- Government guidance / legislation?
- Service plans?

Are there any stakeholders or interest groups the Task and Finish Group wants to hear from in addition to inviting them to the meeting?

- Consultation

- Focus group
- Questionnaire

Ensure there is a balance in the evidence collected e.g. views of activist groups weighed in consideration of an independent audit report.

8. Witnesses

Who would the Group wish to invite to its meetings?

- Council Officers
- Cabinet Member
- Stakeholders / Interest Groups / External Partners eg MKCCM / Centre:mk retailers / Intu / Arriva / CMK Town Council / Chamber of Commerce / London Midland
- Service users
- Professional experts?

9. Site Visits / Observations

Is there scope for potential site visits / observations?
Possibly

10. Public Meetings

Should the meetings be held in public / private / mixture of both?
Wherever possible it is Council policy that scrutiny meetings should be held in public.

11. Officer Support

Identify Scrutiny Officer and any other officers that will be influential in the review process.

Service Director: Public Realm
Head of Transport
Strategic Lead Parking and Taxis
Parking Services Manager

12. Resource Requirements

Estimate the amount of 'person' time required and the potential costs involved.

13. Risk Assessment

Identify potential obstacles to an effective review, including:

- Is it over-ambitious in scope?
- Can it keep to the projected timetable?
- Resources?

14. Proposed Terms of Reference

1. To scrutinise the fall in estimated parking income.
2. To investigate the reasons for the fall in parking income, whether the estimate of potential parking income was too optimistic and the result of poor budgeting practices by the Council or was due to other causes over which the Council had no control.

3. To make recommendations on possible future income forecasting, including how much reliance should be placed on estimate income when trying to balance the budget.

Cont'd

DRAFT

TASK AND FINISH PROTOCOL / OPERATING GUIDELINES

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Task and Finish Groups are set up to undertake an in-depth investigation or review of an issue and operate on a relatively informal basis. Most detailed investigative scrutiny work takes place in this type of working environment. Review Groups are a forum for information gathering and discussion between the Group and officers rather than a formal, decision making body and have no delegated powers.
- 1.2 This document sets out Milton Keynes Council's Operating Protocol for Task and Finish Groups.

2. Membership

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Management Committee will appoint a Chair to each Task and Finish Group, normally on a politically proportional basis, in consultation with Group Leaders taking account of the skills and experience required.
- 2.2 The Membership of each Task and Finish Group is politically balanced and numbers usually vary between a minimum of 3 to 6 elected Members.
- 2.3 All non-Executive Members of the Council are eligible to participate in Task and Finish Groups.
- 2.4 Nominations to the task and finish review groups for confirmation by the Management Committee, will be made by the Chair of the Task and Finish Review Group. The Chair will consult individual Political Group Leaders before nominating any councillors from the Group Leader's Group. Where appropriate, the membership of Task and Finish Groups can co-opt non-Members with a particular expertise / experience / interest to participate in the review being undertaken, eg, the Older Persons' Champion.
- 2.5 The Management Committee will appoint one of its members to act as a sponsor / mentor to each of the task and finish groups.

3. The Review Process

An initial planning meeting will be held involving the Overview and Scrutiny Officer facilitating the review, the elected councillors nominated to sit on the Task and Finish Group, and where appropriate, other Council officers and representatives of Partners or other outside organisations who may be expected to make a significant contribution to the work of the Task and Finish Group, in order to scope the review and agree a plan for the task.

The scoping document / plan should set out:

- (a) A clear statement of the scrutiny topic;
- (b) Proposed outcomes of the review;

- (c) The aim (or purpose) of the review;
- (d) The scope of the review – what will be included and excluded;
- (e) Agreed Terms of Reference;
- (f) Any specific outcomes to be achieved;
- (g) Specific concerns or issues, which should be addressed;
- (h) How the review will contribute to achieving Corporate Priorities;
- (i) An initial list of key stakeholders, partners or other agencies to be involved;
- (j) An initial list of witnesses;
- (k) How evidence will be gathered;
- (l) Any risks which may delay progress;
- (m) A timescale for completion of the task;
- (n) A suggested mechanism for following up / monitoring progress of recommendations which may be made in the final report.

3.3 As well as receiving evidence from witnesses and scrutinising printed matter, consideration should be given to use of site visits, workshops and other activities in order to gain first hand knowledge of the topic under review.

4. Witnesses

- 4.1 A Council's Overview and Scrutiny function has the power under Section 21(13) of the Local Government Act 2000 to require the attendance of members of the Executive and Council officers at Scrutiny meetings.
- 4.2 There is a statutory duty (Section 21(14) of the same Act for any member of the Executive or Council officer invited to attend a Scrutiny meeting to comply with the request.
- 4.3 Other witnesses from external organisations may also be invited to give evidence to Review Groups.
- 4.4 The Task and Finish Group should identify:
 - (a) the persons to be invited;
 - (b) the issue in respect of which the person's attendance is requested;
 - (c) the reason why the attendance of the person would assist the Task and Finish Group in its task.
- 4.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Officer facilitating the review will endeavour to give both internal and external witnesses as much notice as is practicable of the Task and Finish Group's request to attend a meeting.

4.6 The invitation will give details of the review being undertaken, including any supporting documents which may be relevant, state why the witness has been invited to attend and whether or not the Review Group requires written reports in support of the witness's evidence.

5. Conduct of Meetings

5.1 Meetings of the Task and Finish Group shall be scheduled to enable the Group to complete its task within the timeframe identified in the scoping exercise. However, it is recognised that on occasion additional time may be needed to complete a task, but the agreement of the Scrutiny Management Committee should be sought for this.

5.2 Task and Finish Groups should aim, where possible, to hold the necessary meetings within as short a timeframe as possible so that findings do not become out of date before completion of the task.

5.3 Unless the evidence given to a Task and Finish Group is likely to be confidential or exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, all Task and Finish Group meetings will be treated as public meetings and arrangements made to accommodate any members of the public who might attend.

5.4 No witness giving evidence to a Task and Finish Group will be under any obligation to disclose publicly personal information about an employee, a looked after child, or any supplier or recipient of council services.

5.5 All Review Group meetings will be Chaired in a manner which ensures mutual respect between all those participating.

5.6 The Chair will ensure that questions put by members of the Task and Finish Group relate solely to the issue in respect of which the person's attendance has been requested.

5.7 Questioning should be aimed at trying to understand and explore issues rather than at catching witnesses out.

5.8 Members of the Task and Finish Group should avoid making statements rather than asking questions.

5.9 Witnesses, including Executive Members, are not members of the Review Group and should confine themselves to answering questions put to them by the Task and Finish Group or supplying evidence requested by the Task and Finish Group.

5.10 Members of the Task and Finish Group should operate within the agreed plan for the task and should not disclose or use any information/knowledge obtained through involvement in the group for any other purpose.

5.11 The Overview and Scrutiny Officer facilitating the Task and Finish Group will take notes to record the evidence given at meetings and at site visits which will be used to form the basis of the final report.

6. Reports, Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Final reports need to be written in clear English which can be easily understood by the lay reader. Over use of jargon and acronyms should be avoided and, if necessary, a glossary should be included as part of the report.

6.2 Final reports should be based on facts collected, give a full picture of the issues scrutinised and contain both conclusions and clear recommendations.

6.3 Reports should be an expression of the views of the Task and Finish Group on the basis of the evidence received and it is therefore important that members of the Task and Finish Group express their views at the drafting stage.

6.4 When reaching conclusions and making recommendations, the members of the Task and Finish Group should endeavour to reach agreement by consensus. However, if agreement cannot be reached, a minority view on a particular issue may be included in the final report, or as part of minority report.

6.5 Depending on the topic scrutinised by the Task and Finish Group and the recommendations made, the final report will be presented to the Management Committee, Cabinet, Council, an Scrutiny Committee or even an outside organisation for consideration and action.