

CULTURE, HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION PORTFOLIO

DECISION RECORD

18th January 2006

Present:

Councillor Robbie Payne (Culture, Housing and Transportation Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Ralph Harrison, Head of Public Protection and Housing
 John Mennear, Acting Assistant Director, Community Services
 Mike Blair, Acting Transport and Traffic Manager
 Steve Hilton, Assistant Public Relations Officer
 Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

A representative from the Hartlepool Mail was in attendance.

69. Cornwall Street – Proposed Traffic Calming (*Head of Technical Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To advise the Portfolio Holder of the outcome of a site meeting with residents and Ward Councillors to determine the location of proposed traffic calming in Cornwall Street as part of the Oxford Road Local Safety Scheme project.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Acting Transportation and Traffic Manager reported that a site meeting was held on 28th October 2005 with a view to ascertaining locations for road humps in Cornwall Street. After discussions took place, it was agreed to reposition two of the humps. Following this site meeting, the resident of no. 49 suggested that the hump could be located at the junction of Eton Street. This suggestion would necessitate the relocation of several humps. Residents were consulted on this suggestion and

several objections were received. Visits were made to two of the objectors to offer further explanations of the changes. Only one was contactable and they were unwilling to withdraw her objection upon hearing the explanations.

Residents were concerned that these traffic-calming measures would lead to a severe loss of parking. It was reported that this was not the case and that vehicles can, and are permitted, to park on traffic calming measures.

It was also reported that, in order to maintain sight lines, yellow lines would be required at the junctions to each of the side roads off Cornwall Street. In order to reduce the disruption to residents parking these were proposed to be reduced in length into each side street to 2m, allowing corner residents to park their vehicles in the side street adjacent to their property.

The following two options were proposed and detailed by way of an attached appendices:

Option 1

This involves the siting of the traffic calming outlined in the original report except for the relocation of the two humps discussed at the site meeting. The traffic calming would consist of a series of 7 flat top road humps, each road hump having a height of 75mm and a length of 3.9 metres. They would be constructed from a bituminous material.

Option 2

This option would involve siting a series of 3 flat top road humps and 4 raised junctions as described in section 3.4. The road humps would be of the same design as described in option 1 and the raised junctions would be of similar design but would extend fully across the junction. These features would therefore be approximately double the length of a standard road hump.

Although the two proposals outlined above were equally effective, any introduction of traffic calming measures must comply with Department for Transport regulations. However, wherever possible, residents concerns should be accommodated.

The Acting Traffic and Transportation Manager indicated that there was nothing to prevent cars from parking on the flat top road humps proposed and that this would not damage the vehicles.

It was estimated that this scheme would cost £7,000 and would be funded through the Local Transport Plan.

The Portfolio Holder was minded to approve the scheme as detailed in Option 2 above, however he was concerned that the yellow lines may

create problems for the local residents. It was indicated by the Portfolio Holder that the traffic calming measures in Oxford Road may have a detrimental affect on Cornwall Street and that these schemes should not be looked at in isolation. The Portfolio Holder had made enquiries with local estate agents who had assured him that traffic calming measures, in the main did not affect the value of local properties.

The Portfolio Holder requested that the Acting Transportation and Traffic Manager write to all the residents affected by these traffic calming measures to reassure them with regard to their concerns.

Decision

- i) That Option 2 as detailed above be implemented in Cornwall Street as part of the Oxford Road Local Safety Scheme project.
- ii) That the implementation of no waiting at any time restrictions at the junction radii on the streets leading into Cornwall Street be withheld and the situation monitored.

70. Creation of a New Public Bridleway at North Hart Farm, Hart Parish *(Director of Adult and Community Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To seek approval for the creation of a new public bridleway between the Northern end of the adopted highway known as North Hart Lane (Point A) and the Southern end of the Public Footpath known as No.11, Hart Parish (Point B), as shown on a plan attached by way of appendix.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Acting Director of Community Services indicated that there were a number of issues within this report outstanding and therefore requested that this item be withdrawn from the agenda. A report would be submitted to the Portfolio Holder at a later date.

Decision

That the item be withdrawn from the agenda and reported to a meeting at a future date.

71. Amending of the Winter Service Gritting Routes (Director of Neighbourhood Services)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To approve three minor amendments of the winter service gritting routes.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Acting Transportation and Traffic Manager indicated that the winter service was subject to consultation on an on-going basis. During the extended period of snow this winter, a number of issues had been identified and reported for consideration. Three issues to grit residential roads due to their incline were assessed.

Following this assessment, it was felt that there was validity in changing the current provision from grit bins to precautionary salting by gritting machine. This would mean upgrading the nominated roads to 2nd priority gritting routes and redeploying the grit bins to other locations. The nominated roads were: Hartville Road/Ocean Road, Cresswell Road/Cresswell Drive and the currently ungritted section of Spalding Road between Thetford Road and Crowland Road.

The Portfolio Holder requested a detailed and comprehensive report on the financial implications of the service, how better value for money could be achieved and what the criteria was for gritting roads.

Decision

The above amendments of the winter service gritting routes were approved.

72. Murray Street Highway Improvement Scheme (Head of Technical Services)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To confirm the scheme details and seek approval for the proposed car park on the waste land adjacent to Hartley Street.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

As reported to the Portfolio Holder on 13th July 2005, significant funding had been identified by New Deal for Communities (NDC) for an environmental improvement scheme on Murray Street. Contributions were also to be made from the highway maintenance budget and the Local Transport Plan.

The Acting Transportation and Traffic Manager indicated that a key element of the scheme was to improve traffic flows and car parking along Murray Street which should encourage passing trade and help revitalise local businesses. NDC had recently acquired an area of wasteland adjacent to Hartley Street and it was proposed to turn this into a public car park that would be managed by the Council's Parking Section upon its completion.

The main elements of the scheme were:-

- Footpaths to be re-constructed using a quality paving material.
- New street furniture, including street lighting columns, bollards, litter bins, etc.
- Designated parking lay-bys to be regulated for 30 minutes limited waiting.
- Slightly reduced carriageway width of 6 metres to encourage slower speeds.
- Double yellow lines in areas outside of lay-bys to maintain traffic flows and encourage passing trade for local businesses.
- Provision of a zebra crossing at the existing School Crossing Patrol site, to give a safe crossing point at all times of the day.
- School safety zones on Bentick Street and Elcho Street to prevent parking and create a safe area on the approaches to Lynnfield Primary School.
- Provision of bollards to prevent parking on footpath areas.
- Installation of dropped kerbs and tactile paving to improve crossing facilities for the disabled.

The Traffic and Transportation Manager indicated that consultation events had been held on 6th and 8th June at the Lynnfield Centre with letters distributed to residents and businesses in the area asking them to attend to give their views. One of the main points to be raised from this consultation was that businesses did not want the works taking place in the run up to Christmas. It was therefore planned to commence the

scheme in mid-late January 2006. A contractor had been appointed although firm costs were awaited.

The Portfolio Holder was disappointed that the contract had been awarded to a firm from outside the town. The Acting Traffic and Transportation Manager indicated that as the funding for this scheme was predominantly provided by New Deal for Communities, they had insisted on a tendering process being undertaken based on a 80:20 quality:price ratio.

As the works had been delayed so as not to affect trade over the christmas period, the Portfolio Holder asked what measures were being put in place to ensure this did not happen whilst the works were being undertaken. The Acting Traffic and Transportation Manager indicated that the scheme would require some temporary traffic measures to be in place. Although this may cause some delays, the roads would only need to be closed for short periods of time where any resurfacing was required. However, traffic flow would be maintained at all times.

Decision

The scheme as detailed in section 2 including the creation of a car park on the land adjacent to Hartley Street was approved.

73. Masfield Road – Objection to 20 mph Limit (*Head of Technical Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To report an objection received from the Association of British Drivers Hartlepool Group, (ABD), to the advertised order for the above 20mph limit.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Acting Transportation and Traffic Manager reported that due to a number of concerns raised about the speed of traffic and inconsiderate parking on Masfield Road, a scheme was designed and approved at the Portfolio meeting on 5th October 2005. An advertisement was placed in the local press for the scheme which involved the introduction of a 20-mph speed limit on Masfield Road between Chesterton Road and Thackeray Road which generated an objection from the Association of British Drivers Hartlepool Group (ABD).

The traffic calming proposed would consist of a series of speed cushions. This was a type of road hump that allowed buses, fire appliances and ambulances to straddle the hump and therefore not impede their journey. It was also proposed to implement No Waiting At Any Time restrictions around the junction radii. In response to residents concerns about parents parking and obstructing driveways, it was proposed to prevent parking between 8.00 – 9.30am and 2.30 – 4.00pm.

Consultation had taken place and there were 12 responses, 10 were in favour and 2 against. The objections to the scheme from the two residents were based on an increase in noise and pollution levels and increased parking congestion. It was reported that Department of Transport Advice notes 4/96 and 6/96 indicate that the proposals put forward would not have an adverse affect on noise and pollution levels or parking congestion. Although it was acknowledged that these restrictions may transfer parents to park on or near to junctions in neighbouring areas, this action could not be condoned. However, the restrictions would allow Council Parking Patrol Officers to enforce these rules.

The objection received from the ABD was attached by way of an appendix with the issues outlined in the report. The parking regulations proposed would address the road safety issues raised while the other issues were not significantly affected by the scheme. It was noted that the vast majority of local people affected by the scheme are in support of it, as are the school.

The Portfolio Holder indicated that the road safety of pupils near schools was of paramount importance and felt that this was his prime responsibility as portfolio holder. He requested that the scheme be undertaken as quickly as possible and that the implementation of similar schemes at other schools across the town be considered.

Decision

The implementation of the 20-mph speed limit, to complement the associated traffic calming measures be approved.

74. Campbell Road to Back Owton Manor Lane Shops Footpath – Petition for Closure – Consultation Results *(Head of Technical Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To advise on the result of a consultation exercise with residents in respect of the possible closure of the above footpath.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

At the Portfolio meeting in September 2005, it was reported that Councillor Johnson had presented a petition to the authority for the closure of the above footpath, as shown by way of an appendix. It was resolved to carry out a consultation exercise with a wider spectrum of users.

The Acting Transportation and Traffic Manager reported that the consultation exercise had now been completed which included letters sent to residents, local schools, Housing Hartlepool, Ward Councillors and the Council's Estates Section. Of the 185 letters sent out, 66 (37%) were returned with 79% of people agreed with the closure. There was 15% of people against the closure with 6% returning an impartial view. The comments received were included within the report.

Although it appeared that the majority of residents who responded were in favour of the closure, the Council must be able to demonstrate that the highway was unnecessary to achieve a successful application for a stopping-up order to the Magistrate's Court. An alternative means of closure would be to erect alleygates, however the existing layout of the footpath did not lend itself to this type of treatment without substantial boundary alteration works to the adjoining properties.

An application to the Magistrate's Court would cost in the region of £1,000 and if successful, alteration works and land transfers would be required both of which had associated costs and as yet, no funding had been identified.

The Portfolio Holder empathised with all residents concerned but agreed that the Magistrates would make a decision based on the evidence provided. As funding had not yet been identified for this proposals, he requested that an approach for funding be made to the South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum.

Decision

- i) It was approved that an application be made to the Magistrates Court for the stopping-up of the footpath as detailed in the report, subject to funding becoming available.
- ii) An approach for funding for this application be made to the South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum.

74. Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy: Extension of Grants Policy in the Belle Vue Area (*Head of Public Protection and Housing*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To seek approval of a possible time extension to the Belle Vue interim grants policy.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Head of Public Protection and Housing reported that at the Portfolio meeting on 15th August 2005, a decision was made to amend the existing restricted policy to allow consideration of Homeplus and Renovation Grants for works considered essential in the interests of health and safety of the occupants. This amended policy was time-limited until 15th November 2005 to allow consultation on options for the area to take place.

Although New Deal and Hartlepool Revival were working towards producing a decision on the area, the consultation process was proving to be more difficult and lengthier than expected. The consultants examining this were due to report back to New Deal and Hartlepool Revival at the beginning of February with their findings being subject to further consideration and consultation with residents. It was therefore proposed that the existing policy for the Belle Vue area be extended until 31st March 2006.

Decision

That the existing policy for the Belle Vue area be extended until 31st March 2006.

76. Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (*Head of Public Protection and Housing*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To outline the provisions of the Housing Act 2004 in relation to the licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Head of Public Protection and Housing reported that the requirement to license certain types of HMO would become a duty in April 2006. As well as covering bedsit type accommodation, self-contained flats in converted buildings and some bed and breakfast establishments, would also include properties rented by groups of students. However, some self-contained flats would no longer be considered HMOs.

It was estimated that there were approximately 60 HMOs in Hartlepool, of which 10-15 may require a licence under the Housing Act 2004. HMOs of three or more storeys in size with five or more residents must be licensed, although some exemptions would apply. The Act allows for the introduction of licensing of other HMOs but only if a significant proportion of these were considered to be ineffectively managed.

Local Authorities may charge for issuing a licence although any fee structure must be transparent and must reflect the actual cost of the licence. The criteria for the granting of a licence was detailed in the report as well as the criteria for revoking a licence.

The future action required was detailed in report but included:

- Publicity materials to be produced to notify landlords and tenants of the new requirements to licence certain HMOs
- Known HMO landlords to be contacted
- An on-going process would identify and prioritise HMOs for future action
- A fee structure would be developed
- Evidence would be gathered to determine whether the power to introduce an extension of the compulsory scheme should be used
- Consultation would take place with all parties likely to be affected and any views incorporated as necessary.

The Head of Public Protection and Housing indicated that they were currently working with landlords and a further detailed report would be submitted to the Portfolio Holder at a future date.

The Portfolio Holder emphasised the need for consultation in order that a range of views can be considered.

Decision

The contents of the report were noted.

J A BROWN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 24th January 2006