

NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITIES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

25 March 2008

The meeting commenced at 9.00 a.m. in the Avondale Centre, Dyke House School, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Peter Jackson (Neighbourhoods and Communities Portfolio Holder)

Councillors: George Morris and Pauline Laffey submitted their apologies as Park Ward Councillors.

Officers: Dave Stubbs, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Denise Ogden, Head of Environmental Management
Alistair Smith, Head of Technical Services
Mike Blair, Transportation and Traffic Manager
John Smalley, Principal Environmental Health Officer
Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Apologies:

Councillors: George Morris and Pauline Laffey had wished to be in attendance as Park Ward Councillors but unfortunately had to submit their apologies.

70. Mountston Close Gate (*Head of Environmental Management*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To provide evidence for the Portfolio Holder that will assist in deciding whether or not to reinstate the gating scheme at the Mountston Close pathway.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Head of Environmental Management presented a report which outlined the background to the gating scheme at the Mountston Close pathway. In

recent months, monitoring of the area had been undertaken by Hartlepool Police, the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and Environmental Enforcement Team. A summary of the results highlighted that the evidence produced by the crime prevention and environmental agencies failed to demonstrate the need for a gate at the Mountston pathway. In addition, covert surveillance had been deployed by the Council's Neighbourhood Action Team which supported the view that there was nothing to substantiate the increased level of complaints received in this area in relation to anti-social behaviour.

It was acknowledged that the installation and removal of the Mountston gate had been a distressing experience for some residents and it was therefore proposed that assistance from the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit be offered in relation to arranging a mediation service for residents in the area who wished to participate.

The Portfolio Holder thanked officers from all agencies involved for the hard work and commitment in resolving this issue and for the detailed report provided. It was requested that a report be submitted to the relevant portfolio holder in six months' time to highlight any incidents of anti-social behaviour in the area.

Decision

- (i) That the Mountston gate not be reinstated and the existing structure be removed in view of the evidence produced by crime prevention and environmental agencies and the majority of the Residents who replied to the consultation letters.
- (ii) That the Central Area Action Group be asked to take responsibility for implementing the exit strategy as outlined in the report, in an attempt to improve community relations and reduce any fear of crime experienced by local residents.
- (iii) That a further report be submitted to the relevant portfolio holder in six months' time highlighting any incidents of anti-social behaviour in the area.

71. Housing Capital Programme (*Director of Regeneration and Planning Services*)

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) and (ii) applied.

Purpose of report

To update the Portfolio Holder on the Single Housing Investment Pot (SHIP) funding allocations for 2008-11, and to seek approval of the housing capital Programme for 2008/9.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Principal Environmental Health Officer presented a report which outlined the background to the Single Housing Investment Pot (SHIP) allocations for 2008-2011. The allocations for 2008/09 for adaptations for disabled persons and private sector decent homes were detailed in the report. It was noted that apart from Disabled Facilities Grants, the funding available for housing improvements over the next three years had been considerably reduced. Whilst the report referred to the SHIP allocation for 2008/22, the proposals related to the proposed housing capital programme for 2008/09, due to the possible development of a regional grant/loans scheme during 2009/10 which might have an impact on priorities for funding.

In relation to the reduction in funding for assistance to improve Energy Efficiency, discussions were ongoing with the existing partner agency on how to maximise the use of the funding. In addition to this, an approach had also been made from another company interested in working with the Council which may result in a reduced amount of funding required from the Council. The Portfolio Holder indicated that the possibility of including more dwellings within the allocation of funding be examined and commented that he was disappointed that the funding allocation was only half of what had been received in previous year's allocations.

Decision

The proposed Housing Capital Programme for 2008/09 attached at Appendix 1 was approved.

73. Renewal Assistance for Private Sector Housing (*Director of Regeneration and Planning Services*)

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (ii) applied.

Purpose of report

To consider the amendment of the ratio between grant and loan for Renewal Assistance.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Principal Environmental Health Officer presented a report which outlined the background to the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002

which gave the Council discretion over the types and amounts of assistance they could provide for the improvement or repair of private houses.

Reduced central government funding for private sector housing improvement increased the focus on the possibility of recycling scarce resources by using loans and it was inevitable that loans would substantially replace grant. The introduction of the 70% grant/30% loan in Hartlepool had not caused any great difficulties and it was proposed to move to a 50% grant/50% loan scheme. This ratio had been tested in Stockton and Middlesbrough and had proved to work satisfactorily.

It was noted that during the next two years, additional funding may be made available from NDC funds to carry out similar works of improvement and NDC would be able to set its own policy for assistance, although it was expected that this would be aligned with the Council's policy.

Decision

The amendment of grant/loan for renewal assistance to 50% grant/50% loan was approved.

74. Highway Planned Maintenance Works (Five-year programme) *(Head of Technical Services)*

Type of decision

Key Decision - Test (ii) applied.

Purpose of report

To seek approval to the five-year planned highway maintenance programme for the period April 2008 to March 2013.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Head of Technical Services presented a report which provided the background as to the testing methods utilised to identify the condition of a highway and identify which highways in the town would be included in the five-year programme based on the test results, highway inspections, risk management information and customer feedback. A 5-year programme had been established and the financial implications of this were detailed in the report.

Decision

The programme was approved.

75. Minor Works Proposals, Neighbourhood Consultative Forums (*Head of Neighbourhood Management*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To consider recommendations of the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums in respect of Minor Works funding.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report set out the Minor Works proposals considered by the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums. The following schemes were proposed:

Central Neighbourhood Consultative Forum

- i) Burn Valley Ward - Alston Street – additional parking and removal of flower bed and existing plinth - £1,500
- ii) Stranton Ward – Young Street – resurfacing of footpath with tarmac - £2,000
- iii) Rift House Ward – Dryden Road/Swift Grove – remove grass verge and replace with tarmac - £1,850
- iv) Hart Ward – Elwick Village – repair of wooden bridge over the beck and pruning of trees on village green - £1,290
- v) Rift House Ward – Ruskin Grove – remove grass verge and replace with tarmac - £6,300
- vi) Foggy Furze Ward – Studley Road – replace small grassed area with tarmac - £1,500
- vii) Foggy Furze Ward – Vicarage Court – construction of small footpath across grassed area - £350

South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum

- viii) Owton Ward – Lindsay Road – remove grass verge and replace with tarmac - £1,160
- ix) Seaton Ward – Bolton Grove – removal of part of the verge and replace with tarmac - £4,440
- x) Greatham Ward – Station Road – link existing drain to sewer drain

- outside no 6 and 7 Station Road - £8,000
- xi) Rossmere Ward – Jutland Road – contribution to renewal of existing playground - £10,000

Decision

The recommendations of the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums were approved.

76. Hosting of Web Based GIS Software (*Head of Technical Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To seek approval to waive standing orders in respect of the procurement of a specialist software package for the provision of web based information relating to works on the public highway.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Head of Technical Services presented a report which provided the background which indicated that from April 2008 it would be mandatory that GIS co-ordinates be supplied by utility companies relating to all activities that they undertake on the public highway and that local authorities link this information onto a web based GIS system.

Details of the proposed software to be utilised for the provision of this information were provided in the report and it was noted that the adoption of this software would represent the minimum disruption to existing processes and systems and would not require any unnecessary additional investment. The financial implications were detailed in the report and the Head of Technical Services confirmed that this would be incorporated within the Council's ICT Strategy.

In response to a question by the Portfolio Holder the Traffic and Transportation Manager provided clarification on the standing orders proposed to be waived.

Decision

It was approved to waive standing orders in respect of the purchase of the

specialist software package to enable the Authority to meet its duty to provide information on a web based GIS system to provide a visual display of internal and external works to facilitate successful network management by providing information to all stakeholders on its web-site from April 2008.

77. Proposed parking restrictions – Huckelhoven Way/Church Street (*Head of Technical Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To consider objections submitted in response to the advertising of amendments to proposed parking restrictions between Huckelhoven Way and Church Street.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Head of Technical Services presented a report which outlined the background and considered letters of objections from two businesses and seven members of the public, in relation to the impact on the business trade and the loss of “free unrestricted” parking particularly in Tower Street. In light of the consultation undertaken, the scheme was revised to reflect the strength of feeling, particularly from businesses. Additional restrictive parking measures were to be considered for the surrounding area, including residents only parking, access for loading and to protect junctions and accessways.

It was proposed that the restrictions be implemented from 1 April 2008 with the scheme in Tower Street commencing in May 2008.

The Portfolio Holder requested that a letter be sent to all objectors highlighting the options and costs for all car parking in this area.

Decision

The revised scheme was approved.

78. King Oswy Drive – Objections to Traffic Regulation Orders *(Head of Technical Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To seek approval for traffic regulation orders following objections to the Barnard Grove School Safety Scheme.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Head of Technical Services presented a report which provided the background to the introduction of a 20mph speed limit and parking restrictions in the vicinity of Barnard Grove School. As a result of objections received, a number of amendments to the order to reduce the inconvenience to residents and these were detailed in the report in section 4. It was noted that the scheme would be funded from the Barnard Grove Safety Scheme.

Decision

That the proposals outlined in section 4 of the report be approved.

79. School Transport Provision for Children from Burbank *(Head of Technical Services)*

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Portfolio Holder due to outstanding financial information being awaited.

J A BROWN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 28 MARCH 2008