

NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITIES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

22 April 2008

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

Present:

Councillor Peter Jackson (Neighbourhoods and Communities Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Dave Stubbs, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Denise Ogden, Head of Neighbourhood Management
Alastair Smith, Head of Technical Services
Charlotte Burnham, Scrutiny Manager
Colin Ogden, Waste Management Manager
Gemma Clough, Principal Regeneration Officer
Fiona Riley, Regeneration Officer
Steve Hilton, Public Relations Officer
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

Also present K Marshall
John and Denise Taylor

80. M Block Traffic Calming (*Head of Technical Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To report an objection letter and attached petition submitted in relation to the MBlock traffic calming scheme.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The traffic calming scheme had been approved in principle by the Portfolio Holder in August 2007, subject to consultation with residents and ward councillors. The consultation responses demonstrated that 92% of those who responded were in favour of the scheme. The proposals were also presented to the Owton NAP Forum and the South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum.

Following comments from the emergency services slight amendments were made to the scheme which was then approved by the Portfolio Holder in January 2008.

Subsequently a petition and letter had been received from a resident of Motherwell Road objecting that the public notice advertising the installation of the speed cushions did not expire until 28th March but the works commenced prior to this. The Head of Technical Services advised that the reason for this was that the M Block scheme was finalised relatively late in the financial year with funding confirmed even later. It had not been feasible to advertise the public notice any earlier but to delay the work would have resulted in the loss of external funding, with little prospect of it being available in future years. Extensive public consultation had indicated that a majority of people were in favour of the scheme. Should the decision be made to remove the traffic calming measures the costs would need to be borne by existing traffic management budgets.

Another issue raised in the objection was that the scheme did not include road repairs. The Head of Technical Services indicated that this had never been part of the proposals. The Council's Highways Maintenance Team would carry out any required repairs following the usual criteria relating to all highways within the town.

Mr and Mrs Taylor were present and Mr Taylor addressed the meeting. He detailed the progress of the works, advising that letters had been sent from the Neighbourhood Services Department indicating that the work would begin on 17th March, despite the consultation period running until 28th March. However the work had actually started on 14th March. His objection was not to the traffic calming measures rather the fact that the work had been carried out regardless of the outcome of the consultation period. If a member of the public undertook building work without the correct permissions they would be required to undo what had been done so why should the Council be any different. Removing the traffic calming measures would cost money but the work should not have taken place at all.

Criticism was also levelled at officers for sending consultation letters to residents over the festive period when people would naturally have other things on their mind. The reliability of the post at this time was also an issue.

Mr Taylor further commented on the failure to carry out necessary road repair saying residents had assumed such repairs would be carried out as part of the traffic calming measures. He referred in particular to 2 large potholes near one of the speed cushions, asking who would be liable if a resident injured themselves or damaged their vehicle.

Responding to Mr Taylor's comments the Director of Neighbourhood Services acknowledged that the work should not have commenced prior to the end of the consultation period and apologised to residents. It would be wrong, however to remove the traffic calming measures, given that the majority of respondents had been in favour of their installation. Retrospective planning

applications were regularly considered by the Council's Planning Department and officers always tried to be reasonable in these situations. The Director also advised that any injuries etc sustained as a result of bad road surfacing would ultimately be determined by the relative insurance companies.

The Portfolio Holder advised that he was not minded to remove the traffic calming measures as the funding for this would have to be borne by Council Tax payers. He acknowledged that procedures had not been followed and asked officers to ensure that this never happened again. A letter would be sent to residents explaining the situation and apologising for what had happened. Additionally the Portfolio Holder asked that officers inspect the condition of the road and conduct any repairs deemed necessary under the usual criteria.

Decision

- i. That the objection be noted,
- ii. That the scheme remain in place,
- iii. That officers ensure that any future funding arrangements are put in place within realistic time scales to ensure compliance with procedures,
- iv. That a letter be sent to all residents appraising them of the situation and apologising and
- v. That any necessary road repairs be carried out under the usual criteria.

81. Dog Control Orders *(Head of Neighbourhood Management)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To seek approval to introduce Dog Control Orders as per the draft appendices and to seek approval to set the level of Fixed penalty payable for an offence under a Dog Control Order.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report provided details of the Draft Dog Control Order proposals, the scale of the consultation process and the responses to it. As a result a number of changes to the original draft proposals had been made including the lifting of any restriction in the upper Burn Valley Gardens and the Family Wood and an increase in the maximum number of dogs a person could be in charge of in a public place from 3 to 4. The Director of Neighbourhood

Services further advised that the Headland Parish Council had requested that the Dolomite Beach remain on the schedule, despite the objections of residents.

Mr K Marshall was present and addressed the meeting. He requested that the Dolomite Beach be removed from the schedule as there were a number of elderly dog owners who were unable to take their dogs further afield. The answer was to enforce the law more stringently as this would send a message out to the less responsible owners rather than punishing responsible dog owners. The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that responsible dog owners were not the problem. A lot of officer time was expended keeping the Dolomite Beach clean of dog faeces and officers were simply unable to keep up with the problem. Those at fault tended to use the beach late at night or early in the morning, meaning they were difficult to catch. There were additional issues relating to the nesting of wild birds and the growth of a rare orchid plant which meant it was imprudent to have people using the beach 24 hours a day.

The Portfolio Holder advised that he would formally approve the orders as detailed within the report. However he requested that officers arrange a meeting between the residents and members of Headland Parish Council in order to find common ground on this issue. If necessary the Dolomite Beach could be removed from the schedule at a later date.

Decision

That the Orders be formally made as per the drafts attached,

That the Acting Chief Solicitor be authorised to seal, date and insert the date of commencement of the Order on behalf of the Council and

That the proposals and the level of fixed penalty for an offence committed under a Dog Control Order be approved.

82. Kerbside Recycling Collection Service *(Head of Neighbourhood Management)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the activities undertaken to address concerns raised on kerbside recycling at the February Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum meeting.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

Alternate weekly collections were piloted in Hartlepool in July 2006 prior to full implementation in October 2007. Customer satisfaction in refuse collection prior to implementation was 90%. This dropped to 72% during the first phase although it had recently increased to 82%. During a February 2008 meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum members had expressed their dissatisfaction with the service regarding reliability, confusion as to what could be recycled, where to present waste for collection and the level of cleanliness following collection.

An Action Plan to address these concerns was attached to the report for the Portfolio Holder's attention. The Head of Neighbourhood Management advised that the training programme had been reviewed and would be re-implemented following a number of departmental job evaluation issues. Advice would be given to the contractors regarding difficulties in gaining access to containers due the parked cars and where containers should be returned following deposit within the collection vehicles. The importance of securing blue bags following collection had also been reiterated and a number of alternatives to the existing blue bag were currently being considered.

The Waste Minimisation and Recycling education programme would continue to be implemented. Home visits could be arranged if families were struggling with the ban on side waste.

In terms of service performance the Head of Neighbourhood Management reported that recycling had increased from 15% to 32% since alternate weekly collections were introduced. This placed Hartlepool in the top performance quartile in the country. However the National Waste Strategy for 2007 had increased targets to 40% of all household waste by 2010 (45% by 2015).

Councillor Jane Shaw, Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, was present and addressed the meeting. She advised that this was one of the most complained-about issues within the town and was pleased it was being evaluated. There was a need for recycling but it could be done better. This issue would benefit from the scrutiny process and public interest would be high.

The Portfolio Holder indicated that he had received a letter (later withdrawn) from the Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee and had spoken to her on this issue. He would not be referring the issue to scrutiny on this occasion but requested that officers report back to his next meeting on progress with the Action Plan. At that time, following Council elections and the finalising of the Scrutiny Forum remit for 2008/09 he would be minded to look at the terms of reference for a scrutiny referral as he felt it would be premature to it at this moment. Councillor Shaw indicated that to do the topic justice would take 12 months of scrutiny. In terms of the timing the Scrutiny Manager advised that scrutiny work programme items would be considered in June 2008 which would fit in nicely with the Portfolio Holder's proposals. The Portfolio Holder requested a meeting between himself, the relevant scrutiny chairs and the relevant officers regarding the remit of any future scrutiny investigation.

Decision

- i. That the report be noted,
- ii. That an update on the implementation of the Action Plan be brought to the next Portfolio meeting and
- iii. That a meeting be arranged to discuss the remit of a future scrutiny investigation

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

Type of decision

Non-Key

Purpose of report

To seek approval to extend the existing supported bus service 828 following representations made regarding school transport provision for children from Burbank.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

In March 2005 Stagecoach revised the route of its commercial bus service 3 resulting in the loss of bus services along Huckelhoven Way. This particularly affected accessibility for Brierton and English Martyrs pupils living in Burbank and had led to representations on this matter from residents, ward councillors and the MP for Hartlepool. In response to these concerns Stagecoach and the Council had discussed a variety of options, the most recent being the extension of the existing supported bus service 828 from Wainwright Walk to Huckelhoven Way. Data showed that there was spare capacity on this service and service 829 which could enable Burbank children to use the 828 service to travel to school.

Stagecoach, supported by the Council, had indicated they would apply for dispensation to waive the normal requirements of 56 day alteration notice through the Traffic Commissioner. The extension to service 828 would result in an additional cost of £150,20 per 28 day period up to the current contract end in August 2008. There would also be an additional fee of £54 to register the change with the Traffic Commissioner.

Decision

That the existing supported bus service 828 be extended from Wainwright Walk to Huckelhoven Way.

84. Rossmere Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) Update (Final for Endorsement) *(Head of Regeneration)*

Type of decision

Key

Purpose of report

To seek endorsement of the Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) Update for the Rossmere area.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report described the background to NAPs with specific focus on the Rossmere NAP. It outlined the comprehensive consultation process undertaken to develop the NAP from the initial community consultation event to the consultation process on the draft NAP, all of which had enabled the final version to be produced.

The report also illustrated the residents' key concerns which needed to be addressed as well as outlining the format of the NAP document, and the plans to produce the residents' summary pamphlet. The implementation procedure was outlined along with the financial implications of the NAP and a consideration of the possible risks associated with the NAP process.

The document had been endorsed by the Rossmere Forum and the South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum. It would be taken to the Hartlepool Partnership for endorsement on 9th May.

The Rossmere NAP would continue to have an impact on service delivery and would potentially influence future funding opportunities in the Rossmere area.

Decision

That the Neighbourhood Action Plan Update for the Rossmere area be endorsed subject to endorsement from the Hartlepool Partnership

85. Avenue Road / Lucan Street / Middleton Grange Lane – Revised Parking Restrictions *(Head of Technical Services)*

Type of decision

Non-Key

Purpose of report

To consider amendments to the current layout of permit controlled parking bays in Avenue Road and creating new business permit only parking bays in Lucan Street and Middleton Grange Lane.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report detailed the current permit controlled parking provisions in Avenue Road. There are currently 4 business bays and 3 residents' bays, with a waiting list in force for business bays. In recent years the residential occupancy had increased in Avenue Road, leading to requests for additional residents bays as parking in Lucan was restricted by no parking controls or limited waiting parking provision. Day time parking restrictions had also caused difficulties to businesses in the area which were felt to be having an adverse effect on trade. In addition there were 2 unregulated parking spaces in Middleton Grange Lane which motorists were taking advantage of.

A map showing the proposed revised allocation of permit parking control bays in Avenue Road was attached to the report. Under the proposals there would be 6 resident bays and 4 business parking bays. The current limited waiting provision between Errol Street and Tees Street would be reduced and new business bays would be created in Lucan Street and Middleton Grange Lane, thereby providing additional parking spaces for local businesses and further accessibility for demand. The proposed amendments had been discussed with businesses and residents and met with favourable support, although any amendment would be subject to formal advertising and consultation.

The additional business permit bays would provide additional income of £280 per permit per annum while there would be minimal costs attached to the creation of the new parking spaces and revised layout of permit controlled bays.

Decision

- i. That the new business parking bays in Lucan Street and Middleton Grange Lane be approved,
- ii. That the amended bay layout in Avenue Road be approved and
- iii. That the Acting Chief Solicitor be asked to advertise the necessary Legal orders

86. School Meals Service Proposal to Upgrade a Cashless

System (*Head of Neighbourhood Management*)

Type of decision

Non-Key

Purpose of report

To seek Portfolio Holder approval to upgrade the school meals cashless system in English Martyrs School and Sixth Form College to a biometric system.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The current cashless school meals system has been in place in English Martyrs School for over 8 years. The first system of its kind to be installed in a Hartlepool School it was now reaching the end of its life and should it breakdown or crash it was highly unlikely it could be repaired as parts were becoming obsolete. As a result officers felt an upgrade was needed.

The current system uses data stored on a swipe card. However since its installation a number of problems had been highlighted mainly due to the users not the technology. Children would forget to bring them to school, they could be lost, stolen, borrowed, worn out or passed between children. Four hundred new cards were issued per year with approximately 1,000 replaced at a cost of £1.25 - £1.75. Also 200-300 children do not use the cards meaning their details have to be input manually.

An upgrade to the biometric system would remove the need for cards. English Martyrs were intending to use a biometric recognition system in the future for other application including door entry access. Using biometrics as part of the school meals system would save costs and reduce duplication of tasks. Biometrics would involve the accessing of customer identity via a finger reader rather than a card. This would improve speed and accuracy and reduce the risk of bullying. Officers approximated the additional cost to change to the biometric system at approximately £8,000 however these costs would be offset by the anticipated savings by scrapping the current card system. Officers would meet with parents to address any concerns they might have prior to implementation.

Decision

That the introduction of a biometric system in English Martyrs School be approved and the report noted.

P DEVLIN

ACTING CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 29 April 2008