

NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITIES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

19th August 2008

The meeting commenced at 9.00 a.m. at the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Peter Jackson (Neighbourhoods and Communities Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Dave Stubbs, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Philip Hepburn, Parking Services Manager
Carol Davis, Service Development Manager
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

9. Landfill Tax (*Head of Neighbourhood Management*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To set out the effect of a proposed change in Government policy whereby landfill tax is returned to local authorities to enable them to invest in recycling facilities needed for the country to meet EU goals and targets and attempt to identify the impact this would have on Hartlepool Borough Council.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

Landfill tax is tax paid by local authorities for each tonne of household waste sent to landfill rather than disposed of via other methods. It was introduced in 1996 to encourage local authorities and businesses to switch to more environmentally friendly and sustainable methods of waste disposal. Since 1999 the cost has increased annually, from £1 per tonne in 1999 to the current rate of £8 per tonne. To ensure that the rising cost of landfill tax did not reduce the funds available to local authorities for investment in alternative means of waste disposal the Government's stated approach to landfill tax had previously been to return the revenue collected to councils over and above the level of £15 per tonne. However this commitment had recently been reversed and the Government had indicated they would not be returning the revenue from landfill tax.

This combination would leave the Council liable for significant additional costs for which they would not be reimbursed. The anticipated steep increases in landfill tax over the next three years would see Hartlepool paying an estimated £224,000 in landfill tax over the next three years even assuming continued falls in the amount of waste sent to landfill. This additional burden was unlikely to have any more of an environmental impact than would have been achieved with the previous lower levels of tax. Increasing the landfill tax escalator and changing the policy on returning landfill tax to Councils would reduce the net funding to Councils in favour of increased central Government revenue. This was being achieved at the expense of Councils and Council Tax payers as landfill tax was putting increasing strain on local services.

The Local Government Association (LGA) had contacted all local authorities encouraging them to support their campaign for landfill tax to be returned to local authorities to enable them to invest in recycling facilities needed to meet EU goals and targets. The Portfolio Holder was asked to support this.

Decision

That the LGA campaign be supported and officers write to Hilary Benn MP on behalf of the Portfolio Holder asking that landfill tax be returned to local authorities as was promised.

10. Rock Armour Replenishment, Seaton Carew *(Head of Technical Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To seek confirmation of the action of the formal Engineer to the contract to fund additional rock armour at Seaton Carew from the coast protection revenue budget in the sum of £87,000

To issue a variation order on the existing contract with Seymour Civil Engineering Ltd for the amount of £111,500 on a re-measure basis.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

In 2006 and 2007 there were significant sea wall breaches at Seaton Carew evidencing major beach lowering and exposure on the mass concrete wall foundation. This gave rise to serious concerns that the sea would undermine the wall, toppling it over into the sea along with 300m at the North Shelter frontage. It was decided therefore to use rock armour from a less vulnerable fillet section to protect the toe and encourage beach retention. This work was successful but it was felt prudent in the long term to replenish the weakened fillet area eventually. In addition routine inspections showed that the profile of

the rock armour revetment north of the Stell outfall was lower than when built. The net result of all this was that significant amounts of rock armour were required and in February 2008 Cabinet approved funds of £98,000. The contract was subsequently awarded to Seymour Civil Engineering and commenced in June 2008. However it had become apparent that more rock would be needed to complete the work than was available under the existing contract. Seymours had agreed to supply as much rock as was available from their original quarry supplier at the same rate as specified in the contract. However the supplier ran out of suitable rock with the shortfall being sourced from an alternative supplier at a slightly higher rate.

The Portfolio Holder was advised that in order to expedite the works without further delays, and to avoid cost uncertainty and inevitable additional costs in contract preparation a variation order had been issued to Seymours to continue the existing contract. It was estimated that the total cost of the works would be £185,000. Given the original budget of £98,000 and the tender amount of £73,507.09 this left £24,500 still available from the original budget. The shortfall of £87,000 was available from the coast protection revenue budget. A site instruction had thereby been issued to Seymours to continue to completion and the works were completed before the start of the school holidays. The Portfolio Holder was asked to confirm the actions taken by the formal Engineer in these matters.

Decision

That the following actions of the formal Engineer to the Contract be confirmed:

- i. The funding of additional rock armour at Seaton Carew from the coast protection revenue budget in the sum of £87,000
- ii. The issuing of a variation order on the existing contract with Seymour Civil Engineering Ltd for the amount of £111,500 on a re-measure basis

11. Review of Household Waste Recycling Centres within the Tees Valley *(Head of Neighbourhood Management)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the review on the position of Household Waste Recycling Centres within the Tees Valley.

To seek approval to tender the salvage, recycling and site supervision of the Burn Road Household Waste Recycling Centre.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report provided a summary of the contents of Entec's review regarding the position of the Household Waste Recycling Centres within the Tees Valley. A copy of the review was appended to the report. One of the recommendations was that the current Household Waste Recycling Centre on Burn Road should be expanded to improve recycling levels. This would allow the provision of additional recycling containers for current and new materials and improve access during busy periods thereby encouraging recycling.

The current contract for Burn Road was scheduled to end on 31st March 2008 with a six-month extension being granted while the results of Entec's review were imminent. The current contractor had expressed a desire to continue operating the site but it was officers' opinion that the contract should be tendered in order to ensure value for money. In line with the Council procurement policy it was suggested that Hartlepool enter into a joint procurement exercise with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council. The new contract would commence from April 2009 meaning another six-month extension to the existing contract would be required.

A Waste Infrastructure Capital Grant of approximately £160,000 per year had been made available to Hartlepool for 2008 and 2009, dropping to £59,000 in 2010. This meant the additional costs needed to develop the Burn Road site had been identified. It was anticipated that the salvage and recycling tender contract would increase but the full costs would not be known until the receipt of tenders.

Decision

- i. That the need for the Burn Road site to be developed and enhanced to improve recycling performance be acknowledged
- ii. That the Head of Neighbourhood Management be authorised to tender the salvage and recycling service.

12. Piloting Waste Incentive Scheme (*Head of Neighbourhood Management*)

Type of decision

Non-Key

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder that the Government has included powers in the Climate Change Bill to enable up to five English local authorities to pilot waste incentive schemes.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report provided details of Defra's latest initiative to encourage householders to recycle and reduce the amount of household waste they produce. New legislation in the Climate Change Bill allowed up to five pilot authorities in England to trial specific charge and rebate powers for household waste. Local authorities were being asked to pilot a financial incentive scheme commencing April 2009 whereby charges would be made for the amount of residual waste put out with these charges being used to pay rebates to households who throw away the least waste. Charges and rewards could also be linked to Council Tax bills. Local authorities would be expected to design their own schemes within the new powers and there would be wide scope for flexibility covering the length of the scheme, level of incentive and which areas/households would be covered. However the Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that given Hartlepool's success in the area of recycling any incentive schemes were felt to be neither necessary nor sustainable.

Decision

That Hartlepool should not put itself forward to take part in a pilot waste incentive scheme pilot.

13. Neighbourhood Services Departmental Plan 2008/09 – 1st Quarter Monitoring Report (*Director of Neighbourhood Services*)

Type of decision

Non-Key

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the progress made against the Neighbourhood Services Departmental Plan 2008/09 to the end of the first quarter of the year.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Director of Neighbourhood Services outlined the progress made against the key actions identified in the Neighbourhood Services Departmental Plan 2008/09 and the outturns to the end of the first quarter of key performance indicators.

Within the Neighbourhood Services Departmental Plan there are a total of 65 Actions and 42 Performance Indicators identified for which the Portfolio Holder has responsibility. The report summarised the progress made towards achieving these actions and performance indicators. One action and two

performance indicators had been highlighted as not expected to achieve target, reasons for which were given within the report. The Portfolio Holder was asked to approve a change in the due date for the action in question, moving it from September 2008 to December 2008.

Decision

- i. That the change to the action milestone be approved
- ii. That the progress made against the key actions and indicators be noted.

14. Review of Parking Charges *(Director of Neighbourhood Services)*

Type of decision

Non-Key

Purpose of report

To examine and review the current level of permit and pay and display parking charges.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report proposed changes to the existing pay and display parking tariffs, business and commuter permits and season ticket costs. Details were given of the number of parking bays available and the variations in charges across the town. Nationally car parking income trends were falling and in the case of Hartlepool this was expected to lead to budgetary losses.

In addition the Management of Middleton Grange Shopping Centre (MGSC) had raised several areas of concern in relation to central parking provision and charges particularly with reference to the effect the current charge has on potential visitors using the centre between 4pm and 6pm. Visitor numbers were in decline during this period with the parking charges being cited as a possible reason. MGSC had therefore requested a more appealing charge be introduced for this period with officers proposing to suspend charges after 4pm at the multi-storey and Marks and Spencer's Eastside car parks for a trial period with its effectiveness monitored. The Portfolio Holder asked that a press release highlighting this move to free parking be issued via the Public Relations Department.

MGSC had also requested that the multi-storey car park be opened for Sunday trading. To do this would necessitate parking staff to be present on site thereby increasing the running and maintenance costs. Traditionally a

parking charge had only been required Monday to Saturday with Sundays designated as free parking. In order for the multi-storey car park to be opened on Sunday there would need to be a charge for parking to offset the cost of employing staff. It was suggested therefore that a £1 charge for parking on Sundays be levied.

Details were given within the report of the proposed increases in parking charges which it was anticipated would recover an additional £144,000 over the second half of this financial year with a projected £288,00 over 2009/2010. Without these increases a budget pressure would be placed on the department.

Decision

That the proposed increase of pay and display / permit parking costs as set out in the appendix to the report be approved with effect from 1st October 2008.

That the current legal agreement between HBC and MGSC be reviewed with a view to reaching agreement with MGSV to exclude the opening of the Multi Storey Car Park on Sundays.

That if there is a necessity for the Multi Storey Car Park to be opened then a £1 Sunday parking charge should be introduced to cover the additional associated costs.

That a free parking concession after 4pm be established at the Multi Storey and Marks and Spencer's car parks and trialled on an experimental basis and its effectiveness monitored

15. Neighbourhood Development Officers *(Head of Neighbourhood Management)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of work and projects the Neighbourhood Development Officers have been involved in during 2007/08 and the planned activities for the coming year.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report advised that Neighbourhood Development Officers support Neighbourhood Managers in building capacity of residents and assist in the implementation of Neighbourhood Action Plans. They work closely with Resident Representatives and resident groups across the town on a variety of projects. Details were given of some of the projects they had been involved

with during 2007/08 and activities planned for the coming year. The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that their achievements contributed significantly to providing support and assistance to all Council departments, external agencies and local community groups and residents in Hartlepool. They also work closely with Community Network in the capacity building role of Resident Representatives and residents across the town helping to develop and implement the Council's Community Strategy.

The Portfolio Holder requested that his thanks be passed on to the Neighbourhood Development Officers for all their hard work, particularly in relation to the Neighbourhood Action Plans.

Decision

That the contribution the Neighbourhood Development Officers make in building capacity in the community and in implementing Neighbourhood Action Plans be acknowledged and noted.

16. 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:

North Neighbourhood Consultative Forum

- i. St Hilda Ward – Hazelwood Rise – planting of trees and provision of bollards - £4,850
- ii. St Hilda Ward – Steps at rear of St Mary Street – reconstruction - £4,460
- iii. St Hilda Ward – Prissick Street Parking – removal of grass verge and infill with tarmac - £9,000
- iv. Hart Ward – Coast Road Steps – improvements and installation of a handrail - £3,000

- v. Dyke House Ward – Allerton Close environmental improvements - £3,400
- vi. St Hilda Ward – West View Road - removal of grass verge and infill with tarmac – also planting of trees - £11,550
- vii. Throston Ward – Throston Allotments scheme – installation of security fencing - £7,000

Central Neighbourhood Consultative Forum

- viii. Park Ward – Elwick Road Zebra Crossing – installation - £15,000
- ix. Park Ward – Ward Jackson Park CCTV and Lighting – installation - £5,000
- x. Park Ward – Cresswell Road Lighting – installation of new lighting columns and lanterns - £5,000
- xi. Rift House Ward – Macauley Road Parking Provision – removal of grass verge and infill with tarmac - £5,460
- xii. Rift House Ward – Bennett Road Parking Provision – removal of grass verge and infill with tarmac
- xiii. Rift House Ward – Masefield Road Pedestrian Access – installation of crosspaths on the grassed area - £345
- xiv. Rift House Ward – Browning Avenue Parking Provision – removal of grass verge and provision of parking spaces - £10,000
- xv. Stranton Ward – Newhaven Court Parking Provision – increasing the entrance width - £1,425
- xvi. Stranton Ward – Burbank Alleygate Scheme – gating of the rear alleyway between Burbank Street and Ward Jackson School - £5,400
- xvii. Burn Valley Ward – Alston Street Parking Provision – removal of a flower bed and provision of car parking - £4,000
- xviii. Burn Valley Ward – Colwyn Road – removal of the landscaped area and provision of parking - £8,800
- xix. Elwick Ward – Hart Parish Council – Saxon Church – resurfacing of parking area - £3,000
- xx. Elwick Parish Council – Church Steps – reconstruction - £400

South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum

xxi. Fens Ward – Retford Grove Shrub Replacement - £1,225

xxii. Various Wards – verge re-instatement with Bitmac - £28,750

In addition a provision of £5,000 from each of the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums was agreed to contribute to the work of Pride in Hartlepool and £3,500 from each to contribute towards the ongoing rolling programme to provide dropped crossings throughout the town.

Decision

That the recommendations of the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums be approved.

17. Annual Diversity Report 2007/8 *(Director of Neighbourhood Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To provide the Portfolio Holder with an update on diversity actions completed in 2007/2008 and an overview of key diversity issues for 2008/2009.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report included an analysis of key achievements and the approach to Diversity in 2008/2009 which is more mainstreamed by being linked to the Business Planning Process. Some of the key activities to be undertaken the following year were also highlighted.

Decision

That the contents of the report be noted.

P DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 21st August 2008