

NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITIES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

18th December 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
Denise Ogden, Head of Neighbourhood Management
Charlotte Burnham, Scrutiny Manager
Alastair Smith, Head of Technical Services
Jeff Mason, Head of Support Services
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

34. The Removal, Storage and Disposal of Abandoned and Nuisance Vehicles *(Head of Neighbourhood Management)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To seek approval to invite tenders for the removal, storage and disposal of abandoned and nuisance vehicles.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

Abandoned and nuisance vehicles had been a problem across the country since the 1960s and increases in the number of cars had made the situation progressively worse. A wide variety of legislation had been utilised by the Neighbourhood Action Team to assist in the removal of these vehicles including the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 and the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2008. Devolved powers had been obtained from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) for the instant removal of untaxed vehicles from any land so long as it is not associated with a dwelling. A vehicle amnesty was also launched as a further attempt to resolve these issues whereby old cars could be surrendered to Council officers free of charge. To date these measures had been an overwhelming success with the Fire Brigade reporting an unprecedented reduction in

vehicle arson over the last five years.

In order for the Council to remain focused on dealing with this issue it was proposed that tenders be invited for the removal, storage and disposal of abandoned and nuisance vehicles in line with Council requirements. Procurement costs could be shared with other Tees Valley Local Authorities. Reported abandoned vehicles would be investigated by the Neighbourhood Action Team within 24 hours and those identified as abandoned or untaxed would be removed to a secure compound by the successful tenderer. Should the release fees not be paid within a specified time period the vehicle would be destroyed. It was also proposed that the current vehicle amnesty would continue to be provided free of charge.

The Portfolio Holder was advised that current funding, through LPSA grant monies, was due to cease in March 2010 and therefore alternative funding sources would need to be secured. However the service could be self-financing depending on how many vehicles were impounded and the retrieval charges imposed on owners. It was emphasised that the use of an external provider for this service would not impact on or threaten the position of any existing Council employee. The costs of providing the necessary equipment and associated running costs would be borne by the contractor.

The Portfolio Holder expressed his support for the service but asked that he be kept informed of how much income was received through retrieval charges.

Decision

That the invitation of tenders for the removal, storage and disposal of abandoned and nuisance vehicles be approved.

35. Resident's Only Parking Controls – Sandringham Road *(Head of Technical Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To consider a petition received from residents of Sandringham Road seeking the removal of the residents permit parking controlled scheme at this location.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

Sandringham Road was currently on the fringe of the current permit controlled zone and residents would therefore be subject to an increased permit charge from £1 to £5 as agreed by Cabinet when the current permits expire in January 2009. The Head of Technical Services had received a

signed petition from 74 residents requesting the removal of the scheme as they felt parking controls were no longer required. Recent visual surveys had indicated that spaces were available during enforcement hours. This could be seen to support residents' views but could equally be a demonstration that the scheme was working successfully. The residents had acknowledged through the petition that by opting out of the controlled parking scheme the Council would be unable to take parking enforcement action, particularly in relation to match day parking.

Officers proposed therefore that further consultation be carried out with residents in advance of any approval so that all residents were fully aware of the consequences and those who had not signed the petition would be given the opportunity to express their views. Should residents wish to continue with the removal of parking restrictions it was proposed that this take effect from 1st February 2009 following the expiration of the current permits. This was felt preferable to engaging in a costly administrative exercise of refunding part payments for the current permits.

The Portfolio Holder commented that he had been advised by a ward councillor that not all the Sandringham Road residents wanted parking restrictions removed. He asked that officers take this into account when carrying out the consultation.

Decision

That a full consultation be carried out with residents in advance of any approval to remove the area from the controlled parking zone and that the results be reported to the next available meeting.

36. The Dog Kennelling Service (*Head of Neighbourhood Management*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To seek approval to invite tenders for the provision of the Council's Dog Kennelling Service.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 the Council has a statutory duty to provide a dog warden service to discharge the functions imposed or conferred for dealing with stray dogs found within the borough of Hartlepool. Details were given of the current procedures relating to stray dogs including the statutory requirement dogs remain at the kennelling facility for seven clear days before further action is taken. Approximately 400 stray dogs are seized every year with the vast majority re-homed. In addition the Portfolio Holder

was advised that the Council, in partnership with the Dogs Trust, provided a free dog micro-chipping service which had proved extremely popular. Free spaying and neutering was also offered for re-housed dogs.

Tenders were being invited for a three year contract for the provision of the Kennelling Services, with a two-year extension option by mutual agreement. The contract specifications would satisfy the Council's duty to detain stray dogs for the required statutory period of time and meet all legal requirements relating to the temporary holding of stray dogs. The free micro-chipping service would also continue although it was likely that the free spaying and neutering service would not due to financial constraints. Current fees payable by owners claiming their dogs back would be reviewed in the new financial year. The provision, maintenance and running costs associated with the contract would all be borne by the successful tenderer and it was emphasised that the use of an external service provider would not impact upon or threaten the position of any existing Council employee.

Decision

That the invitation of tenders for the provision of the Dog Warden Service be approved.

37. Resident's Parking Consultation – St David's Walk / Throston Grange Lane *(Head of Technical Services)*

Type of decision

Non-Key

Purpose of report

To consider results of a consultation with residents as to a proposed residents only permit parking scheme.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

A consultation had been carried out with residents in the area regarding a proposed residential permit parking scheme. St David's Walk was located off Throston Grange Lane directly opposite the dental surgery. Several new highway improvements had been carried out at this location as part of the Tesco Development on Wiltshire Way and the convenience of this location for visitor parking to the nearby facilities had led to additional demand for parking spaces and resulted in residents finding it increasingly difficult to park close to their own properties. Therefore a residents only permit parking scheme was being proposed Monday to Saturday, 8am to 6pm. As part of the consultation residents were advised of the ongoing phase charge increase introduced from April 2008 and made aware that the cost of a permit would rise to £20 per permit by 2010/11. Of the consultation forms received 76% were in favour of the proposals with 12% against and 12% undecided. Officers therefore

recommended approval.

Decision

That the creation of a resident's only parking zone at St David's Walk / Throston Grange Lane be approved

38. Regeneration and Planning Services Departmental Plan 2008/09 – Quarter 2 Monitoring Report (*Director of Regeneration and Planning Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the progress made against the Regeneration and Planning Services Departmental Plan 2008/09 in the second quarter of the year.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report gave details of progress against Housing Services actions contained in the Departmental Plan and the second quarter outturn of key performance indicators. It was anticipated that all actions and performance indicators would be completed on target.

Decision

That the progress against key actions and indicators in the second quarter of the year be noted.

39. Final Report – Kerbside Recycling Scheme Referral (*Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To outline the findings and conclusions of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee investigation into the operation of the kerbside recycling scheme.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The final report into the kerbside recycling scheme investigation, referred to Scrutiny by the Portfolio Holder in June 2008, outlined the overall aim of the

investigation, terms of reference, methods of investigation, findings, conclusions and subsequent recommendations. In the absence of the Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, the Scrutiny Manager advised that there had been a lot of community engagement around this issue, including the involvement of young people through the 11 million takeover day.

The Portfolio Holder thanked the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee for providing such a comprehensive report in a relatively short period of time. It was acknowledged that Elected Members' perception of the Kerbside Recycling Scheme had changed as a result of this investigation and that the Committee had subsequently congratulated Officers of the Neighbourhood Services Department for their efforts. The Portfolio Holder endorsed these comments, describing the current service as "excellent".

Decision

That the recommendations outlined within the Kerbside Recycling Scheme Referral Final Report be accepted.

40. Final Report – Kerbside Recycling Scheme Referral – Action Plan (*Director of Neighbourhood Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To agree an Action Plan in response to the findings and subsequent recommendations of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's referral into the Authority's kerbside recycling scheme.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report provided brief background information into the kerbside recycling scheme scrutiny referral and provided a proposed Action Plan by the Neighbourhood Services Department in response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

The Head of Neighbourhood Management confirmed to the Portfolio Holder that all the proposed Actions within the plan were achievable, although the proposed reduction in the number of bring services available was being halted for the time being given current market concerns.

Decision

That the Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's investigation into the Authority's Kerbside Recycling Scheme be approved.

The meeting finished at 9.25 am.

P DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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