

REGENERATION AND LIVEABILITY PORTFOLIO

DECISION RECORD

18th November 2005

Present:

The Mayor (Stuart Drummond), Regeneration and Liveability Portfolio Holder

Officers: Alison Mawson, Head of Community Safety and Prevention
Charlotte Burnham, Scrutiny Manager
Craig Thelwell, Environmental Action Manager
Joan Wilkins, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Also Present: Councillor Pamela Hargreaves, Chair of the Regeneration and Planning Scrutiny Forum (representing Councillor Marjorie James – Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee)

31. Final Report – Additional Powers For Community Wardens *(Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee)*

Type of decision

Non Key

Purpose of report

To present the findings of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee following its extensive enquiry into the additional powers available to Community Wardens under the Accreditation Scheme.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Chair of the Regeneration and Planning Scrutiny Forum, on behalf of the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, summarised the content of the Committee's report relating to the outcome of its enquiry into the additional powers available to Community Wardens under the Accreditation Scheme. Outlined within the report were details of the background to the inquiry, its overall aim, terms of reference, methods of investigation and findings. Details were also provided of the conclusions reached and approval sought of the Committees recommendations.

The Chair of the Regeneration and Planning Scrutiny Forum highlighted that whilst extensive consultations had been undertaken the number of responses had been small. There had been no clear steer in favour of a particular course of action, however, there had been a lean towards wardens being able to issue fixed penalty notices for littering and dog fouling.

Following consideration of the information provided the Mayor expressed his support for the award of additional powers to wardens, however, it was recognised that consideration needed to be given to wardens powers in conjunction with neighbourhood policing provisions, in particular the role of Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's). The Chair of the Regeneration and Planning Scrutiny Forum indicated that the need to look at the role of community wardens alongside that of PCSO's had been raised by the committee. It was suggested that it would be beneficial to secure 6 months additional funding for community wardens to enable the impact of their activities to be accessed in conjunction the activities of the 21 new PCSO's recently appointed.

Decision

The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committees recommendations, as outlined below, were approved:

- i) That the findings of the consultation exercise (Appendix A of the report refers) be used to assist in the determination of additional powers for Community Wardens under the Accreditation Scheme in conjunction with those powers which received the most support (paragraph 6.1 (c) refers), the future funding pressures of Community Wardens and proposed changes arising from the Neighbourhood Policing pilot scheme, and
- ii) That the future funding arrangements of Community Wardens be considered as an area worthy of further scrutiny review during the compilation of the Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for the 2006/07 Municipal Year.

32. Installation Of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (Anpr) Readers *(Head of Community Safety and Prevention)*

Type of decision

Non Key

Purpose of report

To seek approval for the installation of ANPR equipment in Hartlepool at various sites and relay ANPR signals to the CCTV monitoring centre.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Head of Community Safety and Prevention reported that Cleveland Police had been one of 23 police authorities selected to take part in phase two of 'Project Laser'. The pilot commenced on the 1st June 2003 and concluded on 30th June 2004, during which time Cleveland Police performing extremely well with an arrest record seventh highest out of the 23 forces and the number of fixed penalty tickets issued fourth highest. Although the pilot concluded on the 30th June 2004 ANPR continued to be successfully used in Cleveland.

Additional funding of £1.5 million was made available in early 2005 to put into ANPR across the country, £3 million of which had been used to set up a central data warehouse, where all the reads from the various ANPR readers across the country will be stored. The remaining £12 million was distributed across the country, of which Cleveland received £200,000.

Within the report attention was drawn to the benefits of the continued operation and expansion of the system and details provided of the following proposals for Hartlepool:

- The provision of 6 ANPR readers, funded from the £200,000 allocated to Cleveland Police earlier this year.
- The provision of a further 6 ANPR readers, funded from the reward grant from the successful Local Public Service Agreement Round 1 (LPSA1) project targeting domestic burglary.
- The relay of ANPR signals via the Police control room to the CCTV monitoring centre in Hartlepool.

Regarding the financial implications of the proposal full details of proposed funding sources and costs were outlined in the report with an assurance that the relaying of signals via the Police Control Centre would not result in an increase in staff workloads. There would also be no direct revenue implications for Hartlepool Borough Council in 2005/06 or 2006/07 as a result of any of the proposals during at least the first two years of operation.

In summing up, it was highlighted that the ANPR system would assist in the reduction of crime and disorder in Hartlepool whilst also helping to identify vehicles associated with crime and direct the police vehicle intercept team.

Decision

- i) The installation of ANPR readers in Hartlepool at 12 sites agreed with Cleveland Police was approved.
- ii) The use of the CCTV monitoring centre to receive the ANPR signals was approved.

33. Minor Works Proposals (*Head of Environmental Management*)

Type of decision

Non Key

Purpose of report

To consider recommendations of Neighbourhood Consultative Forums in respect of minor grant works.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Head of Environmental Management sought consideration of the following Minor Works proposals, as recommended by the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums:

Central Neighbourhood Consultative Forum

- i) Stockton Street – Landscaping - Funding of £1814 to complete the revamping of the landscaped area outside the College of Further Education.
- ii) Belle Vue Way – Landscaping - Completion of the revamping of the landscaped areas running along the length of Belle Vue Way at its junction with Tesco's, at a cost of £3390.
- iii) Newhaven Court and Hucklehoven Way - Removal of large shrub-bed outside the College of Further Education on the bend of Hucklehoven Way to replant with an avenue of trees to match those already planted. The cost of the scheme £3615.
- iv) Naisberry Park - Creation of environmental improvements involving the introduction of some new steel lanterns and replacing some existing ones, together with the removal of shrubs overhanging the boundary fences, and the removal of shrubs at the various access points to the walkways running through Naisberry Park from Tarnston Road to Cairnston Road. The total cost of the scheme £10,500.

- v) Burns Avenue - Removal of grass verges in Burns Avenue to be replaced by tarmac at a cost of £9,500.
- vi) Colwyn Road - Installation of five bollards along grassed open space in Colwyn Road to prevent cars parking, at a cost of £750.

South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum

- i) Spalding Green – Provision of six dropped crossings on the area known locally as Spalding Green at a total cost of £1650.
- ii) Grass Verge Removal – Removal of the following grass verges to be replaced with tarmac:

Greenock Road (29-33)
Fordyce Road (54-junction with Forfar Road)
Motherwell Road (full length)

The total cost of the work £10,700. (£5,350 from the minor works budget and the remainder from the Owton NAP)

- iii) Station Lane – Zebra Crossing - A contribution of 50% towards the £10,000 cost to provide a Zebra Crossing across Station Lane between Glentower Grove and Gilpark Grove.
- iv) Greatham Play Area - A contribution of £10,000 towards the total cost of £40,000 to renew the play equipment at Greatham.

Decision

The recommendations of the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums were approved.

34. Pride In Hartlepool Proposals (*Head of Environmental Management*)

Type of decision

Non Key

Purpose of report

To consider recommendations of the Pride in Hartlepool Steering Group in respect of proposals for community projects and inform the Portfolio Holder of nominations for the 'Pride in Your Neighbourhood awards.'

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Head of Environmental Management sought consideration of the following proposals for community projects, as recommended by Pride in Hartlepool Steering Group:

- i) Greatham Primary School - Support for the creation of a willow tunnel and four wooden benches for the school grounds. The total funding requested £940.
- ii) Manor West Youth Project - Removal and replacement of five dead trees with five further trees and creation of two paved footpaths. The total funding requested £3,490.

Attention was also drawn to nominations received for the 'Pride in your Neighbourhood Awards' under the following categories for 2005, which needed to remain undisclosed until the awards evening:

Environmentally Active Individual
Environmentally Active Community Group
Environmentally Active Group of Young People
Environmentally Active Business
Environmentally Active School
Best New Environmental Project
Best School Grounds
Most Improved Plot (last 12 months)
Adopt a Beach
Special Achievement

Decision

The recommendations of the Pride in Hartlepool Steering Group, as outlined above, were approved.

35. The Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 *(Head of Environmental Management)*

Type of decision

Non Key

Purpose of report

To outline the relevant content of the new Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005, provide an overview of the potential for providing a safe and clean environment for the people of Hartlepool and highlight the likely impact on current resources.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Head of Environmental Management reported that the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 received Royal Assent on 7th April 2005 and gave local authorities greater powers to tackle the growing number of environmental issues within communities. Details of the key provisions of the Act, which was to be implemented by April 2006, were outlined in the report with particular attention drawn to:

- Power to require Name & Address
- Setting Levels of Fines
- Early Payment of Fixed Penalty Notices
- Use of Fixed Penalty Receipts

Particular attention was drawn to the value of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 as an addition to the powers available to the Council as it endeavoured to provide a safe and clean environment for the people of Hartlepool. It was, however, recognised that the enforcement of the new legislation would inevitably bring additional costs for the respective service divisions and in particular that it might not always be possible to recover the full costs of carrying out remedial works.

It was also noted that the Act takes responsibility for dealing with stray dogs away from the Police, resulting in the need for the Council to provide suitable kennelling facilities around the clock in order for members of the public to bring in strays. The logistics of providing this service had its problems and it would be essential that adequate funding be secured prior to the transfer of responsibility.

Attention was also drawn to:

- The need to ensure that enforcement runs in parallel with education and awareness initiatives.
- The need for an assertive campaign to rid the town of nuisance vehicles has resulted in a significant downturn in vehicle crime and vehicle arson. Similar success has been achieved in dealing with litterlouts and irresponsible dog owners, with the number of people receiving fixed penalty fines increasing somewhat over the past year. Fly tippers have also been the target of specific operations.
- The constraints placed upon the work of the Neighbourhood Action Team by dated legislation, which has not provided a means to address the growing number of environmental issues that exist in our communities. Clearly, the new amendments and legislation go some way to correcting this shortfall and with anti-social behaviour high on the public agenda, the new Act had resounding benefits for the town as a whole. However, whilst monies generated from the various fixed penalty options were able to assist in applying the new legislation, a sustainable funding source was required to ensure its long-term effectiveness.

Following consideration of the report, whilst the Portfolio Holder welcomed the new powers contained within the Act he highlighted the importance of using them to their full extent and highlighted the importance of putting the necessary resources in to achieve this. It was felt that in the future the allocation of resources for this needed to be looked at alongside the provision of funding for Community Wardens. Attention was also drawn in relation to the transfer of responsibility for dealing with stray dogs away from the Police to the Council to the need for strong links with RSPCA and other agencies and the provision of appropriate facilities.

Decision

The benefits of the new Act in providing a safe and clean environment, and the need to channel adequate resources towards ensuring its effective long-term implementation, were noted.

J A BROWN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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