

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

24 February 2014

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Peter Jackson (In the Chair)

Councillors: Jim Ainslie, Allan Barclay, Keith Dawkins, Steve Gibbon and
Brenda Loynes

Also Present: Councillor Marjorie James

Officers: Alastair Smith, Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods
Alyson Carr, Head of Finance (Regeneration and
Neighbourhoods)
Mike Blair, Highways Traffic and Transport Manager
Laura Stones, Scrutiny Support Officer
Stephen Telford, Principal Engineer
Kieran Bostock, Senior Engineer
Steve Hylton, Public Relations Officer
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

80. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Sylvia Tempest.

81. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Ainslie declared a prejudicial interest in Minute 84 and indicated his intention to leave the meeting during consideration of that item of business. Councillors Loynes, Ainslie, Barclay and Dawkins declared personal interests in Minute 86.

82. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 January 2014

Received.

83. Minutes of the Meetings of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee held on 26 November 2013 and 4 February 2014

Received.

84. Town Wall Coastal Works: Construction of Set-Back Flood Defence Wall and Associated Works (*Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

Key – tests (i) and (ii) apply. Forward Plan Reference No RN39/12

Purpose of report

This report is to:-

- Inform Members of the findings of the coastal study which commenced in 2008 and the need for carrying out coastal improvements;
- Update Members on progress made to date including consultation and how this has influenced the design of the set back wall;
- Present the detailed design of the set-back flood defence wall and associated works and set out the perceived risks, and the financial/ legal considerations;
- Request Committee approval for the scheme and set out the next steps towards implementation.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director reported on the background to the Town Wall Scheme and the £1.3m of funding allocated by the Environment Agency in support of the scheme. The report updated Members on progress made to date which included feedback from the consultation and how this had influenced the design of the set back wall. Proposals for the set back wall were provided together with the various mechanisms of consultation as summarised in the report. Members were referred to details of consultation responses and action taken, risk implications as well as the financial and legal considerations, details of which were included in the report.

It was reported that should approval to proceed with the scheme be granted, there were various other permissions and consents to be achieved

before work could commence, details of which were provided.

In support of the report, a brief visual presentation was delivered to provide Members with a more detailed understanding of the scheme.

Councillor Jim Ainslie left the meeting in accordance with his earlier declaration during consideration of this item of business.

In the discussion that followed the Committee discussed the outcome of responses from the December 2010 and December 2012 questionnaires which revealed substantial support for the proposals. In relation to the 28 responses received from the December 2012 questionnaire, with 23 in favour of the scheme and 5 against, a query was raised regarding the reasons for the objections. The Senior Engineer advised that the main objections were in relation to the height of the town wall and the visual aspect. Details of the actions taken to address these concerns were outlined.

Officers went on to respond to issues raised by Members in relation to the report. Following further debate, the Committee was of the view that the concerns of residents had been considered.

Decision

That construction of the works be agreed subject to gaining the necessary further approvals.

Councillor Jim Ainslie rejoined the meeting

85. Six Monthly Monitoring of Agreed Scrutiny Recommendations (*Scrutiny Manager*)

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

To provide Members with the six monthly progress made on the delivery of scrutiny recommendations that fall within the remit of this Committee.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided details of progress made against the investigations undertaken by the previous Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum.

The report included a chart which provided the overall progress made against each scrutiny recommendation since the last six monthly monitoring report was presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum in September 2013.

It was noted that all actions had now been completed which completed the monitoring of scrutiny recommendations which fell within the remit of this Committee.

Decision

That the contents of the report be noted.

86. Review of Concessionary Fare Payments to Bus Operators for 2014-15 (*Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

Key – tests (i) and (ii) apply. Forward Plan Reference No RN33/13

Purpose of report

To report the proposed re-imburement arrangements with local bus operators for concessionary fares to be implemented from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 inclusive.

Issue(s) for consideration

It was reported that the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme had been in place since 2008. There had been various local enhancements during this time including free travel before 9.30 am and fixed price pre 9.30 of 30p which was currently still in place. Each year Tees Valley authorities negotiated a fixed payment scheme with the local bus operators, facilitated by Stockton Borough Council.

Hartlepool journeys last year increased by around 4.3% and could increase by up to 5%. The report included details of percentage growth in passenger journeys for the Tees Valley authorities together with projected revenue from 30p fixed fare for pre 9.30 journeys, increasing the flat rate to 40p or above and withdrawing the local enhancement altogether. It was recommended that a 30p flat fare for trips before 9.30 am continued in 2013/14. Whilst an increase to 40p was practical, there was no evidence to suggest a financial benefit in doing so. However, some Tees Valley authorities were pushing for an increase. For Hartlepool to remain part of the Tees Valley negotiations there was a need to conform with the majority or resort to “pay as you go” or separate negotiations. It was highlighted that

since the report was written, a meeting had taken place with other authorities where it had been agreed that the fixed price of 30p would remain for a minimum of 12 months.

Decision

- (i) Approval was granted to continue participating in the Tees Valley wide enhancement to the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) offering travel within and between the areas covered by Hartlepool, Stockton-on Tees, Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland Borough Councils.
- (ii) That the Council continue to operate an enhanced scheme whereby all journeys prior to 9.30 am on weekdays attract a nominal fare of 30p with a maximum of 40p should this be the consensus of the majority of the Tees Valley Authorities. Should the nominal fare be increased on a Tees Valley basis a further report would be submitted to this Committee for information.
- (iii) That charges for replacement passes remain at £5.00.

87. Powlett Road Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement Scheme *(Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Key – tests (i) and (ii) apply. Forward Plan Reference No RN9/14

Purpose of report

To update the Committee on further consultation, which had taken place into the A179 Powlett Road improvements in order to address residents' concerns and seek approval for the amended scheme.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director reported on the background to the improvement scheme for Powlett Road and the decision to undertake further consultation given the concerns raised by a number of residents at the meeting of this Committee in November. The public consultation had taken place on 2 December and details of the issues raised by residents were set out in the report along with a proposed solution to each issue. Letters detailing the proposals were hand delivered to residents on 24 January, the responses of which were included in Section 5 of the report.

The main concerns expressed by residents were the risk of damage to property by vehicles and loss of trees/shrubs. These had been addressed by the option for bollards to be installed outside of people's properties and removal of the proposed lay-by for the bus stop from the scheme and, as a result, there being no need for trees/shrubs to be removed. Four responses had been received to the letter sent to residents, two of which were from the same resident, stating that the scheme would bring traffic closer to their home, could cause difficulty exiting their driveway and that the drains would need to be moved. It was highlighted that the extra lane would mean traffic was slightly closer to property boundaries but would not increase the volume of traffic using the road, should also make it easier for vehicles when exiting driveways and there were no issues with drainage.

The cost of the scheme outlined was approximately £750,000 and would be funded by the Department of Transport and the Council's Local Transport Plan.

Members were referred to an objection from a resident relating to the proposals, a copy of which was attached at Appendix 3 to the report, who had requested that her concerns be reported to today's meeting. The concerns outlined were acknowledged and noted by the Committee.

The Assistant Director provided clarification in response to issues raised by Members in relation to the proposals, anticipated timescales for completion of the works as well as funding arrangements. The Chair queried whether funding would be lost if the scheme did not go ahead to which the Assistant Director confirmed that should this be the case, the allocated funding would be lost.

The Chair welcomed the outcome of the scheme and took the opportunity to thank officers for their hard work in responding to the comments of the Committee and residents.

Decision

That the scheme, as outlined in Sections 3 and 4 of the report, be approved.

88. Strategic Financial Management Report – As at 31 December 2013 *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and Chief Finance Officer)*

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

The report informed Members of the 2013/14 Forecast General Fund Outturn; 2013/14 Capital Programme Monitoring, and provided details for the specific budget areas that the Committee was responsible for.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Head of Finance (Regeneration and Neighbourhoods) indicated that a report would be submitted to the Finance and Policy Committee on 27 February 2014 and owing to the timing of meetings, the detail had been reported for this Committee. Members were advised that there would be an overall underspend at the year end of between £0.729m and £1.160m. As a minimum the lower forecast 2013/14 uncommitted underspend of £0.729m should be available to support the Medium Term Financial Strategy over the period 2014/15 and 2016/17 and this had been taken into account in the final Medium Term Financial Strategy Report presented to Finance and Policy on 31 January 2014.

Members were referred to the overall budget position for the Regeneration and Neighbourhood Services Department by Committee, the reasons for the forecast outturn, details of recommended reserves together with planned capital expenditure, as detailed in the report.

Decision

That the contents of the report be noted.

89. Former Leather Chemicals Site - Update (*Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

The report provided an update on the progress made since Cabinet on 23 July 2012 and to specifically inform Committee of the:-

- Environment Agency revised inspection report and recommendations to the Council in relation to Zone 1 (Frutalom) and Zone 2 (main site)
- Progress made on the site investigation and remedial works in Zone 3 (dunes area)

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director presented the report which provided an update on progress made since July 2012, the outcome of the Environment Agency inspection, progress made on the site investigation, details of emergency capping works together with financial and legal considerations. Following the site investigation works Technical Officers commissioned the specialist services of Consulting Engineers and the investigation information was currently being incorporated into a strategy study which would outline how this contaminated area could be 'cleaned up'. Whilst the strategy (Options Appraisal and Remediation Strategy) was ongoing a preferred option was yet to be identified.

Decision

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That a further update be provided once the Options Appraisal and Remediation Strategy report had been prepared for the site.

90. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The Chair advised that the next meeting would be held on Monday 24 March 2014 at 9.30 am in Committee Room B.

The meeting concluded at 10.25 am.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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