

# **NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

15 April 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, Brenda Loynes and Sylvia Tempest

Also Present: Julie Hetherington, Addison, Belk and Cameron Residents Group

Officers: Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Alastair Smith, Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods  
Mike Blair, Technical Services Manager  
Adele Wilson, Community Regeneration and Development Co-ordinator  
Steve Hilton, Public Relations Officer  
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

## **91. Apologies for Absence**

None.

## **92. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Brenda Loynes declared a personal interest in Minute 97.

## **93. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2014**

Received.

**94. Raby Road/Middleton Road TVBNI Scheme** *(Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods)*

**Type of decision**

Key Decision Test (i) applies – Forward Plan Reference No RN11/14

**Purpose of report**

To seek approval for a highway improvement scheme at Raby Road/Middleton Road, as detailed in the report.

**Issue(s) for consideration**

The Assistant Director reported on the background to the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement Scheme (TVBNI) and the proposals to introduce a highway improvement scheme for Raby Road/Middleton Road. Details of the proposed works were set out in the report and included the provision of a designated right turn lane for westbound traffic on Middleton Road seeking to turn right into Raby Road to relieve congestion by right turning traffic. The junction was used by Stagecoach services 1,3 and 6, Arriva services 22 and 23 and Go North East Service X35.

Consultation had been undertaken with nearby residents and businesses, ward councillors, residents groups, emergency services and bus companies. Only one response had been received from a Residents Group. Whilst the Group felt that the scheme was a good idea, they suggested that the phasing of the lights could possibly be altered to 4 way or turn right filters incorporated. Officers explored this suggestion and were of the view that changing to 4 way lights would significantly increase congestion as the junction currently operated on a 2 way system. The junction would also be modelled as part of the scheme design and where right turn filters were found to be beneficial they would be included.

It was estimated that the scheme would cost approximately £230,000 and would be jointly funded by the Department for Transport and the Council's Local Transport Plan, with a 65% and 35% split respectively.

A representative from the Addison, Belk and Cameron Residents Group, who was in attendance at the meeting, commented that whilst the Group were supportive of the proposals, concerns had been raised regarding the potential right turn difficulties as a result of the level of traffic on Hart Lane. In response, the Assistant Director acknowledged the comments of the Group and provided assurances that their concerns had been considered and the suggestion in terms of the phasing of the lights would be monitored as part of the process.

In the discussion that followed the Assistant Director responded to issues raised by Members in relation to the options available and highlighted that the purpose of bus network improvement projects of this type was to assist movement of public transport. Following further debate, the Committee welcomed the proposal to monitor the scheme and suggested that a filter system be introduced if the monitoring arrangements considered this to be beneficial.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the scheme, as outlined in section 4 of the report, be approved.
- (ii) That the scheme be monitored and a filter scheme be introduced if the monitoring arrangements considered this to be beneficial.

## **95. Additional Highway Maintenance Funding 2014-2015** (Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods)

### **Type of decision**

Key Decision Tests (i) and (ii) apply – Forward Plan Reference No RN01/14

### **Purpose of report**

To provide details of additional funding identified in the Chancellor's autumn statement of December 2012 and by the Transport Secretary in March 2014 and to seek approval for this to be used to enhance the five year highway maintenance programme for 2014-15.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

Prior to presentation of the report in relation to this item of business the Chair was pleased to announce that Council had agreed, at their meeting on 3 April, that additional funding of £131,268 be allocated to the 5 Year highway maintenance programme to match the recent funding that had been allocated by Central Government. In terms of how that funding would be utilised, details of potential schemes would be tabled later in the agenda (Minute 96 refers).

The Assistant Director presented the report which provided details of additional funding identified to improve the highway network and reduce congestion as announced in the Chancellor's autumn statement of December 2012 and by the Transport Secretary in March 2014. With regard to the autumn statement funding for the period 2013/14 and 2014/15

Hartlepool had been allocated £142k and £79k respectively. Hartlepool's share of the fund announced by the Transport Secretary in March 2014 had been allocated on a formula basis and amounted to £131,268. It had been established that better value for money was achieved by undertaking permanent resurfacing schemes rather than repairing individual potholes. It was recommended that the additional annual funding be added to the Local Transport Plan (LTP) capital funding for each year to enhance the highway maintenance programme works for 2014-15.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the additional highway maintenance allocations for 2014/15 identified in the Chancellor's autumn statement of December 2012 and by the Transport Secretary in March 2014 be added to the existing highway maintenance capital funding to enhance works identified in the highway maintenance programme.
- (ii) That the additional works be identified within the programme and published on the Council's website at the end of each financial year as per the conditions of both grants.
- (iii) That the additional highway maintenance funding of £131,268 agreed by Council be noted.

## **96. Highway Maintenance Programme 2014-15** *(Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods)*

### **Type of decision**

Key Decision Tests (i) and (ii) apply – Forward Plan Reference No RN10/14

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval to the planned highway maintenance programme for the period April 2014 to March 2015.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The Assistant Director reported on the background to highway condition reports and the £626,000 that had been allocated for highway maintenance as well as the additional £131,268 that had been allocated by Council. In terms of how that additional Council funding could be utilised, details of additional schemes were tabled at the meeting for Members' consideration.

Assuming similar allocations in future years, it would not be possible to reduce the maintenance backlog and it was likely that the condition of the network would continue to deteriorate. Details of additional highway maintenance funding, as reported in Minute 95 above was provided.

Due to the extent of deterioration of the highway network a complete review of previous years' programmes had been undertaken with all roads being rated using a traffic light system, an explanation of which was provided. Members were referred to the programme, attached at Appendix 1. It was noted that the programme had been established using estimated costs.

The Committee welcomed the additional funding identified. However, concerns were expressed regarding the scale of the repairs required in future years given the impact of the continued reduction in Central Government funding.

In response to queries raised, the Technical Services Manager provided details of the timescales for highway maintenance repairs as well as the partnership arrangements in place with Utility companies.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the planned highway maintenance programme for the period April 2014 to March 2015, attached at Appendix 1, be approved.
- (ii) That the additional schemes identified as a result of additional Council funding, details of which were tabled at the meeting, be approved.

## **97. Safer Routes to School – School Crossing Patrol Site Improvement Schemes** *(Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key decision

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval for a range of safer routes to school schemes that will improve road safety and help promote walking to school by upgrading a number of school crossing patrol sites.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The report provided background information to the work of the Sustainable Travel and Road Safety Team to enhance and promote safe and active travel for all journeys that took place in Hartlepool and the benefits as a result. The work of the unit helped to achieve the objectives of the

Council's Local Transport Plan, details of which were set out in the report. The team also managed the School Crossing Patrol (SCP) service of which there were currently 35 SCP sites which provided a service to almost all of the Borough's 13,000 pupils every day during the school year.

A range of safety schemes at SCP sites had been identified at Brougham Terrace, Masfield Road, Stockton Road, King Oswy Drive, Winterbottom Avenue and Grange Road, details of which were provided. All of the proposed schemes were of a relatively minor nature. However, where new crossing facilities had been proposed or where bollards had been proposed, consultation with residents had been undertaken, the outcome of which was outlined in the report. With regard to the financial considerations, Members were referred to a table included in the report which set out a summary of the proposed schemes, their costs and the schools/wards that would benefit. It was reported that the estimated costs for the Elwick Road Scheme had reduced from £12,500.00 to £9,250.00.

In response to a request for clarification, the Assistant Director provided details of the reasons for the objection in relation to the King Oswy Drive proposal.

### **Decision**

That the schemes, as outlined in section 4 of the report, be approved.

## **98. Access to Open Spaces and Beaches for Disabled People** *(Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods)*

### **Type of decision**

For information

### **Purpose of report**

To acknowledge the following points raised within the letter from Esther McVey MP and how Hartlepool Borough Council had shown its commitment to addressing these considerations.

- a) Consider how inclusive your own local community and environment is.*
- b) Consider whether your own local community and environment could be improved both for the benefit of disabled people but also for the benefit of local businesses.*
- c) Consider how working in partnership with disabled people...*

*could help you do this.*

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The Assistant Director presented the report which set out the background to the points raised within the letter from Esther McVey MP and how Hartlepool had shown its commitment to addressing these considerations. The Committee was referred to appendices to the report which provided detailed information on the variety of improvements and initiatives to enhance the vision of 'Access for All'.

The Chair requested that a letter of acknowledgment be sent to the MP emphasising the invaluable work undertaken by officers on a limited budget.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the points raised in the letter from Esther McVey MP be acknowledged and the contents of the report and examples of how Hartlepool had shown its continued commitment to addressing them be noted.
- (ii) That a letter of acknowledgment be sent to the MP emphasising the invaluable work undertaken by officers on a limited budget.

## **99. Ward Member Budgets 2013/14 & Civic Lottery Update** *(Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods)*

### **Type of decision**

For information

### **Purpose of report**

To inform Neighbourhood Services Committee of the final outturn for 2013/14 in relation to Ward Member Budgets and to provide an update on the Civic Lottery programme.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The report provided background information in relation to the Ward Member Budgets process and associated application and approval framework as well as the decision of the Finance and Policy Committee to align the Civic Lottery Grants Fund with the administration of Ward Member Budgets and the decision that details of progress and expenditure on the Civic Lottery

should be reported to the Neighbourhood Services Committee on an annual basis.

The report included a breakdown of schemes approved in 2013/14, by Ward Member, general areas being supported, examples of collaborative working as well as details of one unapproved scheme.

In relation to the Civic Lottery, a full breakdown of projects supported were outlined by way of an appendix to the report.

Members were referred to the decision of Finance and Policy Committee on 19 December 2013 that Ward Member Budget allocations for 2014/15 be top sliced by 20% (£1,000 per Ward Member) for the continuation of the Environmental Apprentice Scheme and that any unspent monies from the 2012/13 and 2013/14 allocations be set aside and utilised to continue the Ward Member Budget Programme post 2014/15. This had been agreed by full Council on 6 February 2014. In relation to the Civic Lottery, the total funding available for distribution in 2013/14 was £17,023 and this was a rolling programme. The capital investment £427,000 remained untouched.

In the lengthy discussion that followed, officers responded to issues raised by Members. Clarification was provided regarding unspent monies and future allocations in relation to the Ward Members' Budget Programme, the Civic Lottery process and support/subsidy arrangements for commercial operations.

The Chair was pleased to note the schemes and various groups that had been supported from Ward Member budgets as well as the Civic Lottery Scheme and took the opportunity to acknowledge the level of work involved in administering both funding schemes and to thank the team for their contribution.

## **Decision**

The Committee noted the following:-

### Ward Member Budgets

- (i) The 2013/14 outturn for the Ward Member Budgets Programme
- (ii) That £19,333 remained unspent from the 2013/13 and 2013/14 Ward Member Budget allocations and that this would be utilised for the continuation of the Ward Members Budgets Programme post 2014/15 in line with the decision of Full Council on 6 February 2014.

### Civic Lottery

- (iii) Progress to date, including details of expenditure on the Civic Lottery Programme



## **100. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent**

The Chairman ruled that the following item of business should be considered by the Committee as a matter of urgency in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that the matter could be dealt with without delay.

## **101. Any Other Business – Northgate Bus Stop**

The Chair reported that following a complaint received in relation to the proposed relocation of the bus stop from 103 Northgate to a newly constructed lay-by between Brig Open and 107 Northgate, the Headland, Hartlepool, the Council had investigated the complaint and concluded the following:-

1. That the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Services current process of informing residents/Councillors who have an interest in an issue that a Committee Meeting is to be held, be formalised (especially in relation to informing residents) to ensure that it is consistently applied. This instruction has now been issued by the Director.
2. That the Regeneration and Neighbourhood Services give consideration to the matter and be placed on a future agenda of the Neighbourhood Services Committee ensuring that both the Complainant and Councillor Payne receive prior written notice of such meeting. This was the first available meeting for the complaint to be discussed.
3. That Regeneration and Neighbourhood Services issues an apology for the shortcomings identified in the point of complaint that has been upheld i.e. failure to give notice of Committee meeting. An apology has been sent to the Complainant.
4. That when notifying an 'interested' resident that a Committee meeting is to take place to consider a matter they have an interest in, that consideration be given to the inclusion of a reference to the Democratic Services Booklet entitled '*It's your Council – How does Hartlepool Council work and How to get involved*' to ensure the public are fully informed of the process and formality of Council meetings and what to expect. This instruction has now been issued by the Director.

This was the first available meeting for the Committee to discuss the outcome of the complainant's investigation. From today the Department would start the process afresh taking into account the issues that had been raised ie health and safety.

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods stated that a report would be presented to a future meeting of this Committee in the new municipal year.

In response to a request for Member's views in relation to future consultation arrangements and whether consultation on issues of this type should extend beyond the immediate vicinity, the Chair requested that this issue be considered at a future meeting of this Committee under a separate report.

It was clarified that the investigation was undertaken independently by the Legal Department, in terms of the process and not the decision. The Chair reiterated that the purpose of updating Members today was for information purposes only and was not open for debate at this meeting. In response to some concerns that an update report would not be available until the new municipal year and given that the current membership would change, the Chair requested that current Members be invited to that meeting.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the information given be noted.
- (ii) That an update report be submitted in the new municipal year to which all current Members of the Neighbourhood Services Committee be invited to attend.
- (iii) That a report be awaited in relation to future consultation arrangements.

The meeting concluded at 10.30 am.

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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