

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

16 March 2015

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

**Present:**

Councillor: Councillor Marjorie James (In the Chair)

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

Also Present: Councillors Geoff Lilley and George Springer

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2 (ii) Councillor Robbie Payne was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Peter Jackson

Officers: Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Alastair Smith, Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods  
Mike Blair, Technical Services Manager,  
Phil Hepburn, Parking Services Team Leader  
Clare Clark, Head of Community Safety and Engagement  
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

## **70. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Keith Dawkins and Peter Jackson.

## **71. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Ainslie declared a personal interest in Minute 73 and a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute 77 and sought permission to speak and indicated his intention not to take part in the decision taken.

## **72. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2015**

Received

## **73. Review of Concessionary Fare Payments to Bus Operators for 2015-16** (*Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods*)

### **Type of decision**

Key decision tests (i) and (ii) apply – Forward Plan Ref No RN 05/15

### **Purpose of report**

To report the proposed re-imbursment arrangements with local bus operators for Concessionary Fares to be implemented from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 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, details of which were included in the report. In March 2011 agreement had been reached with the operators to continue the fixed payment system in 2011/12, with a revised enhancement of a fixed price of 30p per journey for trips commencing before 9.30 am which had remained in place since this date.

The Department of Transport had now issued its guidance for ENCTS reimbursement in 2015/16. Details of operators' costs were included in the report and it was noted that fares had continued to increase above the general inflation rate and the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) cost index. Increases averaging 3% were made across England in March 2014. Most of the operators in the area had experienced passenger growth in the current financial year due to substantial fleet investment and network improvements and it was expected that this would continue. It was recommended that approval be given to the continued participation in the Tees Valley Wide English National Concessionary Travel Scheme with an enhancement of a thirty pence flat fare for trips before 9.30 am for the financial year 2015/16.

With regard to the financial considerations, the current estimates showed an overall increase of approximately 2.53% (compared to a 2.87% increase in 2014/15). It was proposed to apportion Local Authority payments using the same percentage split as 2014/15 thereby providing each authority with an approximate 2.55% increase, a breakdown of which was set out in the report.

The Assistant Director provided clarification in response to queries raised regarding the services available in the town and potential reasons for an increase in fares.

## **Decision**

- (i) Approval was given 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) The Council continued to operate an enhanced scheme whereby all journeys prior to 9:30am on weekdays attract a nominal fare of 30p
- (iii) Charges for replacement passes remained at £5.

## **74. Local Transport Plan – Delivery Plan 2015-2021**

*(Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods)*

### **Type of decision**

Key decision tests (i) and (ii) apply – Forward Plan Ref No RN 3/15

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval for the Local Transport Plan Strategic Delivery Plan (Appendix 1) covering the period 2015-2021

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

The Assistant Director presented the report which provided background information in relation to the development and requirement to update the Local Transport Plan Strategic Delivery Plan, attached at Appendix 1. The Delivery Plan covered a six year period as funding details had been released covering this period (indicative for Years 4, 5 and 6). The proposed scheme types and budget allocations for the Integrated Transport Block were shown at 5.5.2 of the Delivery Plan, while the Highway Maintenance Block allocations were shown at 5.2.1. Although the maintenance budget was showing a proposed reduction in later years, it was anticipated that this would be supported by additional funding from the Government's Challenge Fund.

In the lengthy discussion that followed presentation of the report, a number of queries were raised regarding the Strategic Delivery Plan. Suggestions were made in terms of how the Interchange could be better utilised. Clarification was provided in relation to usage and benefits of the Interchange. Details of how the Interchange would link in with the proposed

Vision for Hartlepool was outlined. Reference was made to the aim of the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement Scheme and disappointment was expressed regarding the limited financial input from operators in terms of service provision given the continuing increase in profit margins. Concerns were also raised regarding the number of pedal cyclists casualties and how these could be reduced. The need to improve cycle path conditions was emphasised as well as the importance of allocating resources into educating cyclists and drivers on road safety issues. The dangers of cyclists not utilising lights was highlighted and the importance of the police addressing these issues were outlined.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the updated Strategic Delivery Plan, covering the period 2015-2021 be approved.
- (ii) That the comments, as outlined above, be noted.

## **75. Five Year Highway Maintenance Programme** *(Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods)*

### **Type of decision**

Key decision tests (i) and (ii) apply – Forward Plan Ref No RN 4/15

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval for the Highway Maintenance Programme for the period April 2015 to March 2020 (Appendix 1)

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

The report included background information to highway condition reports and the £901,000 that had been allocated for highway maintenance from the Local Transport Plan. The highway maintenance planned for the next five years was set out at Appendix 1 and was based on the assumption that future year allocations would be of similar levels to this year.

Reconstruction works had been identified where other processes were not appropriate and would be carried out in the interests of highway safety. Generally, however, other treatments such as re-surfacing and surface dressing, which were cheaper but had shorter term impact than full reconstruction would be utilised. The Highways Maintenance Programme in previous years had been funded by The Local Transport Plan Structural Maintenance block together with a contribution from revenue budgets. However, due to recent savings on revenue budgets the work would only be

funded from LTP budgets for the foreseeable future.

In response to comments made regarding the state of disrepair of some of the footpaths in the town and the risk of personal injury as a result, the Assistant Director advised that the programme had been developed on a needs only basis. Whilst a list of footpaths had not been included in the programme, £50,000 had been allocated toward resurfacing footpaths. Comments were made in relation to the type of materials used for footpaths. A view was expressed that the type of materials used for resurfacing may be contributing to the poor condition of the footpaths.

With regard to road conditions, a member of the public, who was invited to speak, commented on the impact of large lorries approaching the town at speed in the Coronation Drive/Belle Vue areas causing damage to the road surface as a result. It was suggested that speed restriction measures be introduced to alleviate this problem. In response, Members were advised that whilst the issue of enforcement was a matter for the police, the Council could work with the operators in this area with a view to minimising any further damage.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the proposed Highway Maintenance Programme, for the period April 2015 to March 2020, as shown at Appendix 1, be approved.
- (ii) That the comments, as outlined above, be noted.

## **76. Ward Member Budgets and Civic Lottery Review** (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

### **Type of decision**

Non-key

### **Purpose of report**

To review the current Ward Member Budget and Civic Lottery process.

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

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods referred to the decision taken by this Committee in August 2014 to continue with the current arrangements in relation to Ward Member Budgets (WMBs) and the request that a review of the Civic Lottery Programme and delivery options be undertaken for consideration at a future meeting. Subsequent to this decision, Ward Member Budgets were discussed at a meeting of Council on

18 December 2014 when the need for robust procedures in relation to approvals for Ward Member Budgets was reiterated and a request that this Committee consider the roll out of the procedures followed by Ward Members in the Victoria Ward across all wards.

Members were provided with details of the WMB and Civic Lottery current procedures, together with the options available for Members' consideration, details of which were included in the report:-

#### Ward Member Budgets

Option 1 – roll out the procedure used by Victoria Ward Members across all wards

Option 2 – make the agreement of all three ward members a requirement as part of the application process

Option 3 – cease Ward Member Budgets and replace with a general budget for each of the Neighbourhood Forums

Option 4 – continue using the current Ward Member Budget approval process

#### Civic Lottery

Option 1 – continue with the current arrangements

Option 2 – refer to Neighbourhood Services Committee

Option 3 – adopt a panel based approach to delivery

Option 4 – merge Civic Lottery Budget with Ward Member Budgets

The risk, financial, legal and staffing considerations were provided as outlined in the report.

In the detailed discussion that followed, Members considered the options presented and the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods responded to issues raised by Members. With regard to Ward Member Budgets, the Committee expressed support to continue the current arrangements given that the process was well established and worked well (Option 4 – continue using the current Ward Member Budget approval process which would involve Ward Members having the freedom to come together should they wish with their fellow Ward Members to consider applications from the community, or put forward applications individually or jointly for the benefit of the Ward). It was also recommended that a Declaration of Expenditure be introduced in relation to funds received.

A view was expressed by a Ward Member in attendance that whilst the benefits of Ward Member Budgets were acknowledged, this was a luxury that the Council could no longer afford and that the budget should be allocated to more high priority areas. A member of the public in attendance raised concerns regarding the general principle of Ward Member budgets and considered that this process should cease. Members of the Committee did not support these concerns and shared with the Committee the various community benefits and the types of issues that had been funded from

Ward Member Budgets which otherwise would have not been supported.

With regard to the Civic Lottery future delivery options, the Committee considered the options available and were in support of Option 4 - merge the Civic Lottery Budget with Ward Member Budget allocation to be administered in line with the same criteria as Ward Member Budgets.

The Chair also suggested that where applications were received and the beneficiaries were town wide, a list should be circulated on a monthly basis asking Ward Members if they wished to support the application.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the current application process, criteria and future delivery options in relation to Ward Member Budgets and Civic Lottery Programme be noted.
- (ii) That the existing arrangements in relation to Ward Members, as outlined in Section 5.7 of the report, continue enhancing these arrangements through the introduction of a 'declaration of expenditure.'
- (iii) The Committee endorsed the merger of the Civic Lottery £500 Ward Member allocation with Ward Member budgets as outlined in Section 7.5 of the report.
- (iv) Where applications were received, and the beneficiaries were town wide, a list be circulated on a monthly basis asking Ward Members if they wished to support the application.

## **77. Proposed Residential Controlled Permit Parking Scheme – South Crescent, Headland** *(Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key

### **Purpose of report**

To provide Members with an update on a previous decision by this Committee (September 2013) to defer a request from residents to introduce a residents only permit controlled parking scheme in South Crescent, Headland.

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

The Assistant Director presented the report which provided background information to the decision taken by this Committee in September 2013 to defer a request from residents to introduce a residents only permit controlled parking scheme in South Crescent and that the issue be considered as part of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan for the area. In addition Members had requested that the Parish Council be formally consulted for their views in relation to the scheme and consequential traffic displacement concerns.

A formal response from the Clerk of the Parish Council had since been received opposing any residential permit controls being introduced in South Crescent and citing concerns regarding the impact of the scheme and potential effect on traffic in the surrounding areas as reasons for the objection.

Residents had initially been consulted on a proposal to create a permit controlled parking scheme on the eastern side (coastal) of South Crescent. However, the residents had expressed a preference for the permit parking controls to be directly in front of the properties to the western side of South Crescent. In order to protect the remaining access it would be necessary to create a 24 hour, 7 day a week, prohibition of waiting restriction on the eastern side of South Crescent. Residents had been made aware of the proposed permit parking scheme.

Consultation had taken place with properties directly affected by the proposals and residents who had submitted the earlier petition. From a 60% response all respondents favoured the restrictions being introduced subject to the resident permit parking being directly outside of properties as outlined at Appendix A. The publicity of the report in September 2013 did however, generate a number of letters of objection from residents, details of which were provided, as set out in the report. Concerns had also been expressed as to a regular access requirement for disabled users at 7 South Crescent and given these concerns there was an option to create a dedicated on street disabled and/or a specific loading bay which would assist with disabled parking and access parking requirements.

The Assistant Director responded to queries raised by the Committee in relation to the proposals and a visual map outlining the area was provided to assist Members in their considerations.

A Member of the Committee who was also the Chair of the Headland Parish Council and Chair of the Hartlepool Headland Neighbourhood Planning Group addressed the Committee on behalf of the Parish Council and Headland Neighbourhood Planning Group. A number of objections to the proposals as a result of feedback from working groups and consultation events in relation to traffic displacement issues were outlined and included



concerns around parking and the negative implications any such restrictions would have on adjacent streets and visitor attractions, there was a clear need for additional visitor parking not less, the original application stated that the highways department were against this proposal and the Committee was asked to consider these views.

The Committee further debated the comments made on behalf of the Parish Council and Headland Neighbourhood Planning Group. In considering the issue, the Committee noted there were parking restrictions of this type in other parts of the town, a Member's view that proposals may restrict views of the coastline and noted that all respondents to the consultation undertaken by the Council favoured the restrictions.

In concluding the debate the Chair referred to the background to the original decision to defer the report and was keen that matters were not delayed any further and that a decision be taken by the Committee today.

Following further discussion, the majority of Members supported the proposals to introduce a resident permit scheme at South Crescent, Headland.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the proposed resident permit scheme at South Crescent, Headland as shown in Appendix A of the report be approved.
- (ii) That a prohibition of waiting restriction as shown in Appendix A of this report be extended to compliment the resident parking restriction and ensure vehicle access was maintained.
- (iii) That a designated loading/disabled parking bay be added outside of 7 South Crescent.

## **78. Allotments: 2016 Rules and Regulations** (*Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods*)

### **Type of decision**

For information

### **Purpose of report**

For information and endorsement of the review of the allotment rules and regulations of tenancy.

To advise on the 2016 allotment rental prices.

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

The report included background information to allotment rents and review of the rules and regulations of tenancy. The current rules and regulations handbook was attached at Appendix 1. All tenants had been invited to comment on the current rules or to propose any amendments that they felt necessary. Comments had been received from 9 tenants and one member of the public, details of which were outlined in Appendix 2.

Following a review of the allotment rental structure it was recommended that an administration charge of £25 per plot be introduced plus a standard rental charge of £0.15 per metre square. Following a review of the current rules and regulations of tenancy and taking into account the views of tenants submitted during the consultation it was not proposed that any amendment should be made to the current rules. The Committee was referred to the risk and financial considerations as detailed in the report. The Chair highlighted an error in the report in Table 1 paragraph 6.3 which should read 0.15 per square metre as opposed to .015 per square metre.

The Chair reported that the Chair and Vice-Chair of this Committee would be visiting every allotment site in the town to seek their views and deal with any issues/queries arising from the recent reviews.

### **Decision**

- (i) The Committee noted the 2016 allotment rental price be set at a standard charge of £25 plus £0.15 per square metre of plot to come into effect from 1 April 2016 and to be communicated to tenants with their 2015 tenancy agreement to give 1 years notice.
- (ii) That the review of the Rules and Regulations of the Tenancy booklet and the comments received during the consultation be noted.

The meeting concluded at 11.30 am.

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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