

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

11 September 2017

The meeting commenced at 9.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Dave Hunter (In the Chair)

Councillors: Marjorie James, Trisha Lawton, Brenda Loynes and Carl Richardson

Officers: Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Tony Hanson, Assistant Director, Environment and Neighbourhood
Services
Philip Hepburn, Parking Services Manager
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

13. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Sandra Belcher.

14. Declarations of Interest

None

15. Minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2017

Received

16. Savings Programme 2018/19 *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To enable Members to consider proposals to achieve further savings in 2018/19.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods presented the report which provided background information to the comprehensive report that had been considered by Finance and Policy Committee on 2 December 2016 and the approval of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/18 to 2019/20 by Council on 23 February 2017. Whilst Council had also approved savings of £1.685m in 2018/19 and £0.785m in 2019/20 to begin to reduce the budget deficits in these years, it was highlighted that they did not address the full deficits and savings of £2.320m still needed to be identified, a summary of which was detailed in the report.

Members were advised that an update of the MTFS had been considered by Finance and Policy Committee on 24 July which highlighted the continuing financial risks facing local authorities over the next few years, details of which were provided.

The Director went on to provide a breakdown of the savings proposals that had previously been agreed by this Committee and Council for 2018/19 and 2019/20. The net impact of these savings together with details of how the savings would be achieved was provided, as set out in the report. The risks associated with the proposals and the considerations which had been taken into account in developing the proposals were also provided.

It was highlighted that the impact of achieving further savings for 2019/20 would be challenging and would require further changes and whilst ensuring services were maintained as far as practical, the implications of reducing capacity were reflected in service requirements.

Members were advised of the risk, financial, equality and diversity and staffing considerations of the proposals.

Members considered in detail the savings proposals and expressed the following views/queries/comments:-

- (i) In relation to the proposal to achieve a saving of £410,000 from Transport and Infrastructure and Environmental Services, a Member questioned the accuracy of this figure as had understood from discussions the previous year that the saving would be significantly higher than reported. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that this figure had been previously agreed and had been confirmed by Finance.

- (ii) In relation to the £360,000 Environmental Services saving, Members expressed concern in relation to the level of detail provided in the report in terms of the impact of the proposed changes in operating practices across street cleansing, grounds maintenance and waste collection to achieve this saving. Reference was made to the absence of a winter maintenance programme which was intended to alleviate the impact of such changes in operating practices and address some of the concerns of Members. Concerns were also raised that the resources generated as a result of cancelling winter clean ups had not transferred to the winter maintenance pot. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods reiterated the decision taken by Members in the previous year to reduce this budget and commented on the limited options available and difficulties facing the Council to achieve the Council's savings target. Members were advised that there was no funding available for neighbourhood action days and the department was currently working on an action plan to explore the options available to address reductions in resources. A Member commented that this Committee had accepted the proposals on the basis that the Clean and Green Strategy would be implemented, of which the winter maintenance programme formed part and, given that this had not yet occurred, there was a reluctance to support the report until an action plan was available with further detail. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that arrangements were in place for an update report to be presented to a future meeting of this Committee in relation to the Clean and Green Strategy.
- (iii) Members requested further details in relation to how savings would be achieved and the potential impact on service delivery as a result of savings relating to Highways Trading of £20,000 and Traffic and Transport savings of £40,000 whilst acknowledging that such detail may need to be provided in a confidential report.
- (iii) A number of queries were raised regarding the proposed savings. The Director provided clarification in relation to the potential impact of a reduction in the concessionary fares budget, the ongoing review of the highways trading accounts and indicated that savings had been identified from areas that would result in minimal impact. The Director emphasised the commitment from the department to protect jobs and minimise the need for compulsory redundancies where possible.
- (iv) In response to a query raised regarding highways maintenance arrangements on the A689 and the potential to transfer services of this type to an in-house arrangement, the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods advised that this issue would be explored, the outcome of which would be reported to Members.

Decision

- (i) That the contents of the report and comments of Members, as outlined above, be noted and be utilised to formulate a response to be presented to Finance and Policy Committee.
- (ii) That a decision on the savings proposals be deferred to the next meeting pending receipt of the following additional information:-
 - (a) Environmental Services savings and action plan
 - (b) Highways Trading and Traffic Transport savings
- (iii) That the potential to transfer services to an in-house arrangement be explored, the outcome of which to be reported back to Members.
- (iv) That an update report be presented to a future meeting of this Committee in relation to the Clean and Green Strategy.

17. Darlington Street, Headland – Consultation Response *(Assistant Director, Environment and Neighbourhood Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To report the results of a recent consultation with residents to introduce a resident only permit parking scheme and consider the further introduction of a one way traffic management scheme in Darlington Street, Headland.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Environment and Neighbourhood Services reported on the background to the parking issues in Darlington Street and the impact of business parking demands that had recently resulted in a formal complaint which had escalated to an Ombudsman review. Although the review had failed to support the complaint of maladministration, the local authority had accepted that increased vehicle activity and a lack of parking availability had, at times, inconvenienced residents. The Council had therefore agreed to examine and consult on the following potential traffic management options:-

- (i) An extension of the current resident only permit parking scheme which would operate Monday to Saturday 8.00 am to 8.00 pm.

Permits would be offered on an incremental charge dependent upon the number of permits issued per household and would be consistent with the charge applied on other HBC managed schemes.

- (ii) To prohibit traffic access from Northgate into Darlington Street. A one way traffic flow scheme would require vehicles to access Darlington Street via Nuns Street/Thornton Street.

The prohibition of two way vehicle access allowed for the safer management of vehicles to park on both sides of Darlington Street and removed potential access conflict and the need for safe passing points.

With regard to the results of the consultation, Members were provided with a breakdown of the consultation response and indication of support or otherwise for the two proposed options, as set out in the report. It was noted that the majority of residents who responded to the consultation had indicated support for both proposals.

A google maps presentation was provided showing the locations affected by the proposal.

The Assistant Director sought the Committee's views on a third option which had been identified since the agenda documentation had been issued which was to combine both a permit parking scheme and a one way scheme. This would allow more vehicles to safely park in the limited spaces available. Should Members agree to this option, it was highlighted that further formal consultation would take place during the advertising of the legal orders, with any objections submitted to be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.

The Assistant Director provided clarification in response to queries raised in relation to the outcome of the consultation.

Decision

That the Head of Legal Services be asked to formally advertise the revised proposals to introduce both a resident only permit parking restriction in Darlington Street and a one way traffic control measure prohibiting traffic turning into Darlington Street and Northgate.

18. Amendments to the Environmental Protection Act 1990 *(Assistant Director, Environment and Neighbourhood Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To notify Members of amendments to The Environmental Protection Act 1990 and to approve a fixed penalty charge rate to be applied within Hartlepool, under The Unauthorised Deposit of Waste (Fixed Penalties) Regulations 2016.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director reported on the background to the problems around fly tipping and the responsibilities of local councils and the Environment Agency in respect of illegally deposited waste. The significant costs around investigating and clearing fly tipping were provided, as detailed in the report.

As a result of a change in legislation, powers had recently been made available to local authorities to allow fixed penalty notices to be served as an alternative to prosecution. The Committee's views were sought on the following options available to Members:-

Option 1 – The fixed penalty amount is set at the maximum £400 to reflect the nature and impact on the Borough of this type of offence and to take into account the investigatory and regulatory consequences. No discount is offered for early payment.

Option 2 – The fixed penalty amount is set at the maximum £400 to reflect the nature and impact on the Borough of this type of offence and to take into account the investigatory and regulatory consequences. However a discount is offered for early payment. This would be set at £275 and would be consistent with the percentage reduction offered for similar Fixed Penalty Notices early discount amounts.

Option 3 – The fixed penalty amount is set at the default level of £200 with no discount for early payment.

Option 4 – The fixed penalty amount is set at the default level of £200 with a discount for early payment reduction of £130 and would be consistent with the percentage reduction offered for similar FPN early discount amounts

In the lengthy discussion that followed officers responded to a number of queries raised in relation to the options and powers available to the Council to address fly tipping issues. In response to clarification sought, Members were advised of the additional powers available to both the Council and the Environment Agency to tackle the more high level commercial fly tipping problems. It was noted that the recent powers that had been introduced for local authorities was to address low level domestic fly tipping particularly landlords who regularly deposited unwanted household waste in back streets by providing new legislation that simplified the process in those smaller cases. Whilst differing views were expressed in terms of the level of penalty that should be introduced, Members were keen to ensure that repeat offenders were targeted.

Emphasis was placed upon the need for an effective advertising campaign which the Assistant Director agreed to explore and report to a future meeting of this Committee for Members' consideration. The various methods of publicising the arrangements were discussed. It was suggested that a press release be issued outlining the charges and opening times of recycling and waste collection centres.

Decision

- (i) That a fixed penalty amount be set at the maximum of £400 to reflect the nature and impact on the Borough of this type of offence and to take into account the investigatory and regulatory consequences.
- (ii) That no discount be offered for early payment.
- (iii) That an advertising campaign be explored and reported to a future meeting of this Committee
- (iv) That a press release be issued outlining the charges and opening hours of recycling and waste collection centres in Hartlepool while also highlighting the relatively low bulky waste charge for domestic items.

19. 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.

20. Any Other Business – Site Visit

The Assistant Director reported that a site visit to the Burn Road Recycling Centre would be held week commencing Monday 2 October subject to Members' availability.

Decision

It was agreed that the site visit be held on Thursday 5 October 2017 at 12 noon.

21. Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was reported that the next meeting would be held on Monday 16 October 2017 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 10.15 am.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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