

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

22 January 2018

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Dave Hunter (In the Chair)

Councillors: Sandra Belcher and Brenda Loynes

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2(ii) Councillor Kevin Cranney was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Stephen Akers-Belcher and Councillor Jim Lindridge was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Marjorie James

Also Present: Councillors James Black and Leisa Smith

Officers: Tony Hanson, Assistant Director, Environment and Neighbourhood Services
Phil Hepburn, Environmental Enforcement Team Leader
Peter Frost, Highways, Traffic and Transport Team Leader
Ed Turner, Communications and Marketing Manager
Denise Wimpenny and Angela Armstrong, Democratic Services Team

41. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Stephen Akers-Belcher, Tom Hind, Marjorie James and Carl Richardson.

42. Declarations of Interest

None.

43. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2017

Received

44. Minutes of the meeting of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee held on 6 December 2017

Received

45. Evaluation of Seaton Experimental Parking Scheme (Assistant Director, Environment and Neighbourhood Services)

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To consider the impact of the introduction of several parking restrictions at Seaton Carew following a trial period, implemented in 2017.

To consider whether seasonal restrictions at Seaton Carew should continue.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director presented the report which provided background information to the decision taken in December 2016 by the Committee to introduce seasonal car parking charges at Seaton Carew under an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order and agreement to consider the impact of the restrictions on residents, businesses and visitors at the end of the experimental trial period.

It was reported that throughout the trial period, a number of public consultation events had been held to consider and assist with issues of concern, details of which were set out in the report. A petition containing 3438 signatures had also been received on the announcement of the parking charges, which was prior to the commencement of the scheme.

As a result of concerns raised at the consultation events, a supplementary report had been considered by this Committee in May 2017 which proposed a number of amendments to the initial scheme, details of which were provided. The amendments were introduced in time for the next scheduled consultation meetings and the number of attendees and reported issues of concern dropped significantly as a result. Although the amendments did not universally resolve the complaints, and there were some who wished to see Seaton revert to unregulated and free parking, the level of opposition had noticeably declined as a result of the changes made.

Given the positive impact of the amended restrictions introduced in May 2017 addressing the concerns raised during the consultation process, it was proposed that the amended restrictions form the basis of the permanent scheme in Seaton. The scheme was broken down into several key areas which included, pay and display charges, on street pay and display charges, disc parking, business parking zones, resident permit zones and on street disabled parking bays, details of which were included

in the report. Members were referred to the financial as well as legal considerations of the proposals.

During the discussion that followed presentation of the report, a Member suggested that the proposals in relation to introducing charges for disc parking at a set fee of £1 should not be introduced at this time and should be reviewed in 12 months time. Members were supportive of this proposal. The Committee's views were sought as to whether enforcement of the business permit areas should be seasonal or annual. The Committee was of the view that enforcement should be a seasonal arrangement.

In response to a query raised by a Member regarding the impact of the proposals on businesses in the area, the Assistant Director advised that extensive engagement had been undertaken with business owners throughout the consultation process and amendments to the scheme had been made to address elements of issues and concerns raised by residents and businesses arising from the consultation events.

A Ward Member, who was in attendance, suggested that the operational hours of pay and display should be amended further from 10.00 am to 6.00 pm and that a transferrable universal parking ticket should be made available to enable use in all areas of the town. Members were advised that there was provision in place which allowed transfer of tickets between car parks provided this was on the same tariff rate. There was no provision to transfer from a long stay to a short stay arrangement.

The Ward Member raised concerns regarding the impact of the proposals on business owners and clarification was sought in relation to the number of business owners that had been involved in the consultation process and whether any statistics were available to confirm that complaints had reduced as a result of amendments to the scheme. The Assistant Director reiterated that whilst there was no data available in terms of satisfaction levels, attendance levels and the number of concerns raised at subsequent consultation events had significantly reduced.

A number of residents/members of the public, who were in attendance were invited to address the Committee and spoke against the proposals. Objections were raised in relation to charges generally on the sea front, the adverse impact on visitor numbers and that business owners felt that their concerns had not been adequately addressed. The Committee was reminded that permitted parking stay periods within the disc controlled parking areas had been extended to address concerns of businesses that the proposed 30 minute waiting/free parking was insufficient time for drop in customers to visit their premises and there had been a reduction in pay and display enforcement hours to assist businesses with issues around deliveries and access.

Concerns were also raised regarding the shortage of parking discs available during the trial period, that the consultation events had not been effectively publicised, that an evaluation of the consultation had not been

adequately assessed, there was no information presented in terms of enforcement revenue/ number of tickets issued, how the parking income would be utilised, number of complaints received, no evidence that safety improvements had been achieved as a result, the number of signs and location of the signage was not in-keeping with a conservation area, and that inconsiderate parking had increased impacting on residents who were not part of the resident permit zones. The Chair and officers responded to issues raised. Clarification was provided in relation to the role of the Council and the police in terms of enforcement arrangements and how income would be utilised. It was reported that consultation had already taken place with a number of residents residing outside of the trial area, details of which were set out in the report. Where majority support was indicated it was intended to also include such locations within the controlled permit zone. Ongoing consultation was taking place with residents of Elizabeth Way and Ruswarp Grove and expressions of interest had also been received from other residents on the fringe of the controlled areas.

Another Ward Member spoke in support of the comments made by residents in attendance, as detailed above, and expressed disappointment that there was no evidence to suggest that the trial scheme had been a success, visitors were unclear on the charging arrangements, the impact on local businesses had not been assessed, there was no data available in terms of visitor numbers as well as the adverse impact on residents and business owners experiencing parking difficulties. This was disputed by officers who pointed out that many of the concerns raised had been addressed following the initial public consultation.

In response to comments raised by a Ward Member that events such as miles for men should be encouraged, Members were advised that recent discussions had been held to address this.

Members considered in detail the proposals and representations made and were supportive of the recommendations with the exception of the proposals to introduce a set fee of £1 charge for parking discs and distribution of discs via a dispensing machine and requested that this be reviewed in 12 months time. Members supported the suggestion that enforcement of business permit areas should be a seasonal arrangement.

In relation to the suggestion that parking pay and display operational hours be further amended to 10.00 am to 6.00 pm, whilst the Committee supported the recommendations of 7 days a week from 9.00 am to 6.00 pm, Members requested that the feasibility of amending enforcement times be explored.

Decision

- (i) Members noted the following options which were predominantly reflective of the amendments made in May 2017 and supported the implementation of such restrictions on a permanent basis:-

Pay and Display Areas

- a) Pay and display parking charges to apply 1 April – 31 October.
- b) Enforcement times – 7 days per week 9.00 am – 6.00 pm.
- c) That the feasibility of amending enforcement times to 10.00 am – 6.00 pm be explored.
- d) Parking tariff charges to remain at £1 up to 2 hours, £1.50 up to 4 hours, £2 all day.
- e) Off street pay and display charges applicable in Sea View, Rocket House and Coronation Drive Car Parks.
- f) On street pay and display parking areas on The Front and The Cliff (Eastern side only).

Disc Parking Areas

- g) Free 60 minutes disc parking areas on the The Front – regulated by the requirement to display a parking disc showing time of arrival.
- h) Free 120 minute disc parking area on Station Lane Car Park.
- i) No charges for disc parking should be introduced at this time and the issue of disc parking, including how discs should be made available, be reviewed in 12 months time.
- j) Inclusion of additional dedicated on-street disabled parking bays on The Front within the disc parking area.

Business Permit Area

- k) Designated permit areas set aside for businesses in Back Lane, Seaton, beach slip road and The Front (opposite the bus station). In the event of insufficient demand, the areas would revert to public pay and display parking bays.
- l) Business permits are currently set at a cost of £350 per annum. It was therefore agreed that seasonal permits be set at £204.
- m) Members agreed seasonal enforcement of the business permit areas.

Resident Permit Areas

- n) Appendix D showed those locations where resident only parking restrictions were already established and were enforced throughout the year. It was agreed that the current Traffic Regulation Orders be amended to reflect a seven day per week enforcement period.
- o) It was agreed that those properties included on a temporary basis for the duration of the trial period (as shown as Appendix C) be established on a permanent basis.
- p) It was agreed that the residential parking restrictions be extended to include those locations (shown in Appendix A) where consultation had already taken place and where residents had indicated majority support to be included in the scheme.
- q) For consistency and clarity it was agreed that all resident permit controlled zones be offered on an annual renewable basis, with enforcement taking place over a 12 month period. Permit charges to be consistent with the existing town wide scheme.
- r) It was agreed that further consultation would take place at locations

where residents had expressed an interest for inclusion in the scheme.

- (ii) That the Head of Legal Services be asked to advertise the formal legal notices and that any objections received within this consultation period be reported to this Committee.

46. Clean and Green Strategy Update (*Assistant Director, Environment and Neighbourhood Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To inform the Committee of progress achieved against the actions outlined in the Clean and Green Strategy (Year 1)

To agree additional actions being added to the action plan to be delivered during 2018/19.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director reported on the background to the launch of the three year Clean and Green Strategy and the production of an action plan, attached as an Appendix to the report, to assist in delivering the vision. The action plan outlined some key achievements linked to each of the strategic objectives since the launch of the strategy in March 2017.

A summary of key achievements were provided, as detailed in the report and included progress towards creating a clean town, creating a green town and ensuring a well maintained town.

In presenting the report, the Assistant Director highlighted salient points and was pleased to report that good progress to date had been made against the action plan with most actions either complete or underway. Subject to Members' approval, it was envisaged that the following additional actions would be taken forward in year 2 of the strategy and added to the action plan:-

- To carry out a major public littering campaign (to include local businesses and litter from vehicles)
- To explore restorative approaches as an alternative to fixed penalty notices
- To expand the wildflower programme to more locations across the Borough

A lengthy discussion ensued in relation to dog fouling during which disappointment was expressed that this continued to be a town-wide problem as well as a national issue. Various examples of areas of concern were shared with the Committee by Members and members of the public present. The need to focus on this issue as a priority was emphasised as well as the importance of exploring and utilising any by-laws and powers available to the Council to assist in tackling this problem. The Assistant Director commented on the difficulties facing the Council in terms of enforcement including the limited powers available and the reliance on good intelligence from the public to assist with enforcement as dog walkers often adopted the same daily routine.

A Member highlighted the benefits of utilising DNA sampling to identify persistent offenders. The Assistant Director advised that whilst there was a requirement upon dog owners to ensure their pets were micro-chipped there were no enforcement powers available in relation to DNA testing. The financial implications of the Council undertaking such practices were also outlined and it was noted that this would not be cost efficient.

Decision

- (i) That progress to date and comments of Members on the Clean and Green Strategy be noted.
- (ii) That the following additional actions for year 2 activity be agreed and added to the action plan:-
 - To carry out a major public littering campaign (to include local businesses and litter from vehicles)
 - To explore restorative approaches as an alternative to fixed penalty notices
 - To expand the wildflower programme to more locations across the Borough

47. Home to School Transport – Reconsideration of Unsafe Walking Route *(Assistant Director, Environment and Neighbourhood Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To seek approval to revise the applied unsafe walking route from the Rift

House and Brooke Estate areas of the town to High Tunstall School.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided background information to the decision taken to declare the walking route from the Rift House and Brooke Estate areas of the town to High Tunstall School as unsafe. Road accident statistics for the period 2015-2017 on the route from Catcote Road to High Tunstall School had recorded three school time incidents, details of which were provided.

At present there were 46 students accessing the school bus to High Tunstall School from the Rift House and Brooke Estate areas, a breakdown of which was set out in the report. Since the decision to declare the route unsafe in 2009, the school start and finish times at both English Martyrs Academy and High Tunstall School had changed. The current start and finish times mean that the likelihood of concentrated numbers of students being in the Catcote Road area at the same time was negligible. The assessment of the routes from the Rift House and Brooke Estate areas applying the Road Safety GB guidelines would indicate that the route to High Tunstall school was safe.

Members consideration was sought in relation to the following options for withdrawing the eligibility to transport on the grounds of 'unsafe walking route':-

Option 1 – withdraw eligibility under that criteria from Easter 2018 to all students

Option 2 - withdraw eligibility from Easter 2018 for all new applications and students currently accessing the service continue until the end of the academic year

Option 3 – withdraw eligibility from Easter 2018 for all new applications and students currently accessing the service continue to do so until they leave school

Option 4 – withdraw eligibility from September 2018 for all students

Option 5 – withdraw eligibility from September 2018 for all new applications and students currently accessing the service continue to do so until they leave school

Officers provided clarification in response to queries raised by Members in relation to the report. The Committee noted that the Children's Services Committee Chair had been consulted on the proposals.

Decision

That option 5 be approved – to declare the route safe with immediate effect and withdrawn eligibility under the unsafe walking route from September 2018 to all students.

48. Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was reported that the next meeting would be held on Monday 19 February 2018 at 2.00pm in the Civic Centre.

The meeting concluded at 7.25 pm.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 29 JANUARY 2018