

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

1 December 2020

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and was an online remote meeting in compliance with the Council Procedure Rules Relating to the holding of Remote Meetings and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Present:

Councillor: John Tennant (In the Chair)

Councillors: Tom Cassidy, Helen Howson, Marjorie James, Sue Little and Amy Prince

Also Present:

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2 Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Stephen Akers-Belcher

Councillors Tony Richardson and Leisa Smith

Officers: Tony Hanson, Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services
Sylvia Pinkney, Assistant Director (Regulatory Services)
Kieran Bostock, Assistant Director (Place Management)
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

12. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Stephen Akers-Belcher.

13. Declarations of Interest

None

14. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2020

Received.

15. Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's) *(Assistant Director, Regulatory Services)*

Type of decision

Key Decision test (ii) – General Exception applies

Purpose of report

To seek the views of the Committee in relation to the potential adoption of additional Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's) in Hartlepool.

Issue(s) for consideration

Members were referred to the background information as set out in the report in terms of the purpose and legislation regarding Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's). Certain conditions must be met before a PSPO can be introduced, details of which were provided.

PSPO's could be used to control activities such as the consumption of alcohol in public spaces or to prohibit begging. The Committee was advised of the enforcement considerations in terms of resources. It was proposed that consultation be undertaken in relation to the adoption of PSPO's in parks and other identified public areas for certain activities which caused annoyance nuisance or damage, camping and motorhomes, fishing in certain locations, unauthorised use of motorised vehicles, the consumption of alcohol at Seaton Carew Promenade, including grassed areas as well as identified parks and other open spaces.

In the lengthy discussion that followed the Assistant Director, Regulatory Services responded to queries raised arising from the report which included clarification in relation to enforcement arrangements. In response to comments raised as to why the Headland, Stranton Cemetery and the war memorials had not been included, clarification was provided in terms of the background to the identification process which was based upon supporting evidence and it was highlighted that the consultation would provide an opportunity to identify appropriate areas.

Examples of anti-social behaviour arising from alcohol consumption at Rift House Recreation Ground which had been previously reported were shared with the Committee. A Member requested that evidence in support of the proposals be provided. Concerns were raised in relation to ongoing complaints regarding dog fouling and litter problems and the benefits of

allocating enforcement resources to tackle issues of this type were outlined. Seaton Ward Members spoke in support of PSPO's at Seaton Promenade and parks and reiterated concerns expressed at an earlier meeting in relation to the impact of excessive consumption of alcohol during lockdown on the promenade at Seaton Carew and examples of anti-social behaviour arising as a result.

The Chair announced that the following recommendations had been agreed without dissent.

Decision

- (i) The Committee approved the commencement of a consultation exercise in respect of the following and that the matter be returned to this Committee when the consultation had been concluded:-

A '*Parks PSPO*' that would apply to the town's parks and other identified public areas and would prohibit: -

- a) Riding skateboards, scooters and bicycles where it causes annoyance, nuisance or damage
- b) Camping and motorhomes
- c) Fishing (the prohibition would relate only to certain locations or certain times)
- d) Unauthorised use of motorised vehicles (except for mobility scooters) – this would be limited to certain locations

A '*Drinking Alcohol in Public*' PSPO would prohibit the consumption of alcohol in public, at all times, in the following areas: -

- a) Seaton Carew promenade (including grassed areas)
- b) Identified parks and other open spaces

- (ii) That the comments/views of Members, as outlined above, be noted and actioned as appropriate.
- (iii) That supporting background information in relation to the proposals be provided following the meeting.

Prior to consideration of the following item of business the Chair noted the Committee's request to raise queries in relation to the closed appendices on the Vehicle and Equipment Approvals report and therefore announced that this item would be moved to the end of the agenda.

At this point in the meeting the Chair advised that Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher's had experienced technical issues and lost connection during the decision element of the previous item of business (Minute 15) and wished to record his dissent to the decision. Upon re-joining the

meeting Cllr C Akers-Belcher requested that his vote against the decisions be recorded.

16. Fly Tipping Update *(Assistant Director, Regulatory Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To inform Committee of the issues surrounding fly tipping in Hartlepool following requests from Members to understand more about this particular problem and to consider the referral from Full Council on the 17th September 2020 for this Committee to consider the introduction of a free annual bulky waste scheme for each ward.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report included background information to the referral from Council that fly tipping and the introduction of an annual ward bulky waste scheme be referred to this Committee for consideration. The problems associated with fly tipping were provided as well as details of the powers available to address these issues. Details of the number of fly tipping reports received in 2020 as a comparator with previous years were set out in the report including tonnage figures, fly tipping locations and general categories, how incidents were reported, the process following a report, enforcement powers, resources allocated, the role of enforcement officers as well as details of the number of fixed penalties issued and prosecutions.

Work had commenced on removing access to common problem sites and a working group had been established to look at what more could be done to prevent fly tipping and to identify and enforce against those found to be responsible. The various options available to tackle fly tipping were set out in the report and could include enforcement, publicity or the provision of a wider bulky waste service. At present it was not proposed to implement free skip hire based on the complexities of introducing such a scheme and there was currently no budget identified to cover this cost. It was therefore proposed that further work be undertaken and presented back to Members as part of an update report in 12 months time.

A lengthy discussion ensued during which a number of views/suggestions were made which included the need to effectively publicise the reduced £10 collection charges for bulky waste for low income families, issue reminders to residents on the importance of reporting fly tipping, introduce a requirement to display stickers or introduce a scheme similar to the principle applied to taxis where the necessary licence was displayed on the

front and rear number plates of vehicles, introduce free bulky waste collections in each ward via a partnership approach. Officers responded to suggestions raised and issues arising from the report. Reference was made to the success of a previous bulky waste scheme that had been introduced and the options available in terms of how a bulky waste scheme could be funded in future.

It was moved and seconded that consideration of an annual free bulky waste pilot scheme (1 per ward) be referred to the Finance and Policy Committee for consideration at their meeting on 18 January 2021 as part of the 2021/22 budget considerations.

A recorded vote was taken in accordance with Rule 8 of the Council's Procedure Rules relating to the holding of remote meetings:-

Those in favour:-

Cllrs C Akers-Belcher, Cassidy, Howson, James, Little, Prince and Tennant.

Those against

None

Those abstaining

None

It was confirmed that this was a unanimous decision.

Decision

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the report and the request of Full Council to consider the introduction of an annual ward bulky waste scheme.
- (ii) That consideration of an annual ward bulky waste pilot scheme (1 per ward) be referred to the Finance and Policy Committee for consideration at its meeting on 18 January 2021 as part of the 2021/22 budget considerations.
- (iii) That the comments of Members be noted and actioned as appropriate.

17. Mainstream Secondary Home to School Transport and Passenger Assistants *(Assistant Director, Place Management)*

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

To provide members with an overview of the existing Passenger Assistant arrangements in response to a request from Personnel Sub Committee.

To outline current behaviour protocols and assess the need for providing Passenger Assistants on board mainstream home to school transport.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director presented the report which provided background information to the request of the Personnel Sub Committee to consider if there was a necessity for the provision of Passenger Assistants on mainstream home to school transport bus services. Members were advised that there had been 84 incidents reported in the previous three years, a breakdown of which was included in the report. Most of the incidents were not serious and isolated incidents. Based on the statistics included in the report it was considered there was currently no requirement for Passenger Assistants to be placed on all secondary school mainstream home to school transport routes.

The Assistant Director provided clarification in response to queries raised in terms of statutory duties placed upon local authorities to provide home to school transport for 11 to 16 year olds and the statutory guidance in relation to how distances from home to school were measured. Given the misinterpretations in this regard and clarification that distances were measured based on the safest walking route, it was agreed that information be circulated following the meeting to clarify the arrangements.

Decision

- (i) The Committee noted the request of the Personnel Sub Committee to receive this report,
- (ii) The Committee noted the existing behaviour management procedures and the statistics provided in this report.
- (iii) That information be provided following the meeting in relation to the statutory guidance relating to how distances from home to school were measured.

18. Civil Enforcement Update *(Assistant Director, Regulatory Services)*

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

To provide an update on civil enforcement provision in Hartlepool as requested by this Committee at their meeting held on 13th March 2020.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Regulatory Services reported that the Civil Enforcement Team was made up of a Team Leader, two Supervisors and eight Civil Enforcement Officers. However, since May 2020 there had been several staffing issues which had resulted in the team operating with only six enforcement officers and for two months only five.

The report included details of the duties of the Civil Enforcement Officers, the team's enforcement activities this year as a comparator against previous years and the impact of Covid 19 on certain areas. Funding had been provided by Thirteen Group to allow for the temporary employment of two additional Civil Enforcement Officers for 18 months and it was hoped they would be in post before Christmas.

Emphasis was placed upon the need for greater enforcement in relation to litter and dog fouling which was the primary issue for the public and, given the recent announcement from the Combined Authority in relation to free town centre parking from January, it was moved and seconded that dedicated staffing resources should be redirected to concentrate on litter and dog fouling issues. The Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services outlined the challenges around this problem in terms of identifying the culprits, limited staffing resources and the reliance on public intelligence to tackle such issues. Following further debate and concerns raised regarding dog fouling around schools, parks and open spaces, a Member requested that the motion should include consideration of additional publicity requirements.

A recorded vote was taken on the motion moved and seconded earlier in the debate in accordance with Rule 8 of the Council's Procedure Rules relating to the holding of remote meetings:-

Those in favour:-

Cllrs C Akers-Belcher, Cassidy, Howson, James, Little, Prince and Tennant.

Those against
None

Those abstaining
None

Decision

- (i) That consideration be given to re-directing staffing resources to concentrate on dog fouling and litter problems to include consideration of additional publicity requirements.
- (ii) That the contents of the report and comments of Members be noted.

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 – Hair Salons/Barbers Assessment Regime

A Member asked that consideration be given to undertaking a feasibility study on the benefits of introducing a Covid secure assessment/rating scheme for hair salons/barbers and potentially gyms in the town similar to the hygiene assessment arrangement that currently operated in catering establishments, the background of which was outlined. Following concerns raised by the Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services in relation to the capacity implications for the Test and Trace Team at the present time, along with the work they were also undertaking on supporting businesses with advice and enforcement where necessary, Members commented on the benefits of such a scheme and it was agreed that the suggested study be undertaken in six months time or the end of the pandemic whichever was the earlier.

The following was agreed with no dissent.

Decision

That a feasibility study be undertaken in six months time or at the end of the pandemic, whichever was the earlier, on the benefits of introducing a Covid

secure assessment/rating scheme for hair salons/barbers and potentially gyms in the town similar to the hygiene assessment arrangement that currently operated in catering establishments.

21. Vehicle and Equipment Approvals 2021/2022 and 2023/24 *(Assistant Director, Place Management)*

Type of decision

Non-key decision

Purpose of report

- i) Provide an update on vehicle purchases made in 2019/20.
- ii) Provide an update of the vehicle replacement budget for the current financial year, including vehicles purchases re-phased from previous years.
- iii) Propose the vehicle and associated equipment replacement programme for the 3 year period covering 2021/22 to 2023/24.
- iv) To request that Finance and Policy Committee recommend that the approval for borrowing to fund the related capital expenditure is included in the 2021/22 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) approved by Council.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Place Management presented the report which outlined the background to the combined vehicle asset appraisal and service review that had been undertaken with Service Managers and Team Leaders. An options appraisal of vehicle financing had previously demonstrated that borrowing was the most cost effective way of funding vehicle purchases, particularly as vehicles were now kept for their maximum usable economic life. The advantages of borrowing compared to leasing were provided, as set out in the report.

Reviews of service and equipment needs had resulted in a revised replacement programme for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 and a preliminary one for 2023/24, the financial considerations of which were provided as set out in the report. Members were referred to the revised replacement programme for the three year period covering 2021/22 to 2023/24, attached at Appendix C, and the future borrowing approvals to be recommended for inclusion within the 2021/22 MTFS, a summary of which was included in the report.

The Assistant Director responded to issues raised arising from the report. The Committee indicated their wish to further pursue information contained within the confidential appendices. In view of this, it was agreed that the meeting move into closed session.

22. Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during part of the discussions on the previous item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Minute 21 – (Vehicle and Equipment Approvals 2021/22 to 2023/24) –

This item contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely (para 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

21. Vehicle and Equipment Approvals 2021/2022 to 2023/2024

(Assistant Director, Place Management) This item contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely (para 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Further to discussions in the open session of the meeting and following a brief adjournment, a number of queries were raised in relation to the reasons behind vehicles being recommended for renewal. The background to the decision taken to retain a civic vehicle, which was based on the financial benefits, was discussed at length. A Member requested that detailed background information in relation to the decision taken by Constitution Committee in this regard be provided to all Members following the meeting. Members requested that future reports should include reference to civic vehicle, additional information in relation to the age of vehicles as well as the intrinsic value.

21. Vehicle and Equipment Approvals 2021/2022 and 2023/24 *(Assistant Director, Place Management)*

Issue(s) for consideration

Further to discussions in the closed section of the meeting, details of which were set out above, the meeting returned to open session whereupon the Chair sought any further views on the recommendations.

The Committee agreed the following recommendations with no dissent.

Decision

- (i) That the updated position for vehicle purchases as of 2019/20, as set out in Appendix A, and the list for 2020/21, as set out in Appendix B, be noted. **(These items contain exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))**
- (ii) The Committee approved that proposed replacement programme of vehicles, heavy plant and associated equipment, as set out in Appendix C, and related borrowing approvals set out in paragraph 5.8, to be referred to Finance and Policy Committee to recommend to Council as part of the 2020/21 MTFS.
- (iii) That future reports include more detailed information around the age of vehicles and value.
- (iv) That background information be provided following the meeting in relation to the decision of Constitution Committee to retain a civic vehicle.

The meeting concluded at 12.20 pm.

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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