

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

23 SEPTEMBER 2021

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Councillor: Cameron Stokell (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rob Cook, Rachel Creevy, Peter Jackson, Brenda Loynes and Darren Price.

Also Present: Councillor Carl Richardson as substitute for Councillor Helen Howson in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2.

Councillors Brian Cowie, Sue Little and John Riddle.

Officers: Tony Hanson, Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services
Kieran Bostock, Assistant Director, Place Management
Sylvia Pinkney, Assistant Director, Regulatory Services
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

8. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Helen Howson,

9. Declarations of Interest

None.

10. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 July, 2021

Minutes received.

Pursuant to the discussions around the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) under Minute No. 4 “The Role and Remit of the Neighbourhood Services Committee” the Chair allowed a Member of the public to raise his concerns over the operation of the HWRC specifically the closure on Mondays and Tuesdays and the appointment system. The member of the public considered these placed unreasonable restrictions on members of the public and the Council had prioritised other services to the detriment of HWRC.

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services stated that he had responded to the Member of the public's points in a recent letter. The changes to the HWRC had been agreed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and were as a result of budget savings. HWRC had closed during the pandemic in line with government advice and had only re-opened when permitted and following a full risk assessment for staff and the operation of the site. This had concluded that an appointment system would allow staff to control the flow of vehicles and people and maintain social distancing etc.

11. Local Transport Plan Scheme Update (*Assistant Director, Place Management*)

Type of decision

Key Decision test (i) and (ii) applies. Forward Plan Reference No. NRS02/21.

Purpose of report

To seek approval for a delivery programme of safety schemes across Hartlepool for the financial year 2021/2022.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Place Management reported that the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for 2020/21 at Neighbourhood Services Committee on 19th March 2021. That report identified the allocated budget for Local Safety and Safer Routes to School schemes for 2021/22, and the submitted report detailed the prioritisation of schemes based on updated road casualty data.

Safety schemes were requested from residents and Elected Members across the Borough, and were also identified through a review of accident statistics. The level of demand for safety schemes far outstrips the Local Transport Plan budget, and as such a scrutiny assessment is undertaken to develop the preferred list of schemes to fit the available budget. Analysis of each request is undertaken based on factors such as accident data, speed survey results, the presence of a school / playground, higher pedestrian usage, and community concerns raised.

The Assistant Director highlighted that accident levels within Hartlepool are currently around their lowest ever and therefore it was becoming more difficult to identify schemes based on just accident data alone. Cluster sites are becoming rarer, as are accidents where engineering measures can be implemented to mitigate against them. Information continues to be reviewed and problem sites are addressed appropriately.

A programme of potential safety schemes had been developed and was set out in the appendix to the report. This development of the prioritised list builds on the approach approved at Committee in October 2019. The three

schemes proposed for implementation and the highest scoring schemes on the scoring matrix were; Throston Grange Lane, Grange Road and Mowbray Road with an estimated total of approximately £170,000 and would be funded from the Council's Local Transport Plan. Any savings that may occur in the implementation of these schemes may result in the potential of other schemes being brought forward.

The Chair sought clarification on the differentiation between accidents which the Assistant Director stated were based on the Police categorisations. There were also questions around reporting of accidents as Members considered that some of the sites in the schedule had had more accidents than recorded. The Assistant Director stated that again, they were recorded by the Police but there were also a number of sites recorded by the authority where it had been informed. Members were encouraged to ensure all accidents were recorded by the Police or the local authority.

There were questions around the budget figures quoted and what that covered and the Assistant Director stated it was an estimate for the complete scheme, including consultation and design costs. Members were also concerned at the delegation requested in the report and the Director stated that this only related to the actual schemes that were approved; so that works were not paused in order to get approval for slight variations or unforeseen costs. Members requested this be clarified in the decisions.

Members also suggested the bringing forward of schemes on Coronation Drive, a crossing on Warrior Drive and a review of its traffic calming scheme and additional CCTV cameras at certain traffic light junctions in the town to reduce the numbers of vehicles running red lights.

Members also suggested that Ward Councillors be fully involved in the decision processes around the approved schemes as they could liaise with community. The Assistant Director assured Members that Ward Councillors would be fully involved.

The Chair acknowledged that every Member would have road safety schemes they would wish to see implemented in their wards which was why the Committee had agreed the scoring matrix in 2019 to bring forward a list of schemes based on priority need. Unfortunately the limited budget made this a necessity and the Assistant Director informed the Committee that to undertake all the schemes listed in the appendix to the report, the Council would need a figure in the region of £3.2m.

The following amended decisions were agreed without dissent.

Decision

1. That the continuation of the oversubscribed LTP budget and the requirement for prioritisation be noted.

2. The Committee noted that the list proposed was live and further scheme(s) may be deliverable should savings within the 2021/22 programme be identified.
3. That the proposed safety scheme programme (Throston Grange Lane, Grange Road and Mowbray Road) be approved for 2021/22.
4. That any changes to the proposed three schemes for the 2021/22 programme be delegated to the Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Chair of Neighbourhood Services Committee.

12. Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2021/22 (*Assistant Director, Regulatory Services*)

Type of decision

Non-Key decision.

Purpose of report

To consider the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan for 2021/22.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Regulatory Services reported that the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan for 2021/2022, submitted as an appendix to the report, took into account all the appropriate Food Standards Agency guidance requirements. The Plan detailed the Service's priorities for 2021/22 and beyond, where appropriate, and it also highlighted how these priorities will be addressed.

The Assistant Director highlighted that during the pandemic, the majority of Public Protection staff had been redeployed to carry out COVID work. This included providing advice to businesses, carrying out COVID enforcement work and undertaking enhanced contact tracing. This had meant that from the outset of the pandemic, the service has been severely impacted in its ability to deliver the usual obligations in relation to food safety. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic a Service Plan had, therefore, not been produced for 2020/21.

As at the 1 April 2020, 99.9% of food businesses in the borough had been "Broadly Compliant" with food safety requirements. For food standards 97.9% of businesses achieved broad compliance. No figures were produced for 2020/21 due to the suspension of some proactive food inspections during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Assistant Director suggested that with the impact of the pandemic and the reduction in inspections it was unlikely that those high compliance figures would be repeated initially. There were also a sizeable number of new businesses

registered that had not had a full inspection which would impact on the numbers.

Members expressed their concerns around the numbers of fast food outlets in the town and the Assistant Director indicated that her department only inspected premises approval of them was a planning matter. Members were also concerned at the staffing resources available to the Assistant Director for this important area of public safety and the pressures placed on staff. The Assistant Director stated that there was a vacancy within the team at present. Staff did regularly work outside of the core hours as many premises were only open during the evening. Overtime was managed and staff were extremely flexible in their working practices. The greatest impact had been due to the Covid-19 pandemic and staff being involved in work around that. The team had, however, been up-to-date with its inspections before the pandemic so was not carrying a backlog unlike some other councils.

Staff would prioritise food inspection work as that had the greatest impact on public safety but the Assistant Director believed it would take, as the Food Standards Agency expected, until 2024 before all inspection work was fully up-to-date again. External consultants could be used as a last resort if work was falling too far behind but that was the least likely option and one that would cause a budget pressure for the department.

The following decision was agreed without dissent.

Decision

That the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan for 2021/22, as submitted, be approved.

13. Kesteven Road – Traffic Regulation Order (*Assistant Director, Place Management*)

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

To consider objections to proposed double yellow lines in Kesteven Road.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Place Management reported that a previous Ward Member raised a complaint regarding parked cars on the side road junctions of Kesteven Road. It was reported that cars were parking on the footpath areas around the junctions and consequently reducing visibility and restricting pedestrian movements.

It was requested that double yellow lines be implemented around those junctions along Kesteven Road (seven in total), which don't already have yellow lines in place. In line with the Council's Constitution, the request has been referred to Neighbourhood Services Committee as two or more material objections have been received.

In March 2021, Members previously approved a budget allocation for the installation of road crossings in Kesteven Road. Dropped kerbs would only take up part of the radii around each junction, still leaving the majority of the area free for vehicles to park and therefore not adding to congestion in the cul-de-sacs. A drop kerb though would provide a clear area at which pedestrians can cross.

It is an offence for a vehicle to park on or across a formal dropped kerb with the associated tactile paving, and this is something which the Council's Enforcement Team have the legislative powers to enforce. It was proposed, therefore, to progress with the installation of the drop crossings in order to improve visibility at the junctions, but not install the double yellow lines.

A resident disputed the numbers of objections to the proposals as reported indicating that through a Freedom of Information request he had only been shown six objections. The resident also stated that he had a letter of support for the scheme which was not reported. The Chair stated that he had received the same letter and informed officers. The Assistant Director stated that he believed that the implementation of the yellow lines proposed would not benefit parking in the area but actually make it worse. The implementation of the dropped kerbs at crossing points, which could be enforced, should be implemented to assess if this relived some of the issues being experienced by residents.

It was moved and seconded that the yellow lines scheme should not be implemented but that the crossing point dropped kerb scheme should go ahead. The proposal was carried by way of a majority vote.

Decision

1. That the proposed drop crossing scheme be implemented in accordance with this Committee's previous decision.
2. That the proposed double yellow line scheme is, accordingly, not implemented.

14. Olive Street/The Lawns – One Way System (*Assistant Director, Place Management*)

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

To report objections to the proposed one way street and double yellow lines in Olive Street / The Lawns.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Place Management reported that a request has been made from a resident via a Ward Member to introduce a one way restriction along Olive Street and The Lawns. It was reported that due to the narrow carriageway width and tight bend, it can be difficult for vehicles to negotiate, especially when faced with oncoming traffic.

The restriction would allow traffic to enter at The Lawns and exit via Olive Street. In order to protect sight lines at the exit onto the Marine Crescent / Moor Parade junction, a short section of double yellow lines are proposed around each radius. In line with the Councils Constitution, the request has been referred to Neighbourhood Services Committee as two or more material objections have been received.

Copies and plans of the proposed order were sent to all properties that would be directly affected by the proposed restrictions, while notices were also posted on site. In total four written objections were received. In view of the good safety record, this being a quiet residential area, and the concerns over parking, on balance officers did not consider that the implementation of a one way system at this location was required.

A resident from The Lawns who had proposed the scheme addressed the Committee in support of the proposal stating that the objections did not come from residents in either The Lawns or Olive Street. It was already impossible for two vehicles to pass in either road and the sharp bend needed to be addressed by widening even if a one-way system was implemented. The proposal had been previously supported by ward councillors and the Police.

The following decision was carried by way of a majority vote.

Decision

That the proposed one way system and double yellow lines not be introduced.

15. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 14 October, 2021 at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool. The Chair also highlighted that the time of the meeting on 9 December had changed to 2.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 11.40 am

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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