

# **NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

20 JUNE 2022

The meeting commenced at 3.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

**Present:**

Councillor: Tom Cassidy (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rachel Creevy, Helen Howson, Peter Jackson, Sue Little and Shane Moore.

Also Present: Councillor Moss Boddy.

Officers: Tony Hanson, Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services  
Kieran Bostock, Assistant Director, Place Management  
Jane Kett, Environmental Health Manager (Commercial Services)  
Phil Hepburn, Community Safety Operations Manager  
Steve Hilton, Communications and Marketing Team  
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Councillors Rob Cook.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Jackson declared a personal interest in Minute No. 8

### **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2022**

Received.

### **4. The Role and Remit of the Neighbourhood Services Committee** (*Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services*)

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

Members requested that as most had been on the Committee in the previous Municipal Year, that the presentation be circulated to Members after the meeting for information rather than being given at the meeting.

The Director highlighted the financial position the Council faced over the next two financial years and that the Finance and Policy Committee had received an update report which indicated that the deficit was now estimated to have increased to £4.4 million because of the effects of inflation and rising energy costs. Members questioned the impact of rising fuel costs on the Council's fleet. The Director indicated that they were starting to impact in some areas particularly as fuel rules had changed and the Council no longer had access to low duty red diesel. Refuse vehicles, for example, often only achieved 8 mpg so the cost of fuelling was having an impact.

**Decision**

That the presentation be circulated to Members of the Committee.

**5. Hartlepool Local Plan – Partial Plan Review** (*Assistant Director (Place Management)*)

**Type of decision**

Budget and Policy Framework.

**Purpose of report**

To seek permission for a partial Local Plan review and the update of related evidence based work which would support the robust development of the Local Plan.

**Issue(s) for consideration**

The Assistant Director, Place Management reported that the current Hartlepool Local Plan was adopted in May 2018. Local Authorities were required to review their Local Plan every five years. There were a number of issues that would need to be reflected in a partial review of the Local Plan – the Wynyard Garden Village plan, the impacts of the Covid pandemic on the delivery of new housing, the need to update the climate change section of the plan, changes to the employment land chapter and a series of other updates.

The Assistant Director reported that the costs could be met from the grant funding provided in relation to the development of the Garden Village at Wynyard and as such will not put an additional financial pressure on the authority.

There was concern expressed by a Member at undertaking the review of the Local Plan a year early when there was potential changes to planning laws proposed by the Government in the Queen's Speech to Parliament where a Bill was to be brought forward to reform the planning system to give residents more involvement in local development.

The Assistant Director highlighted that if the review was delayed until next year all the costs would fall in-house and it was unclear as to when the government's proposals would come forward. A Member also expressed their concern at the potential situation of the Council not having an up-to-date Local Plan, as had happened in the past, and the effects that could have.

It was proposed that the review be delayed 12 months to the normal review timetable. There was no dissent to the proposal and the decision below.

### **Decision**

That the proposed review of the Local Plan be deferred for 12 months and reported back to Committee in June 2023.

## **6. Parking Strategic Assessment 2022/32** (*Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services*)

### **Type of decision**

Key Decision (test (i) and (ii) both) apply. Forward Plan Reference No NRS06/21.

### **Purpose of report**

The Department for Transport Operations Guidance recommends that local authorities operating Civil Parking Enforcement prepare a long term parking strategy. The previous strategy for Hartlepool covered a ten year period which expired in February 2021. A final report will be resubmitted to Members for consideration and approval later in the year, once comments from the consultation process have been considered.

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

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services reported that the draft Hartlepool Parking strategy had been prepared taking into account current national, regional and local policies covering those transport and planning policies that directly affect parking on both the highway network and off street car parks. The report had also been prepared during significant uncertainty due to issues caused by COVID-19. As a result it had been difficult to predict the immediate impact on commuter, visitor and shopping demand. As a consequence it may be necessary to review and amend the long and short term priorities identified in the report as circumstances and behaviours change, and local issues evolve.

A Member commented that there was no potential mentioned in the report to facilitate overnight parking in car parks, not for camping purposes. The Director indicated that there would be a further update report to committee which could look at this and there would be financial implications to assess. Members also noted the numbers of electric vehicle charging points was to

be increased significantly to 42 places from the current 2 and asked when these were to be implemented. The Assistant Director, Place Management stated they were due for roll-out in the next few months and Members asked that a timetable of their implementation and sites be circulated.

Members commented that the strategic assessment was not very easy to read and often repetitive and suggested an easier to read version was required for the public. Members also questioned the continuation of the free parking period in the town centre car parks which had been funded by the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA). The Director considered that the funding was unlikely to continue and the parking fee arrangements would return to their normal position. It had to be acknowledged that the parking income target was not being met, placing an additional budget pressure on the department.

A Seaton Carew Ward Member also highlighted the issues of HGV vehicles parking overnight in the Seaton Car and Coach park and also issues of parking around Hornby Park. The meeting also discussed the charging for 'blue badge' disabled parking spaces. Officers indicated that regulations did permit charging for such spaces.

There was also discussion round the monitoring and enforcement of resident parking areas. Members appreciated that Enforcement Officers were not a 'call-out' service but lots of residents did feel they were reporting issues that were not being addressed. Officers commented that the service was not reactive as Members were aware but did rely on the public reporting issues so they could build up a picture of where the hotspots were so that targeted enforcement could be implemented. If the information received suggested that enforcement action should take place outside normal working hours, this could be facilitated. Members requested details of the numbers of car parking fines issued be circulated after the meeting.

A Member commented on the introduction of ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) and questioned if this was for the camera car. Officers indicated that this was the case and ANPR would be included in the new vehicle which was currently in the procurement process.

### **Decision**

That the Parking Strategic Assessment 2022/32 be noted and approval be given to the commencement of the consultation process.

## **7. Review of Post 16 Transport Policy** (*Assistant Director (Place Management)*)

### **Type of decision**

Key Decision (test (ii)) Forward Plan Reference No NRS05/22.

### **Purpose of report**

On the 13th December 2021 Finance and Policy Committee agreed a set of measures which were agreed at Council on the 16th December 2021 to help enable the Council to meet their savings targets for the following financial year. As part of these targets, it was agreed that Post 16 Special Education Needs Transport would cease from September 2022 for new applicants. The report set out the considerations for the revised Policy following this decision.

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

The Assistant Director (Place Management) reported that there was a statutory duty on local Authorities to provide travel assistance to students attending education up to the age of 11, if they meet the eligibility criteria. There was no entitlement to travel assistance once students leave compulsory education at the age of 16. At present the Council provided free home to school travel assistance to students aged 16-19 who had a special education need. This was to a range of venues both within the Borough and across the North East.

In December 2021 Full Council agreed that Post 16 Special Education Needs Transport would cease from the beginning of the Academic year September 2022 for new applicants. Those currently accessing transport will continue to do so until the end of their current course. A revised Post 16 Transport Policy was therefore submitted for Members' approval.

Members requested details of the numbers of children that the change in policy would affect. There was no dissent to the following decision.

### **Decision**

That the revised Post-16 Transport Policy be approved reflecting the decision of Full Council to cease Post-16 travel.

## **8. Elwick Village - Traffic Calming** (*Assistant Director (Place Management)*)

### **Type of decision**

Non-Key Decision.

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval for the implementation of a traffic calming scheme in Elwick Village.

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

The Assistant Director (Place Management) reported that residents in Elwick had previously responded negatively to a proposed scheme of road

humps for the village. A revised proposal to implement gateway features incorporating pinch-points had subsequently been consulted upon with villagers.

There was general support to the proposals from villagers while the Parish Council had indicated its support for some but not all of the proposed gateways. There were also concerns expressed round the significant amount of 'street furniture' in a conservation area and the need for the scheme when the bypass road would, eventually, remove the majority of traffic from the village.

The Council's Conservation Manager had been consulted on the project and has advised that the design of the traffic calming should follow guidance set out in 'Streets for All; Advice for Highway and Public Realm Works in Historic Places' produced by Historic England in 2018. It was proposed, therefore, to use materials sympathetic with the rural setting and signs and markings would be kept to a minimum as per the advice in the document.

In line with the comments received from the Parish Council it was proposed to implement two gateway features in the village, outside the school and by The Green, and to remove the three gateway features proposed for the entrances to the village.

It was questioned by Members as to the need for the scheme when, as the Parish Council acknowledged, the majority of the traffic issues would be removed once the bypass was constructed. The Assistant Director stated that residents had been seeking a traffic calming scheme for some time. The scheme now proposed was scaled down in light of the proposed bypass.

Members requested an update on the bypass scheme. The Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services reported that the process of negotiations with National Highways was still ongoing and once completed the scheme could then be submitted for planning approval. Discussions with landowners were still ongoing and there would be a further report to Finance and Policy Committee later in the year. The start date for construction depended on whether a compulsory purchase process had to be undertaken.

There was no dissent to the following decision.

### **Decision**

1. That, taking into account the consultation responses and the comments from Elwick Parish Council, approval was given to the implementation of two traffic calming features outside St Peters Elwick Primary School and by The Green.

2. That the three previously proposed traffic calming features at the entrances to Elwick village be not implemented.

**9. Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2022/23** (*Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services*)

**Type of decision**

Non Key Decision.

**Purpose of report**

To approve the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan for 2022/23.

**Issue(s) for consideration**

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services submitted the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan for 2022/2023 which detailed the Service's priorities for 2022/23 and beyond, where appropriate, and how these priorities would be addressed. The report gave a summary of the main issue raised in the plan and the Director specifically highlighted the role Public Protection Officers had played in the Council's response to Covid-19 between 2020 and 2022. This additional work had, however, severely impacted the team's ability to deliver its usual obligations.

A member raised concerns a round some bars placing nuts and other snacks on bar-tops. Officers stated that there was legislation now in place, often referred to as Natasha's law, which required venues to have appropriate allergen management in place. If premises were still doing this, then officers would look to ensuring proper training was in place in line with the new legislation.

There was no dissent to the following decision.

**Decision**

That the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan for 2022/23 be approved.

**10. Trading Standards Service Plan 2022/23** (*Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services*)

**Type of decision**

Non Key Decision.

**Purpose of report**

To approve the Trading Standards Service Plan for 2022/23.

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

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services submitted the Trading Standards Service Plan 2022/23 which detailed the Trading Standards priorities and how these priorities would be addressed.

Members expressed concern around the access children were having to vaping products and the counterfeit products that were also being sold. Members requested additional press coverage of these issues. The Director indicated he would include this in an update to Members.

There was no dissent to the decision below.

### **Decision**

That the Trading Standards Service Plan for 2022/23 be approved.

## **11. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent**

A Member asked if the Chair would give consideration to future meetings commencing at 2.00 pm rather than 3.00 pm.

A Member indicated that at the previous meeting approval had been given to the 5 Year Highway Maintenance Programme (Minute 41 refers) that included delegated authority being given to the Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Chair to make any changes required to the schemes approved; had any such changes been required. The Director stated that no changes had been made.

The meeting concluded at 4.25 pm

**H MARTIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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