

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

1 DECEMBER 2022

The meeting commenced at 1.00 p.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Councillor: Tom Cassidy (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rob Cook, Rachel Creevy, Helen Howson, Peter Jackson, and Shane Moore.

Also Present: Councillor Tom Feeney as substitute for Councillor Cameron Sharp in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2.

Councillor Sue Little.

Officers: Tony Hanson, Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services
Kieran Bostock, Assistant Director, Place Management
Sylvia Pinkney, Assistant Director, Regulatory Services
Phil Hepburn, Community Safety and Operations Manager
Steve Hilton, Communications and Marketing Team
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

19. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Cameron Sharp.

20. Declarations of Interest

None.

21. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2022

Received.

22. Minutes of the meeting of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee held on 22 November 2022

Received.

23. Bolton Grove, Seaton Carew – Request for Removal from Resident Only Parking Scheme *(Assistant Director, Regulatory Services)*

Type of decision

Non Key decision.

Purpose of report

The report considered a request from a number of residents of Bolton Grove for the location to be removed from the current resident only permit parking scheme that had operated since 2008.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Regulatory Services reported that the Community Safety Team received a petition signed by 42 residents of Bolton Grove (relating to 33 properties) which requested the removal of Bolton Grove from the current resident only permit parking scheme. The petition demonstrated majority support from 33 of the 57 properties in Bolton Grove (58%) and as a consequence a further formal consultation took place with residents during September 2022.

During the consultation process, residents were made aware of the likely implications of removing Bolton Grove from the permit controlled restrictions, highlighting that in the event residents noticed a subsequent adverse impact on parking availability, obstruction or access, neither the local authority Civil Enforcement Officers or the Police would be in a position to respond to such complaints. The Assistant Director also highlighted that such reviews were extremely time consuming to conduct and when formal changes or amendments were required to Traffic Regulation Orders, were a financial burden on the operational service budget. It would, therefore, not be possible to consider any further review for a period of at least 3 years.

Removing Bolton Grove from any parking restriction would leave this location isolated from other surrounding areas which retain permit parking controls. It was likely that once drivers realise that any parking controls had been withdrawn, this location would see an increase in vehicular activity.

The initial petition showed support from 33 of the 57 properties in Bolton Grove (58%). However, during the consultation process, a number of the residents cited that they would not have supported the petition had they been made fully aware of the implications and the removal of the current traffic management controls would involve the withdrawal of the enforcement protection the scheme provides was a concern to some. Consequently only 22 of the 57 properties (38 %) responded in favour of removing the restrictions at Bolton Grove and 8 properties objected to the removal (14%) with 27 properties failing to respond (47%).

On the basis of the formal consultation the Assistant Director recommended that the residents parking zone should remain in place. It was also highlighted that should Members choose to remove the regulations, the amended Traffic Regulation Order would need to be advertised in accordance with the regulations and there could be further objections to the proposal submitted at that stage.

In debating the issue Members considered that, taking both the initial petition and the majority of the residents who had responded to the consultation that had indicated their support for the removal of the resident only parking restrictions, then the Committee should remove the restrictions as the residents requested. A Member clarified the three year restriction of revisiting the regulations and the Assistant Director stated that whichever decision was made by Members – to retain or remove – the matter wouldn't be reconsidered for three years. These reviews took a significant amount of officer time and resources and the department couldn't sustain repeated reviews of the same streets.

It was moved and seconded that the removal of Bolton Grove from the current resident only permit parking scheme be approved, as requested by residents.

There was no dissent to the following decision.

Decision

1. That Bolton Grove be removed from the resident only permit parking scheme and that the appropriate Traffic Regulation Order be advertised.
2. That it be noted that a further review would not be possible for a period of at least 3 years.

24. Proposed Residential Parking Scheme at Taybooke Avenue – Consideration of Objections *(Assistant Director, Regulatory Services)*

Type of decision

Non Key decision.

Purpose of report

This report outlined five formal letters of objections raised in connection to the proposed resident only parking scheme at Taybrooke Avenue.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Regulatory Services reported that a proposed resident only parking scheme had previously been approved by the Director of Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services under delegated powers, however, as part of the legal process, such an amendment to a Traffic Regulation Order requires the Statutory Notices to be advertised and during this period, a number of objections to the proposal were received. Under such circumstances, the Constitution required that such objections were further considered and determined by Elected Members.

Taybrooke Avenue was currently unregulated with the exception of a School Keep Clear Prohibition of Stopping Order and a school time No Waiting / Loading restriction. As such there were no restrictions preventing any motorist from parking directly in front of the residential properties. Due to the close proximity of the school, most of the resident's parking concerns related to issues associated with Kingsley Primary School. The residents cited examples of members of the teaching staff parking all day on the public highway which, due to the narrowness of this road, can at peak times, create issues for passing vehicles. Also periodically the parked cars can obstruct access to and from the driveways of the residential properties. Residents also complained of issues with HGVs delivering to the school causing issues.

Following receipt of the initial petition, a consultation was carried out with residents of 25 properties at 1-25 Taybrooke Avenue with 15 properties being in favour with only 3 stating they were against the proposal. There were letters of objection from the school and the school governing body questioning the need for the restrictions.

Members indicated their support for the request for the restrictions from a majority of the residents in the avenue. There was some concern that there would still be inconsiderate parking at school drop off and pick up times. The Community Safety and Operations Manager indicated that if enforcement officers attended areas where residents parking only restrictions were in place there would be a minimal waiting time before tickets could be issued. Experience showed that in cases of parents waiting for school children, most moved on rather than waiting to be ticketed.

A Member commented that they would not normally support single streets seeking residents only parking schemes as they tended only to push their problem onto other neighbouring streets but in this case there was ample parking available nearby in the car park for the Rift House recreation ground on Kingsley Avenue.

A resident present at the meeting commented that they had never complained of school staff blocking their driveways, the major issue during the day was delivery drivers blocking driveways as there was nowhere else

to stop. HGVs had significant issues accessing the school as the entrance was simply too narrow.

The following decision was agreed without dissent.

Decision

1. That the implementation of a residents only parking scheme in Taybrooke Avenue as previously approved by the Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services be approved and the appropriate Traffic Regulation Order be advertised.
2. That it be noted that a further review would not be possible for a period of at least 3 years.

25. Coniscliffe Road Car Park (*Director of Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services*)

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

This report provided Members with the details associated with Coniscliffe Road Car Park and notes the proposal to transfer the car park freehold to the Council in its current state.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services reported that in the summer of 2015, a planning application (H/2015/0162) was made which sought planning permission for a residential development comprising 39 dwellings on land to the west of Coniscliffe Road and the provision of a car park (and drop-off point) to serve West Park Primary School on land to the west of Duchy Road. The application was approved by Planning Committee on 2nd September 2015.

An agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) was subsequently signed on 6th May 2016 as a tri-party agreement between Hartlepool Borough Council, R.A and S. Darling Farms (Hartlepool) Limited and Tunstall Homes, and the Decision Notice was issued on 9th May 2016.

The provision of a car park was included to alleviate the pressures caused on the surrounding areas during school drop off and pick up times. The car park would have an access and exit point off Duchy Road and would accommodate 31 car parking spaces. Within the agreed plans, no provision was included for locked gates to either the entry or exit points of the car park.

The Section 106 agreement states that there is an obligation on the developer to ensure that prior to the occupation of any dwelling comprised within the development, that a car park in the location identified in the car park plan is constructed and transferred to the Council for the sum of £1. To date the Council has not yet accepted the freehold transfer of the land, due to concerns over the maintenance costs and the future management of this asset. Having assessed the car park and the surrounding land, it could cost approximately £4,000 per year to maintain. There would also be resurfacing costs of approximately £11,000 every 20 years.

Residents had complained over the last 18 months or so; the Council and Cleveland Police had received consistent complaints from two residents alleging anti-social behaviour to be a constant issue within the boundaries of the car park. In light of the residents' concerns and allegations, two mobile CCTV cameras were placed in the car park on 24th August 2022 to monitor activity at the site and these had not observed any matters of concern. Discussions with the School also confirmed that they had not witnessed any anti-social behavioural issues or vehicles causing a disturbance associated with this site.

Hartlepool Community Safety Team also reported that there were no crime related incidents recently reported in the area, and there was only a single anti-social behaviour report received in September 2022 relating to the car park. In response to this call, police officers attended and found no vehicles present in the car park on arrival.

The two residents had asked if the Council would consider securing the car park with robust fencing and locked gates that were opened early on a morning and closed on an evening during school term time only. However, the Director highlighted that as part of the savings proposals agreed for the financial year of 2022/23, the Council ceased the locking and unlocking of Council amenities such as parks and car parks, so it would not be possible for the Council to agree to this as a result of this approved service change. Furthermore to undertake this request would cost approximately £50,000 in capital costs, with ongoing revenue implications also needing to be found.

As the Developer would like the Council to accept the asset transfer of the car park and adjacent land, and the School has advised that they were not in a position to take control of the site, then the Council are left with no alternative but to accept the site under the terms of the s106 Agreement.

Members expressed concern at the terms of the S.106 agreement and the lack of a commuted sum and sought assurance from officers this situation would not arise again. Members noted that Councillor Brash had submitted via email concerns expressed by several residents as to the problems at the car park. There was also some concern that the school which benefitted from the provision of the car park of who the car park had been included in the original planning permission now did not appear to want the car park.

Residents from Coniscliffe Road were present and attested to the anti-social behaviour problems the car park was causing them. Two residents had taken to 'closing' the entrances to the car park each evening and opening it each morning to prevent its misuse. The residents also considered that the Council's estimates for gating and monitoring the site were unrealistic.

After debate on the issues, Members requested that officers make one further approach to the school to see if a resolution could be found that would involve them potentially taking ownership of the car park. Members acknowledged that previous attempts had been made by officers.

Members commented that until the car park was in the ownership of the Council there was little action they could take and, therefore, the transfer in accordance with the S.106 agreement was required as a first step.

The following decision was agreed without dissent.

Decision

1. That the transfer of the car park in its current format as part of the Section 106 legal agreement be noted. The Committee also noted that this created an additional financial pressure to the Council.
2. That Officers make a further attempt to meet representatives of West Park Primary School to discuss the transfer of the car park to the school.

26. Annual Parking Review 2021/22 (*Assistant Director, Regulatory Services*)

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

The Traffic Management Act 2004 placed a statutory requirement on all local authorities operating Civil Parking Enforcement to produce and publish an annual parking report. The submitted report had been, therefore, prepared for Elected Members for information purposes.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Regulatory Services submitted the Council's Annual Parking Review for Members information. It was highlighted that the financial information set out in the report had already been reported by the Director of Resources and Development though the Review gave a more detailed breakdown of income and expenditure.

Members reported specific and ongoing problems in Wiltshire Way in relation to the Greyfields Recreation Ground and specifically on weekends when league football was played at the site. Residents were becoming concerned at some of the inconsiderate parking including the blocking of footways. Officers indicated they would look to arranging a visit by enforcement officers. Members also debated the issue of charging carers for parking permits to allow them to park in residential parking zones when visiting clients. Officers indicated that in many cases they did not have to buy a permit as the resident would have a visitors permit. Most carers also reclaimed the cost from their employers.

A Ward Member for the Headland asked officers for a breakdown of the tickets issued in the Headland. Members expressed some concern at the number of different tariffs that applied across the Council's car parks. The Community Safety and Operations Manager commented that there were some specific tariffs in places such as the Mill House Leisure Centre car park to allow enough time for visits to the leisure centre. However, it was acknowledged that there were too many separate tariffs and officers were looking at the potential rationalisation of a number of them.

The Assistant Director, Place Management updated the Committee on the roll-out of electric car charging points across the town. Members also discussed some of the issues drivers were having with tickets at the Marina Car Park which was privately owned. A Member queried if there was any news on the extension of the Tees Valley Mayor's free car parking scheme. The Leader of Council commented that no decision had been made at this time.

Decision

That the Annual Parking Review 2021/22 be noted and published in accordance with the Traffic Management Act 2004.

27. Household Waste Recycling Centre *(Director of Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

This report provided an update on the Household Waste Recycling Centre following a request from the Members of Neighbourhood Services Committee to visit the site and receive an update report at Committee. The report also updated Members on the Council's Bulky Waste Collection Service following an increase to service provision during 2021/22.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services reported that the introduction of a free permit scheme for Hartlepool Residents to access the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) at Burn Road was included as part of the budget savings proposals considered for introduction in April 2020. The proposal was contained within the Council Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2020/21 to 2023/24 report approved by Full Council at its meeting held on 19th December 2019.

The purpose of a free permit scheme for Hartlepool residents enables staff to monitor users of the site and to prioritise Hartlepool residents by preventing the disposal of waste from commercial operators and residents from outside the Borough. It also reduced congestion on Burn Road, while helping the Council manage the waste tonnage deposited at the site. Contrary to some beliefs, it was not introduced as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic but did provide support to Covid secure working practices.

The booking system which offered up to 405 booking slots per day during summer months (8am to 6pm), reducing to around 285 slots during the winter (9am to 4pm) was developed in-house at nil-cost to the Authority and allowed the HWRC team to use hand held devices to operate the site. There had been improvements to the system over its time in operation and bookings could be made very quickly online for registered users. User feedback was now very high for the site.

The Director also stressed the benefits of the booking system in controlling non-Hartlepool residents using the site and also in controlling trade waste. There had been a marked increase in demand for the Council's commercial waste service in line with the introduction of the booking system.

In terms of the bulky waste collection service, the Director reported that the introduction of a second team had seen the number of requests for the service increase from over 2,800 requests in 2020/21 to over 4,800 in 2021/22.

The Director stated that as a result of the positive impact that the additional bulky waste collections have had in supporting the Household Waste Recycling Centre, reducing the amount of fly tipping, and as the service was operating as self-funded, the Council had committed to continuing with this service.

Members welcomed the report and thanked officers for the site visit to the HWRC on 2nd November which had proved very insightful. A Member commented that he had been told by a resident that they had attended the HWRC without an appointment and was turned away from the site despite there being only one other car there. The Director commented that the system had been in place for over two and half years so people claiming not to know was unfair. The system had also reduced the amount of

abuse staff received and also allowed greater safety management of the site as periods could be programmed into the day to allow for the movement of skips which could not be undertaken with customers on site.

There were concerns around the online booking system and those who may be digitally excluded expressed by Members. The Director stated that residents could also call the Council Contact Centre on the normal council phone number to book slots. There was also concern expressed that the site relied on users having a vehicle or access to one.

The Chair noted that during the visit there was reference to some users booking a significant number of appointments at one time and not turning up preventing other users from taking those slots. The Assistant Director, Place Management indicated that around 17% of slots were being lost this way and the department was looking at potential methods of restricting bookings and stopping this abuse.

Decision

1. The Committee noted the contents of the report.
2. The Committee also noted the continuation of the expanded Bulky Waste Collection Service, which has helped to support the wider work on supporting the Household Waste Recycling Centre and reducing fly tipping.

28. Vehicle and Equipment Approvals 2023/2024 to 2025/2026 *(Assistant Director, Place Management)*

Type of decision

Key Decision. Forward Plan reference NRS06/22.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to:

- (i) Provide an update on vehicle purchases made in 2021/22 and the current year to date for approvals already obtained.
- (ii) Provide an update of the vehicle replacement budget for the current financial year.
- (iii) Propose the vehicle and associated equipment replacement programme for the 3 year period covering 2023/24 to 2025/26.
- (iv) To request that Finance and Policy Committee recommend that the approval for borrowing to fund the related capital expenditure is included in the 2022/23 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) approved by Full Council.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Place Management reported that a combined vehicle asset appraisal and service review had been undertaken with Service Managers and Team Leaders across the Council. This had looked at each of the frontline services expected vehicle, heavy plant and equipment requirements for the next three years. Further reviews of individual service vehicle and equipment needs had been undertaken in conjunction with respective service managers. This had sought to identify if any potential changes to requirements could be foreseen with regard to possible future plans for these services. This work combined with concerns of rising running costs with aging vehicles had resulted in a revised replacement programme for 2023/24 to 2025/26 submitted as an appendix to the report. The appendix 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 in).

The Assistant Director stated that it was important to note that not every item on the list may be purchased, however, this approval approach allowed the team to react should the need for one of these vehicles arise sooner than was reasonably expected.

Members questioned how the costs were met of hiring in vehicles to replace temporarily vehicles that may have broken down or needed repair and if it was not more cost effective to have 'spare' vehicles on standby instead. The Assistant Director commented that the hiring costs were met by the particular service area. Holding spare vehicles was not cost effective. There were costs associated with the vehicles even if they were not in use and with the costs of purchasing some vehicles it was simply not affordable.

A Member sought assurance that the borrowing proposed here would not result in an unsustainable amount of borrowing for the Council as a whole.

There was no dissent to the following decision.

Decision

1. The Committee noted the updated position for vehicle purchases approved in previous year as set out in Appendix A and the list for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix B. These appendices 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 in).
2. That the proposed replacement programme of vehicles, heavy plant and associated equipment as set out in Appendix C and related

borrowing approvals be approved and referred to Finance and Policy Committee to recommend to Full Council as part of the 2023/2024 MTFS. Appendix C 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 in).

29. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting was on Monday 23 January 2023 at 3.00 p.m. at the Civic Centre.

The meeting concluded at 3.40 p.m.

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 16 DECEMBER 2022