

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

5 FEBRUARY 2024

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

Present:

Councillor: Sue Little (In the Chair)

Councillors: Bob Buchan, Brian Cowie, Rob Darby, Helen Howson, Karen Oliver and Carol Thompson.

Officers: Tony Hanson, Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services
Kieran Bostock, Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services
Sylvia Pinkney, Assistant Director, Regulatory Services
Phil Hepburn, Community Safety Operations Manager
Gemma Jones, Scrutiny Support Officer
Steve Hilton, Communications and Marketing Team
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

28. Apologies for Absence

None.

29. Declarations of Interest

None.

30. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2024

Received.

31. Local Transport Plan 2023/24 Out-Turn and 2024/25 Programme *(Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework.

Purpose of report

To inform Neighbourhood Services Committee of the current position with the Local Transport Plan Delivery Plan, the progress made over the last financial year and to set the budget allocations for 2024/2025.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services reported that the third Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2011-2026, sets out how a safe and sustainable transport system can be delivered within Hartlepool. In recent years the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) has become a conduit between Local Authorities and Central Government on policy implementation, bid development and submission, and also funding allocations, with LTP budgets now being provided to the combined authority for onward distribution to individual Councils.

The works and schemes undertaken during 2023/2024 were shown in Appendix 2 to the report, along with proposed allocations and indicative schemes for 2024/2025. Those individual schemes would be subject to further committee reports where necessary. All works / schemes would be funded via the LTP allocation from Central Government, with the Integrated Transport Block allocation confirmed as £724,625. Individual scheme type allocations for 2023/24, along with the allocations for 2024/25 were shown in Appendix 1 to the report, with the Council now having received a multi-year settlement of the same amount up to and including 2026/27.

A Member questioned how the verge hardening schemes related to the drive for a greener, more environmentally sustainable town and was there any offsetting of the green spaces lost. The Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services commented that this was an issue in some areas of the town. Verge hardening did provide greater resident parking in some of the narrow streets that were not built to accommodate the number of cars households had today. Newer verge hardening schemes would look to using materials that allowed grass to grow through while still providing a strong base for vehicles. In responding to a further question on trees, the Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services stated that re-providing trees in other more appropriate sites was always considered if any had to be removed.

Decision

That the Committee notes the works / schemes delivered during 2023/2024, and approves the anticipated budget breakdown for 2024/2025.

32. Authority’s Monitoring Report (AMR) 2022/23 *(Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key Decision.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to inform Neighbourhood Services Committee of the Hartlepool Local Plan Authority’s Monitoring Report (AMR) 2022/23.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services reported that the AMR is a statutory Local Development Framework (LDF) document produced annually by the Council’s Planning Team. It assesses the effectiveness of local plan policies and the extent to which they are being implemented.

The council were legally required to produce an AMR at least annually. The AMR provided a detailed assessment of planning policy implementation and assists in identifying policies that were not robust and either need amending to ensure that they are implemented or they are in future excluded from the local plan. This year’s assessment concluded that the Local Plan was robust and that the policies were being implemented effectively.

The Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services circulated an infographic document highlighting some of the key findings from the AMR in a more readily understood format as requested by Members during the consideration of last year’s report.

Some Members expressed concern that the Local Plan had not been formally reviewed since 2018 and there had been significant changes in government policy around sustainability that needed to be reflected in the document. The Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services considered that the Plan was robust. Members agreed last year not to proceed with a full review of the Local Plan due to the significant changes that were ongoing at national level and the advice received from central government. The Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services stated that the Local Plan adopted in 2018 runs through to 2031. The AMR assessment showed the plan to be still robust and appropriate. The Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services stated that he did not wish Members to think that Hartlepool did not have a robust plan; we do and our position was well ahead of quite a number of other local authorities.

Members considered that there need to be greater training offered on the Local Plan for Members of this Committee. The Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services indicated that there was specific training given to

Planning Committee Members and it may be appropriate to open that training to the membership of this Committee also. Members indicated that they did not see value in the infographics document for future reports.

Decision

The Committee noted the content of the report and endorsed the Hartlepool Local Plan Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR) 2022/23 as part of the Local Development Framework.

33. Parking Tariff Changes (*Assistant Director, Regulatory Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key Decision.

Purpose of report

To consider amending the town centre parking charges and reducing the number of tariff options at different sites.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Regulatory Services reported that Hartlepool currently operates 12 different parking tariff rates across 23 separate off street car parks and on street town centre locations. It was proposed within the report to reduce these to 8 new tariffs. It was also proposed that in recognition that there has been no increase in parking tariffs for a number of years, it is proposed to increase the hourly parking charges at all the town centre parking sites by 10p. Details of the new tariffs were set out in Appendix B to the report.

Members question how much income the new tariffs would generate and the savings accrued from the reduction in the number of tariffs. The Assistant Director, Regulatory Services stated that it was very difficult to gauge the financial changes. Following the Covid pandemic peoples shopping habits had changed dramatically with significantly less footfall in the shopping centres. There had also been the period of free parking funded by the Tees Valley Mayor in order to generate increased town centre visitors. With that funding now ending the best estimate was that the changes would bring an additional £40,000 but this had to be balanced against the fact that the car parking budget had been underperforming substantially for quite a number of years.

In terms of the asset management, a Member noted that there was an allocation of £30,000 in the Local Transport Plan for parking; was this to offset the shortfall in revenue or capital budgets. The Assistant Director, Regulatory Services stated that the main shortfall in car parking was revenue. Utility costs, the costs of cash collection and the costs associated with enforcement had all risen significantly while prices had remained the

same. In terms of capital, the Assistant Director, Regulatory Services stated that the costs of resurfacing a car park would be substantial.

The Chair put the recommendations set out in the report to the Committee. The following decision was agreed on a majority vote.

Decision

The Committee noted the reasons for the tariff charge review and approved the proposed revisions to the parking tariffs as shown in Appendix B to the report.

34. Removal of Parking Promotions (*Assistant Director, Regulatory Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key Decision.

Purpose of report

To consider the removal of a number of parking promotions that the Council has historically supported.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Regulatory Services reported that historically the Council has provided support to three key parking promotions, however, the budget challenges the local authority now faced has resulted in a review as to whether such ongoing support could continue.

The historical parking promotions include:

- Free Christmas Parking – every Saturday in December;
- Free parking on Sundays (except Seaton Carew); and
- Free parking after 3.00 pm.

The Assistant Director, Regulatory Services reported that there were no records of vehicle usage in the car parks on Sundays or payments in sites where parking is free after 3.00 pm. Consequently, it was difficult to predict additional revenue that the removal of both promotions would generate.

As the local authority did not record usage numbers for the Christmas parking promotion, it was also difficult to accurately predict what additional income may be generated by reinstating the pay and display charge. Any additional income generated by the removal of the three subsidised parking promotion schemes would be used to offset the current budget shortfall for this particular service area.

Introducing a pay and display parking charge on a Sunday would require a formal change to the existing Off Street Traffic Regulation Order and would

be, therefore, subject to the statutory legal process the local authority were required to follow. The removal of the Christmas promotion and free after 3.00 pm promotions were operational decisions that required no formal legal advertising.

The Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services added that in light of the financial pressures the Council and this particular budget faced, it was necessary to address the deficit in the car parking budget.

The Chair put the recommendations set out in the report to the Committee. The following decision was agreed on a majority vote.

Decision

That the proposed removal of parking promotions, as reported, be not approved.

35. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chair indicated that as this was the last meeting of the Municipal Year, she wished to extend her thanks to the Members and Officers for their support and input into the meetings of the Committee.

Councillor Oliver requested that future meetings of the Committee consider reports relating to caravans parked in residential parking zones and whether the current policy needed to be revised.

Councillor Oliver also requested a report to a future meeting related to the increasing number of properties registered as Supported Living Accommodation setting out how these properties operated and were registered, the numbers and locations of such properties and details of the organisations providing this type of accommodation. The Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services stated that he did not believe this fell within the remit of this Committee but would confirm that with Councillor Oliver following the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 10.40 am.

H MARTIN

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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