

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

30 June 2025

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Councillor: Karen Oliver (In the Chair)

Councillors: Sue Little, Corinne Male, Owen Riddle (Vice Chair), Christopher Wallace and Mike Young

Members of Planning Committee also invited:

Councillors: Moss Boddy, Michael Jorgeson, Amanda Napper and Carole Thompson

Also present:

Councillors Rob Darby, Phil Holbrook and Leisa Smith

Parish Council Representatives:

Lyn Noble, Dalton Piercy Parish Council

Officers:

Kieran Bostock, Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods
Sylvia Pinkney, Assistant Director, Regulatory Services
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Fiona Cook and Greatham Parish Council representative Stephen Smith. Apologies were also received from Councillor Quewone Bailey-Fleet (Member of Planning Committee).

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Sue Little and Mike Young declared an interest in minute 8 as they were Members of Planning Committee.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2025

Received.

4. Station Lane Bus Shelter *(Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Non key

Purpose of report

To identify a preferred way forward on whether to reinstate a bus shelter on Station Lane at Byland Grove.

Issue(s) for consideration

The bus shelter at Byland Grove had suffered from anti-social behaviour for a number of years to the point where it was beyond repair. As a result it was removed around 12-18 months ago. However, during that time, requests had been received for the shelter to be reinstated. In view of this a public consultation exercise was undertaken to determine the views of local residents and bus service users.

The consultation showed that the majority of those against the shelter lived in the immediate area and voiced concerns about anti-social behaviour, vandalism and feeling unsafe due to gangs of youths congregating. A significant majority of those in favour of the bus shelter did not leave an address and given the responses, it can be assumed they do not live in the immediate vicinity and may be bus service users. However, increased weight should be given to the people who live close to the bus stop and had experienced problems associated with a shelter on a daily basis. The results of the consultation showed that 62% of respondents were against the reinstatement of the bus shelter compared to 38% in favour.

Councillor Leisa Smith, Ward Councillor for the area and who lived close by the proposed site of the bus shelter addressed the Committee with her concerns around many previous incidents of different types of anti-social behaviour at the former bus shelter. It was noted that since the removal of the bus shelter there had been a marked decrease in those type of incidents. Councillor Smith highlighted that out of the 18 bus stops within Seaton Carew, there were only 6 that had bus shelters and that in her opinion, there was no reason for a shelter in this area, especially given the previous incidents at this site. The level of anti-social behaviour before the shelter was removed was very stressful for the residents living close by.

Members were of the view that a thorough review had been undertaken including consultation with bus users and local residents and were supportive of the Officer's recommendations not to reinstate the shelter.

Decision

That the installation of a bus shelter on Station Lane was not progressed.

5. Energy Efficiency Schemes Delivery 2017-2025

(Assistant Director, Regulatory Services)

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To provide an update on the delivery of energy efficiency schemes since 2017 and to update on the delivery of future schemes.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background to the provision of the energy efficiency schemes that the Council had participated in. There had been a number of funding regimes aimed at lifting people out of fuel poverty, reducing energy consumption and reducing carbon emissions. Since 2017, 3,672 measures had been delivered through these schemes resulting in improvements to 2,435 homes. Further details of the type of the measures undertaken between 2017 and 2025 were included in the report. The Council had participated and completed seven funding schemes since 2017 and there were five schemes ongoing.

A discussion ensued during which Members acknowledged that there was some confusion on the best way forward in relation to energy efficiency and becoming less carbonised and a better understanding was needed. A request was made for more information going forward to enable a review of the net zero policy and the need for timely data to enable Members to make effective decisions. The Assistant Director Regulatory Services confirmed that each property was assessed on an individual basis to ascertain what energy efficiency improvements could be achieved within the criteria for the available funding. Clarification was sought by Members on whether private tenants would be able to apply to participate in these schemes. The Assistant Director, Regulatory Services confirmed that schemes were available to owner/occupiers and private landlords. In relation to private landlords, the criteria for funding would mean that, there may be available funding for one of their properties but for any additional properties, the private landlord may need to contribute a percentage of the cost of any further energy efficiency improvements.

Members wished to pass on their gratitude to the Team as there were numerous different schemes that had been utilised to secure funding for the implementation of energy efficiency measures in people's homes. There was some concern expressed about whether private landlords would take up the offer to improve the energy efficiency of the homes within their

properties. The Assistant Director, Regulatory Services confirmed that all private landlords were encouraged to take up the offer of these funding streams to improve their properties.

In response to a number of questions from Members, the Assistant Director, Regulatory Services confirmed that residents were encouraged to apply to be part of these schemes and assistance would be provided throughout the application process. It was highlighted that the criteria would ensure the best energy efficiency options would be applied to each property on an individual basis. Applications for the available schemes will be fully open later this year and officers will work with the Communications and Marketing Team to develop a campaign and residents will be asked to check if they were eligible through the criteria for the schemes.

The Chair concluded the meeting adding that the Team do an excellent job of securing as much additional funding as they can to make a difference to residents which in turn tackles fuel poverty and climate change.

Decision

The report was noted.

6. Controlling Houses in Multiple Occupation Article 4 Consultation *(Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To inform Members of a proposed consultation on potentially introducing an Article 4 Direction within Hartlepool following concerns raised by members of the public and Elected Members in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) across the Borough.

Issue(s) for consideration

The background to what constitutes a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) was provided in the report along with the legislation that governs their creation and operation. Members views were sought on whether to introduce an Article 4 Direction within Hartlepool which would withdraw the permitted development right to change the use of a dwellinghouse to a small HMO without the need for a planning application.

Members were informed that Article 4 Directions had been utilised by a number of Local Planning Authorities and the Hartlepool Development Corporation had recently opted to undertake a similar consultation process with a view to removing permitted development rights for HMOs in the parts of Hartlepool under their control.

There were two options outlined in the report as follows:

Option 1 – Do nothing: this would maintain the status quo and undertake no consultation on the possibility of removing permitted development rights for small HMOs.

Option 2 – To undertake the Article 4 Consultation. The General Permitted Development Order (GDPO) permits the Secretary of State or Local Planning Authority to make a Direction which withdraws certain types of development within an area where it was satisfied that it was expedient to make such a Direction.

The Chair highlighted that looking at houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) sat alongside work already ongoing in relation to the additional licensing of HMOs and selective licensing. Members were of the view that anything that protects residents by increasing the standards of HMOs and ensuring they were the best that they can be was of vital importance as there were areas in the town with a significant number of HMOs. There had been numerous incidents across Hartlepool where HMOs had caused difficulties for residents for many years and Members were keen for consultation to be undertaken to ascertain the views of local communities. It was important to note that consistency of regularisation needed to be maintained to ensure high standards across the board of all HMOs.

In conclusion, the Chair added that the Council were determined to ensure good standards of housing and safe and stronger communities were in place across Hartlepool and the consultation would be undertaken in conjunction with Hartlepool Development Corporation.

Decision

- (i) Members noted the Council's intention to undertake a 12-month (non-immediate) Article 4 consultation with a view to removing Permitted Development rights for the change of use of a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a small HMO (Use Class C4).
- (ii) Should the Article 4 be implemented following the consultation process then a further report will be brought back to the Neighbourhood Services Committee for approval to commence.

7. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chairman ruled that the following items 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.

Minute 8 – Protection of Residential Amenity from Inappropriately Sited Onshore Wind Turbines

8. Any Other Business - Protection of Residential Amenity from Inappropriately Sited Onshore Wind Turbines

At its meeting on 8 May 2025, Council received the following motion:

“Other authorities across the UK have taken action to address these issues:

- Milton Keynes Council sought a minimum setback of 600 to 800 metres
- Wales recommends 500 metres as a standard separation
- Northern Ireland uses a 10-times rotor diameter rule, with a minimum of 500 metres
- Scotland recommends a 2000m buffer from settlements for major wind developments

These precedents show that clearer, stronger planning rules are not only reasonable, but essential. Council therefore resolves to:

1. Establish a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Working Group within 8 weeks to draft a Wind Turbine SPD that introduces:

For all new onshore wind turbines if the height of the wind turbine generator is-

- (a) greater than 25m, but does not exceed 50m, the minimum distance requirement is 1000m;
- (b) greater than 50m, but does not exceed 100m, the minimum distance requirement is 1500m;
- (c) greater than 100m, but does not exceed 150m, the minimum distance requirement is 2000m;

This is in relation to existing residential properties and schools

- A borough-wide maximum turbine tip height of 99 metres in or near urban and semi-rural areas.
2. Commence a formal review of Policy CC4 of the Hartlepool Local Plan via Neighbourhood Services Committee, with the aim of incorporating these safeguards into statutory planning policy, subject to consultation and examination. This should include a review of amenity for local residents in line with
Hartlepool's Local Plan (Policy CC4):
 - Requires that turbines do not have a significant impact on the “*amenity of local communities or residents including visual intrusion, noise and traffic*”.

"The plan's footnote defines an appropriate topple distance as at least the turbine's tip height plus 10%... This safety setback applies generally to all structures (including dwellings), ensuring a basic separation between turbines and nearby properties."
 3. Ensure that until such a Local Plan amendment is adopted, the SPD and this Motion form a material consideration in the assessment of all wind turbine-related planning applications at Neighbourhood Services Committee.
 4. Affirm Hartlepool Borough Council's continued support for renewable energy, while committing to ensuring it is delivered safely, sensibly, and with full regard for the wellbeing of Hartlepool's residents and the character of its communities.
 5. Assure that no relevant authority may grant planning permission for the construction of a wind turbine generator unless it meets the minimum distance requirement”

Council resolved:

- To commence a formal review of Policy CC4 of the Hartlepool Local Plan via Neighbourhood Services Committee; and
- That until such a Local Plan amendment was adopted, the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and Motion would form a material consideration in the assessment of all wind turbine-related planning applications at Neighbourhood Services Committee.

Members were keen to be in receipt of all the facts and the most up to date information and guidance in relation to the installation of on-shore wind turbines. It was highlighted that there was a potential application for an on-shore wind turbine that had been brought to the attention of Ward Councillors and residents within close proximity of the proposed site and therefore time was of the essence. The Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods confirmed that the Council's Local Plan was robust planning document and included 12 points relating to sites for the progression of wind turbines. A Member referred to a previous application for four wind turbines that failed on a technicality and there were concerns expressed that the Local Plan was not robust enough on that occasion. The Chair reiterated the comments of the Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods that the current Local Plan was a robust document. It was proposed that a report be brought back to the Committee to include some professional and legal guidance and Government guidelines on the issue of the installation of on-shore wind turbines. In addition, it was suggested that Officers look at the motion and the legalities of that motion that was considered by Council alongside the current Local Plan.

Decision

- (i) That a report be brought back to the Committee later this year to include some professional and legal understanding and Government guidelines on the issue of the installation of on-shore wind turbines.
- (ii) That Officers examine the motion and the legalities of that motion that was considered by Council alongside the current Local Plan.

The meeting concluded at 6.25pm

H MARTIN

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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