
INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Draft MINUTES

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Tuesday 8 January 2019 between 7.30pm and 9.01pm.

Councillors present:

Martin Trevett (Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy) (Chairman)	
Andrew Scarth (Lead Member for Housing)	
Joanna Clemens	Angela Killick
Paula Hiscocks	Joan King
Peter Getkahn	Chris Lloyd (substitute for Cllr Giles-Medhurst)
Margaret Hofman	Jon Tankard
Heather Kenison	

Officers Present: Kimberley Grout, Head of Housing Services
Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services
Peter Simons, Senior Transport Planner
Mike Simpson, Committee and Web Officer

Also In attendance: 13 members of the public including petitioners

Councillor Martin Trevett in the Chair

IHED34/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst (substitute Member Cllr Chris Lloyd).

IHED35/18 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development Committee meeting held on 20 November 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

A Member said that although the Minutes were an accurate account of the meeting, the manner in which they were presented, particularly item IHED 28/18, was inadequate. The Chairman said if her comments related to the Local Plan, it was not a matter for this Committee.

IHED36/18 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

IHED37/18 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

IHED38/18 PETITIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 18

- I. The Committee received a petition comprising 71 signatures, which stated:

“We the undersigned strongly object to the proposed introduction of Parking Permits for the residents of Repton Way as proposed in your parking consultation document 2018. We believe there is no need for a Residents Permit Zone on Repton Way and would prefer that the existing parking regulations were properly enforced.”

As the petitioner was not present at the meeting, a Member who represented one of the wards in Croxley Green said he would make sure a report regarding this issue came back to a future meeting of the Committee, and he would, in the meantime, be happy to meet the petitioners.

- II. The Committee received a petition, comprising 34 signatures, against parking restrictions / single yellow lines on Frankland Close in Croxley Green:

“34 out of 44 houses are against parking restrictions, especially the proposal for yellow lines. One house did not want to sign this petition, and the other nine were not contactable.

I must point out that the opposition is to the yellow lines, and there are mixed views on whether parking permits should be considered if that is what Frankland Road ends up agreeing to. If Frankland Road does have parking permits after this consultation process, then the residents of Frankland Close would wish to be consulted on the possibility of having the same scheme as Frankland Road.”

In accordance with Council Procedural Rule 18, the Lead petitioner, Mr Chris Mitchell, presented the petition to the Committee and asked that the plans to apply yellow lines to Frankland Close be revisited.

The Chairman thanked Mr Mitchell, and informed him that the points raised would be fed into the consultation process.

The Head of Regulatory Services said the parking proposals were part of a consultation process which would help determine the way forward. A Member said the issue should not be delegated to the Lead Member, and that the matter should be returned to Committee for discussion considering the scale and nature

of the parking proposals. The Senior Transport Planner said that while the decision on this scheme was delegated in consultation with the Lead Member, like other items on the work programme, there is an expectation that the Lead Member could escalate any difficult or wide-ranging decisions up to the Committee. The Chairman advised that the Committee's remit was to hear the petitioners and pass the submissions to the relevant departments for a response.

III. The Committee received a petition comprising 32 signatures, which stated:

"There is a growing concern and considerable unrest between residents in this road. There are not enough parking spaces, which also includes problems for health attendants and tradesmen unable to start pre-arranged work. It has been said that tradesmen can get dispensation to park on yellow lines but this cannot be done in this road without it being completely blocked. Some time ago, after some two years of complaints, 2 chicanes were removed, there are still four more that could be removed which would be of some help and, if possible, a few spaces in the long term car park at the west end of Talbot Road be allocated to residents. We would like our complaint to be looked at urgently to avoid more unrest in what has always been a very friendly road."

In accordance with Council Procedural Rule 18, the Lead Petitioner, Mrs Jean Harper spoke about the problems incurred by residents of Talbot Road since the introduction of parking zones, and said that healthcare professionals visiting customers were often unable to park. Removal of the chicanes would free up a few spaces, which would also alleviate the flooding risk that currently existed.

A Member said it should be clarified for the benefit of those members of the public in attendance who had signed a petition what happened next in the process. The Chairman said that most of the issues raised in this petition came under the remit of Hertfordshire County Council's Highways department, although the District Council would respond to the request to allocate bays in public car parks for use by residents with permits.

The Chairman advised the petitioner to contact Herts County Council directly, and the District Council would provide contact details. The Head of Regulatory Services said it was not, unfortunately, possible for Three Rivers to forward the petitions to HCC as the District Council had no information sharing agreement with County.

RESOLVED:

That the petitions be accepted and that Officers considered the points raised in petitions I and II as part of the consultation on the Croxley Green Parking Review. In addition, a further report on the Croxley Green Parking Review be presented to Committee in response to requests from Local Ward Councillors.

That the element of the petition in Talbot Road with regard to allocating bays in the public car parks for use by residents be considered.

That the Lead Petitioners be written to in acknowledgement of their submissions and, where applicable, be provided with contact details for Hertfordshire County Council.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

IHED39/18 VERGE PARKING MANAGEMENT

This report reviewed the criteria applied to public requests for new verge hardening schemes to protect verges from parking damage.

The Senior Transport Planner highlighted the four key issues set out in section 1.4 of his report explaining that these issues were complex.

A Member expressed concern over converting green spaces into concrete car parking areas, and said the Council had a duty to preserve green areas. In addition she asked from where would the budget for such work come. The Senior Transport Planner said the funding would come from the same budget in 2019-20 as this is an existing Programme, albeit with a different name.

The Chairman said he knew of areas within the District where flats built several years ago now had insufficient parking space for the residents, and suggested that a separate approach was required in order to provide adequate parking facilities (as set out in the report, section 2.18). A Member said parking problems in parts of Maple Cross were acute, specifically in the turning heads of some roads; and the area needed prioritisation.

The Senior Transport Planner said if the Council decided to create more car parks it would be at considerable expense, as factors such as drainage, lighting and business rates would be incurred, and the Chairman confirmed that car parks were subject to business rates but hardened verges were not.

In response to a question from a Member, the Senior Transport Planner explained that grasscrete was the result of a process by which grass grew through concrete, whereas grass interwoven with plastic was a cheaper but less environmentally-friendly option which was no longer used by Three Rivers.

A Member said some amenity greens were so small they were of little use as children's play areas, and may as well be used for parking. She said it was necessary to judge each case on its own merits. In addition, members of the public should be made aware that highways issues are the responsibility of County Council.

The Member added that street parking in South Oxhey was very problematic in terms of emergency vehicles not being able to gain access to houses, and she believed the same problem existed elsewhere in the District. She suggested that vehicles over a certain size be prohibited from parking overnight as that was the main source of problems and that the verge hardening criteria were further revised with reference to emergency vehicle access. The Senior Transport Planner explained that highway safety was not a consideration in the selection of verge hardening schemes as it was the responsibility of the local Highway Authority. He said that a Traffic Order would be required to stop people from parking in the road, obstructing emergency vehicle access, and such matters could be covered by the Parking Management Programme, but not the Verge Hardening Programme, which did not directly address issues on public roads.

A Member said he would like to endorse the suggestion for the creation of parking areas from amenity areas, and that proposals should come back to the Committee.

The Lead Member for Housing asked for clarification that parking bays were for use by the public, and that bays for the disabled would be provided. The Senior Transport Planner replied that, per item 5.5 in his report, parking bays on the

TRDC estate would not be designated to private persons or bodies. Historically, bays for disabled drivers were provided on public highways and not private land. There were numerous difficulties if land privately owned by TRDC was to be provided for disabled bays that did not arise on publicly maintained highway which was protected by other legislation, so it was unlikely such facilities could be provided on land owned by the Council.

The Lead Member for Housing requested that a report on provision of disabled parking on hardened verges be provided in the future.

The Senior Transport Planner said that demand for disabled bays was likely to increase following the recent reclassification of entitlement to a blue badge that would henceforth include not-physical disabilities, such as mental health issues.

The Head of Regulatory Services reiterated that this specific verge hardening programme was not envisaged to allow spending of Council money on providing parking spaces for private individuals but that these were for the benefit of the public

The Chairman moved that the Officer's recommendations be agreed, with additional reports to be produced on the provision of disabled parking bays on verge hardened areas and on the creation of new car parks on land owned by TRDC. A Member asked for clarification that that cost to the Council in business rates of each parking bay was £250 per year. The Senior Transport Planner confirmed this figure had been provided by the Valuation Office Agency as a benchmark figure for each car parking bay, and that applying a Traffic Order would be worth consideration.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the Verge Parking Management report be noted, and that the items stated above be added to the Work Programme.

HOUSING

IHED40/18 REVIEW OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PLACEMENT POLICY

The Lead Member for Housing commended the report on its thoroughness, which was introduced by the Head of Housing Services, who said the update was due to a change in legislation but was of no significant impact to the Council.

The Head of Housing Services advised that as of today, there were 46 households in temporary accommodation, of which ten were placed outside of the district in Harlow. Those that were housed temporarily in Three Rivers included 17 households accommodated within the South Oxhey regeneration scheme which the Council could only use until the end of this year. There were also eight households currently awaiting temporary accommodation. In response to a question from a Member, she said no households were in Bed and Breakfast accommodation, and had not been for at least a year.

A Member referred to 4.3 of the policy and asked if it was a requirement for customers to make applications online as homeless people tended not to possess a computer in order to make online claims. The Head of Housing Services said that it was the responsibility of the customer to make a claim for housing benefit if required, but that this could be done online or at the Council offices with assistance from the Revenues and Benefits team if required.

The Member asked who was responsible for setting the criteria for placement, which she believed to be particularly harsh. The Head of Housing Services replied that Three Rivers adhered to the Government's legislation when placing customers.

A Member referred to item 6.3 in the report and said she believed housing people within a two hour commute to work was unreasonable. The Head of Housing Services said she did not believe it was, in view of the priority criteria that formed the policy. She said that customers had the choice of commuting to work or moving their children to different schools, and added that the Sustainable Development, Planning and Transport Committee agreed two years ago that a two hour commute was feasible, as it was driven by the availability of housing stock in Harlow.

A Member expressed surprise that, per item 2.8, less affordable rented housing was being built, and asked whether more details were available. A Member suggested it was a Central Government decision and that the Member's MP may be able to provide an answer.

The Head of Housing Services said she would get back to the Member with further information.

POST MEETING NOTE

The Head of Housing Services reported as follows:

One of the main impacts was the reduction in social housing rents able to be collected by Housing Associations and Local Authorities. This had a negative impact on the long-term business plans of those agencies meaning that they had to review their building plans already in place.

A Member asked how many homeless people were currently in Three Rivers, and the Head of Housing Services said such exact data was not known, whether in Three Rivers or anywhere in the country. Many are 'hidden homeless' who prefer to keep under the radar and not seek help, so numbers were therefore not available.

The Lead Member for Housing said it had been known for people (refugees) to be abandoned in the area, which was why, when Chairman of the Council, he supported the Three Rivers Refugee Partnership charity.

A Member asked whether the Council had a duty to provide temporary accommodation to all homeless households. The Head of Housing Services said that although new legislation had been introduced last year which placed additional duties on the Council, it did not alter the client groups that the Council had to provide temporary accommodation for.

The Lead Member for Housing moved that the Committee agree the updated temporary accommodation placement policy to ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the updated temporary accommodation placement policy was agreed.

IHED 41/18 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee reviewed the work programme, and it was agreed that the following items be added:

- i. A report on the Croxley Green Parking review.
- ii. A report on the permitting of advisory Disabled Persons' Parking Bays on TRDC land.
- iii. A Policy review on the creation of car parks on TRDC owned land.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme, including the additional items specified above, be noted.

CHAIRMAN