
INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of a virtual meeting held by remote access on Tuesday 23 June 2020 between 7.30pm to 8.52pm

Councillors present:

Stephen Giles-Medhurst (Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development)	
Andrew Scarth (Housing)	
Tony Humphreys	Reena Ranger
Alex Hayward	David Sansom
Joy Mann	Stephanie Singer
Dominic Sokalski	Phil Williams (for Cllr Drury)
Stephen Cox (for Cllr J King)	

Officers Present: Geof Muggerridge, Director of Community and Environmental Services
Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services
Peter Simons, Senior Transport Planner
Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst in the Chair

IHED 01/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Steve Drury and Joan King with the substitute Members being Councillors Phil Williams and Stephen Cox.

IHED 02/20 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development Committee meeting held on 17 March 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Chair advised that a heading for the second petition therefore providing a clear separation of the two petitions. Also following consultation with the Lead Petitioner for the Croxley Green petition it had been agreed that the points raised by the Lead Petitioner would be included in the minute book as an addendum to the minutes.

IHED 03/20 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair ruled that item 7 (Draft Streetscape Design Manual) had not been available 5 clear working days before the meeting but was of sufficient urgency to take the item as a late item due to the following reason.

To allow Officers to commence the consultation.

IHED 04/20 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded Committee Members who were Blue Badges holders or who had family members or friends who had a blue badge had all received legal advice from the Solicitor to the Council as to whether they should declare a non registrable pecuniary interest.

Councillor Reena Ranger declared a non-registrable non-pecuniary interest on the item on Parking Provision for Holders of Disabled Blue Badges in TRDC Long and Short Stay Car Parks as a member of her family was a Blue Badge holder and may use one of the disabled parking bays in Rickmansworth.

The Chair said that the Member could remain in the virtual meeting room but should not participate in the discussion or vote on the item.

TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

IHED 05/20 PARKING PROVISION FOR HOLDERS OF DISABLED BLUE BADGES IN TRDC LONG AND SHORT-STAY CAR PARKS

The Chair introduced the report, and emphasised that the possession of a Blue Badge was not determined by financial status, and supported the recommendation which was to maintain that the current parking charges still apply. The Head of Regulatory Services said she had no further comments but was happy to answer any questions Members may have.

A Member said they opposed the recommendation as Blue Badge holders were allocated the badges for a reason, and that they should have more time to purchase their ticket and return to their vehicle. Continuing with the current arrangement was not providing fairness or physical fairness for people with disabilities.

Other Members agreed with the points made, and said it was not fair that disabled individuals did not have more time available when parking. Disabled people needed more time to park and get their shopping and the Council should take this into consideration.

A Member also referred to Appendix 2 of the report regarding complaints which had been made regarding the parking ticket machines but the complaints had not been substantiated.

The Head of Regulatory Services said there has been consideration of a number of measures to assist Blue Badge holders, including access, the relocating of ticket machines and the making of payments.

A Member said the proposal was not as fair as it should be, and asked if it would be possible to increase the free parking time from one hour to two hours in short stay car parks. The Chair said every disability was different, and that consistency was needed.

Councillor Stephen Cox proposed, seconded by Councillor David Sansom, an amendment to the recommendation to state that the first hour free be extended to two hours. Other Members on the Committee supported this amendment.

Another Member said not all Blue Badge holders were severely disabled, and that mothers with very young children and a buggy, for example, were just as likely to need more time to obtain a parking ticket and return to the car with it. It was not right to make assumptions, and the policy should remain as it was.

The Chair stated that the car parks in Three Rivers were the only ones in Hertfordshire that offered the first hour free, and that a tariff of £1 for two hours was the lowest in Hertfordshire.

The Head of Regulatory Services was asked whether there would be a cost implication if the policy was changed, and she said there would be. Members were shown a map of Rickmansworth town centre showing the location of disabled blue badge holder parking bays, of which there were 8/9, which Blue Badge holders could use for free and were within walking distance of the town centre.

A Member commented that these spaces for Blue Badge holders would not be a short distance for some Blue Badge holders.

A Member asked about concessions for Blue Badge holders in the long stay car parks, and said there should be two free hours available.

The Head of Regulatory Services said it was not feasible to do this as the fee was £4 for 24 hours so it would be difficult to reduce it. The long term car parks were also aimed at those wishing to stay longer than 2 hours.

The Councillor confirmed his understanding of this.

On being asked what a change of policy would entail, the Head of Regulatory Services said a full process would have to be undertaken comprising a new traffic regulation order, new parking software, new tariff boards and full public consultation.

The Chair reiterated that if the policy was changed there would be complications in implementing the changes. He said that with the amendment the item would require a report to the Policy and Resources Committee as it was a change of policy with budgetary consequences. If the recommendation was passed in the report without any amendment it would go straight to Full Council in July.

The Chair took a vote on the amendment to the recommendation that the one hour one hour free parking in short term car parks be extended to two hours for holders of Blue Badges.

On being put to the Committee the amendment was declared LOST by the Chair, the voting being 4 For, 6 Against and 0 Abstentions.

The Chair moved, duly seconded, that the current parking charges in long and short stay car parks continue to be applied to all users.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation to continue with the current parking charges was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being 6 For, 3 Against and 1 Abstention.

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:

That the current parking charges in long and short stay car parks continue to be applied to all users.

IHED 06/20 MEMORIAL BENCHES, MEMORIAL TREES AND PLAQUES POLICY

The Chair said the Committee was asked to recommend an update to the existing policy for approving and installing memorial benches, memorial trees and memorial plaques across the District. The item had previously been to the Policy and Resources Committee, who agreed the policy in principle, having amended the recommendation to include Ward Councillors in the decision-making for the review of locations/locations when an application was made.

The Head of Regulatory Services asked the Committee to note a few corrections in the report following P&R Committee:

At paragraph 2.4 bullet point 2 and paras 2.7, 5.3 and 15.1 the appendix should read Appendix A. At 7.1 the appendix should read Appendix B.

Para 15.3 is updated to include consultation with Ward Members.

With regard to the Policy P&R recommended and agreed the following changes:

- Sponsors to be informed they will be 1 of up to 3 plaques installed on an existing bench
- Amendments to incorrect appendices
- Taking 2 sets of contact details for each request
- Highways benches – consideration given to location in consultation with Ward members as well as Lead Member and Head of Service
- Highlighting wording on plaques must not include offensive wording or terminology and will be reviewed by officers for each application
- Products purchased will be sourced sustainably
- Sites and numbers of trees planted can be reviewed over time in accordance with the individual management plan and includes in consultation with Lead Member, Ward Councillors and Head of Service

A Member asked what the process was for allocating plaques to benches – would each bench have up to three plaques fitted before another bench was started on, or would each new plaque be attached to a different bench before doubling up?

The Head of Regulatory Services advised this would be dependent on the bench/location required but the policy would not require one bench to be 'filled' up first.

Members raised concern about 3 plaques being erected on a bench if there were disagreements between families/sponsors.

The Head of Regulatory Services aid that not every scenario could be predicted but generally a family could purchase and sponsor a bench exclusively, with up to three plaques. Or alternatively they could purchase a plaque and would be told there could be up to 3 plaques on a bench. Contact details would be taken of at least two people.

A Member said the process sounded unnecessarily complicated, and asked if it could be looked at afresh? The Chair was in agreement with specific regard to the 3 plaques on one bench and questioned whether the scheme could be reviewed and simplified.

The Head of Regulatory Services said the aim was of the policy to allow people to sponsor memorial benches, trees and plaques and for the Council to cover the cost of providing the service. The Chair said he was uneasy with the idea of a bench displaying three plaques from different families, and the Head of Regulatory Services said the options were to buy a plaque or an entire bench.

A Member said it would be necessary to exercise caution when tracking down the surviving families of deceased relatives, and the Head of Regulatory Services suggested annual contact could be made to the families made to check the details the Council had were correct.

A Member asked how many plaques would be considered for each memorial tree, to which the Head of Regulatory Services advised one.

The Head of Regulatory Services emphasised to the Committee that the recommendation had been agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee, and any substantial changes would need to go back to that Committee. Minor tweaks could be accommodated.

The Chair said asked if Officers could review how the issue of number of plaques per bench would work, but was happy for this to be delegated to the Head of Service in consultation with the Lead Member(s).

A Member asked how this was different from the previous policy, and the Head of Regulatory Services said it was now possible to sponsor a tree. The Member said she failed to understand why this item went to Policy and Resources in the first place, and the Principal Committee Manager said it was because it was a change in policy and had budget implications. The Service Committees were not able to determine reports which were outside policy/budget.

The Chair asked that the Committee agree the recommendations, and clarify the situation regarding the three plaques per bench to be delegated to the Director of Community and Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Members and Group Opposition spokespersons.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation with amendment was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the new policy agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee for installing memorial benches, memorial bench plaques and memorial trees within parks, open spaces and on the highway and other routes across the district as detailed at point 2.4 and within Appendix A subject to the clarifying the situation regarding the three plaques per bench to be delegated to the Director of Community and Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Member and Group Opposition spokespersons.

POST MEETING NOTE: Amended policy circulated to Lead Member and Group Spokespersons follow the meeting.

Costs will be reviewed annually year on year to take into account inflation, any additional costs and increased costs from manufacturers/suppliers and will be included as part of the Fees and Charges process.

Locations will be reviewed year on year when required, in consultation with the appropriate Lead Member, Ward Councillors and Head of Service.

IHED 07/20 DRAFT STREETScape DESIGN MANUAL

The Chair emphasised that the manual was a draft version, and this was a request for consent to move the project forward to the Director of Community and Environmental Services in conjunction with the Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development, after which it would go to public consultation. Comments would then be invited on the final document prior to being presented to the Policy and Resources Committee.

The Senior Transport Planner talked through some examples of how the Council was looking to be consistent with the street furniture in the District while recognising that each town and village had its own identity, and this would be accommodated without being prescriptive.

A Member asked whether consideration had been given to Conservation Areas, and the Chair said it was referred to in the draft document.

The Chair asked whether the Committee agreed to the recommendation of approving the Streetscape Manual go for consultation and thence to Policy and Resources Committee.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared CARRIED by the Chairman, the voting being Unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the draft version of the Streetscape Manual be forwarded to the Lead Member and Director, and then to consultation prior to consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee.

IHED 08/20 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman asked if anyone had comments regarding the Committee's work programme, and there was none. It was noted that several items were due to be discussed at the Committee's next meeting on 11 August 2020.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

CHAIR