
INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of a virtual meeting on Tuesday 22 September 2020 from 7.30 pm until 8.06pm.

Councillors present:

Steve Drury (Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy)	
Andrew Scarth (Lead Member for Housing)	
Alex Hayward	Reena Ranger
Tony Humphreys	David Sansom
Joy Mann	Stephanie Singer
Joan King	Raj Khiroya (Substitute for Stephen Giles-Medhurst)

Officers Present:

Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services
Temi Opeyemi, Finance Manager
Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager
Mike Simpson, Committee & Web Officer.
Also present: Mr Paul Rowbottom, Lead Petitioner.

Councillor Steve Drury in the Chair

IHED 20/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Stephen-Giles-Medhurst with the substitute Member being Councillor Raj Khiroya.

IHED 21/20 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development Committee held on 11 August 2020 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 21 August 2020 were confirmed as being an accurate record.

A Member said the minutes of the meeting on 11 August contained a discrepancy in relation to the use of the Chairman's casting vote being repeated, but were otherwise accurate.

Post Meeting Note

The Principal Committee Manager was unable to find any repetition in the minute.

IHED 22/21 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

IHED 23/20 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

IHED 24/20 TO RECEIVE A PETITION UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 18

The Lead Petitioner, spoke on behalf of 30 residents who had signed an e-petition regarding a proposal to replace and or remove the Traffic Order at the Junction of Breakspeare Road and Garden Road. The e-petition stated the following:

To replace or remove the Traffic Order, which has been the selectively imposed at the Junction of Garden Road & Breakspeare Road; because the Waiting/Parking restriction is excessive and fails to consider the impact of removing 40 metres of parking on local residents. We the residents of Abbots Langley object to the implementation of 40 linear metres of Parking/Waiting restrictions at the Junction of Garden Road & Breakspeare Road; which we consider to be excessive. We ask that this selectively imposed Traffic Order is overturned and that Parking & Transport officers, from TRDC, meet with residents to co-produce a solution that genuinely makes parking 'safer, easier and more convenient' for the majority of residents and all road users (including facilitating access for Emergency services and waste collection vehicles).

The Chairman said the e-petition was accepted, and would be referred to Regulatory Services Team to add to their work programme.

A Member who was familiar with the junction spoke in support of the e-petition. The roads were incredibly narrow and from the Victorian era that could not accommodate the current traffic volumes. Residential parking added to the problem.

A Member said the Lead Petitioner had raised some very good points, and asked that they be debated and further information reported back to the next Committee meeting.

The Head of Regulatory Services questioned the value of waiting three months to address some of the points raised, and that returning to the Committee was not standard practice with these parking requests. The Head of Regulatory Services suggested that the response to the Lead Petitioner be circulated to Members of the Committee. She was happy to respond to any questions Members may have at this time.

The Lead Petitioner had submitted information asking the Council to look at the junction protection on that road as well as other proposals to improve parking, which would be done through the Parking Management Programme. In making the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) Officers had followed due process, and the marked area was the minimum legal requirement to protect the junction. It was acknowledged that illegal parking resulted in manoeuvrability problems, especially when larger vehicles and refuse trucks were involved and it was this that was brought to the attention of the Council when the review was requested.

RESOLVED:

That the e-petition be accepted by the Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development Committee and referred to the Regulatory Services Team to be included in their work programme.

The Head of Regulatory Services to circulate to all Members a draft of the final letter to be sent to the Lead Petitioner.

RESOURCES

IHED 25/20 BUDGET MONITORING – PERIOD 4

The Finance Manager presented the report which covered the Committee's financial position over the medium term (2020 – 2023) as at Period 4 (end of July). She asked Members to note that the budget included variances reported in July to Policy and Resources due to Covid, as well as figures carried forward from 2019-20.

A Member referred to point 2.9 and asked how the debt of £39k would be retrieved. The Finance Manager said ideally it would be recovered by a Debt Recovery team. Debts over one year old were subject to a standardised process and referred to the debt collection service.

The Member then referred to Appendix 1 on page 4 regarding Development Management and asked for clarification of the reduction in qualification training. The Finance Manager said the wording was erroneous, and that HR would pay qualification fees and that the budget was no longer with the service.

The Member asked about the figure of £50k for Sustainability projects, and asked what the projects were. The Finance Manager said she did not have the information to hand and would need to let the Member know in writing.

POST MEETING NOTE:

The budget is to fund sustainability projects within the commercial and housing estate. Spending of the budget has been delayed as a result of the pandemic and while we investigate various initiatives that it will be spent on. The budget is to be retained as some of these projects will be statutory i.e. to improve properties EPC's to meet new statutory requirements. The Council has objectives to be carbon neutral within a timeframe and these monies will be needed to achieve this. TRDC has recently engaged a climate change officer who will help identify expenditure items for decarbonisation etc. and expect the monies to be spent through 2021

A Member asked when the Delta Gain project would be finished. The Head of Regulatory Services said the project involved the Council working on private land and consent was needed from the landowner to progress. In addition, there had been ongoing discussion over surfacing and benches. The Legal Team was now involved in preparation of a licence agreement with the private landowner. It was hoped that implementation would be achieved by March 2021.

A Member asked how revenue from planning applications compared to last year. The Head of Regulatory Services said from 1 April to 31 August 2019 there were 672 applications compared with 664 as it currently stands for the same period this

year. Although the numbers were similar, it was the type and scale of applications that affected the income.

A Member made reference to item 2.9 of the report and asked why there was so much debt attributed to temporary accommodation. The Finance Manager requested that the question be referred to the Head of Housing Services to reply in writing to the Committee.

POST MEETING NOTE:

The arrangement for nightly-let temporary accommodation is that the Council pays the provider and then the Council bills the customer that has occupied the accommodation. Unfortunately customers do not always pay what they should pay and so action will be taken in relation to their accommodation. Finance continue to chase any debt owed to the Council and if a customer comes back to the Council they are advised of their debt which will have an impact on any possible future action.

RESOLVED:

That the Budget Monitoring report be noted.

IHED26/20 WORK PROGRAMME

Members of the Committee were invited to comment on the work programme.

A Member said there were a lot of items due to go before the Committee on 17 November and was concerned that some might be rushed through, and asked whether some could be moved to a later date.

The Head of Regulatory Services said at least one of the items would not be ready to go to the meeting on 17 November, and others had to go to the Committee as planned in order to meet time commitments. She would look at whether any items could be deferred to the January meeting.

The Chairman said that if the papers were made available sufficiently early, as they always are, answers to Members' questions could be addressed in advance instead of being debated at the meeting.

A Member said it would be preferable to convene another meeting rather than rush through all the items on the work programme. The role of Members was to scrutinise decisions and if insufficient time was allowed to do so, the reason for having a Committee meeting would have to be questioned.

The Principal Committee Manager advised she would review the work programme with the Heads of Service and if possible move some items to the January Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme and comments be noted.

CHAIR