
INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of a virtual meeting on Tuesday 19 January 2021 from 7.30pm until 20.34pm.

Councillors present:

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

Officers Present: Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services
Kimberley Grout – Head of Housing Services
Adam Ralton – Development Management Team Leader
Peter Simons – Senior Transport Planner
Sarah Haythorpe, Principle Committee Manager

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst in the Chair

IHED 36/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

IHED 37/20 MINUTES

The minutes of the virtual/remote meeting of the Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development Committee held on 17 November 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair when it was possible to do so.

IHED 38/20 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair ruled that the supporting papers on the following items had not been available 5 clear working days before the meeting but were of sufficient urgency to take as late items

Agenda Item 7 – The Parking Management Programme 2021- 23
Agenda Item 8 - The Verge Parking Programme 2021 – 23
Agenda Item 6 - Supporting Housing Delivery and Public Service Infrastructure (December 2020) Proposed Consultation Response, updated responses

IHED 39/20 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

To receive any declarations of interest.

HOUSING

IHED 40/20 PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR OFFER

The Private Rented Sector Offer Policy set out when the Council will make a private rented offer to a homeless applicant. When such an offer is made the policy also described what factors the Council will take into account when assessing its suitability and what steps an applicant could take if they do not agree with the Council's decision. Following a change in legislation it had been necessary to update the Private Rented Sector Offer Policy.

The Head of Housing Services advised that the original Policy had been approved in 2018. Following a change in legislation it had been updated and reviewed.

A Member asked whether EICRs (Electrical Installation Condition Reports) would be required on any housing owned by Three Rivers District Council that was not considered private rental. The Head of Housing Services confirmed that any temporary housing accommodation owned by the Council would also need to comply.

On being put to the Committee the recommendations set out in the report were declared CARRIED by the Chair of the meeting having been agreed by general assent.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee agree the updated Private Rented Sector Offer Policy to ensure compliance with relevant legislation;

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING POLICY

IHED 41/20 SUPPORTING HOUSING DELIVERY AND PUBLIC SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE (DECEMBER 2020) – PROPOSED CONSULTATION RESPONSE

On 3 December 2020 the Government issued the Supporting housing delivery and public service infrastructure consultation. This was a technical consultation, seeking views on proposals for:

- A new permitted development right of a change of use to residential to create new homes, •
- Measures to provide public service infrastructure more quickly through expanded permitted development rights and a new streamlined planning application process for hospitals, schools and prisons,
- The approach to simplifying and consolidating existing permitted development rights following changes to the Use Classes Order.

The Development Management Team Leader highlighted the updates in the consultation paper.

Members raised the following points:

Q: An addition to Paragraph 4.2 that this fee could be increased annually in line with inflation?

A: Planning fees were set nationally but this could be added to this Paragraph. Where it asked whether the fee should be set at £96 they could say it should be set at £462 with the addition that it should be increased with inflation.

Q: It was proposed that the consultation period be reduced from 21 to 14 days would that also apply to the Secretary of State?

Q: The consultation period reduction from 21 days to 14 days would not provide long enough for any consultation. The Chair agreed that this would be inadequate.

Q: Clarification was requested on the proposed changes and how they would fall under Permitted Development, can they just proceed or would they still need to come to the local planning authority?

A: Permitted development rights were nationally available and allowed certain operations to be undertaken without applying for full planning permission. The Government's consultations refers to Prior Approval which is halfway between not needing planning permission and needing full planning permission. The principal of the change of use would be granted by the development order, but it would still be a requirement for an applicant to apply for certain elements of the development to be considered and assessed, e.g. changing a restaurant to a residential premises the applicant would need to apply to the Local Authority for any flooding impacts, transport issues, land contamination issues, adequate natural light and noise from adjacent premises.

Q: Question 3.2 space standards had been put in, would housing mix and disabled provision be considered?

A: Although the Council were not able to consider this currently under Permitted Development Order, it could be worth including.

Q: Question 5, should the Council be asking for a buffer for if a property was vacant for 6 months/a year. A developer may have the means to purchase something that a smaller shop owner was unable to purchase.

A: An addition that they would need to demonstrate that there was no viable alternative use could be included.

The Head of Regulatory Services pointed out that these were all considerations of full planning applications and that the Permitted Development was trying to move away from that so the Council should be saying this was not supported as a concept rather than adding points to it.

Q: Question 6.2 the impact on people who share a protected characteristic. Losing a shop that was a community asset would make it difficult for some people to access alternative services. With different ethnic groups there could be health inequalities. Loss of gyms etc.

Q: Question 7 would this allow a school to build onto a playground? There would be different distances between adjoining residential houses.

A: Consideration of the outdoor playing space with the inclusion of caveats could be included in the response.

Q: Question 9.1 increasing the size of a school could have a positive impact on local businesses but a negative impact could be more traffic, noise etc. An additional positive could be the provision of additional amenities for the community.

Q: For a conversion the developer would not be subject to a Section 106 agreement. Could this be queried and disputed?

A: This was one of the issues with Permitted Development change of use, limited powers of Section 106, with no ability to secure affordable housing.

Q: A suggestion was made for a covering letter from the CEO to accompany the strongly worded documentation. The Committee agreed with this request.

Q: As pubs were exempt from this would they remain empty?

A: This would mean pubs would have to apply for full planning permission.

Q: Could Three Rivers access other Authorities responses to this consultation?

A: It was understood there was a Hertfordshire wide planning group who would be writing to the Government on behalf of all Hertfordshire Authorities. It would be possible to see what some Councils had written from their websites.

The Chair advised that County Council would be putting in a formal objection.

The Chair proposed, duly seconded, that the Committee make an addition to the recommendation to lodge a formal objection to these proposed changes as a loss of Local Government Control and in terms of Residents and Local Councillors ability to comment on planning applications and influence the decision. The letter to go with the response to the consultation and to be agreed by the Head of Service in consultation with the Lead Member.

The Head of Regulatory Services advised that this decision should be delegated back to the Director of Community and Environmental Services to issue a formal objection in consultation with the Lead Member. Once submitted the letter would be circulated to the Committee for information. This amendment was agreed by the Chair of the Committee.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation including the amendments was declared CARRIED by the Chair having been agreed by general assent.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

- Note the report and proposed responses to the consultation.
- Propose any suggested changes to the proposed responses
- Authorise officers to issue the consultation response
- A formal objection to be issued with the consultation, delegated back to the Director of Community and Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Member.

- Following submission, the letter to be circulated to the Committee for information.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING POLICY

IHED 42/20 PARKING MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME 2021/23

The District Council as the statutory Local Parking Authority (and as agent to the local Highway Authority, Hertfordshire County Council) managed the provision of on- and off-street parking in the Three Rivers District through the Parking Management Programme.

This report reviewed the success of the programme in 2019/21 (section 1.7 onwards) and proposes additions to the programme for the financial years 2021/23 (at section 4.5 and Appendix A).

The Senior Transport Planner clarified at Paragraph 2.1 that there were 69 electric vehicle changing points in the Three Rivers District available for the public to use. Two of which were provided by the District Council and the figure of 69 was the highest in Hertfordshire.

The Senior Transport Planner highlighted the main points to be agreed in the report.

The following points were raised by Members:

Q: How would pandemic bias be addressed? A consultation taking place now may not show a proper picture due to commuters working from home.

A: The Chair advised that the earliest consultations would take place would be April and agreement had been made with Rickmansworth West Councillors to delay going to the next stage of formal consultation at this stage. In the case of Yellow line requests, these would be considered as required on safety grounds. The request for yellow lines was mainly due to road junctions being blocked and corners and pavements being parked on. The Senior Transport Planner advised that there was a structured way of consulting, the consultation process was structured with several stages of consultation, the way consultation was carried out was flexible for each scheme and they would always consult Local Ward Cllrs on scheme details like the questions they asked in surveys.

The process undertaken was that drafts of what would be going out to residents were sent to Ward Members in advance and could influence the way they were worded.

Q: Had the delay in the Rickmansworth West consultation been reflected in the report? Consultation on parking issues should not go out during the lockdown.

A: The Chair advised that it had been agreed to review Rickmansworth West from the middle of March in terms of the circumstances, but this programme only applied from April for the next two years. Officers would take on board when to progress this in conjunction with the Ward Members dependent upon the situation.

Q: A Member had concerns about emails received from residents in Dickinson Square, Croxley Green. The report stated that work in Croxley Green would start in February, should this be looked at again in April?

A: The Chair advised that the Croxley Green work had already gone through three consultations plus the statutory process. The order had been sealed and the scheme would come into force. Over 50% of Dickinson Square residents had voted to be included in the scheme.

The Chair moved the recommendation set out in the report.

On being put to the Committee the recommendations were declared CARRIED by the Chair of the meeting the voting being 6 For, 0 Against, 5 Abstentions

RESOLVED:

1. Agreed that the programme is updated to include both the 'prioritised investigations' and the area-wide review that are proposed (in Appendix A and section 3.5) to be included in the programme;
2. that once the programme has been set it shall be adhered to as the current Parking Management Programme, with any significant additions being limited to exceptions to the prioritisation procedure requested by the Lead Member, to be delegated to the Director of Community and Environmental Services; and that
3. the programme will be progressed in line with all relevant current practice, policy and standards; and that decisions on scheme details and programme, including the consideration of objections to Traffic Regulation Orders developed through this programme of works and to any items remaining from earlier programmes of works, be delegated to the Director of Community and Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Member and relevant Ward Councillors.

IHED 43/20 VERGE HARDENING PROGRAMME 2021/23

This report provided the current, prioritised list of proposed schemes to improve parking opportunities by hardening grassed verges and other areas. It detailed the schemes that had been introduced and those which were proposed to be introduced in the next year. The committee was also asked to note the criteria used to prioritise the request list and the policies used in delivering the programme.

On being put to the Committee the recommendations were declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being unanimous by general assent.

RESOLVED:

1. Agreed that the current programme along with the three highest-scoring schemes set out in Appendix A will be included on the proposed work programme; and authorises the Director of Community and Environmental Services to develop and implement schemes at these locations (or if schemes prove undeliverable, at other high-scoring locations as shown on Appendix A) in agreement with the Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development following discussion with local Ward Councillors.
2. Confirmed its agreement for the amended criteria used to prioritise the request list and the practices used in delivering the programme, as set out in section 2.5 above and as agreed in the January 2019 meeting of this committee.

IHED 44/20 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received its work programme.

The Chair raised concerns that some of the items may not be ready for the March meeting as they were dependent upon the Senior Transport Planner being able to write the reports.

A Member asked whether there was a Green Transport Plan. The Senior Transport Planner confirmed that there was a Green Travel Plan and would provide the weblink for the Committee Members.

The Chair moved the recommendation in the report that the work programme be noted.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being unanimous by general assent.

RESOLVED

The Committee noted the work programme.

CHAIR