
INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth on Tuesday 16 November 2021 from 7.30pm to 7.54pm.

Councillors present:

Matthew Bedford (Lead Member Infrastructure and Planning Policy)
Andrew Scarth (Lead Member for Housing)
Stephen Giles-Medhurst (Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development)
Tony Humphreys
Paul Rainbow
Joan King
Ciarán Reed
Lisa Hudson (Sub for Cllr Reena Ranger)
Joanna Clemens

Also present:

Councillor Stephen King

Officers Present: Claire May, Head of Planning Policy and Projects
Sally Riley, Finance Manager
Kimberley Grout, Head of Housing Services
Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services
Mike Simpson, Committee and Web Officer

Councillor Matthew Bedford in the Chair

IHED 14/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Reena Ranger OBE and Stephanie Singer, with the substitute being Councillor Lisa Hudson. Cllrs Alex Hayward and Margaret Hofman, substitute for Cllr Stephanie Singer, were absent.

IHED 15/21 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development Committee held on 21 September 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

IHED 16/21 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair ruled that the following item had not been available 5 clear working days before the meeting but were of sufficient urgency to take at the meeting:

Item 6(c) – the Housing Services Plans had not been included on the Agenda when published but was of sufficient urgency to be taken so that the plans could be discussed by the Committee. The Chair of the meeting agreed to take the item of business.

IHED 17/21 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There was none.

IHED 18/21 BUDGET MONITORING (QUARTER 2)

The Finance Manager introduced the report which was valid up to 30 September 2021. It had been to Policy and Resources Committee on 1 November and approved.

The revenue budget for this Committee showed a favourable variant of £28,000. The £39,000 under Infrastructure and Planning Policy was largely due to moving budgets between Trees and Landscapes, which fell under LEC, and Environmental Initiatives, which was under this committee. Although the report showed a favourable variance overall between the two committees, it was in reality almost zero.

£16,000 was allocated to Development Management to pay for professional fees for ecology services HCC, and under Economic Development there was an £11,000 inflationary increase per the parking contract with Hertsmere Borough Council.

There was a Capital Income variance of £205,000 to be phased into 2022-23. This includes £110,000 for parking bays and verge protection, £25,000 for cycling schemes and £70,000 for controlled parking.

With regard to aged debt, the majority was due to unpaid rent on temporary accommodation, and processes had been introduced to recover these sums or write them off if need be.

A Member asked the reason for the underspend on parking in South Oxhey. The Head of Regulatory Services replied it was an annual budget and a two year programme. Three schemes would go ahead this financial year, one in Rickmansworth and two in South Oxhey, but two, at South Way and School Mead, were pending for the past 12-18 months as still waiting/had been waiting for consents.

The Member said two more schemes in South Oxhey were agreed, and at least one should have gone ahead.

The Head of Regulatory Services replied that the next stage of the Work Programme featured two schemes in South Oxhey, and they may be delivered in the next financial year, although nothing is guaranteed. If there was staffing capacity and the ability to do so the South Way and School Mead schemes may be delivered in the lifetime of this work programme, which is two years, but they were still subject to necessary consents.

A Member asked for clarification of the agreement with Hertsmere BC regarding the provision of parking services, and asked if it was a shared payment that went to a third party contractor to enforce parking or was the Council paying

Hertsmere directly. The Head of Regulatory Services replied that it was unusual for a local authority not to use a third party to enforce parking but Hertsmere operated its own parking enforcement service and TRDC had a partnership agreement in place with Hertsmere BC by which they provided a service for Three Rivers.

The Member asked if the arrangement was on a for-profit basis or at cost, and the Head of Regulatory Services replied that all parking should be cost-recovery, and Hertsmere calculated the cost to them and charged the Council accordingly.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation to note the report and its changes was declared CARRIED by the Chair by 8 FOR and 1 AGAINST.

A Member expressed dissatisfaction at the South Oxhey parking scheme situation, which the Chair advised would be noted.

RESOLVED:

That the Budget Monitoring (Quarter 2) report be noted.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

IHED 19/21 SERVICE PLANS 2022-2025

Economic and Sustainable Development

The Chair advised Members that the Local Plan did not fall under the remit of Economic and Sustainable Development but went directly to Policy & Resources, and questions on the subject would not be considered.

The Head of Planning Policy and Projects said this version of the service plans included more information than previously, and invited questions from Members.

A Member referenced the aim to increase the number of accredited Green Flag parks and open spaces, and was advised that the item was part of the corporate objective and not the Economic and Sustainable Development service.

The Member asked a further question about the Business Satisfaction Survey and the baseline target of 60% and how the responses were measured. The Head of Planning Policy and Projects said the results were based just on the responses received.

A Member thanked the officers for the detailed report and said local authorities throughout the country seemed to be doing everything but their actual job, and cited reducing inequalities, preventing homelessness, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and climate change strategies amongst the objectives. Each one very laudable, but expected to read that the Council aimed to prevent sunspots and cure cancer.

The Chair said the Committee was here to review Service Plans, not corporate objectives. The Member said that to agree the service plans it was surely necessary to agree to the corporate objectives, to which the Chair replied it was a conversation for another place. The Member said that given the objectives as

state the Council was making a rod for its own back. The Chair said the Member's comments would be noted, but unless there were questions specifically about the service plans, the meeting would proceed.

A Member asked that acronyms and initials when used in reports were preceded by the name in full. The Chair asked that the Member highlight where it has been an issue so Officers could rectify.

Regulatory Services

The Head of Regulatory Services had nothing to add to the Service Plans and invited questions from Members.

A Member referred to the item under the Budgets heading and said that a table included no numbers. The Head of Regulatory Services said as they were draft plans the figures were not yet available as the budget was not yet in place, but would be included when the Plans were returned to Committee.

A Member said that under 'Successful Economy' where it was stated that 'We will continue to participate in the Hertfordshire Growth Board and South West Herts Partnership and engage the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to support the economy' it should be noted that it was now statutory to do so when aligned to a committee in which we are a participant. The Chair asked if the Head of Regulatory Services was happy to include this in the Service Plan, to which the Head of Regulatory Services said it was also another corporate objective, but the details would be passed on. The Member said it was a point of fact.

Housing Services

The Head of Housing Services had no further comments and invited questions from Members.

A Member asked how, specifically, Housing Services addressed Noise and Light pollution as mentioned in the Service Plans. The Head of Housing Services said the document provided an overview of its remit, and that Housing Services would respond to complaints relating to light and noise pollution, its role being one of enforcement.

A Member referenced page 9 of the Service Plans and the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). Next year's target was 78% of decisions issued within 26 weeks of referral, and this year's figure was currently 65% and asked if it was a concern. The Head of Housing Services said it was standard for where we were at, and those that took longer were the more complex issues, often requiring dialogue back and forth with Occupational Health.

The Chair asked whether it was realistic to achieve 80% next year. The Head of Housing Services said the pandemic had affected performance in the past year but having hopefully come through the worst of it 80% should be achievable.

A Member said the phraseology in the Service Plan regarding Light and Noise pollution should perhaps be amended to specify **complaints**.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation to agree the updated policy was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the Service Plans be agreed and noted, and that the Committee receives the final Service Plans in March 2022 prior to being presented to Full Council.

IHED 20/21 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's work programme was discussed. A Member said items one and three that were due to come to the January meeting of the IHED Committee may not due to staff sickness.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be agreed and noted.

CHAIR