
INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth on Tuesday 17 January 2023 from 7.30pm to 8.46pm.

Councillors present:

Stephen Giles-Medhurst (Lead Member Infrastructure & Planning Policy) (Co-Chair)
Paul Rainbow (Lead Member Transport and Economic Development) (Co-Chair)
Andrew Scarth (Lead Member Housing) (Co-Chair)
Khalid Hussain
Philip Hearn
Abbas Merali
Tony Humphreys (Substitute for Dominic Sokalski)
Ciarán Reed (Substitute for Lisa Hudson)

Kevin Raeburn
Reena Ranger

Officers Present:

Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services
Peter Simons, Senior Transport Planner
Geof Muggeridge, Director of Community and Environmental Services
Mike Simpson, Committee & Web Officer

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst in the Chair

IHED 18/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dominic Sokalski (substituted by Tony Humphreys), Lisa Hudson (Ciarán Reed) and Joan King

IHED 19/22 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development Committee held on 15 November 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

A Member said there were omissions from the minutes, to which the Chair responded that minutes are not a verbatim account. A recording of each meeting is kept on file and is available for access should it be required.

IHED 20/22 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

The reports relating to items 5, Parking Services and Parking Account update and 6, Three Rivers Parking Management Programme 2023-24, were not published 5 clear

working days before the meeting but the Chair had agreed to take them as late reports for the following reasons:

Item 5

So that officers can start to make the suggested modifications to the Council parking permits

To be able to make amendments to the TRO to regularise School Waiting Restrictions around the District

To make amendments to the TRO at Three Rivers House with regard to enabling a Ground Source Heat Pump to be installed

Item 6

To enable the current work programme to be agreed so that officers can progress and deliver the cycling and walking improvements and parking management improvements in three rivers working with partners.

The Chair advised that item 7, a motion relating to cycle paths on Chorleywood Common, would not be taken at this meeting as, having received legal advice on the matter, it was deemed inappropriate to do so as the matter had not yet been out to public consultation. The motion would therefore be re-presented at a future meeting of the Committee once public consultation had taken place.

A Member expressed disappointment with the decision to not debate the motion was taken so late and also questioned the legality of this. The Chair replied that it was not a matter for debate and the decision to defer had been made.

IHED 21/22 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

IHED 22/22 PARKING SERVICES AND PARKING ACCOUNT UPDATE

The report was introduced by the Head of Regulatory Services and provided an update on the Council's Parking Service, which included the parking account and enforcement, as well as some suggestions for modifications to Council-issued parking permits and the removal of some concessions.

The Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development was supportive of the proposals, and said the plans for carers' permits were a good way of addressing the problem of abuse as they were intended for use by legitimate visitors e.g. family members, and that healthcare providers would have permits issued through the Doctors and Health Visitors permit scheme. The Head of Regulatory Services said there was evidence of permits being abused, and the proposals within the report would provide the Council with an element of control in terms of the issuing thereof.

A Member asked how much additional revenue would be expected given the current deficit in the parking services budget, to which the Head of Regulatory Services replied that the proposals are not aimed towards income-generation as too many imponderable elements existed, such as volume of permit take-up. This was the first recommendation in order to get the process in order, after which it could be developed further.

A Member asked if there is or will be a strategy to address the budgetary deficit. The Chair replied that the answer was contained within the report and would be looked at in the next financial year. In response to a question regarding short term measures to address the gap, the Head of Regulatory Services said there were no current

proposals, and that fixed costs associated with the service contract provider, Hertsmere BC, meant the gap was likely to increase. With regard to the termination date of the agreement with Hertsmere, it was stated that the Council was looking to extend the agreement for a further three years. The Head of Regulatory Services advised that the only way local authorities can make their accounts balance is by parking fees. The Chair said Three Rivers was less affected during the pandemic than other authorities in the county, such as Stevenage, because the Council was less dependent on parking fees. A Member asked whether maintenance of signage was included in the arrangement, to which it was replied that it was.

A Member asked for confirmation that the proposals meant that Blue Badge holders no longer received a free parking permit. The Head of Regulatory Services replied that having a disability did not mean that a permit cannot be afforded. Residents in a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) will receive a permit which includes their vehicle registration details. If Blue Badge holders required an allocated parking bay outside their property, they may apply to Herts County Council.

A Member asked what the rationale had been for 60-year-olds being eligible for a 50% discount. The Chair replied that there was no obvious good reason for it, and the age threshold had been introduced many years ago. It was stated that many working 60-year-olds received a good income.

A Member said that for Blue Badge holders it may not be an option to walk a distance to home from where their vehicle was parked. The Head of Regulatory Services said that under the existing arrangements they are not prioritised for a free permit.

The Chair said that the appendix would clearly need updating from 2020, but reminded the committee that Three Rivers remained the only authority to offer the first hour free for parking. Being in possession of a Blue Badge did not necessarily mean that a motorist could not afford a permit, and if a bay outside the property was required an application could be made to Herts County Council. A Member added that people with a chronic disability were likely to be in care homes.

A Member asked if any of the proposals were subject to means-testing, to which it was replied that there was not. The Chair said the £55 for a permit, up from £50 to account for inflation, was still cheap for a permit, and that some London Boroughs now charged £2,000 per year for a Mercedes with high CO2 emissions.

The Member said there was a lot of hardship out there and the Council should try to help where possible. The Director of Community and Environmental Services referred to Paragraph 8.1 in which it was stated that all recommendations were subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment prior to implementation, so something that was of concern i.e. means testing would be considered as part of any agreed delegated process.

The Chair moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being Unanimous.

RESOLVED:

- i) Officers continue to monitor and investigate the deficit in the Parking Account, specifically around fees and charges. This is to include further work on car park usage and any implications of this. A further report is to be presented to Committee with any findings/proposals.

- ii) All permits are to be issued virtually, unless in exceptional circumstances (to be determined on a case-by-case basis by our parking provider, in conjunction with the Head of Service (as appropriate) and informed by an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA). With implementation delegated to the Director of Community and Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Member to carry out the legal processes allowing changes to the Traffic Regulation Order.
- iii) The withdrawal of the annual visitor permit and its replacement with a specific carer's permit at a price of £55, with implementation delegated to the Director of Community and Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Member (and informed by the EIA) to carry out the necessary consultation and legal processes allowing changes to the Traffic Regulation Order and the introduction of a new carers permit.
- iv) The withdrawal of the disabled blue badge concession for residents permits and the 60+ concession for visitor scratchcards with implementation delegated to the Director of Community and Environmental Services in conjunction with the Lead Member (and informed by the EIA) to carry out the necessary consultation and legal processes allowing changes to the Traffic Regulation Order.
- v) Amendments to the Traffic Regulation Order to ensure all School Restrictions around the District are enforceable. The implementation of such including statutory processes is delegated to the Director of Community and Environmental Services in conjunction with the Lead Member.
- vi) Amendments to the Traffic Regulation Order affecting the Three Rivers House upper deck car park enabling the deletion of up to 4 parking spaces to allow air source heat pumps to be provided (subject to the proposal receiving all the appropriate permissions including planning permission). The implementation including statutory processes is delegated to the Director of Community and Environmental Services in conjunction with the Lead Member.

IHED 23/22 THREE RIVERS PARKING MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME (2023/24)

The Chair said both programmes are set biannually but the Cycling and Walking Programme has not been updated since 2021, awaiting development of the overlapping Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan which was completed in draft in September 2022 and has been agreed for consultation.

The Senior Transport Planner presented the report, and clarified it was a cycling and walking report (Appendix B) as well as a Parking Management programme (Appendix A), and that all schemes had been developed to a point where they could be expected to be put forward for consultation in May

The Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development said it was a big list, and suggested that existing schemes be followed through before these were addressed.

A Member made reference to the parking programme, and said as money was already being lost on CPZs, wouldn't more parking restriction in Chorleywood make the financial position worse. The Senior Transport Planner replied that parking schemes are expected to be self-financing.

A Member asked whether it was possible to add new schemes to the work programme, to which the Chair replied that support of the ward members would give it a greater chance than if not, but the emphasis for now was to clear the items currently on the work programme rather than adding new ones. The Head of Regulatory Services said

a request can be added to the work programme but it would not be reviewed in the next year.

The Senior Transport Planner responded to a question concerning Sandy Lodge Way, and said that when a request is considered, the bigger picture is looked at in order to identify broader consequences of a road scheme. The Member said sometimes part of the road was in Hillingdon and part was in Three Rivers, and all that was required was an extension of a yellow line rather than a whole new parking permit scheme.

The Chair remarked that a wider consultation is taken because a parking scheme tends to result in displacement, and residents need to be made aware of the fact and a process has to be undertaken. A Member said that the Covid pandemic had left a black hole in many services and things just stopped. It was acknowledged that Sandy Lodge Way was partly in Hillingdon so some residents received free transport and those in the Three Rivers part of the road did not, so an issue existed.

A Member asked that wider consideration be given to parking restrictions. In the final analysis, people just don't want others parking outside their properties. The Chair replied that some restrictions are imposed with protection of junctions and road safety in mind, and not just a CPZ scheme.

A Member cited the CPZ that was recently imposed in Croxley and said residents had largely adapted to it and learnt to live with it.

The Chair moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being Unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee agrees that officers continue to develop the proposals set out as the extended work programmes at Appendices A and B; and delegates all decisions on the development of, expenditure on, and any additions to this work programme to the Director of Community and Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Economic Development and relevant Ward Councillors whose Wards are directly affected by proposals.

The Chair thanked the Senior Transport Planner for all the work undertaken by the officer over the years, and for the answers to questions and detailed knowledge shown. The Chair also thanked the Director of Community and Environmental Services, whose attendance at the meeting was likely to be the final one before retirement, for the knowledge, expertise and wisdom demonstrated over the years to not only this but all committees. All Committee Members expressed their thanks to both officers for their past efforts, and wished them both well in the future and sked it be recorded.

IHED 24/22 COUNCIL MOTION REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE UNDER RULE 11(5)

Following the receipt of legal advice, the Chair declared that this item be removed from the order of business as public consultation had not yet taken place.

IHED 25/22 WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Regulatory Services talked the Committee through the date changes to the work programme.

Item 5 would be updated to come to Committee in September 2023

Item 9 would be presented in May 2023 following the consultation.

Item 10 (Cycling and Walkways) may come slightly earlier but this would be confirmed.

On learning that the motion intended for this meeting would now be heard until May the Member was disappointed with this decision, to which the Chair responded that it would come back to Committee after the public consultation, the outcome of which could not be pre-supposed.

A Member asked what the timeframe was for items within the parking programme to be heard. The Chair replied that if all ward members were in agreement and reports were in place it could be progressed, but delays occur if Members wish to refer a matter to the Committee.

A Member asked why the Moor Park Conservation Appraisal update was not amongst those included in the work programme. The Head of Regulatory Services said the appraisals were prioritised, and where no action was currently deemed necessary it was left alone. Other appraisals would be looked at in date order.

The Chair informed the relevant Member that the Bedmond Village Conservation Appraisal report would be an initial one, and detailed work would follow if it was deemed necessary.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's work programme be noted.

CHAIR