
INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth on Tuesday 15 November 2022 from 7.30pm to 10.01pm.

Councillors present:

Stephen Giles-Medhurst (Lead Member Infrastructure and Planning Policy)
(Co-Chair)

Paul Rainbow (Lead Member Transport and Economic Development) (Co-Chair)

Chris Lloyd (Substitute for Andrew Scarth)

Tony Humphreys (Substitute for Dominic Sokalski)

Khalid Hussain

Kevin Raeburn

Philip Hearn

Reena Ranger

Abbas Merali

Joan King

Officers Present: Sally Riley, Finance Business Partner
Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services
Peter Simons, Senior Transport Planner
Jason Hagland, Strategic Housing Manager
Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager
Mike Simpson, Committee & Web Officer

Also in attendance: Councillors David Raw and Ciarán Reed, County Councillor
Paula Hiscocks,

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst in the Chair

IHED 08/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Scarth, Dominic Sokalski and Lisa Hudson, substituted by Chris Lloyd, Tony Humphreys and Andrea Fraser.

IHED 09/22 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development Committee held on 11 October 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

IHED 10/22 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

An item of business (10a) that had been to note at Council was not included with the original agenda and would therefore be taken as a late item as agreed with the Chair. The details of the item had been in the public domain since the publication of the Council summons in October

IHED 11/22 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

IHED 12/22 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT Q2 (PERIOD 6)

The Finance Business Partner introduced the report, that covered the Committee's financial position over the medium term (2022 – 2025) as at the end of November and which had been presented to the Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 7 November 2022. The Finance Business Partner highlighted the changes relating to the Committees budgets and invited questions from the Committee.

A Member asked for a report on parking patterns of behaviour and the enforcement of penalties. The Head of Regulatory Services said parking revenue was definitely recovering but comprehensive figures were not yet available. A similar question had been asked at the P&R Committee and officers were looking into providing the required information. As the responsible partner for parking enforcement, Hertsmere had reported staffing and recruitment problems, and the car parking contract with the authority would continue to be monitored.

The Chair asked that Members make officers aware of parking issues within their wards. Although parking income was down on the previous year during the summer months, there was an increase generally, and the Council was on course for greater revenue for the year.

A Member expressed concern about the number of Housing vacancies not filled and saw nothing about the rent guarantee scheme. It was asked whether the scheme was advertised properly. The Chair said details of help available was on the home page of the website, to which the Member replied not everyone had access to a computer or a Smart phone.

The Strategic Housing Manager would provide details on the advertising of Housing vacancies to Committee Members.

RESOLVED:

That the Budget Monitoring (Period 6) report be noted.

IHED 13/22 STRATEGIC CORPORATE AND SERVICE PLANNING 2023-2026

The draft Service Plans of those Council Services which report to this Committee were presented for comment. The Strategic Framework had previously been to the Policy and Resources Committee and would go out for public consultation, with new comments included as part of the final plan.

A Member said families appeared to be omitted from the Strategic Framework which was an oversight as families were vital and should be at the heart of it, especially as so many were struggling. A Member responded that all residents in Three Rivers were important.

A Member summarised that the Committee would have another opportunity to see the plan when it returned for sign-off.

The Chair said the new format would be much more user-friendly and easier to read, especially for those outside the Council.

RESOLVED:

the Committee provided comments on the draft Service Plans as detailed in the minute and as presented together with any suggestions for their further development which were noted.

IHED 14/22 HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY UPDATE 2022

The Strategic Housing Manager provided an overview of the proposed changes to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy, which included changes to the structure in Housing services, and the criteria by which customers were included on the housing register. There was also a change to the Housing Panel which made it more relevant following the restructure. Questions from Members were invited.

A Member asked what was meant by significant childcare needs, to which it was replied that officers assess cases based on the level of need required. The Member asked whether the two days customers were given to make a decision on an offered property commenced with verbal contact, because an offer sent by email may not be seen for days.

The Strategic Housing Manager said clients were asked to nominate their preferred method of being contacted. It was necessary to draw a line at a point where accommodations could then be offered to other people on the waiting list, but the point about verbal contact would be considered.

The Chair asked whether it was possible to have someone nominated as a fall-back in case circumstances prevented an offer to a client being discussed. The Strategic Housing Manager said a next of kin nomination option was available, and this could be built into the process.

A Member asked whether the properties offered to homeless customers were checked regularly for suitability as it was understood some were mouldy and generally not habitable. It was stated in response that the properties offered were checked for safe habitation and relevant certificates were issued.

In reply to a question regarding children in allocated properties, the Strategic Housing Manager said a room in a house at a principal property would be provided. TRDC was signed up to a Joint Protocol for care leavers aged 16-17 whereby they could apply for accommodation in an existing or new area, the aim being to stop 16-17 year olds leaving care and going homeless. The Strategic Housing Manager was happy to clarify further with Members either by email or in person.

RESOLVED:

That the Housing Allocations Policy update 2022 as agreed at the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee be noted.

IHED 15/22 RICKMANSWORTH WEST PARKING SCHEME

The Senior Transport Planner introduced the report, in which Members were asked to determine which streets to include in the Rickmansworth West parking scheme area before the detailed design is progressed to the statutory notice of a Traffic Regulation Order. This report considers the response to public consultation and the detailed discussion of the issues set out in the report.

The Chair used discretion under Rule 35(B) point to allow several members of the public to speak on this item as they wished to speak on a number of different roads included within the report.

The Head of Regulatory Services referred to correspondence received from a member of the public on behalf of residents of Elm Way in which concerns about the report were raised. Those concerns would be addressed separately in due course.

The Senior Transport Planner explained the purpose of the report, which was to identify which roads should be included in the parking permit scheme in Rickmansworth West. The process had been out for public consultation previously, but that a delegated decision could not be agreed (as set out in the report) so the delegated report had been returned to the Committee. In his view the key issues were to do with Park Way and Elm Way. This was particularly for Elm Way which could be an uncontrolled street surrounded by controlled streets and he considered that the responses from the survey indicated that residents were aware of this, as set out in the report.

It was stated that Ward Members and Lead Members had failed to provide consistent agreement in deciding on an option.

The proposed options for the parking scheme to be considered by Members of the Committee were set out in the report. There were four options proposed by Officers with a variant that had been suggested by local Ward Councillors.

It was proposed that Uxbridge Road should be a clearway; there would be the first in the District. Engineers had determined that parking bays could not safely be provided on the narrow section of Uxbridge Road.

Officers were recommending option A, but Members were invited to consider this option or provide an alternative.

The Chair used discretion under Rule 35(B) point to allow several members of the public to address the committee on this item as they wished to speak on a number of different roads included within the report. Representations were received from two residents of The Close, comprising seven houses, one from Mount View, one from Uxbridge Road, specifically numbers 101-111, two from Park Way, one from Field Way who raised points regarding the junction of Field Way and Mount View, and a representative of Elm Way residents.

The Chair moved, duly seconded, that Option B be adopted as it would best meet the wishes of residents while providing a robust scheme. The Chair added that a recent parking consultation in Croxley had resulted in changes of mind among residents, and although none was anticipated based on what was heard tonight, the democratic process required everyone be given the opportunity to reconsider.

The Senior Transport Planner addressed the comments made by the speakers. It was said that (as referenced in the report), enforcement was reported to be an issue but was not relevant to the consideration of new parking restrictions as there was always an expectation that any restrictions would be enforced.

A clearway was proposed for Uxbridge Road as the installation of parking bays was not feasible. The original parking scheme had been consulted over a much wider area, to Tudor Way and Shepherds Lane, but had been reduced considerably. A key driver behind the scheme was the need to address current parking pressures on residential roads and another was the likely displacement of parked vehicles from Moneyhill Parade and the Uxbridge Road once the clearway was introduced.

The Chair clarified that revenue from parking can only be spent on parking, and the parking budget was currently in deficit as not enough money was being recouped and was being subsidised by Council Taxpayers. A Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) would bring in more revenue. There was a limit to what enforcement officers could enforce, and although vehicles parked on yellow lines were within their remit, a vehicle parked too close to a junction, for example, would be a matter for the police.

A Member disagreed with the proposed scheme. It was obvious that a very successful and vibrant street that lent itself to a healthy night-time economy was impacted by insufficient places for parking. Short term parking provision was intended to create 'churn' by which several vehicles may use the same bay throughout the day.

The Senior Transport Planner said the role of the District Council, as with any Traffic Authority, was not to provide parking facilities but to manage the available parking space on public roads, by deciding who can park where and when.

A Member expressed the opinion that a successful small economy could be achieved from revenue from Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) if enforcement was applied. It was suggested that the grace period be reduced to zero and the number of traffic enforcement officers be increased. The Member asked if a review of car park use could be commissioned to identify where demand was. Robust enforcement was required, and perhaps some creative thinking was required such as free parking for a trial period as part of this process.

The Chair said that that revenue from PCNs could not be considered. There was an expectation of total compliance with restrictions, where ideally no PCNs would be issued. Some residents wanted restrictions, and some did not. If nothing else, Uxbridge Road must be made a clearway on safety grounds, which would then prevent the parking of vehicles half on the pavement

A Member said parking schemes did not generate more parking spaces and suggested more residents should walk or cycle rather than use their cars. There was a lot of illegal parking on Uxbridge Road, and there was a need to invite the County Council to work with us.

A Member asked what impact the scheme would have on businesses in Moneyhill Parade. The Senior Transport Planner replied that the idea was to manage parking and keep people moving. Most shop owners in the area had been consulted with a split between those opposed and some who were in favour as they felt that the proposed plan would benefit their customers by preventing

all-day parking. A big problem was commuters parking near the shops which prevented customers from parking.

A Member asked if it could be agreed that a review of the parking services contract with Hertsmere should come to the Committee.

The Head of Regulatory Services said it was possible, but as the budget was in deficit, increasing enforcement would add to the taxpayers' burden. It would be necessary to look at additional income opportunities to support enforcement. The key aim of enforcement was to educate, not make money by issuing parking tickets.

A Member said Croxley Green residents who originally rejected a parking scheme would now welcome one, and others who were not included wished they had been. It was reiterated that this was the final chance for residents to rethink their decision. Uxbridge Road was different in that it was a safety issue.

A Member said this was the third consultation on the subject, and residents must be listened to. A Member referred to Uxbridge Road, and said vehicles parked half up on the pavement prevented lorries and potentially emergency service vehicle from getting through, and for that reason something needed to change.

A Member referenced the earlier comment about residents taking more exercise instead of using their cars and said residents in the streets identified for parking controls did not drive to the shops. The Member said that Option E was a preference and it could be tweaked to include a few more roads.

The Chair replied that option E was covered as part of Option B, as moved at the beginning of the discussion.

A Member asked why a traffic flow study wasn't completed ahead of a parking study.

The Senior Transport Planner replied that this wasn't essential when preparing a parking scheme but that the design took traffic flow into account, using for example background traffic flow data provided by the County Council, as referenced in the report.

Local Ward Councillor David Raw said a response rate of 47% residents overall was not enough to reach a conclusive opinion. It was believed that Option A was in effect railroading something through that was not wanted, and the best solution would be to canvass residents in each road.

Local County Councillor Paula Hiscocks spoke in support of residents and said they should get what they expressed a wish for. Parking issues were mostly caused by commuters, workers at local business and postal workers, and there was insufficient space for residents.

The Chair said the proposal being moved was Option B, which excluded Park Way, Elm Way and The Close, as there was evidently no or very little support for a scheme in those roads, along with Field Way north of Mount View. There was, however, considerable support for a scheme in Mount View and the bottom end of Field Way, and for a clearway and revised parking arrangements along Uxbridge Road on safety grounds and to increase in churn.

The Chair said the Council would not go ahead with a scheme that residents did not want, and that the design of the proposed option would be based on comments received and discussed with Ward Members and Lead Members.

The Senior Transport Planner said Option E was a minimal one which included Mount View only and bays on the Uxbridge Road.

The recommendation Option B was moved by the Chair and seconded by Councillor Paul Rainbow.

On being put to the vote, the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being 7 For, 4 Against and 0 Abstentions.

The Chair confirmed with the Senior Transport Planner that the usual procedure would be followed, to issue a letter to the streets now excluded from the proposed scheme, so that members of public could communicate concerns in writing so they could be considered and where appropriate included in the scheme details and taken forward.

RESOLVED:

That the streets as identified in Option B be included in the scheme area before the detailed design is progressed to the Traffic Regulation Order stage.

That decisions on further scheme details and programme be delegated in line with all relevant current practice, policy and standards, including the consideration and treatment of objections to Traffic Regulation Orders, to the Director of Community and Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Member and relevant Ward Councillors.

IHED 16/22 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair was asked by a Member in attendance to consider in the work programme a conservation appraisal for Bedmond Village. The Chair as the comment had been made, the item would be included as stated.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's work programme be noted.

IHED 17/22 TURN OFF THE LIGHTS TO SAVE ELECTRICITY

Council had noted that the motion below (motion 3) had been referred to the Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development Committee meeting on 15 November 2022 under Rule 11(5) of the Council Constitution

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst moved, seconded by Councillor Paul Rainbow the motion as detailed below:

Turn off the lights and save Electricity

Three Rivers Council is determined to do what it can to tackle the Climate

Emergency whilst also dealing with the current fuel crises.

Therefore Council urges business and employers to re-double effort to ensure excessive use of lighting and air condition particularly addresses the need to:

- 1. Turn off lighting, including neon display lights, when shops and offices are unoccupied*
- 2. Not use air conditioning unless essential for business purposes*
- 3. Install water saving/recirculation devices*

It was proposed to debate the motion as would follow at Council, but the Chair used their discretion under Council Procedure Rule 35(b) point to allow a member of the public to speak on the motion.

Councillor Reena Ranger moved an amendment to the motion to include assist, support and encourage local businesses and employers to redouble their efforts and that the Council should lead by example by looking at a minimum on site reduction of 15-20% beyond building regulations, which the proposer did not accept.

Councillor Abbas Merali moved an amendment to the motion to add "Urgent" to encourage support, which the proposer did not accept. The motion could be promoted as an agenda item in its current form.

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

The Chair asked that the speaker send more details which may be considered for inclusion in the Local Plan

RESOLVED:

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CHAIR