

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES,
GERNON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY
ON WEDNESDAY, 8TH JANUARY, 2020 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors Claire Strong (Chairman), Faye S Frost (Vice-Chairman), David Barnard, John Bishop, George Davies, Steve Deakin-Davies, Ian Moody and Sam North*

In Attendance: *Louise Symes (Strategic Infrastructure and Projects Manager), Claire Morgan (Community Engagement Team Leader), Marie Pritchett, Hilary Dineen (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager) and Matthew Hepburn (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 3 members of the public.*

18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio Recording – 30 Seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Terry Tyler.

19 MINUTES - 10 OCTOBER 2019

Audio Recording – 47 Seconds

Prior to the Minutes of the 10 October 2019 being approved, Members entered into a discussion in relation to their request to have an update on the Local Plan.

In respect to points raised by Members, the Strategic Infrastructure & Projects Manager was able to offer the following responses:

- Concerns raised by the Members would be reported back and raised with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport;
- Although disappointing for Members, the Strategic Planning Manager was not able to provide an update on the Local Plan as there was nothing currently for Members to be updated on and;
- Comments had been submitted to the Inspector and there was now a wait to hear back from the Planning Inspector.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 10 October 2019 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman;
- (2) That the Strategic Planning Manager be requested to provide an update on the Local Plan at the next meeting of the Southern Rural Committee on 26 March 2020.

20 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio Recording – 13 Minutes 20 Seconds

There was no other business notified.

21 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 13 Minutes 25 Seconds

- (1) The Chairman welcomed those present at the meeting;
- (2) The Chairman reminded those present that the Council had declared a Climate Emergency. This was a serious decision and meant that, as this was an emergency, all of us, officers and Members had that in mind as we carried out our various roles and tasks for the benefit of our District;
- (3) The Chairman advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (4) The Chairman drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.

22 GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

Audio Recording – 14 Minutes 40 Seconds

The Community Engagement Team Leader presented the report entitled Grants and Community Update and advised the following:

- Owing to the change of date for that meeting, as a result of the Parliamentary Election, it was felt that the delay in the provision of funding to the Codicote Pre-School for £750 would detrimentally affect the project. The grant was therefore decided under delegated decision by the Service Director – Legal and Community;
- There was £10,982 left for allocation at the last meeting of the financial year in March;
- The deadline for receiving grant applications was 31 January 2020 and;
- Anyone wishing to apply for a grant could do so by emailing the Community Engagement Team Leader directly or contacting the Community Engagement Team.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor David Barnard

The Community Engagement Team Leader provided the following responses to questions raised:

- The ability for Parish Councils to apply for grant funding would be discussed later in that meeting under agenda item Community Grants Policy Review.

RESOLVED: That the actions taken by the Community Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for the Southern Rural Area be endorsed.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (1) To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement Team.
- (2) This report is intended to inform Members of the financial resources available to the Committee. It draws attention to the current budgetary situation by assisting in the effective financial management of the Area Committee's budget. This ensures that all actions are performed in line with the Authority's Financial Regulations, the Council's Constitution, and the guidance of the existing Grants policy as agreed by Cabinet in June 2016.
- (3) The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims of the Corporate Plan.

23 NHDC PARKING STRATEGY DRAFT PARKING OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Audio Recording – 17 Minutes 40 Seconds

The Parking Projects Officer and the Strategic Infrastructure & Projects Manager presented the report entitled NHDC Parking Strategy Draft Parking Operational Guidelines and advised the following:

- The North Hertfordshire District Council Parking Strategy 2019-2031 was approved in January 2019;
- New opportunities to manage the parking stock across the District and generate additional income has been included in the draft Parking Operational Guidelines, which included;
 - Other Services in Council Car Parks;
 - Charging for On-Street Parking;
 - Employee Parking Schemes and;
 - Sale of Permits to Non-Residents in Controlled Parking Zones.
- The North Hertfordshire District Council Parking Operational Guidelines document should be read alongside the Parking Strategy;
- It was important that the Parking Operational Guidelines remained a living document in order to ensure it provided a flexible approach to emerging issues;
- The Parking Issues Reporting Pack allowed members of the public to report parking issues;
- The Reporting Pack sought to educate members of the public on parking related issues and different types of parking controls;
- Applicants must keep a log of parking issues over a four week period in order to allow for the severity to be assessed;
- 80% of residents must agree with the parking issue and;
- A similar report pack was in use at Hertfordshire County Council.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Claire Strong;
- Councillor Faye Frost;
- Councillor John Bishop and;
- Councillor George Davies.

Points raised by Members were as follows:

- The cost of a replacement permit;
- The Lairage multi-storey car park in Hitchin bay monitoring system proposal;
- Income generated by Penalty Charge Notices from off-street parking;
- Car sharing incentives and;
- Advancements in technology in order to help Parking Enforcement Officers know the time a vehicle parked.

The Parking Projects Officer and the Strategic Infrastructure & Project Manager provided the following responses to questions and points raised by Members:

- Councillors and members of the public had reported the issue of motorists having no way of knowing whether parking spaces were available in lower levels at the Lairage multi-storey car park in Hitchin; a bay monitoring system or some form of electronic signage to inform drivers in advance, was given as an example as a way of addressing that problem;
- There was no cost to a replacement permit at present, and the draft Guidelines were looking to introduce this;
- More Penalty Charge Notices were issued to vehicles parked on street parking compared to off-street parking;
- Implementing technology such as Induction Software was being looked into. However, there was a huge cost associated to that work;
- Car sharing incentives were being looked into under the Electric Vehicle Strategy and;
- Ways in which to promote and publicise the Parking Reporting Pack were being considered.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Draft North Hertfordshire District Council Parking Operational Guidelines at Appendix A of the report be noted;
- (2) That the Draft North Hertfordshire District Council Parking Issues Reporting Pack 1 and Part 2 at Appendix B and C of the report be noted.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

- (1) That the Draft North Hertfordshire District Council Parking Operational Guidelines at Appendix A be considered and adopted, subject to the following amendments:
 - The deletion of point 7 on page 42 of the report as the resourcing cost was covered in point 5 on page 42 of the report;
 - The deletion of 'and at least once during the life of NHDC parking strategy' under Policy 5 – Off-street Car Park Tariff Reviews on page 42;
 - Add 'if required' to the end of point 3 on page 42 of the report.
- (2) That the Draft North Hertfordshire District Council Parking Issues Reporting Pack 1 and Part 2 at Appendix B and C be considered and adopted;
- (3) That delegated authority be given to Service Director - Regulatory to approve minor amendments and format changes to the draft Parking Operational Guidelines as required in consultation with the Executive Member and Deputy for Planning and Transport;

- (4) That officers proceed with the work associated with the key projects listed in the Parking Strategy Strategic Action Plan using the Parking Operational Guidelines to implement the policy framework.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: The draft Parking Operational Guidelines will provide the necessary guidance and assessment criteria for the Parking Strategy policy framework for managing parking across the District in a most cost efficient way that accords with the Council's Corporate Objectives and its Medium Term Financial Strategy.

24 COMMUNITY GRANTS POLICY REVIEW

Audio Recording – 45 Minutes

The Community Engagement Team Leader presented the report entitled Community Grants Policy Review and advised the following:

- The report outlined the proposed changes to the grants policy;
- The process had been simplified;
- The policy was last reviewed in 2016;
- Changes to the eligibility criteria were on page 90 of the report at paragraph 8.2.1;
- Organisations with charitable status, voluntary sector groups, community groups, Community Interest Companies, Community Interest Organisations, Schools, Academies, Business Improvement District Groups, Parish and Town Councils were now able to apply for grants;
- The 2016 Policy stated that applicants were ineligible for funding if they had other funding from NHDC within 2 years. This would no longer apply under the new policy;
- These changes would encourage a variety of organisations to apply and;
- The new criteria was similar to that of other local authorities.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor John Bishop;
- Councillor David Barnard;
- Councillor Faye Frost;
- Councillor George Davies;
- Councillor Claire Strong and;
- Councillor Sam North.

Members raised the following:

- There was a concern expressed in relation to the policy change detailed at paragraph 8.2.3 in regards to allowing applicants to apply for a grant despite receiving funds within the 2 years;
- The types of organisations that would be eligible for funding and;
- Whether grants should only be awarded to organisations based within North Hertfordshire rather than the broader eligibility criteria of 'be for the benefit of North Hertfordshire residents' as detailed on page 96 of the report under Eligibility Criteria.

The Community Engagement Team Leader provided the following responses to points and questions raised:

- In order to be eligible for funding, organisations would need to be a CIC/CIO, hold charity status or have a Constitution;
- Area Committee Grants were not as substantial as pre-2016;

- District wide Community Grant applicants may be considered by a proposed District-wide panel and;
- A proposed change in the Council's constitution will allow for the relevant Executive Member to authorise a District-wide grant.

RESOLVED: That the proposed review of the Community Grants Policy and criteria be noted.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That the criteria and outline consultation process be approved, subject to the following amendments:

- Grant eligibility criteria clause B on page 96 of the report - grants to only be given to organisations based within the North Hertfordshire District rather than broadly 'be for the benefit of North Hertfordshire residents.'

REASON FOR DECISION: The awarding of grant funding awards to organisations, charities and voluntary groups, and the use of grant budgets devolved to Area Committees allows the Authority to further its aims and overarching Priorities of the Council and District.

25 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

Audio recording – 1 Hour 7 Minutes 15 Seconds

The Chairman advised that the next meeting of the Southern Rural Committee would be held on 26 March 2020 at 8pm as there would be a pre-meet with Parish Councils from 6:30pm until 7:30pm.

The Chairman reminded Members that the deadline for grant applications was 31 January 2020.

RESOLVED: That an informal discussion between Members and Parish Councils prior to the Southern Rural Committee meeting on 26 March 2020 named Village Voices be arranged.

REASON FOR DECISION: To inform Members about Ward Matters.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Chairman