

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 January 2015 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Sue Gray (Chair), Tom Kelly (Vice-Chair), Roy Jones, Martin Kerin and Simon Wootton

In attendance: David Parish, Street Lighting Engineer
Ann Osola, Head of Service
Leanna McPherson, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

17. Minutes

The Minutes of Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held on 12 November 2014 were approved as a correct record.

18. Items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

19. Declaration of Interests

There were no such declarations.

20. PTR O&S fees and charges

As part of the budget process each year, the Council needed to review its fees and charges. The future development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy would also need to take account of changes in fees and charges in broad terms over the period of the strategy. Directors and Heads of Service had reviewed the fees and charges for 2015/16 within their remit.

Appendix 1 to the report showed the detailed proposals for fees and charges for 2015/16 as follows:

- Charges that are set by statute or other policy are marked S, (those have not been amended as the figures for 2015/16 are not yet known);
- Charges that can be set at the Council's discretion are marked D;
- The current (2014/15) charge (where this is Nil and there is a charge for 2015/16 this represents a new charge);
- The proposed 2015/16 charge;

- Any concessions available to groups or individuals in the community; And
- The effective date of implementation of the new fees and charges.

The Head of Transportation and Highways addressed the Committee, advising that, with regard to parking charges, the Council had difficulty in balancing the budget for the forthcoming year and there had been a previous resolution to raise the parking charges as they had been frozen for three years.

Members were advised that parking charges were not just an income stream, they were also used manage traffic flows in the Borough and to encourage motorists to consider different types of greener transport such as the train or bus.

Councillor Gerrish addressed the Committee, expressing the need for increased charges against a background of cuts across the Council. The Committee noted that if charges were not to be increased then further cuts may have to be made.

The Committee questioned as to why some parking charges had increased and some not, and why there was no increase to penalty charge notices. It was noted that the changes were market led and in response to this the Head of Transportation and Highways advised the Committee that comprehensive report on the parking budget would be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

To note the fees and charges in appendix 1

21. Investment in Highways report

The Head of Transportation and Highways introduced a report to the Committee, informing them of the delivery of the proposed LED (Light Emitting Diode) street lighting conversion programme.

Thurrock had around 17,300 street lights which cost the Council approximately £850,000 per year in electricity bills. Over the next 2 years Thurrock would convert these lights to LED operation which would cut this energy bill by half, reduce street lighting maintenance costs and significantly reduce Thurrock's Carbon footprint. The resultant saving would allow the capital investment to be repaid, whilst still achieving the target of £250,000 revenue saving from 2017 onwards.

The Committee were advised that the programme was not a radical change and meant the Council would not have to introduce part night lighting.

The Committee were further advised that communities would have the opportunity to engage with the programme and it was noted by Members that the procurement process was OJEU compliant.

Members welcomed the report before them and felt that it reaffirmed the Councils commitment to not introduce part night lighting.

RESOLVED:

That an update will be presented to the committee according to the programme.

22. Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview Scrutiny Committee 2014-2015 - Work Programme

Democratic Services advised Members of the following amendments to the work programme since publication of the agenda:

- The Local plan be reported to the Committee at the first meeting of the new municipal year;
- The Lower Thames Crossing to be renamed the Thames Master Plan and
- Officers advised that the Committee had already seen a report on DP World and asked Members if they were happy to remove this item from the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme amendments be agreed and noted.

The meeting finished at 7.43 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk