

LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES

of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Wednesday 15 January from 7.30pm until 8.50pm.

Councillors present:

Councillors Chris Lloyd (Lead Member
Leisure)

Roger Seabourne (Lead Member Community
Safety and Partnerships)

Stephen King

David Major

Donna Duncan

Phil Williams (Lead Member
Environmental Services and

Sustainability)

David Sansom

Alison Scarth

Jon Tankard

Kate Turner

Alison Wall

Also in attendance:

Kimberley Rowley - Head of Regulatory Services

Nick Egerton – Environmental Health Manager (EHM) - WBC

Sherrie Ralton - Committee Manager

Ray Figg – Head of Community Services

Councillor Roger Seabourne in the Chair

LEC 31/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

LEC 32/19 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee meeting held on 27 November 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

LEC 33/19 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman ruled that the following item of business had not been available 5 clear working days before the meeting:

AIR QUALITY MONITORING STATION REPORT

The Chairman explained that the timing of this issue had been delayed as the rules of the General Election meant that the Council were unable to receive the petition within the pre-election purdah period. The Chairman said he felt it was of sufficient urgency in order to progress the issue.

LEC 34/19 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

LEC 35/19 TO RECEIVE A PETITION UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 18

The Committee received a petition which had over 100 signatures. The petition asked the Council to:

“In the absence of any Air Quality Monitoring device within the Maple Cross area, install a full Air Quality Monitor immediately.

The traffic in all forms: HGV's and LGV's, has steadily increased in our area and is the biggest cause of pollution. HS2's ongoing works have caused significant levels of dust. Maple Cross residents deserve to know what they are inhaling. We therefore demand the immediate installation of an all-encompassing Air Quality Monitoring system in Maple Cross.”

In accordance with Council Procedural Rule 18 a Member of the Public presented the petition to the Committee and addressed the meeting.

RESOLVED:

The petition be accepted. The Lead Petitioner be written to in acknowledgement of the submission.

LEC 36/19 AIR QUALITY MONITORING STATION REPORT

The Committee received a report detailing the options available for monitoring air quality in Maple Cross.

The Environmental Health Manager (EHM) gave a background on the levels of air quality. He said that the air quality data available from DEFRA was not just for one year, but on going with the most recent mapping in 2017, although this did not show particulate levels changing from 2015. DEFRA used a network of monitors with the data used to create the mapping. It is scientifically based.

The Head of Regulatory Services explained that a decision had been made to bring a report to this meeting to provide an immediate response to the petition. She said that the report showed the Council's legal obligations and how these were carried out and gave a number of options to be considered.

The Chairman asked for a background of the process the Council had gone through for HS2. The Head of Regulatory Services said for HS2, there had been a petitioning process, in which Herts County Council (HCC) was also involved. . The Council had petitioned on air quality but had only been successful with regard to the monitoring of dust. As a result of the petitioning HS2 were required to install dust monitors at certain locations. HCCs petitioning on air quality has resulted in air quality monitoring in certain locations but around the compound. The Council had been told that nationally HS2 had done what they needed to do in terms of air quality with regards to their construction.

POST MEETING NOTE Information: HS2 publish the data from their air quality monitoring stations monthly. This is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/monitoring-the-environmental-effects-of-hs2#monthly-air-quality-and-dust-reports>

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 35(b) a Member of the Public spoke in support of installation of an Air Quality Monitoring Station.

The EHM advised that he had initially responded on what had to be reported on legally. One reason there was a target level rather than an objective level was because of the transient nature of PM2.5 concentrations. The smaller the particle, the further it would travel. Urban traffic only made up 14% of PM2.5 in the UK. 20% was from international sources which was why it was not necessarily considered a local issue. The network of nitrogen dioxide monitoring the Council undertakes is a good indicator of pollution coming from vehicles, which was considered to be the main source of pollution within Three Rivers.

The Head of Regulatory Services clarified that all the options required additional information from the Lead Petitioner. Funding would be addressed once a need had been identified.

Councillor David Sansom said HS2 had advised a year ago that there was money available for local projects. He proposed that an amendment be made to recommendation 1 that HS2 be approached to fund the air quality monitoring to be sited between HS2 and Maple Cross, the Chairman, although he thought it very unlikely HS2 would agree to such a grant, was happy to second the proposal.

The Chairman said he understood that any funding would be for enhancing the community but agreed that the Council could ask for funding towards this research. The Member stressed that the research should be carried out by this Council not HS2.

The Head of Regulatory Services pointed out that the cost of a continuous monitoring station would be in excess of £40,000.

A Member suggested contacting the Head of Community Partnerships to find out whether there would be any Public Health funding available.

A Member asked if Officers could look at the availability of any other grants. They also asked about portable testing sites. The EHM advised that portable monitoring equipment was not generally of a high standard and there was no DEFRA approved temporary monitoring equipment. Diffusion tubes used by the Council are considered to be plus or minus 20% accurate which was why they were only used for long term monitoring to improve accuracy. Diffusion tubes were usually used alongside continuous monitoring. Looking at vehicle emissions nitrogen dioxide levels were easier to monitor than PM10 and more likely to exceed the objective levels. NO2 was the worst case scenario.

A Member asked if as well as looking at data and levels of pollution, could this be broadened to cover public health outcomes? HCC collected data annually on asthma, coronary disease, cancer of the lungs. It would be helpful to see the trends within the District over the past 10 year.

A Member said in addition to getting the £40,000, Option 2 should also be pursued.

The Head of Regulatory Services said the estimate was for one diffusion tube but once the Lead Petitioner advised of the areas of particular concern it may be monitoring at more than one site was necessary. Once the information was received it was proposed to return a report to the Committee to agree the cost. The data would be collected for a year.

However, there was a possibility that without firm evidence of the need to commence air quality monitoring by diffusion tube in the locality, this concern could be repeated across the District so whatever decision was made would mean any additional requests would also have to be considered. Evidence from our annual monitoring reported to DEFRA showed that in the past no specific issues had been highlighted in Maple Cross.

A Member agreed that more monitoring was required but asked whether the siting of monitors should be delegated to Officers. The Chairman replied that Officers currently do this and that any costs would have to be found within the Council's budget.

Councillor Alison Wall moved, duly seconded, that recommendation 1 be amended to have the inclusion that public health data be included. The EHM confirmed Officers met with HCC regularly. HCC were putting together an air quality strategy across Hertfordshire which should include public health and had an objective to work on PM2.5 therefore this was already being addressed

A Member said he would like to understand what the County wide strategy is and ensure that Three Rivers had a strategy that would work over ten years across the District rather than just a knee jerk reaction.

The Chairman said that Recommendation 1 appeared to take in most of the concerns that had been raised.

The Head of Regulatory Services added that Recommendation 1 can be revised to say that Public Health and County Council Data would be accessed to collate with data that comes from the residents. If the option is anything other than do nothing it would have to come back to Committee due to the financial implications. It would also include that Officers had been asked to pursue additional funding.

It was not considered practical to include a time frame as it would all depend upon evidence being gathered and assessed.

Councillor Chris Lloyd proposed, duly seconded, that the following additions discussed be included within Recommendation 1:

'Officers to explore funding from HS2 and other possible funding options but for the longer term.'

'Officers to work with HCC on the Air Quality Strategy for Hertfordshire'

The Head of Regulatory Services added that any decision taken on the actions outside of budget would be brought back to Committee and decisions within budget could be delegated to the DCES in consultation with the Lead Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability. It was advised that Officers would guide the residents as to what evidence would be required.

On being put to the Committee Recommendation 1 with the amendments above was declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being Unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That:

- 1) A response is sent to the Lead Petitioner requesting additional information and any supporting evidence and this evidence is reviewed by appropriate specialist Officers;

And the decision is delegated to the DCES in consultation with the Lead Member to consider the Officer review of any evidence and agree an option detailed in this report or alternative actions which the local authority has powers to act such as the investigation of dust under the statutory nuisance or planning regimes;

And Officers to explore funding from HS2 and other possible funding options;

And Officers to work with HCC on the Air Quality Strategy for Hertfordshire;

And Public Health and County Council Data to be accessed to collate with data that comes from the residents.

- 2) If following the review of any additional information and evidence it is resolved to pursue Option 2, 3 or 4 then a report be brought back to this Committee for a final decision if it cannot be delivered within existing budgets and a growth bid be submitted if required.

Councillor Phil Williams left the meeting.

LEC 37/19 REVIEW OF LICENSING FEES AND CHARGES

Following the Licensing Review a 28 day a consultation with stakeholders had taken place. The consultation sought comments on the new fees and charges and expired on Wednesday 15 January 2020.

The Head of Regulatory Services advised that no representations had been received.

A Member was concerned about the percentage of price increase on some licences. The Head of Regulatory Services advised that the fees had not increased for a number of years and were based on partial cost recovery. It was noted that there had been no responses to the consultation to date.

Councillor Chris Lloyd proposed, duly seconded, the recommendation in the report.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chairman, the voting being For 7; Against 0; Abstentions 3

RECOMMEND:

That the decision be delegated to the Director of Community and Environmental Services to consider any further consultation responses received and that the proposed licensing fees are adopted and implemented (as set out in Appendix 1 from 1 April 2020).

The results of the consultation to be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee on 21 January 2020 and then at Full Council on 25 February 2020 with the fees being effective from 1 April 2020 if agreed, with the increase in income included in the budget setting report.

LEC 38/19 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee reviewed their work programme.

RESOLVED:

Noted the work programme.

CHAIRMAN