

STEPPING HILL AREA COMMITTEE

Meeting: 5 March 2024
At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Will Dawson (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Pete West (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Jake Austin, Grace Baynham, Dominic Hardwick, Helen Hibbert,
Wendy Meikle, Will Sharp and Frankie Singleton.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 23 January 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

The following interests were declared:-

Personal Interests

| <u>Councillor</u> | <u>Interest</u> |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Grace Baynham | Agenda Item 4(i) – ‘Chair’s Announcements’ and Agenda Item 16 – ‘Stepping Hill Hospital Travel Plan’ as an employee of Stepping Hill Hospital |
| Dominic Hardwick and Will Sharp | Agenda Item 4(ix) – ‘Ward Flexibility Funding – Stockport Armed Forces Community Organisation’ and Agenda Item 15 – ‘Ward Discretionary Budget report Hazel Grove Royal British Legion Flag (item of urgent business)’ – as members of the Royal British Legion. |

3. URGENT DECISIONS

No urgent decisions were reported.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

(i) Chair's Announcements

The Chair provided an update on the Stepping Hill Hospital Travel Plan; a finalised plan was expected within a few weeks.

The Chair announced that the brand new town centre Interchange Park was scheduled to open on 18 March 2024 and encouraged Members and residents alike to visit the new park.

Finally, the Chair announced the planned weekend of celebrations for the conclusion of the Stockport Town of Culture year which would include free events at Stockport Market and Underbank to which all were welcome.

(ii) Neighbourhood Policing

A representative of the Assistant Director for Legal & Democratic Governance reported that a representative of Greater Manchester Police had been unable to attend the meeting and nor had a written update been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Members requested the representative of the Assistant Director – Legal and Democratic Governance to write to the Neighbourhood Police Inspector on behalf of the Committee to request an update on neighbourhood policing issues for the next meeting of this Area Committee.

(iii) Public Question Time

No public questions were submitted.

(iv) Petitions

One petition was submitted with 190 signatures in relation to ‘keeping parking free at Arundel Avenue, Hazel Grove.

The Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways and Transportation informed the Area Committee that a review of free council car parks was underway across the borough. Car parks which were likely to be viable for charging were those in the busiest local and district centres and those within commuter locations. The car park at Arundel Avenue was unlikely to meet that criteria and parking charges were therefore unlikely to be introduced.

RESOLVED – That the position be noted.

(v) Open Forum

A representative of the Assistant Director – Legal & Democratic Governance reported that no organisations had indicated that they wished to address the Area Committee as part of the Open Forum arrangements.

(vi) Ward Flexibility Funding - Feel Good Feminist Fightclub CIC

A representative of the Assistant Director – Legal and Democratic Governance submitted an application received on behalf of Feel Good Feminist Fightclub CIC for a grant of £300 from the Ward Flexibility Funding Budget towards the cost of organising an event for World Women’s Wellness Day to promote physical, mental and emotional wellness amongst women in the Stockport community.

RESOLVED – That approval be given to the application received from Feel Good Feminist Fightclub CIC for a grant of £300 from the Ward Flexibility Fund towards the cost of

organising an event for World Women's Wellness Day to promote physical, mental and emotional wellness amongst women in the Stockport community.

(vii) Ward Flexibility Funding - Housebound Too Scooting

A representative of the Assistant Director – Legal and Democratic Governance submitted an application on behalf Housebound Too Scooting for a grant of £150 from the Ward Flexibility Funding Budget towards the cost of arranging a social gathering and fundraiser day to promote mental well-being and to raise the profile of the organisation.

RESOLVED – That approval be given to an application received from Housebound Too Scooting for a grant of £150 from the Ward Flexibility Funding Budget towards the cost of arranging a social gathering and fundraiser day to promote mental well-being and to raise the profile of the organisation.

(viii) Ward Flexibility Funding - Samaritans of Stockport & District

A representative of the Assistant Director – Legal and Democratic Governance submitted an application on behalf of Samaritans of Stockport & District for a grant of £142.86 from the Ward Flexibility Funding Budget towards the cost of advertisement and promotion, upgrading infrastructure and the purchase of publicity materials.

RESOLVED – That approval be given to an application received from Samaritans of Stockport & District for a grant of £142.86 from the Ward Flexibility Funding Budget towards the cost of advertisement and promotion, upgrading infrastructure and the purchase of publicity materials.

(ix) Ward Flexibility Funding - Stockport Armed Forces Community Organisation (SAFCO)

A representative of the Stockport Armed Forces Community Organisation (SAFCO) attended the meeting and submitted an application for a grant of £300 from the Ward Flexibility Funding Budget towards the cost of delivering an event to celebrate Armed Forces Day in the town centre.

RESOLVED – That approval be given to an application received from Stockport Armed Forces Community Organisation (SAFCO) for a grant of £300 from the Ward Flexibility Budget towards the cost of delivering an event to celebrate Armed Forces Day in the town centre.

(x) Ward Flexibility Funding - Offerton Womens Club

Representatives of Offerton Womens Club attending the meeting and submitted an application for a grant of £800 from the Ward Flexibility Funding Budget towards the cost of organising speakers and activities, to support existing members and to appeal to potential recruits.

RESOLVED – That approval be given to an application received from Offerton Womens Club for a grant of £800 from the Ward Flexibility Funding Budget towards the cost of

organising speakers and activities, to support existing members and to appeal to potential recruits.

Non-Executive Business

5. DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

There were no development applications to consider.

6. PLANNING APPEAL, ENFORCEMENT APPEALS AND ENFORCEMENT NOTICES

A representative of the Assistant Director – Legal & Democratic Governance submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) summarising recent appeal decisions; lists current planning appeals and dates for local enquiries; informal hearings for planning appeals, and enforcement action within the Stepping Hill Area Committee area.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. THE DELIVERY OF BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN THROUGH THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCESS

A representative of the Director of Place Management submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the activities relating to the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain through the Planning and Development Management process.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- It was reported that, under the proposals outlined in the report, an ecologist would undertake a baseline survey to calculate the biodiversity value of the site, which the developer would be obliged to increase by ten per cent.
- Examples of increasing biodiversity included planting, the addition of bird boxes or plugging gaps in fencing. Biodiversity additions could take place off the site of the development in a landbank.
- A statutory metric tool had been introduced to secure biodiversity outcomes and there would be a sequential policy requirement to deliver biodiversity additions first on-site then off-site.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. INTRODUCTION OF CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S CHECKLIST FOR THE VALIDATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

A representative of the Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the proposed re-adoption of the council's Application Validation Checklist (AVC) for the validation of planning applications. As a Local Planning Authority, the council must publish a local list of information requirements for submitted planning applications, pursuant to the National Planning Policy Framework.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

9. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION FOR DETERMINING PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND THE PLANNING PROTOCOL

A representative of the Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) related to significant changes to the planning system in England over recent years. During this time multiple new types of applications had been introduced and most recently an increased focus was being placed on the importance of making timely decisions.

In light of the changes to the planning system and the increased emphasis placed on the speed and quality of planning decisions it was considered necessary to consider the need to make a number of changes to the scheme of delegation for the determination of planning applications. In parallel it was also considered appropriate to review the Planning Protocol to ensure that it reflected accurately long-standing custom and practice in how the council exercised its planning powers.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- It was reported that, under the proposals, householder planning applications would be fully delegated to officers, irrespective of the number of objections to the application.
- Under the proposals, householder applications would not be subject to call-in. Where concerns were raised by residents to a councillor in respect of a householder application, councillors would have the option to raise those directly with the officer. There would be no option for a site visit for householder applications.
- Development applications would be considered by an Area Committee where the council had received six or more representations which did not accord with the officer recommendation, or which had been called-in by two or more councillors.
- Members commented on the potential risk that decision-making for applications not determined in a public forum might be perceived to lack transparency.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

Executive Business

10. REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR A FEASIBILITY STUDY ON FOOTPATH 41 HAZEL GROVE AND BRAMHALL

A representative of the Director of Place Management submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) requesting funding for a feasibility study on footpath 41, Hazel Grove and Bramhall.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- It was clarified that the funding request for this scheme was £3,720 (and not £3,320 as set out in the report's recommendation).
- Members commented that the footpath had become difficult to navigate due to flooding and welcomed the opportunity to link the pathway to Happy Valley.

RESOLVED – That approval be given to the undertaking of a feasibility study in relation to the making of improvements to Footpath 41 Hazel Grove & Bramhall at a cost of £3,720 to

be funded from the Area Committee's Delegated Budget (Norbury & Woodsmoor ward allocation).

11. TREE PRESERVATION ORDER - 23 OFFERTON ROAD, HAZEL GROVE 2023. OBJECTIONS 2024

A representative of the Director of Place Management submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing an objection to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) at 23 Offerton Road, related to two mature pine trees.

It was noted that this matter was considered at the last meeting of the Area Committee where it was agreed to defer a decision to enable a letter to be sent to the resident to inform them that the letter of that the letter from 1997 was too old to justify a decision not to protect the tree. The resident has since replied and supplied additional evidence to support his claim that the trees are unsuitable for Tree Preservation Order, which has been included in the report.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Members commented that the two reports submitted by the resident supported the resident's request that the trees be cut down.
- In response it was stated that the reports did not clarify which tree roots were causing damage to drainage and the driveway.
- It was reported that the Tree Preservation Order for the two trees fell into the 'defensible' category.

RESOLVED (5 for, 1 against, 3 abstentions) – That the Tree Preservation Order at 23 Offerton Road, Hazel Grove be rescinded.

12. ARUNDEL AVENUE, HAZEL GROVE - INSTALLATION OF A BENCH

The Assistant Director – Legal and Democratic Governance submitted a report on behalf of the Director of Place Management (copies of which had been circulated) related to the installation of a bench seating facility near the shops on Arundel Avenue in Hazel Grove.

It was commented that the funding for the bench would be drawn from the Norbury and Woodsmoor Ward Discretionary Budget, and not the Hazel Grove Budget as set out in the report.

RESOLVED – That the Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources be requested to approve the allocation of £3,000 from the Ward Discretionary Budget (Norbury and Woodsmoor ward allocation) towards the costs associated with the supply and installation of a bench (seating facility) near the shops on Arundel Avenue in Hazel Grove.

13. CLARENDON ROAD PLAY AREA - WARD DISCRETIONARY BUDGET

(NOTE: The Chair was of the opinion that this item, although not included on the agenda, should be considered as a matter of urgency in accordance with section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that prompt consideration be given to the allocation of Ward Discretionary Budget funding).

The Assistant Director – Legal and Democratic Governance submitted a report of the Director of Place Management (copies of which had been circulated) setting out a request to allocate £7,400 of Ward Discretionary Budget (Hazel Grove) to play area improvement work at Clarendon Road Play Area.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Members commented that a further bid would be made to fund swings at the Clarendon Road Play Area.
- Members thanked local residents for their involvement, in particular the suggestion for improvements to the play equipment at this play area.

RESOLVED – That the Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources be requested to approve the allocation of £7,400 in Ward Discretionary Budget (Hazel Grove ward allocation) to improvements at Clarendon Road Play Area.

14. CHEVIOT ROAD WARD DISCRETIONARY BUDGET

(NOTE: The Chair was of the opinion that this item, although not included on the agenda, should be considered as a matter of urgency in accordance with section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that prompt consideration be given to the allocation of Ward Discretionary Budget funding).

The Assistant Director – Legal and Democratic Governance submitted a report of the Director of Place Management (copies of which had been circulated) setting out a request for £850 of Ward Discretionary Budget to be allocated to Cheviot Road Play Area.

RESOLVED – That the Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources be requested to approve the allocation of £850.00 from the Ward Discretionary Budget (Norbury and Woodsmoor ward allocation) to enhance play area maintenance at Cheviot Road Play Area.

15. WARD DISCRETIONARY BUDGET REPORT HAZEL GROVE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION FLAG

(NOTE: The Chair was of the opinion that this item, although not included on the agenda, should be considered as a matter of urgency in accordance with section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that prompt consideration be given to the allocation of Ward Discretionary Budget funding).

The Assistant Director – Legal and Democratic Governance submitted a report of the Director of Place Management (copies of which had been circulated) setting out a request for funds to support the cost of a new union Flag that will be flown from the flagpole at Torkington Park, Hazel Grove.

RESOLVED – That the Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources be requested to approve the use of £60 from the Ward Discretionary Fund (Hazel Grove Ward allocation) to cover the cost of a new union Flag that will be flown from the flagpole at Torkington Park, Hazel Grove.

16. STEPPING HILL HOSPITAL TRAVEL PLAN

This item was placed on the agenda at the request of Councillor Hibbert.

Members commented on the Stepping Hill Hospital Travel Plan under Agenda Item 4(i) – ‘Chairs Announcements’, and as such, with the consent of the Area Committee, this item was withdrawn.

17. PROGRESS ON AREA COMMITTEE DECISIONS

A representative of the Assistant Director for Legal & Democratic Governance submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on progress since the last meeting on decisions taken by the Area Committee and detailing the current position on area flexibility funding. The report also included the current position on the highway and traffic management delegated budget.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.39 pm