

Runnymede Borough Council
ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
28 September 2017 at 7.30pm

Members of the Committee present: Mrs G Warner (Vice-Chairman in the Chair), Miss E Bancroft, Mrs E Gill, T J F E Gracey, Mrs M T Harnden, Mrs Y P Lay, Miss J K Sohi and M L Willingale

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors M T Kusneraitis and P I Roberts

247 FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Chairman read out the Fire Precautions.

248 NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Groups mentioned below had notified the Chief Executive of their wish that the changes listed below would be made to the membership of the Committee. The changes were for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting and thereafter the Councillors removed would be reappointed.

Group	Remove From Membership	Appoint Instead
Conservative	Councillor JJ Wilson	Councillor Miss E Bancroft
Runnymede Independent Residents Group	Councillor D J Knight	Councillor Mrs E Gill

The Chief Executive had given effect to these requests in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

249 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 June 2017 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

250 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M T Kusneraitis and P I Roberts

251 BEOMONDS ROW AND WHITE HART ROW, CHERTSEY – PROPOSED RESIDENTS CONTRACT PARKING SPACES

The Committee was advised that due to changes in the use of retail units in Chertsey Town Centre there had been an increase in unauthorised parking in the service

yards located in Beomonds Row in Chertsey. This had resulted in inconvenience to users of the facilities and residents who accessed their properties from the area.

Discussions had been carried out with residents of Beomonds Row over the issues. The residents, some of whom were on limited incomes, found the existing cost of contract parking in the bays, at £700 per annum, was prohibitive. They had asked if it was possible to have the opportunity to purchase contract parking bays at a reduced rate for residents of those properties who used the service yard.

The opportunity to purchase car park permits at considerably reduced rates was available to residents of properties adjacent to Beomonds Car Park in Chertsey and around Hummer Road Car Park in Egham. The precedent for this provision therefore already existed in the Borough and the same process would therefore be available for the parking areas at Beomonds Row and White Hart Row for residents which were similarly adjacent.

The provision of resident's contract parking would make better use of the existing parking bays, facilitate enforcement under the Off Street Parking Order and assist in resolving the tension between residents and commercial occupiers. Members were fully supportive of providing reduced rate contract parking to residents. Accordingly, it was –

RESOLVED that -

residents of properties adjoining Beomonds Row and White Hart Row parking areas in Chertsey be permitted to purchase contract parking bays, at £250 per annum or £75 per quarter

252 MOBILE HOMES ACT 2013 FEES AND CHARGES

The Committee's approval was sought for the Council to raise the fees and charges payable in respect of the Mobile Homes Act 2013.

In November 2013 Members approved a policy for charging an annual licence fee for all relevant protected sites of £25.00 for a single unit site and an additional cost of £4.00 for each additional unit up to 101 units, then a further reduced charge of £3.00 for each additional unit up to 201 and £2.00 for each additional unit over 201. Members also approved fees of £400 for an application for a new site licence together with a fee of £200 for processing a transfer or amendments to an existing site licence.

Members were advised at the time of introduction of the fees that fees would be reviewed in 2016 once the new licensing regime had bedded in. The review of fees did not take place in 2016 due to enforcement issues with regards to mobile home sites which diverted the limited Officer resource hence delaying the fee review until 2017.

The fees had now been reviewed and the following fees were recommended;

- i) The annual site licence fee be increased to a single unit charge of £50 and additional sliding scale costs of £6 per unit cost up to 101 units, £5.00 for additional unit costs up to 201 units and £4.00 for any further additional unit.
- ii) Application for a new site licence fee £300 (plus site inspection costs of £50 together with any additional unit costs).

- iii) Application for a transfer or amendment to an existing site licence current fee £295 (additional cost of £50 flat rate to be added if a site inspection is required)
- iv) Application for a minor amendment to an existing licence i.e. a revised site plan or amendment of less than 2 conditions fee £200
- v) Application for a replacement copy of a site licence fee £25
- vi) Deposit of site rules fee £75
- vii) Should the fit and proper person test be implemented prior to 2018/19 this additional £102 fee will apply to all new applications and transfer applications from the date the test becomes effective. (In the case of a transfer application if the applicant holds an existing licence with Runnymede having satisfied a previous 'fit and proper' test the charge will not be applied).

The Committee endorsed the revised fees and accordingly –

RESOLVED that –

the above mentioned rise in fees and charges payable in respect of mobile home site licences be approved

253 LOCAL AUTHORITY ENERGY COMPANY OBLIGATION FLEXIBLE ELIGIBILITY – STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Committee was advised of central Government's ECO2 Help to Heat Funding Schemes and agreement was sought for Runnymede Borough Council's Statement of Intent, setting out the eligibility for Affordable Warmth Flexible Eligibility in accordance with The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) was an obligation on energy suppliers aimed at helping households cut their energy bills and reduce carbon emissions by installing energy saving measures. It had operated since 2013 and had recently been updated and amended by ECO 2 Amendment which extended the operation of the obligation to run until September 2018. The Government had confirmed that it expected to consult on the future of the scheme post-October 2018 later in 2017.

Under the ECO scheme extension, energy suppliers would be able to achieve up to 10% of their 'Affordable Warmth obligation' for the extension period (estimated to have a value of nearly £70m over the 18 months of the scheme) by installing energy saving measures in households declared eligible by local authorities. This new mechanism, also known as "flexible eligibility", allowed local authorities to make declarations determining that certain households met the eligibility criteria for a measure under the Affordable Warmth element of ECO. It also included a new opportunity for Local Authorities to direct more of ECO funding towards people who had particular health conditions who were at higher risk if they lived in a cold home. It was also proposed to allow increased flexibility on eligibility based on income as the current process required a household member to be in receipt of certain benefits, not just on a low income. Local Authorities were considered by BEIS to be in the best position to make these judgements.

Members considered the Statement of Intent (SOI) for the Runnymede Energy Company Obligation Flexible Eligibility. The SOI directed that Help to Heat funding would be directed to households that fitted one or more of the following criteria:

- a) Living in fuel poverty, but not in receipt of ECO qualifying benefits ('fuel poverty')
- b) Had a low income and vulnerability to cold ('LIVC'), and/or
- c) Otherwise could benefit from Solid Wall Insulation (SW1) 'in-fill' project

Members were pleased to note that the criteria opened up funding possibilities for varied households in the Borough including the elderly.

Eligible households would be identified by referral agencies, including the relevant departments of the Council and County Council and Age UK Limited.

It was noted that this was a national scheme and therefore funds were limited. It would be prudent for Runnymede Borough Council to direct households swiftly while funds were still available. Officers had already raised awareness of the scheme with appropriate partners.

Staffing needed to deliver the Local Authority role within its obligation would be met from the existing Energy Management Team as far as possible. It was considered that if the number of referrals became high then additional resources may be required.

Members agreed to authorise the Corporate Director of Planning and Environmental Services to sign and approve the Statement of Intent for ECO Flexible Eligibility under the Energy Company Obligation.

RESOLVED that –

the Statement of Intent for the Local Authority Flexible Eligibility requirements in respect of the Energy Company Obligation (ECO2) be approved

254 GOVERNMENT'S DETAILED PLAN FOR TACKLING NITROGEN DIOXIDE

The Committee was informed of the publication of the Government's UK Plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations.

The Committee received an overview of the finalised UK plan and associated documents. In brief it appeared the latest Government Plan 'was a plan for more plans' (as with the earlier draft plan). However, there was at least a greater recognition of the problem through the allocation of specific funding for local authorities tasked with implementing measures contained within the Plan including at least for the first time a realistic value on the cost of preparing for action.

The technical report to the Plan showed that charging drivers to enter a 'clean air zone' was the swiftest way to tackle illegal levels of pollution in local areas. However in respect of the 29 authorities directed to produce feasibility studies charging clean air zones were deemed a measure of last resort. Other measures within the Plan included a ban on the production of diesel and petrol cars from 2040 together with a reiteration of funding being made available for air quality and cleaner transport work.

Scrappage schemes part of the consultation plan had been dropped although there were proposals for taking action against car manufacturers who cheat or distort emissions data in the future. There was nothing mentioned related to the now widely acknowledged manufacturers transgressions of the past.

The new Plan appeared to be focused on tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide levels which was a subtle change from the consultation plan which was aimed at improving air quality in the UK in tackling nitrogen dioxide in our towns and cities.

Runnymede Borough Council was not a Council to whom a direction had been issued and there were no additional actions required of the Council in respect of measures detailed within the July 2017 Plan. At this stage it was not known what if any impact the direction order served on the neighbouring borough of Surrey Heath in regard to producing feasibility studies might have on Runnymede.

There were no additional resource implications at this stage. Officers would continue to work towards implementing the Council's 2014 action plan, however Members were reminded that with a staffing allocation of only 0:11 FTE for air quality work progress in this area would be limited to meeting statutory reporting requirements and basic monitoring work. At some stage in the future it seemed likely that the Government would finalise its position on air quality and should this impose further liabilities on local authorities including issuing further direction orders, current staff resources would have to be reviewed.

The Committee discussed the possibility of introducing new signage across the Borough reminding residents that by cutting their engines they were saving money. Officers would consider this when funds were available.

255 INTERIM REPORT ON ENFORCEMENT OF LITTER AND DOG CONTROL LEGISLATION

The Committee was provided with an update on the 12 month trial enforcement initiative covering the service of fixed penalty notices for litter and dog control legislation offences within the Borough by an external contractor Kingdom Environmental Protection Services (KEPS).

Prior to its introduction maximum publicity was given to informing members of the public and visitors to Runnymede of the proposed enforcement actions. Publicity included, but was not limited to publicising the trial on the Council's webpages, referring to the issue of FPN's for littering and dog fouling in 4000 letters sent out to residents in the Council's green waste scheme, the inclusion of a strap line to the same effect on all email responses sent out by customer services leading up to the going live date in June, erection of 'enforcement and no littering' signage around the Borough and in relation to dog fouling, posting of specific signage in all veterinary practices targeting dog owners.

As at 31 August 2017 KEPS working on behalf of the Council had issued a total of 619 FPN's for litter and dog control offences. Whilst the trial was still in its infancy early indications were positive. Members requested Officers report to Committee when substantive data was available on costs and income. Officers were advised that it would be beneficial for Enforcement Officers to attend Egham High Street which was having problems with litter following the start of the academic year at RHUL.

256 FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY PUBLICATION 'REGULATING OUR FUTURE – WHY FOOD REGULATION NEEDS TO CHANGE AND HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO IT'

The Committee was advised that the Food Standards Agency (FSA) had recently published 'Regulating Our Future – Why food Regulation needs to change and how are we going to do it'.

The FSA had produced the new publication as they believed the current 'one size fits all approach' was ill suited to the diverse nature of the current food industry and the system needed to change. The FSA had requested that Local Authority Members were made aware of the FSA's intended approach and were kept informed as things progress towards 2020.

The publication detailed the changes the FSA wanted to make to build a modern, risk-based, proportionate, robust and resilient system.

Members were advised that there were minimal resource implications for the Council at this stage. It was noted that one of the FSA's principles on which the future regulatory system was based was that businesses would meet the costs of regulation, which would be no more than they needed to be. There was an intention by the FSA to introduce a new funding model to ensure the sustainability of the new system, details of which were not elaborated on at this stage.

(The meeting ended at 8.01 pm)

Chairman