

Runnymede Borough Council  
ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

21 November 2019 at 7.30pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors M Heath (Chairman) J Wilson (Vice-Chairman)  
A Alderson, M Brierley, S Dennett, T Gracey, J Olorenshaw, S Walsh and D Whyte

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor M Willingale

345 FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Chairman read out the Fire Precautions.

346 NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

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

<b>Group</b>	<b>Remove from Membership</b>	<b>Appoint Instead</b>
Runnymede Independent Residents'	Councillor B Clarke	Councillor A Alderson

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

347 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 June 2019 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

348 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor M Willingale.

349 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Heath declared a non-pecuniary interest on item 12 (Fireworks – Animal Welfare) as she runs an All-party Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare for which the RSPCA are members. Councillor Heath remained in the chamber, took part in the discussion and voted thereon.

350 ANNUAL REVIEW OF CAR PARKING CHARGES IN OFF-STREET CAR PARKS

At its meeting in September 2005, the former Economic Development Committee resolved that there should be an annual review of car parking charges. Charges were reviewed in November for implementation in January, along with the Council's other fees and charges.

The Committee reviewed the car parking and permit charges in the Borough's 14 Council owned and managed off-street 'pay and display' car parks and was asked to approve the Officers recommendation that current charges in the Council's car parks, including the charges for permit and contract parking remained the same.

Members received details on the estimated income from the car parks should charges remain the same, assuming current trends for usage of the car parks continued.

Estimated Income from the Car Parks with charges unchanged

Town Centre Tariffs		
Time Period	Current tariff	Projected
1 hr	£1.30	£217,679
2 hr	£2.50	£188,255
3 hr	£3.50	£63,830
4 hr	£4.00	£37,112
5 hr	£4.50	£37,107
6 hr	£5.50	£7,744
All day	£7.00	£246,267
Estimated income		£797,993
Ex Vat		£664,994
Out of Towns Tariffs		
1 hr	£0.60	£4,087
2 hr	£1.20	£7,439
3 hr	£2.00	£7,420
4 hr	£3.00	£4,575
5 hr	£3.50	£9,930
All day	£5.50	£16,170
Estimated income		£49,621
Ex Vat		£41,350

Members were fully supportive of car park and permit charge levels remaining unchanged in the forthcoming year. It was noted that increases had been approved last November and further increases may adversely impact on the number of visitors throughout the Borough. Officers advised the Committee that the Council's Planning Department would be undertaking

a full review of parking provision in the Borough next year. As part of this review, parking on residential streets, parking enforcement, ANPR and barrier systems in Council's car parks could all be considered.

The Committee received a copy of a letter regarding parking sent to Officers from the Egham Chamber of Commerce on 21 November 2019. The Egham Chamber of Commerce were asking the Committee not to increase charges and requested some changes to parking charges in Egham when the Egham Gateway project commenced. Whilst Members were supportive of not increasing charges for the forthcoming year they did not support the other proposals suggested by the Egham Chamber of Commerce at this time. However, the parking review in 2020 would look at all Borough parking provision.

**RESOLVED that –**

**Car park and permit charge levels remain unchanged for the next year.**

351 FEES AND CHARGES 2020/21

The Committee's approval was sought for the proposed mix of statutory and discretionary fees and charges for those services falling under the remit of Environmental Services.

The main fees and charges being increased related to; Refuse Collection, Recycling, Highways and Engineering and Environmental Protection with proposed fee increases being between 2 – 5%.

The Committee was supportive of the proposed fees and charges

**RESOLVED that –**

**the proposed fees and charges for 2020/21 be approved, to be effective from the dates within the appendix or as soon as practical thereafter**

352 SINGLE USE PLASTIC

Members were advised that a single-use strategy for the County had been formulated and agreed by the Surrey Environmental Partnership (SEP) in early 2019. The strategy aimed to eliminate as much Single Use Plastic across Surrey as possible. The Committee was asked to agree that the strategy formed an RBC SUP policy on eliminating avoidable single use plastic (SUP).

Members were pleased to note that RBC were already taking small steps in eliminating SUP. The Committee was very keen to support the RBC SUP policy and to promote the use of the policy across the Borough. Officers were asked to provide the Committee with quarterly updates on progress on RBC's and Surrey wide elimination of SUP.

**RESOLVED that –**

**Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) adopt the RBC SUP policy on eliminating avoidable single use plastic along with promotion of that policy across the Borough**

353 SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL AGENCY AGREEMENT FOR HIGHWAY VERGE CUTTING AND WEED CONTROL INTER AUTHORITY AGREEMENT

The Committee was updated on the present arrangements with Surrey County Council and Spelthorne Borough Council (SBC) for carrying out highways verge cutting and weed control in Runnymede. Members were asked to consider extending the arrangement for a further period of nine months to enable a detailed review and decision on how the service was provided from 2021.

At the meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee on 15 March 2018 Members resolved to enter into an Inter Authority Agreement with SBC for an initial period of 2 years to fulfil Runnymede's obligation to Surrey County Council (SCC) for highways verge cutting and weed control. The present Inter Authority Agreement between RBC and SBC (£110,000) would expire on the 31 March 2020. However, RBC's obligation to SCC ran until 31 March 2022.

Members received details on the present state of agreements between the three authorities and several options for future verge cutting and weed control within Runnymede. The Committee was fully supportive of the Officers recommendation that the present arrangements be extended for a further period of nine months. Members felt this gave Officers time to fully explore future options available.

It was noted that there had been some problems with weed control particularly over last Summer and Members had received numerous complaints from residents in this regard. Officers assured the Committee that new arrangements would be in place next year which would alleviate the problem. Concern was also raised regarding tree suckers breaking through both footpaths and roads which caused damage. Officers would look into treating the suckers expeditiously in order to prevent further damage.

With regard to verge cutting the Committee was keen to avoid aggressive cutting in order to encourage biodiversity. Consideration however would need to be given to verges where sight lines may be affected.

**RESOLVED that –**

**the present arrangements with Spelthorne Borough Council for verge maintenance and weed control be extended for a further period of nine months from 1 April 2020 until 31 December 2020**

354 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS IN COMMITTEE AGENDA REPORTS

Members were asked to approve that all future Committee agenda reports requiring a decision included a mandatory section that dealt with the consideration of environmental and sustainability/biodiversity implications of the subject matter in the reports.

With regard to further environmental transparency, accountability and the increasing current awareness within both Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) and the country at large in respect of climate change matters, the Council at its meeting on 18 July 2019, resolved to commit RBC to undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) when any decision was made, funding agreed, or actions taken. Officers advised Members that to carry out a full EIA in respect of each individual decision would be both time consuming and inappropriate for the vast majority of tasks and decisions undertaken on a daily basis. However, the statutory EIA principles and the effects on the wider environment should be a determinant for all decision makers.

In order to facilitate this commitment, it was proposed that the mandatory environment and sustainability/ biodiversity considerations were included in all reports requiring a decision. Members were advised that the existing RBC 'draft agenda report format' template already provided for the relevant environmental implications to be included and considered in a report. This would be mandatory in future and if there were no direct environmental implications arising from reports etc. then a statement to that effect should be included to show that the issue had been considered. Therefore, an emphasis and commitment to ensuring these implications were addressed would satisfy the requirements of the Council's EIA resolution on 18 July.

The Committee supported the Officers recommendation and requested that Officers advise all Committee Chairs that this Committee had approved the recommendation, and all future reports requiring a decision being considered should include the mandatory section to show consideration had been given to environmental, sustainability and biodiversity implications.

**RESOLVED that –**

**all Committee agenda reports requiring a decision include a mandatory section that deals with the consideration of environmental and sustainability/biodiversity implications of the subject matter in the reports**

355 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2020/21

The Committee was asked to approve the 2020/2021 Environmental Services Business Centre Plan and note the business cases requiring additional expenditure.

As part of the annual business planning cycle each business centre completed an annual Business Centre Plan which set out for the forthcoming year: key drivers/influences, objectives, performance/activity indicators, the links to the themes in the draft Corporate Business Plan 2020-2024, and key risks, by utilising a standard corporate template.

Environmental Services was a multi-disciplinary business centre covering a range of services including Environmental Health and Licensing, Direct Services Organisation (DSO) and Engineering Services.

The Committee noted the business cases requiring additional expenditure which were still subject to recommendation by Corporate Management Committee and Full Council. Members also approved the 2020/21 Environmental Services Business Centre Plan. Officers were asked to include Officer names alongside the job titles in the organisation charts in the Business Plan in future.

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) the 2020/21 Environmental Services Business Centre Plan be approved; and**
- ii) the business cases requiring additional expenditure be noted**

356 FIREWORKS – ANIMAL WELFARE

The Committee was asked to approve the formal adoption by Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) of measures aimed at preventing or sufficiently reducing the risk of fireworks causing distress, injury and anxiety to people or animals.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) whilst, acknowledging fireworks could bring much enjoyment to some people, had recently highlighted the significant problems caused by fireworks to both people and animals in terms of distress, injury and anxiety. In line with other authorities RBC were seeking to adopt measures aimed at preventing or sufficiently reducing the risks posed to people and animals by fireworks.

The RSPCA believed that further research was needed to properly understand the impact of noise on animals and several things could be done to improve the situation for animals and people by:

- introducing a limit on the public use of fireworks on or close to specific dates and times
- tightening restrictions on the sale of fireworks in the run up to Bonfire night
- reducing the maximum noise level of fireworks sold to the public, ensuring they are labelled accurately
- licensing all public firework displays – and ensuring displays are better advertised to the public

In support of the RSPCA campaign Members were asked to adopt the following measures:

- to encourage all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people
- to annually raise the issue around the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can

be taken to mitigate risks via the Council's magazine, website and social media.

- to write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays
- to encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display.

The House of Commons Petitions Committee in its First Report of Session 2019 'Fireworks' published on 5 November 2019 had made a number of recommendations to the Government concerning the sale and use of fireworks and their detrimental effects on human and animal health. The report included a recommendation for the Government to fund and coordinate a major, national awareness campaign on the responsible use of fireworks to get the message across to the public from October 2020 and annually thereafter.

The Committee fully appreciated the distress and anxiety loud fireworks caused to both people and animals. Whilst they supported the proposal Members felt it would be very difficult to enforce the offence until legislation was passed at national level. It was agreed that generally public firework displays were advertised as these were invariably run for fundraising purposes, but small private displays could also be problematic. The Committee felt the measures should be adopted and the harm fireworks caused both people, animals and wildlife should be placed on the Council's communications channels, in particular in the run up to festivities where fireworks may be used.

#### **RESOLVED that –**

**Runnymede Borough Council adopts measures aimed at preventing or sufficiently reducing the risk of fireworks causing distress, injury or anxiety to people or animals**

#### 357 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2019/20 QUARTER 1 RESULTS

The Committee received the results of the Environmental Services Key Performance Indicators for Quarter 1 of 2019/2020.

Officers advised the Committee that figures relating to ES1 (Residual household waste per household) and ES2 (Percentage of household waste sent for re-use, recycling and composting) were not yet available and therefore these would be reported to the next meeting. With regard to ES3 (Number of missed bin collection complaints) Officers were proposing to report these as a percentage figure in next year's business plan. At present 99.7% of bins were collected on time, which should be celebrated. However, the way the figures were currently reported did not convey this. The Committee was advised that some complaints were not genuine due to bins being missed because residents hadn't put out their bins or they had been left because they had been rejected as being contaminated. Officers were looking at ways to streamline complaints, so figures were more reliable.

It was highlighted that there was a problem with overflowing bins in Egham, High Street and Officers were asked to look into installing larger bins in this area.

(The meeting ended at 8.39pm)

Chairman