

Runnymede Borough Council
ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
18 November 2020 at 7.30pm via MS Teams

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

Members of the Committee absent: None

Councillors I Mullens also attended

306 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 September 2020 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

307 OFF STREET CAR PARKING CHARGES

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 were 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.

It was noted that the effect of the pandemic and the lock downs had significantly reduced car park use across the board. The main commuter car parks showed large reductions. Phone and Pay to park was introduced, as an alternative to pay and display, into all Borough car parks in October 2013. The current contractor RingGo had been in place since January 2016. Payment by this method now accounted for 31% of all parking transactions (up from 24% last year) and 81% of all day parking sessions (up from 78% last year). The use of RingGo as opposed to cash payments had been encouraged due to the pandemic.

With the current car parking charges similar to those in other Surrey Boroughs, the recommendation to not increase parking fees at this time was also mindful of the adverse impact increases could have on local businesses, communities and the local economy particularly during the pandemic.

RESOLVED that –

car park and permit charge levels should remain unchanged for the next year

308 FEES AND CHARGES – 2021/2022

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 (Trade Waste and Domestic Waste (where chargeable), Recycling, Recycling Green Waste, Street Cleansing,

Graffiti Removal, Highways and Engineering, Environmental Protection and Animal Welfare Licences. A new set of charges were included from April 2018 for one- off payment covering Trade, Refuse, Recycling and Green Waste. This one-off payment for each size of bin was to cover the cost of collecting contaminated bins or additional bin collections. These charges had been increased by between 15 and 55%.

Members of the Committee were keen to encourage commercial organisations to recycle more. Officers advised the Committee that work in this regard was ongoing and it was hoped the upcoming Environmental Bill would put a duty on commercial organisations to recycle.

The Committee was supportive of the proposed fees and charges

RESOLVED that –

the proposed fees and charges for 2021/22 be approved, to be effective from the dates within the appendix or as soon as practical thereafter

309 MOBILE HOMES ACT – FIT AND PROPER PERSONS TEST

Members were advised that on 23 September 2020 The Mobile Homes (Requirement for Manager of Site to be Fit and Proper Person) (England) Regulations 2020 came into force. The regulations introduced the requirement of a Fit and Proper Person Test (FPPT) for the occupier of land used as a relevant protected caravan site (i.e. the licence holder). Both new and existing site operators were required to apply for inclusion on a local authority held register of fit and proper persons. For new applicants, the FPPT applied from 1 July 2021, however, existing site operators must have submitted a valid application by 1 October 2021.

From 1 July 2021 local authorities will be required to satisfy themselves that the relevant person is a fit and proper person to manage a site. In addition, the legislation requires the local authority to establish and maintain an up to date register which must be published online and be available for inspection. The local authority may grant, grant with conditions or reject applications for inclusion on the register following a FPPT assessment and additionally, in prescribed circumstances remove the person from the register, impose conditions on the person on the register or vary or remove a condition imposed on a person on the register.

Under the latest set of regulations, a local authority could charge an application fee and annual fee for inclusion on the register in accordance with a published fees policy. With respect to decisions made (whether or not to add an applicant to the register), there is a right to appeal to the First Tier Tribunal. This would have significant resource implications beyond Officer time in processing an application (i.e. Officer and Legal time to prepare appeals which were not currently accounted for within existing collective resources and such costs could be taken into account when setting fees).

In 2017 this Committee agreed a pre-approved fee of £102 for new FPPT applications but that no charge would be applied to existing Runnymede mobile home site licence holders. Given the latest regulations and the resource implications the Committee was asked to approve a fee of £160 (payable every 5 years) for both existing and new occupiers of land who may make applications for inclusion in a register for Fit and Proper Persons held by Runnymede Borough Council.

Members welcomed the new legislation which Officers advised the Committee was very comprehensive

RESOLVED that –

- i) **The Corporate Head of Environmental Services be authorised to grant, grant with conditions, or reject applications for inclusion of persons on the relevant register of fit and proper persons; and**
- ii) **The Corporate Head of Environmental Services be authorised to remove a person from the register or vary or remove a condition imposed on a person on the register; and**
- iii) **The Corporate Head of Environmental Services be authorised to appoint a person to manage a site if the local authority was satisfied that the person was a fit and proper person; and**
- iv) **A fee of £160 be set for both existing and new occupiers of land who may make applications for inclusion in the register of fit and proper persons held by Runnymede Borough Council**

310 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2021/2022

The Committee was asked to approve the 2021/20212 Environmental Services Business Centre Plan

As part of the annual business planning cycle each business centre completed an annual Business Centre Plan which sets out for the forthcoming year: key drivers/influences, objectives, performance/activity indicators, the links to the themes in the 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 was advised that the key achievements in 2020/21 to date by the Business Centre were:

- Produced and implemented a new RBC household waste and recycling strategy
- Successfully rolled out the new refuse fleet and maintenance contracts for the waste services
- Increased garden waste subscriptions from 8,544 to 10,063
- Took part in 2 stop and search initiatives with Police, VOSA, the EA and Trading Standards
- Environmental Health staff provided much of the welfare cell cover during the first lockdown period and carried out 1000 visits to business premises and houses in multiple occupation regarding Covid preventative work.

Next year the focus would be on; Green Initiatives, The Climate Change Strategy and Planning and Infrastructure of the Depot.

The Chairman commended the Environmental Services staff on the huge amount of work the Business Centre carried out. Members were pleased to note the plan for next year was realistic and achievable.

RESOLVED that –

the 2021/22 Environmental Services Business Centre Plan be approved

311 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Committee was advised that Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 KPI's would be reported to the next Environment and Sustainability Committee meeting on 14 January 2021. The delay was due to Covid cases affecting waste collections.

312 URGENT ACTION – STANDING ORDER 42

The Committee noted pro-forma 971 detailing urgent action taken after consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The SO42 authorised the Corporate Head of Environmental Services (CHES) under the Coronavirus Regulations as an authorised person to make designations of authorised persons under the current Coronavirus Regulations and any further coronavirus regulations which may be enacted from time to time in response to the current pandemic.

313 DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT PAVEMENT PARKING CONSULTATION

Members were advised of a recent Department for Transport (Dft) consultation sent to Runnymede Borough Council for response. The consultation had asked for responses in relation to three possible solutions to the problem of pavement parking.

Option 1: To rely on improvements to the existing Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) system

Currently it was possible to introduce a restriction on pavement parking through the TRO process. TROs were currently required to introduce any restrictions such as yellow lines and limited waiting bays. It was possible to ban pavement parking under this process however the current process was quite a lengthy and time-consuming one. The proposal was to simplify the process although the detail of the new process would have to be subject to further consultation. As with the current TRO process though each site would need to be subject to scrutiny to establish where parking on the pavement should be banned, partially banned, or allowed. Any restriction introduced because of a TRO would have to be signed and marked on the roads as to where the restrictions applied. This would add to the costs and resulting sign clutter on the pavements.

Option 2: To allow local authorities with CPE powers to enforce against 'Unnecessary obstruction of the pavement

This offence was currently only enforceable by the Police as an unnecessary obstruction of the highway. The proposal would require some legislative amendment to differentiate between the road and pavement for the purpose of enforcement through CPE provisions. Current CPE restrictions enforced tended to be absolute, where enforcement Officers only needed to consider whether or not the vehicle was committing the contravention, or not. i.e. Was it parked on a yellow line or not? Obstruction required more objective consideration as to whether it was an obstruction and if so, was it 'unnecessary.'

Option 3: A national ban on pavement parking

Currently London had a ban on pavement parking. Pavement parking was only permitted where it was signed and marked on the roads. In an ideal world the same restrictions would apply everywhere so, there was no ambiguity for motorists.

Officers advised the Committee that they considered Option 2 to be the most appropriate approach to the problem. It could be implemented relatively quickly and would give Councils the powers to deal with the complaints which they were currently powerless to deal with now.

The Committee discussed various areas in the Borough where pavement parking was a problem. Members often received complaints from residents on this issue, so it was

important that this was addressed. The Committee was supportive of Option 2 and asked Officers to prepare a Borough response to Option 2 after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of this Committee.

RESOLVED that –

the proposed Borough response (Option 2) be approved after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman prior to the response being submitted to the DfT

314 PRESENTATION ON THE IMPACT OF COVID ON COLLECTION OF RECYCLING AND WASTE

The Committee received a presentation on the impact of Covid on the collection of recycling and waste from the Direct Services Manager. The presentation covered along with challenges presented by Covid, information on refuse, garden waste, food waste and commercial waste collections in the Borough. Members also received information on street cleansing, the recycling and waste management policy and a summary of potential improvements. The Committee was very appreciative to the Direct Services Manager for the presentation. Members felt this further endorsed the value of Runnymede operating their own waste services given the continued collections for residents during the pandemic, particularly when other authorities waste collections had been significantly disrupted.

(The meeting ended at 9.17pm)

Chairman