

Runnymede Borough Council
ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
29 September 2021 at 7.30pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors M Heath (Chairman) N King (Vice-Chairman)
S Dennett, R King, S Lewis, J Olorenshaw, D Whyte,
S Williams and M Willingale

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor D Clarke

Councillor I Mullens also attended

234 FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Chairman read out the Fire Precautions.

235 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 June 2021 were confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to deletions struck through and addition shown in bold in relation to the Climate Change Statement of Intent, Minute 68, paragraph 7.

The paragraph now reads: Members were assured that Runnymede was not lying dormant in relation to Climate Change ~~Effective action was being taken which included.~~ **There has been** a 62% reduction in our Scope 1 and 2 emissions compared to our 2009 baseline ~~to 2019/20~~. Other direct climate change avoidance actions encompassed under Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions were currently under way and had been directly reported to relevant business units.

236 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Clarke

237 CIVIL ENGINEERING CONTRACT

The Committee was asked to authorise a tendering process for the Council's Land Drainage, Pumping Stations, Minor Civil Engineering and Professional Services Term Contract.

Officers advised the Committee that the current contract with an external contractor for both capital and routine maintenance works for land drainage and other civil engineering works was due to expire on 31st March 2022. Under the existing contract the Council had undertaken both capital and routine maintenance works, as per the terms of the contract. The type of work covered by the current contract included watercourse/pumping stations maintenance, drainage improvement, town centre maintenance and other civil engineering works (e.g., car park, access road and footpath etc.) for some departments within the Council as well as for Spelthorne Borough Council. The circumstances had changed since the last contract started in that the agreement between the Council and Spelthorne Borough Council to undertake works on their behalf was no longer in place.

The approach the Council would take was to secure what is termed a Measured term contract. This type of contract was used where the client had a regular programme of

works that that would be undertaken by a single contractor. The proposed contract would be for a period of 4 years with the possibility of extending it for a further period of 4 years annually if it was beneficial to both parties.

The value of the works had been estimated from the total expenditure to the existing term contractor in the last three years from all departments of the Council. It was approximately £164.5k per year, with a total of £658k over a 4-year period and £1.316k over an 8-year period.

Members asked if work undertaken could be brought in-house. Officers advised the Committee that given the periodic nature of the work this option was not cost effective.

Concerns were raised regarding using one single contractor and felt the option of appointing several contractors should be considered. Officers advised Members that they would consider this option. It was noted that any contract entered into would have a break clause included in the event of poor performance.

RESOLVED that -

the procurement of a contractor for the Council's Land Drainage, Pumping Stations, Minor Civil Engineering and Professional Services Term Contract be approved with an estimated value of £164.5k per year, with a total of £658k over a 4-year period and £1,316k over an 8-year period.

238 PROPOSAL FOR ADDITIONAL MARKETS IN EGHAM TOWN CENTRE

Members were asked to approve up to twelve additional street trading licences to be granted in a calendar year for Egham.

The Committee was advised that on 18 November 2010, the Council's former Economic Development Committee noted that the Council had received a request from the Egham Chamber of Commerce to issue street trading licences for various community events in High Street, Egham. That Committee gave authority to the then Director of Administration and Leisure to grant a street trading licence each year in the High Street, Egham for a Christmas event, an Easter event, a Food and Drink event and one other event.

In 2020, the Egham Chamber of Commerce was approached by Surrey Vegan Markets with a proposal to hold markets on the High Street in Egham. Three markets had since been held on 10 October 2020, 22 May 2021, and 24 July 2021 which Officers had obtained authority to issue a street trading licence through the Urgent Action procedure under Standing Order 42. The market operator had reported that all three markets had been successful and there was a clear appetite for these markets in the community. Additionally, Council Officers had carried out a survey after the vegan market in July 2021 to gauge what businesses felt about the market and the results were overwhelmingly positive.

The Egham Chamber of Commerce introduced the vegan market to the town and had managed and liaised with the market operator and all subsequent communication was done between the two parties. This arrangement worked very well in that no Officer involvement was needed.

The vegan market operator now wished to hold the market more regularly. However, the current limit on licences held by the Egham Chamber of Commerce did not permit this. For more markets to be held the granting of further street trading licences would be needed.

Whilst Members fully supported this, they were keen for a broader offering to be encouraged rather than just vegan food. Officers were therefore asked to engage with other traders to ensure potential traders were aware of the Council's interest in working with them.

Members were very supportive to having markets in the Borough but felt the current proposals were not as ambitious as they hoped and wanted markets to be expanded throughout the Borough. Members were keen for markets to be placed in all Borough town centres to increase footfall in the high streets thereby giving much needed support to local businesses. Officers advised Members that currently there were only two licensed streets in the Borough both of which were in Egham. Legislation allowed some streets to be designated as licensed, some able to obtain consent and some prohibited. To expand markets more generally streets with consent would need to be designated as licensed. Officers were looking to review that position in order for more markets to be held, however, Members were advised that changing designation of streets could be a long process due to the legislative processes which needed to be undertaken.

Regarding Chertsey, Members were advised that The Feoffees of Chertsey Market had Charter rights, but Officers advised the Committee that initial discussions with Feoffees had been promising.

It was noted that Egham Town Councillors would like Officers to consult/inform them of any future markets taking place in Egham and representation from Egham Town Councillors on the Egham Chamber of Commerce needed to be considered.

RESOLVED that –

- i) the Corporate Head of Law and Governance be authorised to grant up to 24 street trading licences in a calendar year to the Egham Chamber of Commerce in addition to the street trading licences which are already authorised to be granted; and**
- ii) the Council allow Egham Chamber of Commerce to run a trial period of 6 events, which will then be reviewed at the end of the period, allowing for possible further events in the Borough based on the outcomes; and**
- iii) a report be brought back to the Committee in March 2022.**

239 UPDATE ON MATTERS RELATING TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND EXTERNAL PROJECTS

Shaun Barnes (Depot Manager) provided the Committee with an update on the depot:-

Members were advised that the depot needed 100% attendance in order to function well so therefore COVID and cases of flu had recently impacted the service. Any shortfall in service would be made up by weekend working. Shaun Barnes was currently looking at training relief drivers. There were currently two office positions vacant at the depot. Both recycling and contamination rates had improved. The recycling rate for the last quarter was 49.9%.

The Committee was advised that the CHES Peter Burke had recently left the Council and Mario Leo CHLG was currently the interim CHES whilst the recruitment process for a replacement was undertaken.

The Chief Executive had recently proposed a series of changes to his office. One aspect of that change was to create a post of Head of External Projects and Climate Change. Dr

Marcel Steward had been appointed to the post and would have management responsibility for Climate Change and Energy. The restructure also created a Climate Change Officer post. This position was advertised in August 2021 and interviews would be held in October 2021. The Council's Energy Unit had been transferred from Commercial Services Business Unit to the Climate Change team based in the Chief Executive's office.

Work was currently being undertaken on the preparation of the Corporate Business Plan and Four Thematic Supporting Documents which would support the Corporate Business Plan, including the Climate Change Strategy.

Members of the opposition groups expressed their anger and frustration regarding the lack of a finalised Climate Change Strategy despite being promised this by October 2021, which was still a significant delay on the original timetable. In addition to the lack of a Climate Change Strategy they were very frustrated that Runnymede was not doing more on a practical level to tackle climate change. A Member recalled that at Full Council on 17th October 2019 the Leader of the Council had been asked to consider appointing a Senior Officer to drive Environmental and Sustainability Improvements and at that meeting the Leader had said the Council had a strong commitment to respond quickly and effectively to this global challenge however, nearly two years later RBC still did not have a Climate Change Strategy.

Moreover, in addition to not having a Climate Change Strategy the opposition parties strongly felt that more should be being done on a practical level to tackle climate change i.e., carbon emission considerations for the Egham Orbit and only granting planning permission to carbon neutral properties for all new builds. With regards to planning, Officers advised that guidance from government was still awaited on greener buildings and at present a local authority could not insist all new builds were carbon neutral. The applicant had a right to appeal against refusal and as no policy was in place any appeal would be upheld. A national policy as soon as possible was needed to negate this.

It was noted that policies contained in the new Local Plan would give the Council the opportunity to tighten up on some environmental measures in relation to planning policy and building control.

An opposition Member felt that Runnymede should have declared a Climate Change emergency. The Chairman advised the Committee that this could be done but this didn't in itself help address climate change.

An opposition member expressed concerns that the 7 points raised in her Statement of Intent had not been actioned/considered any further. Other Members stated that various options/ideas had been forwarded to the Chair but hadn't been acknowledged or actioned. Members were asked to forward any emails again as the Chairman couldn't recall receiving all the emails mentioned.

It was suggested that an informal meeting be arranged for October to discuss the draft Climate Change strategy before coming formally to the next meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee in November. The session would allow members of the public to sit in the gallery and listen to the debate.

It was noted that RBC was currently working with the business sector giving funding advice on becoming zero carbon. Members were encouraged to ask businesses to sign up to the RBC business newsletter so they could receive this information.

240 URGENT ACTION – STANDING ORDER 42

The Committee noted that acting in accordance with Standing Order 42 the following action had been undertaken by the Officer shown below after consultation with the Chairman.

Officer	Action Taken	Central Index No
Corporate Head of Law and Governance	To grant a Street Trading licence to enable a Vegan Food Market to be held in the High Street Egham on 24 th July 2021	976
Corporate Head of Law and Governance	To grant a Street Trading licence to enable a Vegan Food Market to be held in the High Street Egham on 9 th October 2021	983

(The meeting ended at 9.46 pm)

Chairman