

COUNCIL MEETING
10 DECEMBER 2020
SUPPLEMENTARY SUMMONS
ITEM 5

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 12

Question from Deborah Long, a local resident:-

Three quarters of UK local councils have declared a Climate Emergency, with more than half committing to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030 or sooner. Why is Runnymede Council still stalling on this vital declaration? When will you declare a Climate Emergency?

Question from Aileen Owen Davies ,a local resident:-

With Climate Change becoming ever more irreversible, creating disaster on a world wide scale, will the Council now declare a Climate Emergency ?

Up and down the land councils have done so, and are now adjusting their policies to the National Commitment to attain Zero Carbon by 2030. Why hasn't Runnymede also declared a zero carbon commitment and the full recognition of the Climate Emergency?

ITEM 7

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 13

Question from Councillor S Whyte to the Leader of the Council

I note that the Natural England guidelines (2008) which we are planning to use as guidelines for the creation of SANG's in Runnymede, does not explicitly include accessibility for wheelchair users and other mobility aids.

Whilst I understand that these are national guidelines, does the Leader agree with me that with the number of new dwellings planned in the current Runnymede Local Plan, that Runnymede Borough Council should be setting an example to other Local Authorities and ensure that any new SANG's created in the borough are as inclusive as possible for all residents and will have suitable access for users including those that rely on mobility aids such as wheelchairs?

Question from Councillor Neathey to the Leader of the Council

In Runnymede there are many heroes of the Corvid 19 pandemic including of course NHS workers, Council Officers, Teachers, the Police and other key workers like our local retail workers. Does the Leader of the Council agree with me that all of them deserve our thanks and ongoing support both during and after the pandemic?

(pto)

ITEM 10

NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 15

Labour and Coop motion from Councillor Neathey: Fair Tax Mark

Motivation:

This motion is being proposed and seconded by the Labour and Co-operative parties because we believe that tax enables the country to provide services from education, health and social care, to flood defences, roads, policing and defence. It also helps to counter financial inequalities and rebalance distorted economies. It is something we should all be proud to pay. The Fair Tax Mark is a great initiative to support those organisations that want to do the right thing and ensure we have an ethically sound economy.

This council notes that:

- Corporate tax evasion and avoidance are having a damaging impact on the world's poorest countries, to such a level that it is costing them far more than they receive in aid (even more so now UK Aid has been cut)
- Even for wealthy countries it is a significant concern, for example it is costing the UK as much as £30bn a year
- This practice also has a negative effect on small and medium-sized companies who pay more tax proportionately
- The UK Government has taken some steps to tackle the issue of tax avoidance and evasion by issuing Procurement Policy Note 03/14, which applies to all central government contracts worth more than £5m
- RBC has implemented procurement processes that align to PPN 03/14
- Polling from the Institute for Business Ethics finds that "corporate tax avoidance" has, since 2013, been the clear number one concern of the British public when it comes to business conduct.
- Almost two-thirds (63%) of the public agree that the Government and local councils should consider a company's ethics and how they pay their tax as well as value for money and quality of service provided, when undertaking procurement.
- Between 2017-19 Around 17.5% of public contracts in the UK have been won by companies with links to tax havens. with a combined value of £37.5bn
- It has been conservatively estimated that losses from multinational profit-shifting (just one form of tax avoidance) could be costing the UK some £7bn per annum in lost corporation tax revenues.
- In response to the Covid-19 crisis, the UK Government, like many across the world, has made available unprecedented financial support for businesses and workers financially impacted by the crisis. This has come with a significant public cost putting greater pressure on future tax revenue.
- The Fair Tax Mark certification scheme was launched in February 2014 and seeks to encourage and recognise organisations that pay the right amount of corporation tax at the right time and in the right place. It's the only scheme of its kind in the UK,

bridging the gap between corporate responsibility and the wider tax justice movement.

- The Fair Tax Mark offers a means for business to demonstrate good tax conduct, and has been secured by organisations with a combined annual income of £50bn and more than 6,500 outlets and premises, including many social enterprises and co-operatives.

This council believes that:

- Paying tax is often presented as a burden, but it shouldn't be.
- Tax enables us to provide services from education, health and social care, to flood defence, roads, policing and defence. It also helps to counter financial inequalities and rebalance distorted economies.
- As recipients of public funding, local authorities should take the lead in the promotion of exemplary tax conduct; be that by ensuring contractors are paying their proper share of tax, or by refusing to go along with offshore tax dodging when buying land and property.
- Where substantive stakes are held in private enterprises, then influence should be wielded to ensure that such businesses are exemplars of tax transparency and tax avoidance is shunned - e.g., no use of marketed schemes requiring disclosure under DOTAS regulations (Disclosure Of Tax Avoidance Schemes) or arrangements that might fall foul of the General Anti-Abuse Rule.
- UK cities, counties, **Boroughs** and Districts can and should stand up for responsible tax conduct - doing what they can within existing frameworks and pledging to do more given the opportunity, as active supporters of international tax justice.

Therefore this council resolves:

That the Corporate Management Committee form a report and recommendation for full council before the end of the municipal year which considers the following plan of action as recommended by the Fair Tax Mark organisation:

1. Approve the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration:

<https://fairtaxmark.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Declaration-19-09-.pdf>

- 1.1. Lead by example and demonstrate good practice in our tax conduct, right across our activities.
 - 1.1.1. Ensure contractors implement IR35 robustly and pay a fair share of employment taxes.
 - 1.1.2. Not use offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property, especially where this leads to reduced payments of stamp duty.
 - 1.1.3. Undertake due diligence to ensure that not-for-profit structures are not being used inappropriately as an artificial device to reduce the payment of tax and business rates.

- 1.1.4. Demand clarity on the ultimate beneficial ownership of suppliers and their consolidated profit & loss position.
 - 1.2. Promote Fair Tax Mark certification for any business in which we have a significant stake and where corporation tax is due.
 - 1.3. Support Fair Tax Week events in the area, and celebrate the tax contribution made by responsible businesses who say what they pay with pride.
 - 1.4. Support calls for urgent reform of EU and UK law to enable local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies.
2. In addition to the actions recommended by the Fair Tax Mark the report should also explore the following:
 - 2.1. Use the Social Value Act to integrate tax status further into our procurement process.
 - 2.1.1. The Fair Tax Mark would be used as positive evidence of social value above the PPN 03/14 standard.
 - 2.2. Work with Runnymede businesses to encourage the use of the Fair Tax Mark
 - 2.3. Go further than the declaration to ensure all council owned businesses are Fair Tax accredited and the council itself is as close to accreditation as is possible as a public sector organisation.
 - 2.4. Encourage other public sector bodies to adopt a similar approach.
 - 2.5. Council asks the officers to publicise this policy and to report on its implementation annually as part of the budget.