

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

22 April, 2021 at 7.30 pm via MS Teams

The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor E Gill) in the chair.

Members of the Council present Councillors M Adams, A Alderson, D Anderson-Bassey, M Brierley, J Broadhead, T Burton, I Chaudhri, B A Clarke, D Clarke, D Cotty, M Cressey, S Dennett, R Edis, E Gill, L Gillham, J Gracey, T Gracey, M Harnden, M Heath, C Howorth, J Hulley, N King, R King, M Kusneraitis, S Lewis, S Mackay, M Maddox, I Mullens, A Neathey, M Nuti, J Olorenshaw, N Prescott, P Snow, J Sohi, P Sohi, S Walsh, D Whyte, S Whyte, M Willingale and J Wilson

Members of the Council absent: Councillor J Furey

547 **HRH PRINCE PHILIP**

The Mayor called for and Members observed a minute's silence in commemoration of the long service to the Queen and the country of His Royal Highness (HRH) the Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh who had died on 9 April 2021. It was noted that the Leader of the Council and the Mayor had sent a letter of condolence to the Queen.

548 **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor made her announcements.

The Mayor thanked the following Councillors who were standing down in May for their past service to the Council and its residents, and wished all candidates well in the May election:

Cllr Brierley
Cllr Chaudhri
Cllr B Clarke
Cllr P Sohi

Cllr Chaudhri made a farewell speech.

549 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 4 March ,2021 were confirmed and signed as correct record.

550 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None received

551 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None declared

552 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 12**

Question from Deb Long, a local resident:

'Can Runnymede outline specifically the actions it has taken to respond to Cllr Robert King's climate change emergency motion back in 2019, as action taken solely by Runnymede Borough Council to reduce its emissions since the 2019 motion has past and I cannot see any reduction that's particularly impressive. The 2020 lockdown will inevitably have a reduction in emissions but to have a clear picture that shouldn't be included in the overall targets.'

Cllr Heath, Deputy Leader of the Council and Chairman of Environment and Sustainability Committee, responded as follows:

'I would like to go through that Motion to show what we have done and what remains to be done. I will firstly point out that the Motion is not agreed policy of the Council, it was a set of suggestions that the Council voted to look at with no set timeline. Some of the parts of the Motion will be part of our strategy, but that is a strategy which is also not agreed policy at this point as it will come to Committee and will be democratically voted upon.

1. *Declare a 'Climate Emergency'*

I have set out why we have not done this at the last Full Council meeting and I believe I was very thorough in that response as can be seen in the Minutes of the last full Council and which will be sent to Ms Long. We acknowledge that Climate Change is a priority and we have taken more positive action than many Councils who have declared an emergency and then have done nothing to address it.

2. *Set up or purchase market and information monitoring tools that allow reasonable estimates of the carbon emissions of all economic and social activity regardless of sector within the borough.*

We are in the process of evaluating how we will achieve this, including how we will identify the 'hotspots' to prioritise action on where there is the most benefit – this will be built into our Strategy and Members will hear more in due course.

3. *Set a target to make Runnymede Borough Council carbon neutral by 2025, taking into account both production and consumption emissions.*

We have already cut carbon by 62% compared to our 2009 baseline to 2019/20. We are aiming to fit alongside Surrey County Council's targets. Surrey County Council have set a Target to be carbon neutral with respect to Scope 1 and Scope 2 Emissions by 2030* (A copy of the scope definition will be sent to you after this meeting) We will seek to expedite any targets we set and plans that will help us do this will be in our climate change strategy.

4. *Set a target to make the whole of the borough, including all economic and social activity regardless of sector, carbon neutral from a production and energy consumption (including transport) point of view by 2030.*

Definition of emission scopes and their minimum reporting requirements under GHG Protocol

Scope

Scope 1 - direct GHG emissions

Includes emissions from activities owned or controlled by the academy trust that release emissions into the atmosphere. Examples include emissions from combustion in owned or controlled boilers, vehicles.

Scope 2 – energy indirect emissions

Includes emissions from own consumption of purchased electricity, heat, steam and cooling. These are a consequence of the academy trust's activities but are from sources not owned/controlled.

Scope 3 – other indirect emissions

Emissions that are as a consequence of the academy trust's actions, but the source is not owned or controlled, and which are not classed as scope 2 emissions. For example, business travel in private cars.

This is an extremely complicated and monumental task which encompasses the whole of the Borough. Scope 3 emissions include the private and public sector. While this is not within the direct remit of the Borough Council we have co-ordinated Runnymede business forums where we can provide leadership and guidance to agree and achieve mutual goals. As stated previously – our intention is to mirror Surrey County Council's Scope 3 Target which is 2030. It will be appreciated that this requires the active intervention of the private sector which is challenging in the current pandemic. We are also looking at initiatives with organisations such as Royal Holloway University. We are willing to demonstrate leadership here but we also need a lot of resource.

5. *Call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target easier to achieve.*

This is a given. We work closely with our MP, and the Secretary of State to provide the powers and resources. I speak to Dr Spencer regularly on these issues and I am confident he sees climate change as one of his priority issues and will push for the necessary resources. In due course, and once our Strategy is in place, I will be using my day job skills as a policy advisor to lobby more formally.

6. *Instruct the Constitutional and Legislative MWP to explore ways the Sustainable Communities Act could be used to support RBC carbon emissions reduction targets.*

This has not yet been done as the MWP work plan was full but I think this is a worthy topic and perhaps one better executed as a group exercise across the Surrey councils.

7. *Work with other councils and the government to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5°C. Continue to work with partners across the region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans.*

We are working more broadly than that and we are working with other councils and business at the County, Regional and National level.

8. *To set up a specific climate change and carbon reduction MWP and require all service Committees to be presented with policies and plans to deliver against these targets within 6 months.*

We have set up a Climate Change Member Working Party. All service Committees must give due consideration to the environmental impact on all of the Councils' decisions. Our planning and housing are at the forefront of this.

9. *Produce a report for next Council on the level of investment in fossil fuel and carbon intensive industry of our pension plan and other investments.*

The Council's pension plan is administered and controlled by Surrey County Council. These considerations will no doubt be taken into account in Surrey County Council's Climate Change strategy which you will find online.

10. *Embed climate change targets into the Council's future investment plans.*

As mentioned, we are required to consider the Environmental Impact of all Council decisions which we make and we Councillors, as decision makers, should all bear this responsibility.

11. *Embed climate change objectives into planning policy.*

This has been achieved through our local plan. You can see the list of how this is being done on our website page for climate change. A link can be sent to you. [Our climate-related policies and strategies - Runnymede Borough Council](#)

12. *Report by Annual Council 2020 a costed action plan to get to targets set out above*

If one looks at the definition of the Scope 1, 2 and especially Scope 3 Targets – the possibility of being able to report on a costed plan to achieve all targets by 2020 or 2021 is remote.

This would have been ambitious without Covid 19 but that did thwart any plan to deliver a Climate Change Strategy last year which was the original intention. We will be seeking to do this in our Strategy and so we hope to deliver this action plan by 2021

13. *Report to Council annually with the current situation and plans the Council will take to address this emergency.*

Yes, it is intended that this will be part of our strategy

14. *Aspire for national recognition as having the most ambitious and comprehensive climate change targets, plans and accountability structures of any branch of local government in England and Wales. ‘*

Absolutely, of course we aspire to this and that is why we are not rushing through a weak plan. We are working to look at all of the options available to us, gather the views of Councillors via the Working Party and monitor the output from other forums which we use.

We are also mindful that we have a duty of care to all Runnymede residents and a requirement to meet their needs on a broader remit than the climate change agenda in isolation.’

In response, Ms Long commented that she understood that Ben Spencer MP was not supportive of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill.

Cllr Heath said that she would forward on a note from Ben Spencer to Ms Long which outlined his position on the Bill.

Question from Aileen Owen Davies, a local resident:

'Following my question to the Committee in November 2020, regarding the Council's refusal to declare a Climate Emergency, I was told that certain decisions were in the pipeline. I would like to know the outcome of some of the proposals stated in the answer given to my initial question. I was informed that Climate Change is now a top priority and that you are taking measures to address this. What measures have been taken?'

Cllr Heath responded as follows:

'In my response last November I outlined all of the things we have already done to address climate change with a 62% carbon emission reduction to date and many other initiatives which I have reported in detail. I spoke at length about our planning policies to ensure that our new homes are energy efficient, improvements to biodiversity, encouragement to EVC take up and active transport initiatives to look at connectivity 'in the round' by avoiding car usage where possible. I use this example to show that this is ongoing, 'business as usual' for the Council where it is embedding the climate change agenda into all of its work streams. Measures to avoid, minimise or mitigate environmental impacts are a requirement for all decisions made by the Council at every level of its administration.

So for example, we committed to making the Council's social housing energy efficient where possible. From 2021, our new build homes will target the highest-level EPC rating of A. All our existing properties will achieve a C energy efficiency rating as a minimum by 2030, saving 709 tonnes of carbon every year from 2030.

We agreed, wherever possible, to install photovoltaic panels to the roofs of Council buildings. So far this includes:

- The Hythe Centre,
- The Woodham and New Haw Day Centre,
- Egham Orbit leisure centre
- Unit 1 Chertsey Business Park

We are reviewing further sites that may be suitable for similar projects.

The way in which we develop our own building has changed significantly in response to the challenges of climate change. Again, this is ongoing 'business as usual' work. Our development of new homes and business premises in the centre of Egham also incorporate measures within its structure to support the environment and climate agenda. These include:

- Solar controlled glazing
- Low energy internal lighting
- Wastewater heat recovery system
- Highly efficient thermal insulation
- High thermal mass soffit boards
- Low water use fixtures

We constantly introduce new improvement measures around waste and we have recently appointed a new recycling officer to ensure that this work is moved forward. More of the material which households put out for recycling is now actually being recycled, following

the launch of a new strategy to tackle this issue. The new strategy was approved by Councillors in July 2020. Before that date 16.5 per cent of material put out as recycling from people's homes could not actually be recycled because our processors were not able to deal with it. During the period July-September 2021 the average is five per cent which is the lowest average in the county. This is a particular success for Runnymede as the pre-July 2020 figure was amongst the highest in Surrey.

We are absolutely committed to working to control what happens around the Heathrow expansion agenda to prevent any additional noise and air pollution impacting our area. We understand the need to push for strategies that do not bring an additional environmental impact and we have developed a sound knowledge base and way of working that has given us a voice on this issue. We won't be taking our eye off the ball here.

The Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution was published in late 2020 outlining the ambitions from the Government to make the UK a global leader in climate change. We work extremely closely with our Member of Parliament. Our officers have also been tasked with constantly looking for grant opportunities to help deliver this ambition locally. I also work with MPs at the national level to raise the profile of urgent environmental issues through my day job; for example we have an enquiry on public procurement through the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee from which we will certainly be shaping our strategy – buy local, buy British, buy seasonally and so forth.

We do not have our Climate Change Strategy which will come later this year owing to the readily identifiable challenges which we have all met along the way - including a global pandemic. However we have not sat idle and we are delivering. We now have a webpage for climate change which we will be populating with information on the Borough and Climate Change so that residents are kept informed.

Finally. I suggest to those residents who feel so passionately about this issue that we are 'very open to good ideas' and their getting involved and working in the community to take forward measures on climate change. Members in my division have created a walking and cycling group, litter picking groups, Heathrow action groups and I have had constructive meetings with residents who have big ideas from new technology right down to wild meadows and bee hotels. They want to help us with the strategy and their input is welcomed. It doesn't matter what political persuasion you come from, this is an issue which goes well above Party politics and is about everyone working together if we really want to succeed.'

In response, Ms Owen Davies asked if the Climate Change Strategy which had been due this Spring had been finalised.

In response, Cllr Heath stated that the Strategy had been delayed owing to a diversion of Officer resources to deal with the response to the Covid pandemic. The Council was working on many initiatives and the Strategy would come forward in due course and would be an effective one which makes a difference. Cllr Heath welcomed the input of residents into the Strategy.

Question from Dominic Breen, a local resident:

'Does the Leader of the Council believe that decent housing should be a right for all residents, and how many prosecutions has Runnymede Council taken against rogue landlords since 2016 under the Housing and Planning Act for inadequate housing conditions and where safety and rental laws are broken.'

Cllr Prescott, Leader of the Council ,responded as follows:

'Since 2016 Runnymede has issued 1 civil penalty which is an alternative to prosecution.

The Private Sector Housing team's main function is to enforce the Housing Act 2004 which includes the regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO). The Private Sector Housing Section raises housing standards by responding both reactively and proactively utilising the warrant of tools available to them to tackle rogue landlords. Prosecution or alternatively civil penalties are options available to the Council where a landlord fails to comply with an enforcement notice served against them or if they fail to apply for an HMO licence. In most cases landlords will comply when formal notices are issued and therefore a prosecution is not warranted.

From 2016 to 2019 the PSH team received 861 requests for service and carried out 428 HMO activity work including HMO licensing and proactive HMO inspections of HMO's that did not fall under the licensing criteria. The vast majority of properties encountered were compliant, 297 had minor issues which were dealt with informally in line with our enforcement policy and 112 formal notices were issued which were largely complied with. We endeavour to work with landlords and agents to get properties brought up to standard as soon as possible for the benefit of occupiers.

Government advises in their Rogue Landlord guidance that Local authorities must consider carefully before bringing prosecutions, but where a landlord persists in illegally letting property, local authorities should prosecute through the Courts. Different penalties apply depending on the nature of the offence and the enforcement route authorities have used to tackle the issue. Runnymede is committed to implement policies and procedures that subscribe to principles of good enforcement to ensure the standard of private sector housing is safe and suitable for the occupants and that premises subject to Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing are compliant.'

In response Mr Breen asked the Leader if he was aware of the conditions many residents in ex council homes were living in and asked what the Council was doing to inform residents of their rights in taking action against rogue landlords.

Cllr Prescott replied that the Council's Private Sector Housing team were proactive in dealing with rogue landlords and that any tenants should contact the Team if they had concerns. Cllr Prescott was confident that the housing stock in the borough was in a good condition and that any tenants who had concerns should report rogue landlords to the Council.

Question from Philip Martin, a local resident:

'Why is increasing council tax to families like mine in Chertsey acceptable in the middle of a pandemic when we are struggling to make ends meet, we were promised support and protection all we seem to get is the bill for the Conservative failure to prevent the worst recession in Europe despite the pandemic?'

Cllr Prescott responded that Runnymede's Council Tax was one of the lowest in the UK and that Runnymede's element of the total Council Tax was the smallest element compared to the SCC and Police precepts. The increase in Runnymede's part of the Council Tax amounted to £5 per this year for a Band D property and was necessary to provide a high level of community services, regenerate town centres and support the Borough's High Streets.

Mr Martin requested the Council to offer 100% Council Tax support for working age persons instead of the current 80% support to assist struggling families.

Cllr Prescott would provide Mr Martin with a written response to this request.

Question from Steve Ringham, a local resident:

'Air pollution in the UK is a major cause of diseases such as asthma, lung disease, stroke, and heart disease, and is estimated to cause forty thousand premature deaths each year, which is about 8.3% of deaths, while costing around £40 billion each year

Other statistics published elsewhere, show that around 6% of deaths in Runnymede are due to air pollution. That's approximately 50-60 deaths a year in the borough. And that is despite Runnymede having over 75% of its land designated as Green Belt. The borough also has the dubious distinction of hosting not one but two AQMAs - Air Quality Management Areas. The M25 AQMA, declared in 2001, extends approximately 70mtr either side of the M25 between Junctions 11 and 13. It was updated in 2015 to include the area around the level crossing at Vicarage Road underneath the M25. The second area is the Addlestone AQMA, in Addlestone town centre and covers parts of High Street, Station Road, Brighton Road and Church Road. That second description comes from the Defra website but there is no map provided. So it is not clear to the full extent of the Addlestone AQMA. This area was declared in 2008. Both of these AQMAs seriously affect the air quality for residents in Addlestone, Runnymede's most populous town, more than any other area in the borough.

Link to RBC Defra Air Quality page: https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/local-authorities?la_id=215

In 2014, RBC published an AQAP - Air Quality Action Plan, also available via the Defra Website as above. As an aside, it appears that the first draft of the AQAP was done in 2008. Unless those dates are wrong, I find it incredible that progress on this plan (let alone any action) was so painfully slow, given the impact of the problem on our population.

Section 6 of the plan lists a number of ideas and measures on how to improve air quality, as well as promoting awareness of air quality to residents and how they can help.

My question is therefore this: Having a plan is all well and good, but if there is no action, no review and no measurement of that action, then the plan is pointless. However, the Air Quality Action Plan does not appear to have been publicly reviewed or updated since it was published in 2014. Has any measurement, metrics and subsequent review been carried out on the progress and effectiveness of the action plan since 2014, particularly if that review should lead to a revision or update to the plan with respect to its current fitness for purpose, in terms of pollution reduction, cost effectiveness and possible new anti-pollution measures that were not available in 2014?'

Cllr Heath responded as follows:

'The question from Mr Ringham correctly points out that there are two air quality management areas within RBC. One being associated with the M25 and the second relating to Addlestone four-way traffic controlled junction. Having two AQMAs is not in itself unusual. Spelthorne has a single AQMA which covers the whole of the borough and Surrey Heath a continuous AQMA running through the borough encompassing the M3 and the neighbouring properties either side. Reigate and Banstead have 9 AQMAs.

Both the RBC AQMAs are centred on high density traffic areas for example, recent modelling works (pre-covid) showed exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide levels would be close to the boundaries of the M25 itself and would not have any significant impact on the wider areas. It is likely that a future review of the RBC AQ plan would seek to remove most of the M25 (running through RBC) from being declared an AQMA given the fact that RBC have no control over the management of the motorway and its traffic which comes under the responsibilities of Highway England.

The other AQMA within Addlestone is at the 4-way controlled traffic junction. As with the M25 the emissions of nitrogen dioxide relate to traffic on the road. In this case SCC are the body with responsibilities for the upkeep and maintenance of the County's roads which limits RBC's ability to exercise any control over emissions without input and assistance of SCC. Runnymede have been in discussion with SCC, as owners of the highway and has

asked the question as to how they are able to make adjustments to this junction to improve the flow and hence help to reduce emissions levels. It is worthy of note that the Government is seeking to redress the interaction of two tier authorities regarding AQMAs within the current Environment Bill. That said, from recent measurements of nitrogen dioxide within the Addlestone AQMA it is becoming clear that it is only at the very centre of the traffic light-controlled junction that there is an exceedance of the national prescribed standard. Overall, within RBC, the number of properties where residents are being subjected to a level in excess of the prescribed limit value is very small. Within the Borough 99.9% of the population live within properties that are below the Government's set limits for air quality. That does not mean we do not need to solve the problem for that small number and we absolutely must but I just wanted to set the context. Residents of Runnymede should not be made to feel fearful and should be aware of the correct statistics.

With regards to yearly commentary on air quality, the Council publishes an air quality annual statement report (ASR) and these reports contain maps /plans which clearly indicate where the AQMAs are located. These ASRs are posted on RBC web site. Air Quality Annual Status Reports (ASR) are submitted annually to RBC's Environment and Sustainability Committee as well as to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The last meeting of that Committee actually looked at this issue in detail and you can read the Minutes online.

The ASRs also provide detailed commentary as to air quality initiatives/actions taken within each calendar year. RBC was the authority which set up and got operational the County wide air quality forum. RBC are members of the air alert scheme. RBC Councillors have contributed to Surrey's school educational programme on air quality where applications to Defra for grant funding have been made as just some examples of action. These annual update reports help to provide useful information as to events during the year under consideration in relation to air quality.

With specific regard to updating the RBC policy there is a requirement under the Environment Act that Air Quality Action Plans are periodically reviewed although there are no set time limits specified within the Act. DEFRA guidance suggests a five year period as to when reviews should be performed. To date the air quality action plan has not had any specific review outside of the ASR's. It is therefore fully accepted that since the air quality action plan was put in place in 2014 a formal review is due and as such this will be a matter that will be attended to in due course.'

Mr Ringham asked why it had taken 6 years for the AQ Action Plan to be published in 2014.

Cllr Heath responded that she was not a member of the Environment and Sustainability Committee during that period and would find out the reason and respond to Mr Ringham, but confirmed that the review would be much speedier and that Air Quality would be a key priority in the new Climate Change Strategy.

Question from Adrian Elston, a local resident:

Does the Leader of the Council think it's acceptable that his administration lost £2.1 million which could have been used to build the council homes we so desperately need in Addlestone. Will he or the Chair of Housing Committee be resigning to take responsibility for this disgraceful mismanagement?

As the time allowed for Public Questions had expired, Cllr J Gracey Chairman of Housing Committee, would send Mr Elston her written reply under Standing Order 12.12

553 PETITIONS

No petitions had been submitted by Members of the Council under Standing Order No 19.

554 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 13**

No questions had been submitted by Members of the Council under Standing Order No 13

555 **CONSTITUTION REVIEW 2021**

Council considered a recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee held on 15 April 2021 regarding various changes to the Council's Constitution resulting from periodic updating and recommendations arising from a review of the Constitution by the Constitution Member Working Party (MWP). Many of the changes proposed had emanated from the MWP which had met regularly and had made a valuable contribution to the review of the Constitution. Officers and Members expressed their appreciation of the MWP's detailed review of the Constitution and of the contribution made by the various political groups to the review and in particular, thanked Councillor Tom Gracey, who had chaired the MWP since its inception, for his work for the MWP.

Council noted a summary of all of the proposed changes to the Constitution including the proposed new arrangements for matters reserved to the Planning Committee. Council accepted all of the proposed changes to the Constitution subject to two further amendments as recommended by Corporate Management Committee.

The first amendment was to change paragraph 23.3 at Appendix 'B' as references to "called-in" and "call-in" in this context could result in confusion with the call-in provisions set out in the Council's Constitution relating to the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee.

The second amendment was that reference be provided in the Council's Constitution to the payments to Members for membership of Member Working Parties. These Member Working Party payments did not form part of the Members Allowances Scheme and it was agreed that it would be appropriate, on grounds of transparency, to make reference to these Member Working Party payments in the Constitution. Council agreed that reference be made in the Constitution to these Member Working Party payments and that publicity would be given thereto.

The primary recommended change to the items to be considered by the Planning Committee, which was fully supported by the Constitution MWP, was in the number of representations required for a Planning application to be reported to the Planning Committee, as set out in paragraph 23.6 of the proposed new arrangements. The current trigger for a Planning application to be considered by the Planning Committee was when more than two objections had been received from more than two different households or addresses. It was proposed to increase this number to more than ten different households or addresses after analysis of historical data and benchmarking with other local authorities. Council noted further information explaining the reasons for increasing this number in this way. The Chairman of the Planning Committee commended these changes to Council.

Some Members considered that the trigger for a planning application to be considered by the Planning Committee should be where more than six objections had been received from more than six different households or addresses. It was suggested that a new figure of six objections was appropriate taking into account the number of properties in close proximity to a typical Runnymede property as shown on Runnymede maps. These Members considered that one of the disadvantages of smaller applications being decided by officer delegation rather than by the Planning Committee was that this would remove the opportunity for the Planning Committee to add restrictive conditions to an application. These conditions which were added by Members enhanced Runnymede's environment. The view was also expressed that a threshold of six objections was appropriate for planning applications in rural areas .

A majority of Members supported increasing the threshold to ten as they considered that this change was based on evidence and had been well researched. Compared to other local authorities directly adjacent to Runnymede or in close proximity to the borough, Runnymede's threshold was very low. The Committee noted the provisions in place for Planning applications to

be referred to the Planning Committee in the Surrey Heath, Spelthorne, Elmbridge, Woking, Guildford, Bracknell Forest and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead local authorities .

Runnymede's low threshold had led to a significant and disproportionate number of small applications being brought to the Planning Committee. These smaller applications were usually relatively uncontroversial in comparison to other Planning applications, with interest expressed only from directly adjacent neighbours, and were nearly always approved in line with officer recommendation(s) because they accorded with approved Planning policy. These applications did, however, take up a significant amount of the Committee's time and reduced the time that could be spent on larger applications and policy matters.

Over the period from January 2020 to April 2021 a threshold of ten would have removed 26 items from the Planning Committee agenda, which were all approved in line with officer recommendation(s). This would bring the average number of Planning application items on the Planning Committee from 5 to 3.5. This would allow more time for the Planning Committee to consider the more finely balanced planning applications and also other business such as updating Policies or service plans and would result in a more manageable agenda. The data suggested that applications with more than ten objections tended to be more controversial and that therefore it would be appropriate for those applications to be determined by the Planning Committee.

A review of the Council's Planning service had been undertaken by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee which had included a visit to the Council from the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) and a report from PAS and a meeting held with local residents. The problem of smaller applications being considered by Runnymede's Planning Committee had been identified by PAS and also by the local residents that had taken part in the review and had formed part of the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee's recommendations to the Planning Committee.

Removal of less contentious items from Planning Committee agendas would help deliver the PAS, local residents and Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee recommendation that smaller applications should not be considered by the Planning Committee. Concerning the removal of the opportunity for the Planning Committee to add restrictive conditions to smaller applications which enhanced Runnymede's environment, the Corporate Head of Development Management and Building Control exercising delegated authority would add suitable conditions for these smaller applications if they were required.

Any items which were particularly controversial would fall within either the ten household or address threshold (paragraph 23.6) or the provision for a Councillor to request an application to be the subject of a decision by the Planning Committee (paragraph 23.3) or the Corporate Head of Development Management and Building Control's power to list applications for consideration by the Committee as set out in paragraph 23.4 of the proposed new arrangements .

Some Members commented that the Council needed to communicate more effectively with all affected residents in the borough in future consultations on the next Local Plan review via digital and non-digital methods. The Chairman of the Planning Committee confirmed that this would be done and that it had been addressed in the Statement of Community Involvement and related Communication Strategy

An Amendment was moved proposing that the trigger for a planning application to be considered by the Planning Committee should be where more than six objections had been received from more than six different households or addresses. A requisition that the voting on the Amendment be recorded was made by Councillor Kusneraitis and the voting was recorded as shown below:-

For the Amendment (13): Councillors Brierley, Burton, D Clarke, Edis, Harnden, R King, Kusneraitis, Lewis, Mackay, Mullens, Neathey, S Whyte and D Whyte.

Against the Amendment (26): Councillors *Adams, Alderson, Anderson-Bassey, Broadhead, Chaudhri, B Clarke, Cotty, Dennett, Gill, Gillham, J Gracey, T Gracey, Heath, Howorth, Hulley, N King, Maddox, Nuti, Olorenshaw, Prescott, Snow, J Sohi, P Sohi, Walsh, Willingale and Wilson*

Abstentions: 0

The Amendment was lost.

Councillor R King requested that the voting on the Constitution be taken separately and three votes held as follows with the voting on Parts 3 and 6 being a recorded vote.:

- i) Part 3 of the Constitution (changes to delegated powers to Officers on Planning applications):

For: (29) Councillors Adams, Alderson, Anderson-Bassey, Broadhead, Chaudhri, B Clarke, D Clarke, Cotty, Dennett, Edis, Gill, Gillham, J Gracey, T Gracey, Heath, Howorth, Hulley, N King, Lewis, Maddox, Nuti, Olorenshaw, Prescott, Snow, J Sohi, P Sohi, Walsh, Willingale and Wilson

Against (9): Councillors Brierley, Burton, R King, Kusneraitis, Mackay, Mullens, Neathey, D Whyte and S Whyte

Abstentions (2): Councillors Cressey and Harnden,

The vote was carried.

- ii) Part 6 of the Constitution (Members' Allowances Scheme);

For (32) Councillors Adams, Alderson, Anderson-Bassey, Brierley, Broadhead, Burton, Chaudhri, D Clarke, Cotty, Dennett, Edis, Gill, J Gracey, T Gracey, Harnden, Heath, Howorth, Hulley, N King, Kusneraitis, Lewis, Maddox, Nuti, Olorenshaw, Prescott, Snow, J Sohi, P Sohi, Walsh, D Whyte, Willingale and Wilson

Against (3): Councillors, R King, Mullens and, Neathey,

Abstentions (5): Councillors B Clarke, Cressey, Gillham, Mackay and S Whyte.

The vote was carried

- iii) The vote, which was not requested to be recorded on Parts 1-2,4-5 and 7 of the Constitution and recommendation ii and ii from the Corporate Management Committee was carried.

RESOLVED that -

- i) **the changes to the Council's Constitution be approved subject to the amendment of paragraph 23.3 of the proposed new arrangements for matters reserved to the Planning Committee so as to delete references to 'call -in'(as reported), and to the provision of additional wording in the Constitution referring to the payments to Members for membership of Member Working Parties (as reported) ;**
- ii) **the revised Constitution be effective from 19 May 2021; and**
- iii) **the Corporate Head of Law and Governance be authorised to settle the final form of the Constitution for adoption in accordance with the above**

decisions, and the Corporate Head of Law and Governance be authorised to incorporate any delegations to Officers subsequently authorised by Committee(s) after 22 April 2021 and prior to printing, and make any minor editing changes necessary to correct errors or omissions discussed after 19 May 2021.

556 MINORITY GROUP PRIORITY BUSINESS

No items of Minority Group Priority business had been registered under Standing Order 23.

(The meeting ended at 9.35 pm)

Chairman