

01.02.23

Dear Councillor

**Summons to a Meeting of the Full COUNCIL**

I hereby summon you to attend the meeting of the Full Council to be held on **Thursday, 9 February 2023 at 7.30 pm. The meeting will be held at Council Chamber - Civic Centre.**



PAUL TURRELL  
Chief Executive  
**01932 425500**  
Email: [paul.turrell@runnymede.gov.uk](mailto:paul.turrell@runnymede.gov.uk)

## **A G E N D A**

1. **Mayor's Announcements**

2. **Minutes**

13 - 20

To confirm and sign, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2022.

3. **Apologies for Absence**

4. **Declarations of Interest**

If Members have an interest in an item, please complete a member interest form and email it to [Democratic.Services@runnymede.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.Services@runnymede.gov.uk) by 5pm on the day of the meeting. Members are advised to contact the Corporate Head of Law and Governance prior to the meeting if they wish to seek advice on a potential interest.

5. **Speaking or Questions from Members of the Public under Standing Order 12**

In pursuance of Standing Order 12.1, public questions or speaking is not permitted at this meeting.

6. **Petitions**

To receive any petitions from members of the Council under Standing Order 19.

7. **Questions from Members of the Council under Standing Order 13**

Question a)

From Councillor Carl Mann to the Leader of the Council:

“Can the Leader of the Council please give us an update on Egham Orbit?”

Question b)

From Councillor Sylvia Whyte to the Leader of the Council:

“Last September I was pleased that Runnymede Borough Council supported the Great Big Green Week, be it at a very low level, promoting the event on social media and encouraging community groups and organisations to get involved.

I note that this year’s event runs between 10th and 18th June. Is Runnymede supporting this event and are we able to raise the profile a bit higher than last year to get more people involved?”

Question c)

From Councillor Robert King to the Leader of the Council:

“Does the Leader agree that NHS workers, from porters to doctors, from nurses to cleaners, are invaluable to the health of the nation and that we should show the best support we can from Runnymede Borough Council to them and particularly those who live and work in our Borough?”

Question d)

From Councillor Abby King to the Leader of the Council:

“Will the Leader join the Labour Party and the Labour and Co-operative group on this Council, and lobby his Conservative friends presently in government to rule out any increases in the government’s energy price cap from April and force energy firms to pass on recent falls in gas prices to households.”

Question e)

From Councillor Rhys Davies to the Leader of the Council:

“How many Improvement Notices have been issued by Runnymede’s private sector housing team in the last year, broken down by housing tenure (housing association or private rental) and Category 1 or 2 hazards and how many resulted in further action?”

8. **Recommendations from Committees**

a) **Housing Revenue Account Estimates for 2022/23 - recommendation from Housing Committee**

*The report and appendices associated with this recommendation were circulated to all members with the agenda for the meeting of the Housing*

*Committee and are available on the website.*

The Senior Accountant advised Committee that the setting of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) estimates was largely based on the assumptions included in the HRA business plan unless specified in the report. The proposed 7% increase in rents was consistent with Government guidance and also ensured that the Council would not be penalised through the loss of Rent Rebates subsidy entitlement.

The large increase in the Housing Repairs budget was the continuation of a multi-year programme reversing many years of low expenditure and includes deferred expense for the current year.

Committee were advised that in the current year's budget a provision was included to enable the transfer of up to £30,000 of HRA funds to help top up the DHP contribution received from the DWP. It was proposed that the Council continued to increase the DHP contribution by a sum of £30,000. Members were advised that any contribution from the HRA could only be used to help HRA tenants who required assistance, and this assistance was granted using the same criteria as set out in the Council's DHP policy.

Although considerable balances remain in the Housing Revenue Account, consideration was needed to cover current and future spending plans plus the need to service the £100m of borrowings over the next 20 years.

The Senior Accountant concluded that whilst the estimates only covered the next financial year, an updated 30-year finance plan would be presented to the March Committee.

The Committee Chair added that despite the backdrop of financial pressures the Council was facing, the Housing service was still making plans for delivery of services having identified risks, along with strategies to manage those risks.

The Committee Vice Chair expressed concern about the provision of £20,000 to help households in financial difficulties not being sufficient, but was reassured by the proposed increase to the Housing discretionary fund. It was added that further means to support tenants would be kept under review and proposals brought back to Committee if necessary.

**Resolved that –**

- i. the draft revenue estimates for 2023/24 were approved and the Full Council were requested to make provision accordingly; and**
  - ii. the proposed changes in rents and charges (including those for Housing General Fund services) for 2023/24 were approved to be effective either from the first rent week of April 2023, or 1 April 2023 as appropriate.**
- b) Medium Term Financial Strategy - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee**

*The report and appendices associated with this recommendation were circulated to all members with the agenda for the meeting of the Corporate Management Committee and are available on the website.*

The strategy covered the financial period up to 2025/26 and would be used to inform the upcoming budget setting process. The committee was reminded of the current economic context, which had had a significant impact on the figures set out in the report. The government's upcoming Levelling Up Bill was also expected to have an impact on the strategy.

The council's longstanding financial prudence had provided some budgetary resilience, however there was a sizeable deficit predicted by 2025/26, which would require some difficult decisions to be made before then. The council's capital programme was likely to require careful scrutiny, particularly with regard to when capital receipts were received. The proposed change to the minimum recommendation for the council's working balance was welcomed.

There was discussion about the upcoming pay award and the increasing cost of living. Discussions were ongoing with the local union branch and a report would be considered by the Corporate Management Committee and Council in due course. The proposed offer was aiming to be both fair and affordable.

The proposed additional Assistant Chief Executive role was debated. Some members considered that more information, particularly around targets for growth and savings, was required before a decision could be made on whether to proceed with the creation of the post. It was however asserted that the role was going to manage various key areas with their own savings, growth and performance targets. It was also the belief of the administration that additional strategic capacity was required in order to deliver a demanding workload in the coming years.

Separate named votes were requested on each part of the officer's recommendation.

Proposed motion (i)

That the Medium Term Financial Strategy be recommended to Council for approval.

For the motion (10)

Councillors T. Gracey, Howorth, Cressy, Gillham, J. Gracey, Prescott, Mullens, Nuti, D. Whyte and Willingale.

Against the motion (1)

Councillor R. King.

A named vote was requested, with the voting noted as follows:

For the motion (10)

Councillors T Gracey, Cressy, Cunningham, Gillham, J Gracey, Heath, Nuti, Willingale, Wilson and D Whyte.

Against the motion (1)

Councillor R King.

Abstentions (1)

Councillor Mullens.

**Motion (i) was passed.**

Proposed motion (ii)

That the following be approved:

(a) the creation of an additional Assistant Chief Executive post, with an annual budget of £150,000 including on-costs, be included in the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy.

(b) a supplementary estimate of £20,000 in 2022/23 for associated recruitment costs for the additional Assistant Chief Executive post.

For the motion (7)

Councillors T. Gracey, Howorth, Cressy, J. Gracey, Prescott, Nuti, and Willingale.

Against the motion (4)

Councillors Gillham, R. King, Mullens and D. Whyte.

Abstentions (0)

**Motion (ii) was passed.**

**c) 2023/24 Treasury Management Strategy - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee**

*The report and appendices associated with this recommendation were circulated to all members with the agenda for the meeting of the Corporate Management Committee and are available on the website.*

The proposed key changes were highlighted to the committee. Many of the proposed changes had become necessary because of the requirements of the new Treasury Management and Prudential Codes, which included two new Prudential Indicators. It was also necessary to increase the investment counterparty limits as increased balances caused by the setting aside of MRP had made finding homes for the Council's investments difficult. It was noted that the reference to the "Monetary Policy Committee" being a government body in appendix A should be amended to state that it was a "Committee of the Bank of England".

A named vote was requested, with the voting noted as follows:

For the motion (10)

Councillors T Gracey, Cressy, Cunningham, Gillham, J Gracey, Heath, Nuti, Willingale, Wilson and D Whyte.

Against the motion (1)

Councillor R King.

### Abstentions (1)

Councillor Mullens.

It was **resolved** that the following be recommended for approval by Council on 9 February 2023:

- 1) The proposed 2023/24 Treasury Management Strategy, encompassing the Annual Investment Strategy as set out in the officer's report;
- 2) the Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators for 2023/24, as set out in the report;
- 3) the revised Treasury Management Policy Statement and Treasury Management Practices, as set out in the appendices to the officer's report;
- 4) the authorised limit for external borrowing by the Council in 2023/24 of £700,613,000 (this being the statutory limit determined under Section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003); and
- 5) the Council's MRP statement for 2023/24 remain as follows:  
"The Council will use the asset life method as its main method for calculating MRP. In normal circumstances, MRP will be set aside from the date of acquisition. However, in relation to capital expenditure on property purchases and/or development, we will start setting aside an MRP provision from the date that the asset becomes operational and/or revenue income is generated".

**d) Capital and Investment Strategy and Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2026/27 - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee**

*The report and appendices associated with this recommendation were circulated to all members with the agenda for the meeting of the Corporate Management Committee and are available on the website.*

The challenging financial circumstances under which the Capital and Investment Strategy and Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2026/27 had been prepared were highlighted. The strategy and proposed capital projects would potentially require further consideration in light of the potential of delays in capital receipt generation and any changes resulting from the upcoming levelling up bill. The revenue impact of capital projects also required careful consideration.

It was stated that the administration wished to continue its aspirational capital programmes, but could only do so after careful consideration of each proposal. Consequently, it was felt that some discretionary projects, such as the streaming of committee meetings, had to be postponed until it was affordable to pursue them, or affordable alternatives had been identified by the Communications Working Group.

A named vote was requested, with the voting noted as follows:

### For the motion (8)

Councillors T Gracey, Cressy, Cunningham, J Gracey, Heath, Nuti, Willingale and Wilson.

Against the motion (4)

Councillors Gillham, R King, Mullens and D Whyte.

Abstentions (0)

It was **resolved** that the following be recommended for approval at Council on 9 February 2023:

- 1) the Capital Strategy at Appendix 'A' and the Capital Programme at Exempt Appendix 'B'; and
- 2) that useable capital receipts be maintained at a level of £2 million.

e) **2023/24 Budget and Council Tax - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee**

**In accordance with The Local Authorities Standing Orders (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a named vote must be taken on this item.**

*The report and appendices associated with this recommendation were circulated to all members with the agenda for the meeting of the Corporate Management Committee and are available on the website.*

The proposed budget had been prepared following consideration of various documents at previous meetings of the committee, such as the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Some of the proposed expenditure, such as various surveys, would dictate the potential need for further expenditure (both revenue and capital) but would also enable project phasing to be undertaken in a managed way.

A significant budget deficit had been forecasted in the medium term. The projected deficit did not include unforeseen expenditure that would be considered as in-year supplementary estimates, nor any growth in future years. Due to the challenging financial circumstances expected in the coming years, an increase to the General Fund working balance (from £3 million to £5 million) was proposed.

The committee noted the comprehensive nature of the statutory Section 151 Officer's statement.

It was felt by some that there were omissions in the budget, in particular for the most deprived residents impacted by the cost of housing in the borough, and those with long term health needs. It was also suggested that more needed to be done to generate income from trade waste.

The outcome of discussions with staff representatives about the annual pay settlement was awaited. There were further discussions about the utilisation of officer expertise and available bandwidth to delivery projects.

Questions were asked about the progress being made on the Council's climate change strategy. A revised action plan, for future review by members, was being developed by officers. Due to the comprehensiveness of the action plan, significant engagement across council departments was required before the review could be completed.

A named vote was requested, with the voting noted as follows:

For the motion (8)

Councillors T Gracey, Cressy, Cunningham, J Gracey, Heath, Nuti, Willingale and Wilson.

Against the motion (4)

Councillors Gillham, R King, Mullens and D Whyte.

Abstentions (0)

It was **resolved** that:

1) The following be recommended for approval by Council on 9 February 2023:

- a) the Revised Budget for 2022/23 and Budget Estimates for 2023/24, including growth items, as set out in the report and at Appendices B, C and E;
- b) an increase to the Band D Council Tax level of 2.99% (£5.37) from £179.55 to £185.92;
- c) the revised minimum threshold for the General Fund Working Balance of £5m; and
- d) transfers to and from Reserves as set out in the report.

2) The following be noted:

- a) The updated Medium-Term Financial Forecast at Appendix A.
- b) The statement of the Chief Financial Officer at Appendix F.

**f) Englefield Green Committee - position of Chairman - recommendation from the Englefield Green Committee**

*The report and appendices associated with this recommendation were circulated to all members with the agenda for the meeting of the Corporate Management Committee and are available on the website.*

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, under Standing Orders provisions a Special meeting was convened.

The Committee discussed recent agreed actions relating to Englefield Green and the role of the Chairman in progressing these actions.

After a comprehensive debate a vote was made in relation to the proposed motions.

**Resolved that:**

**The Membership of Englefield Green Committee did not have confidence in the Chairman and a recommendation should be made to Full Council that the Chairman should be removed from his role and replaced by a new Member of the current Englefield Green Committee for the remainder of this municipal year**

## 10. Notices of Motion from Members of the Council under Standing Order 15

### Motion a)

From Councillor Robert King.

This motion is being proposed and seconded by the Labour and Co-operative parties because we still believe that tax enables the country to provide services from education, health and social care, to flood defences, roads, policing and defence. It also continues to help 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.

It is also important that in all aspects of public life taxes are paid fairly, justly and the penalties for non-payment are enforced equally. No matter how powerful an individual or company, everyone should be equal before the law. Where they break the law they should be punished equally as any other citizen for breaking the same laws and that this even applies to members of HM government.

This council notes that:

- Corporate tax evasion and avoidance continue to have 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 for wealthy countries it is a significant concern, for example it is costing the UK as much as £32bn a year HMRC estimated in 2021
- This practice also has a negative effect on small and medium-sized companies who pay more tax proportionately, and consequentially impacts our local high streets
- 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
- 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](#):
  - 1.1. Lead by example and demonstrate good practice in our tax conduct, right across our activities.
    - 1.1.1. Not use offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property, especially where this leads to reduced payments of stamp duty.
    - 1.1.2. 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.
    - 1.1.3. 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 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.

Motion b)

From Councillor Rhys Davies.

This Council notes:

1. The unilateral decision by Surrey County Council to return devolved on-street parking enforcement back to County control.
2. That these services were previously provided by Runnymede Borough Council, along with other districts and boroughs, and could be highly responsive to the needs of residents and the concerns of Councillors, where they were fully resourced.
3. Where streets faced parking overspill or parking stress, Councillors and residents are able to apply for a resident parking permit (RPP) scheme to ensure a level of specific control over the area or street considered.
4. That in Runnymede 7 such schemes are presently in place in the following streets:
  - Burn Close
  - The Hythe
  - Hythe Road
  - Cumberland Street
  - Railway Terrace
  - Thorpe Road
  - Wick Road
5. That the current permit charge is £80 for first permit issued to a household, £100 for second permit issued to a household and £130 for three or more permits issued to a household.
6. That the revenue derived by these permits had previously gone into expanding the enforcement team in Runnymede and ensured residents had a better opportunity to park outside their own home and that parking safety was enhanced.
7. That the unilateral decision by Surrey County Council has had a detrimental impact to this Borough's ability to enforce these permits and generally maintain the same level of staffing in our parking team.
8. That residents in Egham Hythe, Englefield Green West and Addlestone North where RPPs are in force are now paying the same price for a permit and a service which is less valuable than it was last year, with lower enforcement ability.

The Council resolves:

That the Leader write a letter to the Leader of Surrey County Council to make the following points, with group leaders who are agreement with the sentiments raised, invited to co-sign it:

1. That this Council once again reiterates that it believes it is the wrong decision to return those devolved on street enforcement powers back to the County Council.
2. That we request a revised and published timetable for completion and role out of the new service provided by Surrey County Council and that it be shared with this Council and our residents.
3. That we reiterate this Council's wish for all new and transferred staff to be employed with a local remit and base, to ensure their local knowledge is not lost in the new service.
4. That Borough and District Councils in Surrey should be provided with a compensation fund from Surrey County Council, so funds can be distributed equally to all permit holders, given they have been receiving a worse service than they applied for because of the actions by Surrey County Council.
5. That the Leader of Surrey County Council is asked to confirm that in future, in the spirit of providing good and efficient public services regardless of who

provides them, no future unilateral decisions will be taken without consulting districts and boroughs where their services or roles will be directly affected.

11. **Minority Group Priority Business**

No minority group priority business has been registered under Standing Order 23.

12. **Press and Public to be Excluded by Resolution**

To consider any items so resolved at the meeting.