

Runnymede Borough CouncilEnvironment and Sustainability CommitteeThursday, 16 November 2023 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Council present: Councillors D Coen (Chair), V Cunningham (Vice-Chair), A Berardi, R Bromley, D Clarke, MK Cressey, S Ringham, D Whyte, S Williams and A Balkan.

Members of the Council absent: Councillors S Jenkins and N Prescott.

In attendance: Councillors T Gracey and L Gillham

## 27 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023 were confirmed and agreed as a correct record.

## 28 Apologies for absence

None received.

## 29 Notification of changes to Committee Membership

To record the following substitutions:

Cllr A. Balkan for Cllr N. Prescott  
Cllr S Williams for Cllr S Jenkins

## 30 Declarations of interest

None received.

## 31 Implications of Climate Change for Runnymede Borough Council

The Committee received a report following the motion carried at Full Council in 2019. The motion required a report to be brought to the Environmental and Sustainability Committee setting out the implications of climate change for Runnymede Borough Council, and for this report to have regard to the matters set out in items 1-14 of the motion along with other relevant considerations. This required, amongst other things, the consideration of whether a Climate Emergency should be declared in Runnymede.

The Committee was fully supportive of declaring a Climate Emergency in Runnymede. It was fully acknowledged that climate change was happening and was due to human activities; along with warming, other changes that were occurring such as melting polar ice, rising sea levels and more frequent floods, droughts, and heatwaves.

The Committee wished to ensure that members of the Corporate Management Committee, when making their decision, were made aware that Members of the Environment and

Sustainability Committee had stressed their concerns that there was a real climate emergency. Tough decisions needed to be made but funding for supporting Runnymede becoming net zero was essential. Costs of fixing runaway climate change impacts in the future would be much higher.

Recommended that:

The Committee NOTES that the net zero targets within the motion resolved on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019 (in points 3 and 4) have been superseded by those subsequently agreed through the adoption of the Climate Change Strategy by the Council

That the Committee RECOMMENDS to Corporate Management Committee to recommend to full Council that a Climate Emergency is declared in Runnymede in line with the wording recommended at paragraphs 5.16 to 5.18 of the report

## 32 **Parking Fees and Charges**

The Committee was asked to consider proposed changes to the current charges in the Council's car parks, including the charges for permits and contract parking

Members were informed that the effect of the pandemic and the current financial crisis was still having an impact on car park use across the board. The Council had frozen parking fees for five years to support residents and businesses through the pandemic and more recently the cost-of-living crisis. It was now considered that some relatively small increases and changes would help maintain and improve public car parks at a cost the Council could afford. There had been a lack of investment and maintenance in the car parks and even the repair of potholes was costly.

The addendum to the Parking fees and Charges report was noted. A report on car parking at Coopers Hill would be brought back to a future Committee.

The Committee raised some concerns regarding some anomalies in parking charges, particularly in relation to open spaces. All car parks in the Borough needed to be treated in an equitable way. The Committee was reassured that Officers were currently only dealing with car parks on our current orders and that the others would be looked into in the future.

The Committee was not supportive of the proposed flat rate for Sunday parking and felt parking charges on a Sunday should be the same as the charges between Monday – Saturday. Members felt a Sunday flat rate would discourage shoppers from visiting businesses on a Sunday, which would have a detrimental impact on businesses in the Borough.

With regard to permit parking, it was noted that in some instances only an annual permit could be purchased, and residents had raised with members the possibility of quarterly permits also being available. Officers would look into introducing this option at next year's annual review.

Resolved that:

- (i) Pay and display charges should be increased by 20 and 10 pence as per paragraph 4.5 for Town and Out of Town car parks to ensure car parks remained self-financing and properly maintained.
- (ii) Permit prices should be increased as per paragraph 2.7 to offset the costs of increase maintenance and investment to Council owned car parks.
- (iii) Sunday charging should be introduced in line with the charges charged Monday – Saturday to bring in line with other Surrey Authorities and offset the cost of increased maintenance and investment.
- (iv) The free period for Homewood Park should be reduced from three hours to 90 minutes to ensure the income from the car park is able to cover the costs of maintenance. Cost of £2.70 be introduced for the period 90 minutes to 3 hours and increased to £5.00 for periods over 3 hours.
- (v) Re-introduce parking charges at Pooley Green for the first 60 minutes bringing it back into line with other out of town car parks to ensure the car park remains viable.

### 33 **Fees and Charges**

The Committee received the proposed changes to fees and charges for the next financial year for the services managed by the Environment and Sustainability Committee.

The annual review of charges was an important part of the overall budget setting process and the policy framework for service provision in general.

If agreed, the fees and charges would be included as part of the 2024-25 budget and the effects of any increases/reductions in charges would be incorporated into the figures for the appropriate service areas.

Resolved that:

The proposed fees and charges as set out in the Appendix are approved to be effective from the dates within the Appendix or as soon as practical thereafter.

### 34 **Fixed Penalty Notices**

The Committee was asked to approve the proposed revisions to the Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) amounts for fly-tipping and waste offences following legislative changes to the Fixed Penalty Notice maxima amounts.

The levels were last set between 4 to 7 years ago as and when the legislation was amended.

Waste offences remained a significant issue with 780 fly-tips reported in 2022/23. The Committee was advised that Community Services had recently obtained a grant for more cameras to be installed.

The Committee was advised that larger fly-tips were dealt with by the Environment Agency.

Resolved that:

The revised FPN levels as detailed below be approved:

FPN level under section 33ZA(9)(a) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 shall be £500 (lower level) and £1,000 (higher level) on a case-by-case basis.

FPN level under section 34ZA (8) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 shall be £300 (lower level), and £600 (higher level) on a case-by-case basis

FPN level under regulation 5 of the Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (England) Regulations 2017 shall be £180.

The FPN levels above shall be discounted by 50% for early payment within existing periods specified for such payments.

A lead-in period of four weeks before application of revised FPN amounts be provided from the date of decision by the Committee to allow communication of the revised amounts to members of the public.

### 35 **Sandbag Policy**

Members received a report on the Sandbag Policy which had previously been discussed at the Environment and Sustainability Committee in September 2023.

At that meeting, Members had provided feedback on the report. The revised report incorporated feedback and amendments received.

Members were grateful to Officers for the positive discussions that had taken place since then and were supportive of the proposed course of action.

Resolved that:

The current sandbag policy was outdated and no longer fit for purpose.

The current policy be replaced with a position statement on the Council's website, which could be updated as required.

The Council embarks on a communication campaign to ensure all residents and communities are informed of the change and encouraged to actively plan for future flooding events.

### 36 **Exclusion of press and public**

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the remainder of the meeting during the consideration of the remaining matter under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as set out in Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

### 37 **Environmental Services Team Restructure**

The Committee was presented with a report which detailed a restructure of Environmental Services, GIS, Environmental Health, Licensing, Engineering, Green Spaces, Grounds Maintenance and Street Naming and Numbering.

The restructure was cost neutral and would deliver a new and improved management structure for Environmental Health, increased capacity in Green Spaces front line services including arboriculture and the transfer of street naming and numbering from Engineering to the GIS team which would give greater resilience in the GIS team.

The Committee was in support of the proposal.

Recommended that:

The Committee **RECOMMENDS** to Corporate Management Committee that authorisation be given for a consultation on the proposed restructure as outlined in the report and to delegate authority to take forward the agreed changes to the head of paid services subject to no significant issues being raised during the consultation exercise.

(The meeting ended at 9.16 pm.)

Mayor