



Environment and Sustainability Committee

Thursday, 11 January 2024 at 7.30 pm

Council Chamber - Civic Centre

Members of the Committee

Councillors: D Coen (Chair), V Cunningham (Vice-Chair), A Berardi, R Bromley, D Clarke, MK Cressey, S Jenkins, N Prescott, S Ringham and D Whyte

In accordance with Standing Order 29.1, any Member of the Council may attend the meeting of this Committee, but may speak only with the permission of the Chairman of the Committee, if they are not a member of this Committee.

AGENDA

Notes:

- 1) Any report on the Agenda involving confidential information (as defined by section 100A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972) must be discussed in private. Any report involving exempt information (as defined by section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972), whether it appears in Part 1 or Part 2 below, may be discussed in private but only if the Committee so resolves.
- 2) The relevant 'background papers' are listed after each report in Part 1. Enquiries about any of the Agenda reports and background papers should be directed in the first instance to **Democratic Services, Democratic Services Section, Law and Governance Business Centre, Runnymede Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel: Direct Line: 01932 425622). (Email: democratic.services@runnymede.gov.uk).**
- 3) Agendas and Minutes are available on a subscription basis. For details, please ring 01932 425620. Agendas and Minutes for all the Council's Committees may also be viewed on www.runnymede.gov.uk.
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Filming should be limited to the formal meeting area and not extend to those in the public seating area.

The Chairman will make the final decision on all matters of dispute in regard to the use of social media audio-recording, photography and filming in the Committee meeting.

**List of matters for consideration
Part I**

Page

Matters in respect of which reports have been made available for public inspection

1. **Changes to Committee Membership**

2. **Minutes**

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To confirm and sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th November 2023.

3. **Apologies for absence**

4. **Declarations of interest**

Members are invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registrable and non-registrable interests in items on the agenda.

5. **Chertsey Town Centre Street Licensing**

9 - 21

6. **No Mow May**

22 - 25

7. **Exclusion of press and public**

8. **Exempt Information**

9. **Grave Digging Contract**

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Runnymede proposes to procure a contractor to carry out the function of grave digging in all its cemeteries.

The contract value is commercially sensitive. Putting this information in the public domain before the procurement exercises are conducted would undermine the competitive nature of the exercise.

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

Runnymede Borough Council

Appendix A
RBC ESC 16.11.23

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Thursday, 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: None

In attendance: Councillors T Gracey and L Gillham

27 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13th 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 17th 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 post holes 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 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.)

Report title	Chertsey Town Centre Street Licensing
Report author	Azra Mukadam
Department	Economic Development
Exempt?	No
Exemption type	N/A
Reasons for exemption	N/A

Purpose of report:

To resolve

To recommend to Full Council

Synopsis of report:

This report seeks authority to finalise the process to designate Guildford Street, Chertsey, as a licence street and amend the Council's Street Trading Resolution by adding Guildford Street to its list of licence streets.

Recommendation(s):.

That the Council resolves that:

- 1) All previous resolutions of the Council made pursuant to paragraph 2 of Schedule 4 to the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1982 (the Act) be hereby revoked
- 2) Pursuant to Paragraph 2 of Schedule 4 to the Act, that as from the date when this resolution takes effect, all areas of land within the Borough of Runnymede which are "streets" within the definition of that term contained in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 4 to the Act shall be designated as prohibited streets with the exception of any streets referred to in resolution 3 below
- 3) The parts of streets set out below be designated as Consent Streets or Licence Streets, as defined in Schedule 4 to the Act :

Consent Streets

Broadway, New Haw

Licence Streets

High Street, Egham
Station Road North, Egham
Guildford Street, Chertsey

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 In 2021, the Chertsey Town Team and local businesses reported to officers, that they needed support to bring shoppers back into the town. The lack of footfall and vibrancy is a legacy from the Covid pandemic and the impact from both hybrid working and online shopping popularity.
- 1.2 The most evident method identified to increase footfall to the area was to run regular events and markets in the town centres, drawing local people to the area and offering a wider range of goods.
- 1.3 A report was taken to the Environmental and Sustainability Committee (E&S Committee) in September 2021 to allow the authority to develop street markets across the Borough's town centres with the first focus of development to be in Egham and to use this as a way to further review opportunities for the rest of the Borough.
- 1.4 A further report was presented in June 2023 to the Environmental and Sustainable committee, which agreed that the Corporate Head of Law and Governance be authorised to serve public notice starting the proceedings to amend the current designation of licenced streets in the Borough (pursuant to its powers under Schedule 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982), and a public consultation be undertaken to add one street, Guildford Street, Chertsey as a designated licence street and permit street trading.
- 1.5 Officers also sought authority in July 2023 from Full Council to commence the process of designating streets within Chertsey Town Centre in which street trading is permitted, specifically Guildford Street.
- 1.6 A public notice was published on the 15th August 2023 in the Surrey Advertiser newspaper (refer to Appendix B) and on the Runnymede Council Public Notice webpage.
- 1.7 The deadline for any public representation on the notice was 28 days (i.e. 12 September 2023) to respond in writing.
- 1.8 As no communication had been received from County Council Highways Department or Surrey Police, a reminder was sent on 30th October.
- 1.9 County Council Highways Departments have since responded with no issues. They confirmed that they have no objections to the designation of the section of Guildford Street between its junctions with Riversdell Close and Windsor Street/London Street being designated a Licence Street to provide future opportunities for markets and events to be held at the location. As highlighted in Appendix D
- 1.10 Surrey Police have not responded.
- 1.11 Officers confirm that no representations were received during the public notice period or since then.

2. Report and, where applicable, options considered and recommended

- 2.1 As there has been no representation concerning the public notice to date , officers seek permission to proceed with the designation of Guildford Street, Chertsey, as a licence street.
- 2.2 Once permission has been permitted by committee, further approval will be sought from Full Council to proceed with the designation of Guildford Street, Chertsey as a licence street.
- 2.3 Consideration of permitting licence streets in other parts of the borough like local centres and villages have also been reviewed. The main challenges that are faced by designating license streets in smaller and more localised centres were identified in the E&S Committee report dated June 2023 (Appendix A point 2.2)

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 Corporate Business Plan 2022- 2026 The Council's Corporate Business Plan identifies five key objectives: climate change, empowering communities, health and wellbeing, economic development and organisational development.
- 3.2 In line with some of the key objectives, this report aims to further the aim of the climate change strategy through creating a greener environment and encouraging a circular economy whereby we source local, support more ethically focused trading through the street markets and antique style market events. Also encouraging localised events that people can cycle or walk to.
- 3.3 This report aligns objectives from the Economic Development Strategy 2022-2026 through objective 3 of developing the vitality and vibrancy of our town centres and growing the tourism and leisure economy by providing a wider range of shopping experiences to the community by way of offering markets in the town centres. Allowing visitors to spend time dwelling and spending locally through the partnership opportunity of town businesses and the market offerings.
- 3.4 By creating more vibrancy and vitality of our town centres we aim to reduce leakage spend to neighbouring boroughs. Regular street markets will encourage the community to interact with local traders and local retailers, allowing the opportunity to visit shops while attending the market.
- 3.5 National Planning Policy Framework 3.5 Section 7. of the NPPF 'Enhancing the Vitality of Town Centres' paragraph 86. This report aims to work within the planning policy framework to promote town centres and to retain, enhance and create new opportunities where possible to support promoting the vitality of town centres.
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/7-ensuring-thevitality-of-town-centre>

4 Resource implications/Value for Money

- 4.1 Legal – Any resources for the Street trading licencing has been and will be sought though current resources and will not require any additional resources.

- 4.2 Economic Development – Town Centre Management will be key in supporting the development of regular markets.
- 4.3 Environmental Services/Licensing – There are licensing issues around the sale of alcohol and any kind of public entertainment. Licensing of alcohol and regulated entertainment is simply a case of submitting a Temporary Event Notice unless a premises licence already covers this type of activity. This involves minimal resourcing from the Licensing and Environmental health Officers and is inexpensive at £21 per event.
- 4.4 Currently there has been no additional resources needed from Direct Services (DSO) Refuse, street cleaning and staff resources during market day. This will be reviewed at the end of the first year of this development.
- 4.5 Potential risks associated with more frequent markets are that there may not be enough demand to allow the traders to derive an income on a regular basis from the market, resulting in less interest from market operators to set up further markets

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Authorisation of Markets in England takes various forms, the latest being statutory, under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 (the Act), section 3 authorising Street Markets (through Schedule 4) and section 37 Temporary Markets.
- 5.2 Under s3 of the Act, Local Authorities can adopt provisions contained in Schedule 4 and decide if they wish to prohibit or allow street trading in their area. If they decide to allow street trading, they can designate specific streets as consent or licence streets.
- 5.3 Runnymede Borough Council adopted the powers contained in Schedule 4 of the Act in 1982, creating consent and licence streets, the list of which has been amended over the years. The Council has adopted prohibition for all streets except for those designated by resolution (rather than listing the streets where street trading is prohibited), meaning street markets can only take place on designated streets.
- 5.4 The June 2023 report to this Committee sought authority to start the process of designating Guildford Street, Chertsey, as a licence street and was followed by approval during the next meeting of the Council. The process to create a licence street is initiated by consultation, including consultation with the Chief Constable and Highways, which has now been completed, followed by consideration of the responses. No responses having been received, the Council can therefore now proceed with confirmation of the addition of Guildford Street, Chertsey, to its list of licence streets.
- 5.5 If this committee recommends the addition of Guildford Street and Full Council accepts the recommendation, publication of this resolution will need to take place on two consecutive weeks and under strict statutory deadlines. It is anticipated that the resolution will take effect from April / May 2024.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 The Council has a Public Sector Duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to:
- a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.
 - b. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a Protected Characteristic and persons who do not share it
 - c. Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share those characteristics.
- 6.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed for the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) in April 2022. Increasing market and event activity within the Borough's towns directly relates to Priority three of the EDS which seeks to support the Borough's town centres.
- 6.3 A screening assessment has been undertaken regarding the specific designation of Guildford Street as a Licence Street for the June 2023 report, which has concluded that an equalities screening assessment is adequate at this stage. Attached at Appendix C

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 The Council's current terms and conditions stipulate that litter and rubbish should be removed by traders or market operators at the end of the day's trading. Furthermore, officers will continue to use their best endeavours to encourage localised walking or cycling to the town to attend the markets. Market operators already promote the markets on local social pages and resident groups to attract the local community.
- 7.2 Moving forwards, to support the Council's wider response to climate change, officers propose to review the Council's market trading terms and conditions to consider the types of markets that are being developed in the towns. Markets could be required to demonstrate that they are working towards a more sustainable business model, for example only providing paper or recyclable bags to customers.
- 7.3 During this review process, officers will also consider, for example, whether amendments should be made to stipulate the types of products and equipment being used by markets, or to encourage local suppliers and/or the sale/display of local goods and produce where practical and feasible.
- 7.4 A report on the review of the market trading terms and conditions will be the consideration of a separate committee report, which will be brought through this committee at a later date (exact date to be confirmed).

8. Timetable for Implementation

- 8.1 As referenced in point 5.5

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 In conclusion, this report presents an opportunity for regular annual markets to be held in Chertsey. The appetite is overwhelming from retailers and the market operator after a trial market day. Feedback from operators and businesses suggests that the local community and businesses on the high street benefit from the vibrancy and interaction in a safe and open setting. Officers have since published a Public

Notice in line with the local authorities adopting provisions contained in Section 3, Schedule 4 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, and there has been no representation from the public against the notice.

10. Background papers

Can be provided upon on request.

11. Appendices

Appendix A (E&S Committee Report 8th June)

https://rbc365.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/CommitteeReports-EnvironmentandSustainabilityCommittee/EfmwFW_39hZAu7KRBGFUp6kBXrqQGA_3Mf1Jcgbb6l378w?e=OqAKo0

Appendix B (Public Notice)

Appendix C (Equalities Screening Assessment)

Appendix D (Guildford Street map)

**RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL
 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS
 PROVISIONS) ACT 1982 PART
 3 - STREET TRADING**

**Notice of intention to pass a
 Resolution on Street Trading and the
 designation of Consent, Licence and
 Prohibited Streets in the Borough**

Notice is hereby given that the Council's Environment and Sustainable Committee, at its meeting of **16 November 2023**, intends to recommend to the Council to pass a Resolution (at its meeting of 7 December 2023) under Paragraph 2 Schedule 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, subject to consultation responses, to confirm current designations apart from **Guildford Street, Chertsey**, which shall be redesignated from Prohibited Street to Licence Street.

The terms of the draft resolution are as follows:

1. that all previous Resolutions of the Council made pursuant to Paragraph 2 of Schedule 4 to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 ("the Act") are hereby revoked;
2. that all streets maintainable at public expense, within the Borough of Runnymede, be designated as **Prohibited Streets** under Paragraph 2 of Schedule 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, save the following which are to be designated as Consent Streets and Licence Streets respectively:

Consent Street

The Broadway, New Haw

At the eastern service road adjacent to the street, from the northern boundary of the Black Prince Public House for a distance of 15 metres in a northerly direction.

Licence Street

High Street, Egham

Station Road North, Egham

Guildford Street, Chertsey

with effect from 15 January 2024.

The effect of the resolution is that, from the said date, any person who engages in street trading in a Licence Street or a Consent Street without being authorised to do so, or in any Prohibited Street, may be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a level 3 fine (not exceeding £1,000 at the date of this Resolution).

Once made, the Resolution will allow the Borough Council to control street trading in these streets, using powers set out in the Act.

Anyone wishing to make representations on the proposed Resolution should do so in writing to the Town Centre & Events Manager, Runnymede Borough Council, Civic Offices Station Road, Addlestone, Surrey, KT15 2AH or via email at towncentremanager@runnymede.gov.uk no later than 11 September 2023.

Dated : 15 August 2023

Runnymede Borough Council

Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone, Surrey, KT15 2AH

M A Leo

Corporate Head of Law and Governance

EQUALITY SCREENING

Appendix C

Equality Impact Assessment guidance should be considered when completing this form.

POLICY/FUNCTION/ACTIVITY	LEAD OFFICER
Expanding the Current Street Licences.	Azra Mukadam

A. What is the aim of this policy, function or activity? Why is it needed? What is it hoped to achieve and how will it be ensured it works as intended? Does it affect service users, employees or the wider community?

The impact of the recent pandemic has negatively impacted the town centre businesses across the borough. Businesses are seeing a rapid decline in footfall and residents are visiting less due to more online shopping options and easy access to supermarkets as a one-stop shopping offering.

The development of street markets across the borough gives opportunity for the town businesses to benefit from an increase in the number of visitors to the area, and having a local market close to a community could have the effect of reducing the impact of loneliness within certain groups within the local area.

Egham is currently the only place in the borough to hold a street licence, permitting street trading and commercial markets to run.

In order to expand street licencing in other Town Centres in the borough, members of the Environment and Sustainability Committee (ESC) agreed in September 2021 that the Council would first focus on developing markets in Egham.

Since the first report was presented to the ESC in 2021, Egham has developed two regular street markets:

- 1) A vegan market that occurs on the third Saturday of each month.
- 2) A local artisan market that provides fresh produce sourced from the local area that's occurs the first Saturday of the month.

Having developed Egham as a location that hosts regular markets, Officers are committed to developing Chertsey Town Centre as the next location for regular markets and events.

Chertsey is a priority area for the wider economic development strategy to level up Runnymede residents' pride in their local area. The objectives are to deliver improvements to Chertsey Town Centre. Chertsey will therefore be the focus for the investment in '*Community and Place*'. Part of this proposal is to develop outdoor markets to build vibrancy and increase footfall.

The impact of having more roads with street licence will affect the wider community only during periods of the market day. Road closures and diversion of road traffic will be required but has no direct impact to council services or council employees.

B. Is this policy, function or activity relevant to equality? Does the policy, function or activity relate to an area in which there are known inequalities, or where different groups have different needs or experience? Remember, it may be relevant because there are opportunities to promote equality and greater access, not just potential for adverse impacts or unlawful discrimination. The Protected Characteristics are; Sex, Age, Disability, Race, Religion and Beliefs, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity.

Any impact from the street licencing on the wider borough community, including those groups with protected characteristics is likely to be positive by encouraging people from all ages, women who come within the protected characteristic of pregnant & maternity, and anyone with a disability to attend the markets. Opening the road to pedestrianisation will allow pushchairs and wheelchair users to easily access the market stalls. This may also help address loneliness and isolation and reduces the need to travel to neighbouring towns.

The table below highlights points that have been considered as positives and negatives of the expansion, that may directly impact those protected characteristics of age, pregnant & maternity, and disability the following points:

Positive of expansion	Negatives of expansion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider choice of products to suit all ages and abilities. • Reducing travel to bigger towns for shopping, saving those with disabilities and age having to get transport • Road closure for markets allows easier access for pushchairs, wheelchair users and those with physical disabilities. • Opening hours will align with general trading for high street businesses which suits all ages and disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road closures will impact traffic diversion of road users, so those with disability car licence may have to park outside of the location identified for road closure. • Noise and footfall traffic in the town could impact residents that live directly in the area • Consideration on promotion to those that have hearing and visual impairment. • Consideration is needed for advertising/promotion to those with hearing and visual impairment

The table shows that both the younger and older people of the protected characteristic of age would positively benefit from attending an open-air event with pollution from exhaust fumes reduced by the absence from cars in the area.

This would also have a positive impact of the anyone within the protected characteristic of disability due to breathing related issues.

However, given that the traffic would be prevented from streets would be pedestrianised and closed off for anyone with a car modified for use by someone with mobility issues. In contrast, closing off the street would assist those who have mobility scooter.

The Markets may encourage parents with very young children to attend which may have a positive impact on women and older people who otherwise may not venture out into the local community as much.

If the policy, function or activity is considered to be relevant to equality then a full Equality Impact Assessment may need to be carried out. If the policy function or activity does not engage any protected characteristics then you should complete Part C below. Where Protected Characteristics are engaged, but Full Impact Assessment is not required because measures are

in place or are proposed to be implemented that would mitigate the impact on those affected or would provide an opportunity to promote equalities please complete Part C.

C. If the policy, function or activity is not considered to be relevant to equality, what are the reasons for this conclusion? Alternatively, if there it is considered that there is an impact on any Protected of Characteristics but that measures are in place or are proposed to be implemented please state those measures and how it/they are expected to have the desired result. What evidence has been used to make this decision? A simple statement of 'no relevance' or 'no data' is not sufficient.

By widening the opportunity for street trading licencing to be granted to other parts of the borough, more residents of the wider community will be able to attend the markets and have an opportunity to meet the other members of the community and purchase a wider range of products in their local area. Support for the independent shops and smaller businesses on the high street is needed.

In 2020, Officers carried out engagement directly with 100 town businesses about their views on regular street markets. Feedback was positive as businesses felt that the increase in footfall would benefit their business. There were few concerns about street parking and how often a market would run.

Considering the engagement carried out, officers believe this work demonstrates that there is little negative impact to the protected characteristics considered in Part B thus completing a equalities screening assessment is adequate at this stage.

This screening assessment will need to be referred to the Equality Group for challenge before sign-off.

Date completed: 24th November 2023

Sign-off by senior manager: Azra Mukadam

Guildford Street, Chertsey



Report title	No Mow May
Report author	Helen Wilson, Deputy Green Spaces Manager
Department	Environmental Services
Exempt?	No
Exemption type	N/A
Reasons for exemption	N/A

Purpose of report:

- To resolve

Synopsis of report:

Information in regard to the adoption of 'No Mow May' as a new grassland management method for the benefit of biodiversity in and around the Parks and Open Spaces managed by Runnymede Borough Council.

Recommendation(s):

- To continue with current mowing schedules rather than implement No Mow May
- To focus on the management of the existing wildflower meadows to more effectively increase biodiversity in the borough.

1. Context and background

1.1 The question of whether Runnymede Borough Council should introduce 'No Mow May' was raised in July 2023 to Helen Clark, Head of Environmental Services, and a report on the subject requested for this Committee by Cllr. D Coen.

2. 'No Mow May'

2.1 'No Mow May' is a grassroots environmental movement that encourages people to leave their lawns and green spaces uncut during the month of May.

2.2 The goal of this movement is to support biodiversity and benefit pollinators, particularly bees and other insects, by allowing wildflowers to bloom and provide food and habitat for a multitude of species

2.3 The movement has gained popularity in the UK and has inspired many people to let their lawns go wild for the month of May, or longer, in an effort to create a more environmentally friendly and wildlife-friendly landscapes.

2.4 Other Councils across the UK have taken part such as Monmouthshire and Warwick. Feedback has been widely positive.

- 2.5 The introduction of 'No Mow May' to Borough-managed land as a blanket policy to *all* grassed areas in the borough is likely to result in numerous complaints from residents on the assumption of neglect and the potential for obstructed sight lines in certain areas.
- 2.6 From an ecological perspective; cutting at the end of May kills all the invertebrate eggs and larvae laid on the plants and the more favourable time to cut would be mid-late July.
- 2.7 To increase the number of wildflowers available for pollinators one must reduce the strength of the grass sward to reduce competition. One of the most effective ways to achieve this is to reduce the fertility of the grass by collecting arisings following the cut that would otherwise fall to the ground and feed the soil if left in situ.
- 2.8 At present, the capacity within the Grounds' Maintenance team to cut, collect and dispose of large areas of grass clippings is limited due to the cost of disposing of arisings. The existing areas we currently maintain as wildflower meadows are maintained by a contractor.
- 2.9 One alternative to No Mow May would be carefully selected locations with low impact to residents for more carefully managed wildflower meadows. These would be chosen based on the maximum potential for successful wildflower establishment and likelihood of improving the appearance and amenity of that location.
- 2.10 There are, however, no immediate plans to establish these *additional* wildflower meadows while the newly established, in-house grounds maintenance and Green Spaces teams focus on successfully delivering our current grounds maintenance schedules for 2024 and as we put in place specialist hay cut contractors for our current meadows for future seasons.
- 2.11 As Officers review the management of our sites across the borough, we will be looking for opportunities to trial new wildflower meadows based on our ability to properly manage their required mowing regimes with the machinery we have.

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 The addition of wildflower meadows would contribute to the goals outlined within our Climate Change Policy. Wildflower meadows support Runnymede's aspiration for increasing Biodiversity and Nature recovery in the borough.
- 3.2 The work around these priorities also aligns with the Corporate Business Plan, particularly around the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and the role this will play in providing residents with leisure and recreational spaces.
- 3.3 By utilising open spaces residents, in particular young people, will benefit from being able to lead an active lifestyle, which in turn is anticipated to result in positive health outcomes for those residents; individuals who have an active lifestyle have, on average, been shown to require fewer medical interventions throughout their lifetime than those who have not.
- 3.4 The Health and Wellbeing Strategy Objective 2 - Healthy Communities has the action "for all residents to be able to engage and participate in their community, access services, facilities, amenities, leisure, and recreational opportunities locally".

4 Resource implications/Value for Money

- 4.1 There are no additional costs to implement No Mow May as the grass is simply left uncut for May although its benefits are minimal to wildlife.
- 4.2 The alternative, additional meadows, would require analysis into the reduction of regular cuts throughout the year by in house staff verses an annual cut, collect and dispose operation with hire of a specialist contractor or the purchase of the appropriate machinery to bring the operation in-house.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 In addition to legal implications mentioned elsewhere in this report, claims under health and safety in the event of grass not being cut, contract and procurement, in the event of hiring an external contractor and employment law considering possible effects on internal staff may be involved and would need to be considered on a case by case basis.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 Includes new and reviewed policies/strategies and anything affecting people with protected characteristics in accordance with the Council's public sector equality duty to produce an Equality Impact Screening or full impact assessment.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 There are several implications linked to the environment and biodiversity and these are intrinsically linked to the implementation of wildflower meadows.
- 7.2 The proposals related to this report relate strongly to the objectives for local authorities within the Environment Act (2021) that places obligations on local authorities to enhance areas for wildlife and conservation.
- 7.3 In implementing this policy, such areas of work are also intended to support the Councils priorities in relation to Climate Change, for example the removal of the need to run machines that use fossil fuels for a period of time. Additionally, there is the positive carbon sink effect that meadows have in contrast to amenity grass.

8. Risk Implications

- 8.1 Sight lines / risk to habitat

9. Other implications (where applicable)

- 9.1 Not applicable

10. Timetable for Implementation

- 10.1 Any new wildflower meadows would only be introduced following a successful meadow maintenance season in 2024 and following careful site and resource assessments.

11. Conclusions

11.1 Officers would not recommend No Mow May due to its minimal benefits to biodiversity.

12. Background papers

12.1 None

13. Appendices

13.1 None

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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