

Runnymede Borough CouncilEnvironment and Sustainability CommitteeThursday, 7 March 2024 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors D Coen (Chair), A Berardi, D Clarke, MK Cressey, S Jenkins, S Ringham, D Whyte, A Balkan (In place of N Prescott) and C Howorth (In place of V Cunningham).

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors V Cunningham (Vice-Chair), R Bromley and N Prescott.

In attendance: Councillors T Gates and L Gillham

45 **Changes to Committee Membership**

Councillor A Balkan substituted for Councillor N Prescott.
Councillor C Howorth substituted for Councillor V Cunningham.

46 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 January 2024 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

47 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Bromley.

48 **Declarations of interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

49 **Air Quality Action Plan**

The Committee was presented with, for information, the draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for 2024.

Air quality was assessed against objectives for various pollutants. Where a local authority identified that an air quality objective for a particular pollutant was unlikely to be met in a particular area and where there was relevant public exposure, they must designate the area as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The major source of air pollution affecting the RBC area was due to road traffic. An AQMA covering the route of the M25 through the borough was declared in 2001. An AQMA covering the junction of the High Street, Station Road, Brighton Road and Church Road was declared in 2008. Both areas were declared for the pollutant, Nitrogen Dioxide.

Data since 2019 indicated that the air quality was improving and that both AQMAs could be revoked. However, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions the monitoring data for 2020 and 2021 may not be representative of long-term trends. To ensure that the AQMAs are not revoked prematurely the Council intends to continue to monitor these areas for at least another two years, as well as continuing to review air quality in potential pollution hotspots in Chertsey and near the Ottershaw roundabout.

Air quality objectives were achieved across the Borough in 2022 with a general trend

towards improvement in air quality.

The Committee was advised that the next step in relation to the Action Plan was to undertake a full consultation. Once the final AQAP was available it would be brought back to this Committee.

The Committee was pleased to note that the Surrey Air Alliance were currently undertaking a trial on monitoring air quality inside schools.

Concerns regarding the increasing use of wood burners due to the cost of living crises was raised. Officers would circulate to the Committee information on the proposed public information campaign on wood burning. The campaign would be looking at educating residents on safer fuel use.

50 **Sustainable Fleet Management Strategy**

The Committee was advised that the Sustainable Fleet Management Strategy (SFMS) sought to streamline and coordinate the Council's activities associated with the management of its fleet.

The Council's fleet was made up of 79 vehicles including Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV), mini-buses, vans and specialist equipment, as well as approximately 34 pieces of hand-held machinery and equipment. With the exception of the leased Meals at Home vehicles, the Council owned all of the fleet assets.

In the calendar year 2023, the Council spent £698,349.87 operating its fleet (this figure included fuel, maintenance, parts, leasing and insurance costs).

The SFMS sets out to provide an environmentally sustainable operational fleet which delivers safe, reliable services to the community and was affordable to the Council,

The three guiding objectives of the strategy were:

- Safe and Compliant,
- Fit for purpose and offers value for money
- Environmentally friendly

The SFMS contained an action plan. This set out the proposed short term actions (to be implemented between 2024 and 2026).

The Committee was advised that central to delivering on the Strategy vision and objectives was the proposal for the Council to move to a 'one fleet approach'. This meant the organisation and coordination of the Council's fleet would be centralised. The current approach meant operational and strategic responsibilities were split between various services areas, mainly the Community Services, Customer, Digital and Collection Services, Housing and Environmental Services Teams. Moving forward, the central Fleet Management team would sit within Environmental Services.

The Committee welcomed this step forward and were pleased to note the proposed introduction of a 'one fleet approach' which would no doubt simplify the process if a shared service was ever considered.

Resolved that –

- 1) The Sustainable Fleet Management Strategy for Runnymede Borough Council, as attached at Appendix A in the agenda pack, be endorsed by the Environment and Sustainability Committee
- 2) This Committee recommends that the strategy be endorsed by the Corporate Management Committee at the meeting of 21 March 2024.
- 3) Subject to endorsement of the strategy by the Corporate Management Committee on 21 March 2024, the strategy be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

51 **New Waste and Recycling Policy**

Officers reported that Surrey County Council (SCC) operated a 2-tier structure, whereby the Boroughs and Districts were responsible for waste collection and SCC were responsible for its treatment and disposal.

The end destination of the recycling and waste was controlled by SCC.

Since the introduction of recycling in 2008, Runnymede Borough Council's (RBC) recycling performance had increased from 20% (2008/09) to 49% (2021/22). This placed RBC 79th out of 333 authorities.

In July 2020 the Environment and Sustainability Committee approved a Household Recycling and Waste Kerbside Collection policy. This policy has served the Council well and offered a framework for provision and collection of refuse and recycling bins for households.

The 2022 policy did not, however, specify bin provision for either Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) or for flats. The new proposed policy included this provision.

Officers already worked with students from Royal Holloway University by educating students on what bins were used for what waste. It was agreed that most problems relating to problems were around lack of education and unwillingness to comply. It was noted information tags would be attached to bins in the Englefield Green offsite student areas at the start of the autumn term.

It was reported that a new development of flats in the Borough was having ongoing problems with contaminated waste. It was noted that in some cases recycling bins had had to be removed from flats due to continued contamination. Officers reported that bin collectors could now take photos of contamination and upload to the bartec system.

It was reported that a recent meeting it had been agreed that the distribution of hard copies of the waste and recycling schedules would be ceased. The cost of producing the leaflet was considerable and it was felt residents now used other channels to check when they were due a bin collection.

Officers would speak to the Council's Communications team regarding promoting the new waste and recycling policy on the Council's website and social media channels.

Resolved that –

The 2020 Household Recycling and Waste Kerbside collection policy be revoked and a new Waste and Recycling Policy which expands the remit of the former policy to include Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and blocks of flats be introduced.

52 **Environmental Services Service Area Plan 2023/24**

The Committee received a report on the delivery of the 2023/24 Environmental Services Service Area Plan and a summary of the Service Area Plan to be delivered during 2024/25 for approval.

The Committee was pleased to note that after a shaky start the new grounds maintenance arrangements had greatly improved.

It was noted that the main challenges for 2024/2025 would be:

- Recruitment of new Officers established in the 2023/2024 restructure of Environment Services
- Interim operation of the depot whilst alternative options for delivering a compliant and effective site and accommodation were explored
- Delivery of the proposed fleet and fuel strategy which would offer increased efficiency and reduce RBC scope one emissions
- Review of licensing and enforcement options for Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Review of street cleansing service
- Review of cemetery conditions

Resolved that -

The 2024/25 Service Area Plan for Environmental Services be approved.

53 **Street trading consent application and the future of The Broadway, New Haw as the Council's sole consent street**

Officers reported to the Committee that The Broadway, in New Haw was the only consent street in the Borough and therefore street traders could apply to trade at that location.

An application had recently been received for a stall to sell hot gourmet food up to seven days a week between the hours of midday – midnight.

However, during a recent street trading application it was clear that any application to trade at The Broadway was highly likely to be refused due to concerns from various bodies including the Police, Surrey Highways and Local Councillors. The concerns raised were around parking, litter, noise, antisocial behaviour, and impact on local businesses. Officers, therefore, would suggest that The Broadway being a consent street be reviewed and reconsidered.

Resolved that –

- 1) The application for street trading be refused for the following reason:-

The noise and nuisance which is anticipated resulting in hot food trading at this particular location would be detrimental to the peace and quiet enjoyment of residents in the vicinity, have a detrimental impact on other businesses in the area and increase the prospect of antisocial behaviour.

- 2) Officers present a report to the next meeting of this Committee in order for this Committee to consider and recommend to Full Council that:-

The Corporate Head of Law and Governance be authorised to review the designation of consent streets in the borough pursuant to its powers under Schedule 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 and proceed with public consultation to re-designate The Broadway, New Haw from a consent street to a prohibited street.

54 **Exclusion of press and public**

Resolved that -

the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting during discussion of the following reports under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the reports in question would be likely to involve disclosure exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

55 **Procurement of Rural Roads Refuse Collection Vehicles**

The Committee was asked to consider a report pertaining to the purchase of two (one 12 tonne and one 15 tonne) rural waste collection vehicles. These vehicles would be used to collect refuse and recycling from homes on narrow rural roads.

There were a number of roads serving approximately 2,000 homes which were inaccessible to the standard 26 tonne RCV fleet. Both of the current road vehicles were beyond their 7 -year replacement cycle and both were now exceeding their annual maintenance budgets.

The option to purchase electric 12 tonne and 15 tonne RCVs was not presently available on the open market but the vehicles would be fuelled by HVO where possible in accordance with the proposed fleet and fuel strategy.

Resolved that –

- 1) The procurement of 2 rural roads (One 15 tonne and one 12 tonne) replacement RCV vehicles for the DSO using a Competitive Tender procedure be approved.
- 2) Corporate Management Committee be asked to approve a capital estimate in the sum of £176,195 to meet the cost of purchasing the vehicles as set out in the report, to be financed from the equipment replacement reserve.

56 **Move to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel**

Officers presented to the Committee a report on the delivery method and costs associated

with a change in the fuel by the Runnymede vehicle fleet from Diesel to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO).

HVO is a paraffinic fuel which is chemically similar to conventional fossil fuel diesel and complied with European Standard EN1590. It could reduce greenhouse emissions by up to 90% depending on the feedstock from which the HVO was produced, and any blend with diesel.

It was reported that RBC would be the first Borough Council in Surrey to move the HVO. The Committee wished to commend Officers for all their work in bringing this forward. This showed RBC's commitment to the Council's Climate Change Strategy and making the Borough a greener place to live and work.

Resolved that –

- 1) The business case for the switch from Diesel fuel to HVO fuel be approved.
- 2) The release of the £100,000 provision set aside in the General Fund Revenue and Business Plan for this purpose be approved.
- 3) HVO fuel be sourced by the Council be certified through the Renewable Fuels Assurance Scheme (RFAS)
- 4) A virement of £22,200 from the Street Cleansing budget approved, to allow for the replacement of the Fuel Management System and to allow for the essential works listed at paragraph 4.6 of the report be carried out to the Council's fuel tank which is based at the Ford Road Depot

57 **Councillor D Coen**

The Committee noted that this was the last Environment and Sustainability Committee Councillor D Coen would be chairing, as Councillor Coen was not re-standing for election this May. Committee Members and Officers thanked Councillor Coen for his valued contribution and wished him well. Councillor Coen thanked both Members and Officers for their support.

(The meeting ended at 9.21 pm.)

Chair