

Runnymede Borough CouncilCommunity Services CommitteeThursday, 9 November 2023 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors C Howorth (Chairman), S Lewis (Vice-Chairman), A Berardi, T Burton (In place of M Smith), M Harnden, R King (In place of A King), C Mann, J Mavi and S Walsh.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor M Darby.

38 Notification of Changes to Committee Membership

To note that Councillor T Burton substituted for Councillor M Smith and Councillor R King substituted for Councillor A King.

39 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

40 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Darby.

41 Declarations of Interest

Councillor R King declared an Other Registrable Interest in item 7 concerning the Contain Outbreak Management Fund Grant Allocations. He was the voluntary Chair of one of the organisations recommended for receipt of a grant as declared on his declarations of interest form on the Council's website. Councillor King left the room for this item and did not participate or vote.

42 Voluntary Support North Surrey Presentation

The Committee was asked to note a detailed powerpoint presentation on the work of Voluntary Support North Surrey and how the funding they received from the Council was utilised.

VSNS outlined their key activities which ranged from core work, corporate engagement and networking to support for small charities in finding funding and support to Ukrainian families and sponsors of which 150 families were in Runnymede.

VSNS estimated that their social value in the work they did was approximately £2m in north Surrey. VSNS worked with the business community as well recruiting volunteers and through donations made to local charities. The breadth of activity was noted which included Befriending, disability, mentoring, health, mental health, youth and older people.

In respect of Befriending this was the service launched jointly with the Council with 2 years worth of funding. 12 volunteers had been recruited so far. However, long term self-sustainability could not be guaranteed if funding was removed. The decision had been taken not to charge for the service as this might preclude assistance to people who most needed it.

VSNS gave an overview of their own financial position which they described as currently healthy although they were always looking for new sources of funding to help keep them viable to help others. Some of their successes included the befriending project, the volunteer awards, website improvements and a better position as being a trusted, independent advisor. Other voluntary organisations were not so fortunate and it was likely that some charities and similar would cease to exist in the current climate.

Councillors were invited to support Voluntary Support North Surrey's (VSNS) campaign to recruit more volunteers which was thought to be their greatest challenge. VSNS made a request that the Council continued to provide them with core funding on a 3 yearly basis rather than annually as this helped them attract more funding from other sources.

VSNS were asked to re-instate Councillor M Harnden on their newsletter and updates circulation list.

VSNS were invited to attend an event at Englefield Green and others that might be organised to meet representatives from local organisations that might benefit from their expertise.

VSNS were thanked for their presentation and update on their work in the community.

43 **Fees and Charges 2024/25**

The Committee's approval was sought to set the fees and charges in respect of the services provided by Community Services for 2024/2025.

Officers explained that prices had been held in some areas to encourage uptake of the services and to avoid people not being able to afford them. All services were heavily subsidised and the true cost of provision was significantly higher in some areas.

In respect of Meals at Home, there had been a 10% increase in the unit cost of meals, hence the proposal to increase the charges by between 8.7% and 10.58% depending on the type of meal and when it was delivered. The popularity of three course meals had also reduced. In response there would now be two course meals with an option to purchase an additional course. Officers asserted that Runnymede's prices were competitive. To evidence this, Officers were asked to provide the Committee with a table of comparators for fees and charges relating to Meals at Home. The success of using electric vehicles was discussed and the costs of doing so continued to be monitored.

Officers confirmed that the fees and charges for Community Transport would also be increased by similar amounts to reflect the fact that in 2024 the Council was likely to lose revenue with the potential loss of contracts.

Officers confirmed that they planned to submit a report to a future meeting regarding the Community Transport fleet with procurement and leasing options for different models of delivery.

In respect of Careline an increase of 5% was proposed, noting that fees and charges had not increased since 2014. The Committee was concerned that the most vulnerable in the Community continued to be supported with an affordable service. However, it was also recognised that the Council faced financial challenges which made balancing affordability with the baseline cost more difficult. Officers were to consider indexing fees and charges to the end user group's income where appropriate.

It was noted that the fees and charges relating to Chertsey Museum ran with the school year so would not be introduced until September 2024.

Resolved that –

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

44 **Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) Grant Allocations**

The Committee's approval was sought to award Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) grant allocations to five local organisations from the sum of £50,000 which had previously been set aside for the post pandemic capacity building grant scheme.

The scheme aimed to help organisations that delivered services directly to residents and which contributed to the health and wellbeing of the residents and developing communities. The recommendations had been discussed by an Officer and Member panel in early October 2023 and a maximum of £5,000 per organisation could be awarded.

The five organisations and the amounts agreed were:

- Homestart Runnymede and Woking - £4,950
- The River Church on behalf of the Forest Estate Community Hub - £5,000
- White Lodge - £5,000
- St Paul's Church - £5,000
- Cruse Bereavement Support - £4,921

The Committee was pleased to support these projects. In addition, the panel had determined that a further four organisations might be assisted, subject to further work with them to ensure they met the criteria. Members agreed to this approach and to ringfence the following amounts to be determined in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee:

- The Village Centre - £4,910
- Chertsey and Addlestone Good Neighbours - £2,000
- Addlestone Community Centre - £2,000
- Surrey Coalition of Disabled People - £5,000

With regard to Addlestone Community Centre it was recommended that although £5,000 had been requested, £1,000 should be ringfenced to see if the Centre's Men in Sheds project could be supported, and a further £1,000 to develop events and activities for young people. The remaining £3,000 for paid assistance for the café was rejected.

Members noted that rejection of the application by Egham Cricket Club could be because it was more suitable for Youth Development Funding and further discussion would take place to determine what assistance might be possible, noting that all the COMF funding needed to be allocated and distributed by the end of March 2024.

The Committee agreed that further work was needed with these organisations to discuss their projects and thanked Officers for all the work they had completed so far.

Resolved that –

- i) **the recommended successful applications to COMF be approved; and**
- ii) **the requested amounts for organisations where further discussion or information is required, be ringfenced, and the decision to award a grant**

be delegated to the corporate Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Community Services Committee.

45 **Youth Development Fund Grant Applications**

The Committee was asked to approve grants of up to £7,000 each to a number of local organisations from the Youth Development Fund.

A panel of Officers and Members had met in early October 2023 to consider the applications. As a result, it was recommended that the following be approved:

- Homestart Runnymede and Woking - £4,908
- The Village Centre - £3,190

The panel had decided that three applications should be rejected on the grounds that there was insufficient information provided to demonstrate the projects met the criteria to specifically benefit young people in the borough. Officers were asked to encourage outcome based bids with specific details in funding requests. The Committee agreed with this and suggested that to make successful bids in future they should be signposted to ask for assistance from Voluntary Support North Surrey.

The panel recommended that the sum of £7,000 each should be ringfenced for St Paul's Church in Addlestone and the Susan Roberts Foundations for Youth, subject to amendments being made to their applications so that the panel could be satisfied of specific details and sustainability of their projects. Members concurred and were content for decisions on the ringfenced applications to be made in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee.

With reference to the previous item on COMF grant allocations, Officers intended to submit a report to the meeting of the Committee in January 2024 concerning a possible grant to Egham Cricket Club.

Resolved that –

- i) the recommended successful applications to Youth Development Fund be approved; and**
- ii) the requested amounts for organisations where further discussion or information is required, be ringfenced, and the decision to award a grant be delegated to the corporate Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Community Services Committee.**

46 **Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) Review**

The Committee reviewed the two Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) which were currently in place, applying to two specific areas in Addlestone and Englefield Green. Approval was sought to allow the PSPOs in both areas to lapse rather than re-start the process to renew them when they were due to expire in 2024.

Officers confirmed that a public consultation had not resulted in many responses but that the Police had formed the view with which Officers concurred that neither PSPO was necessary or proportionate, with a lack of evidence as to their current relevance as the forms of anti-social behaviour detailed in the PSPOs had reduced significantly.

It was acknowledged that other forms of anti-social behaviour were still occurring and

Officers were encouraged to continue the preferred approach of finding alternative diversionary activities to reduce anti-social behaviour and re-build communities where confidence in the Police had fallen.

It was confirmed that the Council, along with other partner agencies, worked in a variety of ways to help reduce anti-social behaviour in the borough with both regulatory and non regulatory measures.

It was asked that the Minutes listed some examples of the powers that could be employed in this regard. Non regulatory work included the annual Junior Citizen project delivered to our primary schools where a variety of safety measures were delivered, engagement with residents groups (including Royal Holloway University of London), use of the Probation service 'community payback' to help improve the physical environment via clear ups and the use of the Mediation service to resolve neighbourhood disputes.

Community Safety hosted a weekly operational meeting facilitated by community safety with representation from colleagues in Community Safety, Planning, Environmental Health, Housing and Open Spaces. A problem solving approach was taken to help address any anti-social behaviour issue with the powers available to each department used.

Similarly, Community Safety administrated and chaired two multi agency problem solving meetings to discuss problem offenders, vulnerable victims or geographic issues with appropriate action plans developed.

Some Members highlighted the need for more Neighbourhood Watch groups in the borough. Officers were asked to continue encouraging communities to form Neighbourhood Watch groups in liaison with Surrey Police who took the lead on setting these up.

Officers agreed that removal of the PSPOs was appropriate and to continue monitoring anti-social behaviour and the provision of activities for young people. It was noted that the commencement of the Friday Night Project was imminent but that other initiatives should be explored to combat problems such as drug taking which had overspilled from neighbouring boroughs into parts of Runnymede.

Officers were thanked for their report.

Resolved that –

both the Addlestone and Englefield Green Public Space Protection Orders be allowed to expire in June 2024.

47 **Cabrera Trust Management Committee - Constitution**

The Committee was asked to exercise its delegated role from the Council as sole Trustee of Cabrera Trust to make an amendment to the Constitution of the Cabrera Trust Management Committee.

Members learned that a Group local to Virginia Water called the Friends of Cabrera Trust Woods would like to be represented on the Cabrera Trust Management Committee. They assisted the Management Committee in looking after the area known as the Riverside Walk in Virginia Water; some 52 acres of land, designated as a local nature reserve by organising volunteer groups and raising funds to contribute to maintenance costs.

It was confirmed that the Friends Group had a constitution and had been advised by Voluntary Support North Surrey in that process. It was also confirmed that the Friends

Group co-optee would have voting rights.

The Management Committee was supportive of co-opting a named member of the Group and a deputy to cover if they were unable to attend a meeting. The Committee was content with the proposal in principle but Officers were asked to clarify the internal process by which the FCTW selected and nominated named persons.

Officers were also asked to confirm whether the Management Committee had to formally vote to accept the co-opted Member and Deputy of the Committee.

Resolved that –

the Constitution of the Cabrera Trust Management Committee be changed to allow the addition of one person identified by the Friends of Cabrera Trust Woods (FCTW) to become a member of the Committee and, in the event that person is unable to attend a meeting, a further person identified by the Friends of Cabrera Trust Woods be entitled to substitute for the person who cannot attend.

48 Community Services Service Area Plan Update – Quarter 2 2023/24

The Committee noted progress with the Community Services Area Plan for Quarter 2 of 2023/24.

Officers were satisfied with the quarter 2 performance in respect of the 35 objectives and highlighted further development of processes and plans for the S106 monies identified for Englefield Green, the development of the play space replacement programme and the completion of the tender process linked to the skatepark intended for Heathervale Park. An update on this project was requested which Officers would provide when available.

In addition, Members noted that the tennis court refurbishment programme, working in partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association was also complete and the commencement of the Befriending Service as noted in the presentation by Voluntary Support North Surrey earlier in the meeting.

In respect of the Armed Forces Covenant, Members were advised that this was being co-ordinated by the Chief Executive's Office with support from Officers in Community Services. An update would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

It was noted that some discussion had taken place with various stakeholders about what the most suitable facilities might be at Kings Lane now that the previously proposed biketrack was no longer being progressed. Officers were asked to provide an update when available and to give Councillor Burton copies of previous reports on this subject.

Officers were thanked for their report which was duly noted.

49 Community Services Key Performance Indicators Quarter 2 2023/24

Members were asked to note the key performance indicators for Quarter 2 of 2023/24.

The Committee recalled that Service KPIs were approved in March 2023, with Officers aiming to provide information across all functions of Community Services to inform Members with a holistic understanding of performance, progress and breadth of activity.

Officers drew attention to specific areas in which Officers were seeking improvement. These included:

- Chertsey Museum education activity
- Meals at Home marketing plan which was being devised across the Community Services partnership
- Community Transport's ongoing service review
- Social Prescribing

Officers were unconcerned by the RAG rating for Chertsey Museum as it was reflective of less activity in the school holidays.

In the case of Social Prescribing, Officers advised that the RAG rating did not necessarily reflect a downturn in work. Rather, Officers were dealing with more complex cases.

It was suggested that in respect of annual targets only to include statistics in the Quarter 4 reports. However, it was helpful to look at projections for these areas.

Members thanked staff in Community Services and the report was duly noted.

50 **Chertsey Meads Management Liaison Group Minutes**

The Minutes of the Chertsey Meads Management Liaison Group meeting held on 5 September 2023 were received and noted.

51 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

Resolved that –

the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following report under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the report 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.

52 **Procurement of Digital Alarms**

The Committee was asked to approve an approach to upgrading the Careline equipment in both Runnymede and Surrey Heath; and if approved, to recommend the proposed procurement route and associated costs to Corporate Management Committee and ultimately full Council, given the overall cost in the sum reported.

Officers explained that they had been working to find an appropriate solution to the impending Digital Switchover for the last few years, during which time the industry was reportedly uncertain as to what they were able to recommend or promote as the way forward.

Officers advised that the work covered two main areas. These were the refresh of digital equipment in residents' homes, to ensure connectivity and compatibility, and the need to digitalise Safer Runnymede as the monitoring centre that received the alerts via Community Alarm Systems. Officers confirmed that the current timescales meant that the work needed to be completed by December 2025.

Members noted that with well over 1000 alarm units installed in residents' homes, the financial implications of having to replace analogue equipment with a digital solution were

significant, as reported, whilst new, additional equipment would also have a new cost element to it.

The Committee was mindful of the current financial position of the Council and the fact that a capital provision was not budgeted for to replace the equipment. This had meant Officers would have to consider other options in order to preserve the service.

Members recalled that the Council was in receipt of Better Care funding, primarily for the delivery of disabled facilities grants, as well as other solutions that promoted independence and safe living at home.

Officers confirmed that in previous years, there had been an underspend against the grant, resulting in the monies being retained by the Council in a ring fenced budget, as they could not be absorbed into general fund budgets.

Officers were pleased to announce that the aforementioned underspend, provided the opportunity for the digital refresh to be funded, given recent changes to the guidance on how the funding was utilised and the opportunity to work more flexibly with the funding in support of the health and care system was available to the Council.

Members were asked to note that the Council's CLT had approved the business case and written permission had been secured from the Adult Social Care lead, and the NHS Place lead, who were responsible for the Better Care Fund in North West Surrey, to repurpose a sum as reported to the digitalisation of the Community Alarm service. Both parties had recognised the important role that the service played in supporting residents to live independently at home, as well as supporting health and care in meeting the needs of residents.

Officers confirmed that through Homesafe Plus, the hospital discharge offer from boroughs in NW Surrey, the most referred to service as part of discharge planning was Community Alarm and Telecare.

The Committee was satisfied that Officers in both Community Services and Law and Governance had researched the proposed way forward extensively to ensure that such an approach was an appropriate use of the funding awarded as set out in the report.

Members recognised the acute value of the service to some of the most vulnerable residents and appreciated the efforts which Officers had made to source funding. When asked, Officers were confident that re-purposing the underspend would not have a detrimental effect on applications for Disabled Facilities Grants. However, this would be monitored.

The Committee understood that the Council had no choice in the matter as it was Utility led, save to find the most reliable and value for money route for the Council, and at the same time retaining it as an affordable lifeline to residents. This would form the basis of a wider review to ensure the best interests of users of the Careline service.

Members were concerned that the most suitable and technically efficient provider was sought and asked for some benchmarking to be completed in this regard as well as confirmation of what the anticipated increase in data charges per month would be.

Members welcomed the intention for the procurement of suitable equipment to commence early in the new year, with the roll out taking place immediately thereafter.

Resolved that –

the proposed approach towards the digitalisation of the Community Alarm Service,

be approved.

Corporate Management Committee be asked to recommend to Full Council that-

- i) a supplementary Capital estimate in the sum reported be approved for the purchase and installation of digital Community Alarm Equipment, to be funded from the Better Care Fund over the next 3 years; and**
- ii) approval is given to enter into a procurement process for the purchase of digital Community Alarm Equipment, on behalf of both Runnymede and Surrey Heath Borough Councils up to a potential total value in the sum reported.**

Appendix A Chertsey Meads Management Liaison Group Minutes

(The meeting ended at 9.50 pm.)

Chairman