

29.11.23

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, 7 December 2023 at 7.30 pm (or at the rise of the special meeting, whichever is the later)**. The meeting will be held at **Council Chamber - Civic Centre**.



Andrew Pritchard
Chief Executive
01932 425500
Email: andrew.pritchard@runnymede.gov.uk

A G E N D A

1. **Mayor's Announcements**

2. **Minutes**

10 - 28

To confirm and sign, as a correct record, the minutes of the Council held on:

- 19 October 2023 (special meeting)
- 19 October 2023 (ordinary meeting)

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 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**

Any questions received will be circulated separately following the deadline for submissions of questions from members of the public.

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**

a) Question from Councillor Don Whyte to the Leader of the Council:

A year ago at the 2022 December Corporate Management Committee it was identified that RBC needed to make savings of £5.2m by the end of March 2026 in order to deliver a balanced budget for the municipal year 2026/2027. Can I ask the Leader, why no progress been made by his Administration in identifying any of the required £5.2m savings?

8. **Recommendations from Committees**

a) **Risk Appetite Statement 2024 - 2025 - recommendation from the Standards and Audit Committee**

The report associated with this item was circulated to all members with the agenda for the [21 November 2023 meeting of the Standards and Audit Committee](#).

At its meeting on 21 November 2023, the Standards and Audit Committee was asked to review the draft Risk Appetite Statement and statements for each category of risk and make a recommendation for their approval by full Council in December 2023.

The full report can be seen [here](#).

Set out in the table attached at Appendix A is a summary of the discussion along with the recommended levels of risk tolerance for the thirteen risk categories.

The Committee reached consensus on all but one of the risk categories, and Members are asked to determine what opinion they wish to ascribe to the 'Commercial' risk category.

Members are asked to note that a report regarding the Risk Register will be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of the Standards and Audit Committee in January 2024.

Recommended to full Council on 7 December 2023 that –

the overarching Risk Appetite Statement for 2024/25 and supporting risk appetite statements for each risk category be agreed.

b) **Implications of Climate Change for Runnymede Borough Council - Corporate Management Committee**

The report associated with this item was circulated to all members with the agenda for the [16 November 2023 meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee](#) and also considered at [Corporate Management Committee on 23 November 2023](#).

The Planning Policy and Climate Change Manager outlined the referral from the Environment and Sustainability Committee and asked the Committee to consider recommending that Runnymede Borough Council declares a climate emergency.

Members stated that this motion was welcome, and thanked officers for their actions in creating a clear strategy to tackle climate change but some expressed regret that this had not been declared sooner.

The Committee recommended 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

c) Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25 - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee

The report associated with this item was circulated to all members with the agenda for the [23 November 2023 meeting of the Corporate Management Committee](#).

The Assistant Chief Executive outlined the context in which the Council Tax Scheme was proposed. She outlined the proposed scheme which would use universal credit data to assess entitlement, introduce a flat rate non-dependent deductions for claimants, and reduced the weekly entitlement from £10 to £5. This had the benefit of ensuring the team had greater capacity to process claimants, and more people were able to benefit from the scheme.

It was recommended that the current scheme be continued into the next financial year to allow for a full year's data to assess its effectiveness. This would ensure that should any amendments be required in the future, that they were based off of data from a full financial year.

Whilst members welcomed the reform, one member felt that they could not support the scheme as it did not go far enough to support the most vulnerable families. They stated that 62% of those who are eligible for support take it up, which meant that 38% do not, and asked if there were plans to create take up scheme to publicise the support available and encourage those who are eligible to take it up. The Assistant Chief Executive agreed to look into this with the Corporate Head of Customer, Digital and Collection Services upon her return.

The Assistant Chief Executive also clarified that it was not possible for residents to obtain 100% council tax relief, and that the amount of relief received was proportionate to a resident's income. She agreed to clarify what the maximum income for council tax relief was.

It was recommended to full Council that:

- 1. The Council Tax Support Scheme be continued for the 2024/25 financial year, including the provision to automatically apply legislative changes for the annual uprating of the prescribed applicable amounts for 2024/25 financial year as set by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).**

d) Electric Vehicle Strategy - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee

The report associated with this item was circulated to all members with the agenda for the [23 November 2023 meeting of the Corporate Management Committee](#).

The Planning Policy and Climate Change Strategy Manager outlined the Electric Vehicle Strategy.

A member raised concerns about the car club, a venture set up to enable residents to rent fuel-efficient, hybrid and electric vehicles. They believed that it was not publicised well and there were concerns that diesel cars were using the allocated parking spots. The Planning Policy and Climate Change Strategy Manager agreed to contact Enterprise to check the minutiae of the agreement.

Another member asked about provision for an electric vehicle strategy for staff of Runnymede Borough Council. They were assured that such provisions were in the corporate strategy and would begin in earnest when the new Corporate Head of HR began.

It was **resolved** that:

1. The Electric Vehicle Strategy for Runnymede Borough Council was endorsed.

The Committee **recommended** to the Council that:

1. The Electric Vehicle Strategy be adopted with an implementation date of 14th December 2023.

e) Reserve Forces Policy - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee

The report associated with this item was circulated to all members with the agenda for the [23 November 2023 meeting of the Corporate Management Committee](#).

The Chief Executive outlined the Reserve Forces Policy. He firstly drew members' attention to the provisions on p.211 of the agenda and clarified that an administrative error had not allowed the fourth bullet to separate from the third, but that it was to 'ensure that reservists are not disadvantaged by their role as reservists.' He then stated that this policy was intended to allow the Council to pursue its ambition to secure a Gold Armed Forces Covenant Award. He stated that the Council's submission would be viewed more favourably by implementing the changes as suggested.

A member asked how many employees of Runnymede Borough Council serve in the Reserve. The Chief Executive stated that there was only one employee who, to their knowledge, was part of the reserve forces, although he emphasised that members of the reserves are not obliged, subject to a waiver system, to inform their employers.

The Chief Executive also clarified that there was a special leave policy for employees who are part of other voluntary organisations.

It was recommended to full Council that:

1. The revised policy be adopted.

f) Minor Amendment to the Constitution - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee

The report associated with this item was circulated to all members with the agenda for the [23 November 2023 meeting of the Corporate Management Committee](#).

The Corporate Head of Law and Governance outlined a minor amendment to the Constitution that would allow for a Standing Council Tax Setting Committee to be established. They clarified that its only function would be to approve the appropriate council tax setting motion, and this would only happen should the relevant precept authority have not provided the figures required to set the Council Tax by the date when Runnymede Borough Council holds its Council Tax setting meeting.

It was resolved that:

- 1. The Corporate Head of Legal and Governance be delegated authority to make further necessary amendments to the Constitution, to give effect to the amendments proposed in the report.**

It was recommended to full Council that:

- 1. A standing Council Tax Setting Committee be approved.**

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

To receive and consider any notices of motion from members of the Council under Standing Order 15.

Motion a) From Councillor Sam Jenkins

Adopting a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit in Runnymede

Motivation:

This motion is being brought forward to encourage local developers to go above and beyond towards building energy efficient, zero carbon homes that will reduce overall Borough emissions and contribute towards tackling the climate crisis.

This council notes:

Due to uncertainty around the Government's policy direction, the decision was made at Planning Committee in June 2023 to pause the review of the Runnymede Local Plan until the new plan making regime is introduced. This is not expected to take place until late 2024 at the earliest and it could take a further 30 months from there to introduce a new Local Plan.

In May 2023, it was reported that the Earth is likely to break the key temperature limit of 1.5C between now and 2027 as a result of human activity (see note 1). Therefore an urgent need exists to promote and actively encourage sustainable development that supersedes the speed at which any new Local Plan can be implemented.

Adopting a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit enables interim measures to be put in place to encourage energy efficient, zero carbon developments whilst underpinning the core principles of the existing Local Plan until it can be reviewed. It also provides

Councillors with an opportunity to put the knowledge gained from recent Carbon Literacy training into action, by encouraging developers to build zero carbon homes and to retrofit existing properties, thereby reducing overall Borough emissions.

Cotswold District Council, in collaboration with West Oxfordshire District Council and Forest of Dean District Council worked with leading technical experts from Etude, the Passivhaus Trust, Levitt Bernstein and Elementa Consulting to produce a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit template (see note 2). The template provides best practice guidance for small-to-medium sized builders, architects and developers to deliver new-build net zero homes or retrofits of existing homes.

The template is available under Creative Commons for any authority to adapt as they wish, to make it specific to the needs of their local area. One example of a local authority who has adapted the toolkit in this way includes Somerset Council (see note 3).

There are a number of ways that Runnymede Borough Council could adapt this template to suit the needs of our local area, such as by:

- Adding RBC branding and relevant images.
- Amending the introduction – setting out Runnymede’s climate goals, referring to existing planning policies and relevant planning guidance (e.g. Design SPD / Green and Blue Infrastructure SPD).
- Making minor changes throughout the document to reference Runnymede’s Climate Change Strategy / Action Plan / Local Plan.
- Introducing a couple of pages on ‘beyond energy’ issues – to consider wider sustainability issues such as sustainable transport and drainage, and gigabit capable connectivity (e.g. refer to Surrey County Council’s Healthy Streets guidance and Sustainable Drainage Systems guidance).

It is important to note that a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit does not constitute a Supplementary Planning Document and should be considered as a separate entity. However, if a developer can demonstrate that they have used the Toolkit to meet or exceed Local Plan energy policy requirements in a sustainable manner, and that their proposal therefore brings about climate change benefits, this would be a material consideration which would be weighed in the balance in deciding whether to grant planning permission.

The Council Believes that:

- Adopting a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit gives Runnymede Borough Council an opportunity to proactively encourage greater sustainability within the Borough, providing a framework which inspires developers to go beyond the bare minimum and to actively reduce emissions within their work.
- Adopting a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit will strongly encourage the introduction of zero carbon new-build homes as well as increased retrofitting of existing properties.
- Adopting a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit provides the Council with a means of encouraging sustainable development across the Borough between now and the next Local Plan review.
- Adopting a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit will help to reduce a significant portion of overall Borough emissions by promoting greater energy efficiency.
- Adopting a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit falls into line with recommendations which arose from a recent study commissioned by officers on Climate Change policy options which could be pursued as part of a revised Local Plan.
- Adopting a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit will help Runnymede Borough Council to get a head start on implementing its upcoming Climate Change Action Plan, as

the adoption of a toolkit is one of the goals listed on this plan (sub action 1.1.4).

- Adopting a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit could potentially be used to incentivise developers to meet the initial capital cost of providing heat pumps and improving cooling systems.

The Council resolves to ask the Corporate Management Committee to consider:

1. Asking officers in the Climate Change team to adapt the existing template as described above to create a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit for the Borough of Runnymede.
2. Adopting the Net Zero Carbon Toolkit once a working draft has been scrutinised by the Climate Change Members Working Party.
3. Including the Net Zero Carbon Toolkit into the 2024/25 Climate Change Delivery Plan to ensure that the adopted document is promoted in a timely and effective manner to the local development community.

Note 1 - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-65602293>

Note 2 - [How to achieve net zero carbon homes - Cotswold District Council](#)

Note 3 - <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/other-design-and-technical-guidance/net-zero-carbon-toolkit-in-somerset-west-and-taunton/>

10. Minority Group Priority Business

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

11. Press and Public to be Excluded by Resolution

To consider any items so resolved at the meeting.

12. Recommendations from Committees

a) Housing Revenue Account Development - recommendation from the Housing Committee

The report associated with this item was circulated to all members with the exempt agenda for the 15 November 2023 meeting of the Housing Committee.

The Head of Housing & Business Planning outlined the importance of the schemes in enabling the Council to meet its target of 125 new housing units over five years. To ensure the success of these schemes, a Clerk of Works and Employers Agent would need to be procured to monitor the programme for each site and manage contractual matters. They would also ensure health and safety and building regulations compliance.

It would be intended that the properties affected would be let on affordable rents in the region of 65% of the market rent at the time which would benefit working families and ensure viability of the scheme in the long term.

A member questioned if the development would count towards the Council's target of 125 homes if the units were classified as affordable housing rather than social housing. This would be clarified in January's meeting.

Further questions arose around the viability of keeping rents at 65% of

market level. It was explained that affordable housing always aimed to stay below market level, and this was comparable to other London rents. The Chair assured members that should the 65% figure prove unviable, he would bring the matter back to Committee rather than agreeing delegated authority function.

The Committee resolved that:

- 1. The proposed tenure mix for each scheme as detailed in the report was agreed.**
- 2. The Council's bid to Homes England for Capital Grant Funding and the financing of the schemes as set out in the report was agreed.**
- 3. The procurement route proposed for a Clerk of Works/ Employers Agent to assist with both schemes, the cost of which was included within the total budgets was agreed.**
- 4. Delegated authority was given to the Corporate Head of Housing or Assistant Chief Executive (Place) to agree, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, the rent level for each scheme.**

The Committee recommended to Council that:

- 1. The budget and subsequent procurement of the first piece of land and the completed scheme in line with the planning approval (if obtained) and agreed specification be approved.**
- 2. The budget and subsequent procurement of the second piece of land and the completed scheme in line with the planning approval and agreed specification be approved.**
- 3. Subject to the approval of Recommendation 1 and 2 above, Full Council were recommended to approve funds from the total budget to be utilised within the financial year 2023/24 to commence the legal process for each of the schemes, to be financed from HRA Reserves.**

b) Procurement of Digital Alarms - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee

The report associated with this item was circulated to all members with the exempt agenda for the 9 November 2023 meeting of the Community Services Committee and was also considered by Corporate Management Committee at its meeting on 23 November 2023.

The Corporate Head of Community Services outlined the referral to upgrade the Careline equipment in Runnymede and Surrey Heath to digital alarms. This would cover both the refresh of digital equipment for residents to ensure connectivity and connectivity, and the digitalisation of Safer Runnymede as the monitoring centre.

A member asked for clarification why this referral was in part two when there was no budgetary information in the report. The Corporate Head of Law and Governance clarified that the item was placed into part two to enable members to discuss more thoroughly items, but agreed to look into alternatives such as putting parts of reports into a part two appendix to

allow greater transparency.

It was recommended to full Council that:

- 1. A supplementary capital estimate in the sum reported to the Community Services Committee for the purchase and installation of digital community alarm equipment be funded from the Better Care Fund over the next year.**
- 2. Approval to be 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 to Community Services Committee.**