

Runnymede Borough CouncilCommunity Services CommitteeThursday, 4 January 2024 at 7.30 pm

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

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors M Darby and C Mann.

In attendance: Councillors T Gates and L Gillham.

53 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 November 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

54 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Darby and C Mann.

55 Declarations of Interest

Councillor A King declared an Other Registerable Interest in the item concerning the S106 Englefield Green Minor Projects Fund as she was a member of one of the organisations recommended to receive grant funding. Councillor King left the room for this item and did not participate or vote thereon.

56 Chertsey Museum Wellbeing Project - St Peter's Hospital Untold

The Committee received an information report about a new project Chertsey Museum was organising, working with the Arts and Healing Manager at Ashford and St Peter's Hospital.

Officers advised that in line with the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, this project brought together heritage, health, and wellbeing. Funding for the Museum's project had been secured totalling £15,000 from the Association of Independent Museums, via its 'New Stories, New Audiences' scheme. Some of the grant would be used to fund additional hours to the Museum's Education Assistant post to further the project.

The Committee welcomed the concept of the new story to be told through this project which was the history of St Peter's Hospital and the role it had played in supporting residents and being a key institution within the local community.

The new audience element of the project would, in part, come from opportunities to engage with residents and patients, not currently involved with the museum or potentially local history and heritage more widely. For example, by the creation of a memory book by staff at the hospital and the public, the production of a piece of art by long term patients and an invitation to the local community to make a quilt to thank the NHS for their work and record the community's memories of the Hospital.

Officers outlined the areas of focus within it and the intended project outcomes. For example, boosting wellbeing, developing skills, using a wide range of media, and a temporary exhibition at the museum, planned for January 2025 at the project's conclusion.

Members noted the following breakdown of the budget:

Activity or Purchase Description	Total
Videographer to record oral histories and make final product	£5,850
Sound recording of oral histories and transcription x 20	£3,000
Engagement officer	£2,250
Well-being art project	£1,500
Memory/creative boxes	£900
Artist ideas	£500
Exhibition panels/design	£950
Total	£14,950

Members were informed that linked to wider determinants of health and the Council's Strategy, a separate piece of work was being conducted by the Graduate Trainee within Community Services which involved looking at the use of Wellbeing Activation Measures. The Committee was particularly interested in the results of this which would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee. Members were also keen to bring this project to the attention of the Council's Councillor representative on the Trust.

The Committee agreed this was a positive example of the partnership work being undertaken by the Museum to identify and develop new opportunities to promote local history and the heritage of the borough. In terms of promoting the project, Members requested that the Council's Communications team continued working with the Museum and St Peter's Hospital so as to reach as many people as possible and encourage participation in the project.

Officers advised that a report updating Members on the Museum generally would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee. This would include details of plans to improve the museum's website which some Members had experienced some difficulty with accessing the on-line activities. This could include involvement by the Council's bid writer to secure funding. Issues concerning the lease and storage would also be addressed in the future report.

Officers were thanked for their report and looked forward to seeing the project come to fruition.

57 **Eco Implementation Report**

The Committee's approval was sought to enter into a partnership with Happy Energy Solutions Ltd (Happy Energy) to deliver the Energy Company Obligation and the government's ECO4 Flex Scheme. Approval was also sought to publish an ECO4 Flex Statement of Intent associated with the main ECO Scheme.

Officers advised that the ECO Scheme was an initiative to help reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions. It was the fourth such iteration of the scheme which started in July 2022 and ran until March 2026. Funding to residents was for the installation of appropriate energy efficiency measures for low income households, targeting those with an EPC rating of 'D' or lower and the household being in receipt of certain benefits to qualify.

Officers confirmed that part of the ECO Scheme was ECO4 Flex, to which local authorities could sign up. This allowed local authorities to tailor energy efficiency schemes to their particular area, thus widening the eligibility criteria for residents identified as needing assistance with heating their homes. To participate the Council would need to publish a Statement of Intent on its website, signed by the Chief Executive, a pro-forma of which was

noted by the Committee.

Members reviewed the range of available energy efficiency measures. Some Members aspired to steering residents away from Gas Central Heating and non-condensing boiler replacement. However it was noted that a balance had to be struck between finding a short term solution to meet immediate need and achieving the aims of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan and the wider target of Net Zero 2050.

Some Members, whilst supportive of the initiative, did question whether there was any overlap between the work undertaken by Action Surrey and Happy Energy. Therefore, Officers were asked to provide the Committee with some comparative data between Happy Energy and Action Surrey detailing what each company provided, specifically what services were the same and how they differed from one another, and the number of grants which each had provided to the borough's residents. It was noted however that Happy Energy dovetailed with the Council's Home Improvement Agency offer which was considered beneficial. Happy Energy were also reported to have a good track record with neighbouring authorities with whom they worked and from previous partnerships with the Council.

To assess the scale of the problem, Officers were also asked to provide the Committee with details of how many homes in the borough had an EPC rating of D or lower, if this data was available, and an estimate of how many households were estimated to be assisted by Happy Energy over the life of the scheme in order to demonstrate value for money.

Officers agreed to feedback to the Climate Change Team accordingly.

Resolved that –

the partnership with Happy Energy Solutions Ltd be approved, to deliver the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) 4 and ECO4 Flex Scheme and publish an associated Runnymede Borough Council ECO4 Flex Statement of Intent on the Council's website. Thereby, enabling qualifying residents living in private sector homes in Runnymede to access funding under the ECO4 schemes

58 Social Prescribing Service Update

The Committee noted an update on the Council's Social Prescribing service.

Members recalled that the purpose of Social Prescribing was to empower individuals referred to the service to take control of their health and wellbeing and find a way to achieve their personal goals. This was not necessarily a straightforward case of onward referrals as evidenced by the case studies included in the report.

In terms of staffing, Members were advised that the team currently comprised 3 Social Prescribing Link Workers (SPLW). There was provision for a 4th SPLW, funded by the Housing Business Centre as a one-time payment for an 18 month fixed term contract. However, currently the demand for this role was limited and the post was vacant. Officers would keep the Committee apprised of any proposed alterations.

With regard to coverage of the borough, the service was provided to 8 GP surgeries under the COCO and SASSE 2 Primary Care Networks. Officers confirmed that although this did not include Englefield Green, people there could still be supported because the Better Care Fund covered the whole borough.

Members were keen that in the current financial climate the social value of the service could be quantified. Officers were currently investigating suitable software which could assist with identifying trends. For example, hospital discharge and re-admission rates as a

result of intervention. The new software would also be able to track data more effectively and allow a greater overview of service performance. To complement this, Officers also aimed to collect and measure feedback from residents.

The Committee reviewed statistics for the reasons for referrals to the service, noting that low level mental health and wellbeing support accounted for the largest number of referrals, closely followed by emotional support, remaining independent at home with the assistance of practical help, identifying opportunities for social interaction and providing benefits and budgetary advice.

Officers were thanked for their report which was duly noted.

59 S106 Englefield Green Minor Projects Fund

The Committee's approval was sought to allocate grants from the residual Section 106 Englefield Green Minor Projects Fund.

Members recalled that grants totalling £19,052 had been awarded so far as set out below:

Applying Organisation	Summary of Application	Amount awarded £
St Jude's C of E School	Swimming pool liner	5,000
Englefield Green Cricket Club	Cricket strip	3,402
EGVRA	Items for annual village fair	3,000
Draughtbusters	Draught excluding items	1,000
The Egham Band	Purchase of instruments	5,000
EGVRA	Eco friendly planters	1,650

This left a balance of 66,201, from which it was proposed to award the following grants, leaving a remaining balance of £38,452:

Applying Organisation	Summary of Application	Amount awarded £
The Green Team	To develop green spaces and provide free vegetables and fruit to residents	6,749
The Englefield Green Memorial Trust	To correct levels within the Memorial walkway, renovate the Memorial Planters and seating area	7,000
The Journey Church	Building surveys and utility mapping surveys	7,000
The Journey Church	Health outreach coordinator for 75 weekly 3 hour drop-in sessions + 1 hour admin over an 18 month period	7,000

In addition, although a further application from the Englefield Green Residents Association had been rejected, it was proposed to commit a one-off sum of £2,100 to fund three editions of its newsletter, subject to consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, under delegated authority. If approved the new balance would be £36,352.

The Committee was very pleased with the constructive and structured approach to determine these awards; namely a panel comprising Members and Officers. It was suggested that this was a best practice model that could be used for other projects. In doing so Officers in Community Services were congratulated for their work to make this a

transparent and ward inclusive process. The benefits of having a Neighbourhood plan in order to access funding were also noted.

Officers planned to submit a report on a revised Grant Aid Policy to a future meeting of the Committee.

Resolved that –

- i) **the recommended successful applications to the S106 Minor Projects Fund, be approved; and**
- ii) **delegated authority be approved to award a grant to Englefield Green Village Residents Association, following ongoing discussion and as outlined, to the Corporate Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Community Services Committee**

60 Runnymede Club4 Programme

The Committee was presented with a report detailing the Runnymede Club4 Programme which ran in 2023; part of the Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF) launched in 2021.

Officers advised that HAF provision was commissioned to Active Surrey until March 2025 to deliver funded places during the school holidays to eligible families by way of an 'e voucher'.

The main aims of the scheme were to encourage and facilitate healthy eating, being active during the school holidays reducing social isolation and to be more engaged with schools and other local services. These in turn would, it was hoped, foster resilience, character and wellbeing and wider educational attainment. To date Runnymede had received £667,352 to provide over 17,212 holiday camp places to children across the borough. In 2023, £117,310 in funding was awarded to local providers benefiting 406 children to access 3,504 funded places on a wide range of activities including Core Judo Coaching, The Gap Club, The River Bourne Club, the Story Project with St Paul's C of E Primary School, PSD childcare and Our Parks Ltd. The full list was available in the report.

Officers provided the Committee with full details of the summer camp in 2023; how it was organised and operated at Egham Orbit and included some very positive feedback from scheme users, which demonstrated how valued it was.

Officers were commended on their enthusiasm and commitment, clearly illustrating an holistic approach to assisting children across the borough. To address financial concerns, it was suggested that it might be worth considering producing a video to raise awareness and attract donations to allow the scheme to continue after March 2025 when funding came to an end. Officers would also continue to seek other funding opportunities.

In terms of reaching out to as many eligible families as possible Officers were requested to take appropriate steps to ensure local schools were aware that referrals to the programme could be made for children from families with no recourse to public funds.

The report was duly noted with heartfelt thanks to the Officers involved in delivering the project in partnership with all the other providers.

61 ACE Youth Project Update (Formally Friday Night Project)

The Committee noted an information report updating Members on the ACE Youth Project, formerly known as the Friday Night Project (FNP).

Members were advised that FNPs had been running in the Surrey districts and boroughs since 2019; their purpose was to engage young people aged 11 to 18 in a range of low cost sport and leisure activities. To date none had been set up in Runnymede. However, Officers wished to see this progressed and with funding of £29,000 from the Youth Development Fund, previously approved by the Committee, were now in a position to introduce sessions from February 2024. As they would take place in Addlestone, Chertsey and Egham it was decided to re-name the project, 'ACE.'

Officers reported that following research undertaken to secure suitable locations for the project, they had settled on Kick-X in Addlestone, Sports4Kids (S4K) at Gogmore Farm in Chertsey and Egham Orbit and for the sessions to be delivered by those organisations on behalf of the Council. The organisations would be asked to produce quarterly reports and case studies on the young people taking part. The timetable for delivery was noted and the active involvement of the Council's Communications Team to promote the pilot project.

The Committee welcomed the project which supported the health and wellbeing agenda and 'healthy communities' as well as providing valuable diversionary activities for young people, drawing them away from anti-social behaviour.

Officers were asked to assess viability of potential venues for the project in Englefield Green and/or the feasibility of providing transport to other venues. Officers agreed that a report reviewing Community Transport would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

In addition, as the project was a pilot with funding only available for it, a report on future funding options would also need to be considered at a future meeting of the Committee if the pilot was successful and there remained a desire to continue.

The report was duly noted.

62 **Foxhills Community Camp**

The Committee received for information a report on the fourth Foxhills Community Camp.

Members noted that this strand of the Council's children's activity provision had been generously supported in the sum of £100k by the Hayton Trust (Foxhills County Club and Resort) since 2019 up to 2021, and that a further £100k had been committed for the period 2022 until 2025.

The Camp was open to children aged 7 to 15 years old, who were referred into the programme on a first come first served basis. In 2023, 61 young people were registered to take part in the various activities over a four week period. Meals were also provided and very positive feedback had been received, as detailed in the report.

The Foxhills Camp was a combination of indoor and outdoor activities. Foxhills was only used for practical reasons for outdoor activities. However, Officers were asked to explore viability of further use of indoor facilities at Foxhills and use of other venues if practicable.

Officers reported that future delivery options were being considered as well as ways to reduce cost and discuss with relevant partners ways to invest in attendance to reduce the drop-out rate.

Officers were thanked for their report which was duly noted.

63 **Runnymede Pleasure Ground Estimates 2024/25**

The Committee, sitting as sole Trustee of the Runnymede Pleasure Ground Trust, was asked to approve the financial projection for 2024/25 and proposed fees and charges in respect of Runnymede Pleasure Ground.

Members recalled that the budget for the current year was approved at this time last year, and a revised budget and an estimate for next year were set out for approval.

Officers advised that traditionally, budgets tended to change very little at the site with the exception of car parking which was highly dependent on the weather. However, several supplementary estimates had been approved recently for a series of works, some of which were still outstanding. Therefore, the relevant figures had changed significantly in both the current and next financial years.

The Committee noted that where these works had been completed, the actual costs were included in the figures. However, where they had not been completed, the approved estimate was included instead and the remaining budgets would be carried over into the new year to allow them to be finished.

The Committee was aware that parking fees had remained the same at the Pleasure Grounds since 2009. Therefore, Officers considered it appropriate to propose an increase in line with other local attractions to ensure that the future plans and aspirations for the site could be met. For example the long anticipated play area enhancements.

Officers confirmed that owing to the high level of additional works approved during the year, the Trust was due to make a £35,000 deficit for 2024, returning to an annual surplus of £41,000 from next year. The Trust's reserves were anticipated to be £385,000 by March 2025, most of which could be devoted to improving the site.

The Committee discussed potential ways of improving access to the site and how this might form part of an active travel plan. Arising from this debate, Officers were asked to convey the wishes of the Committee to relevant Officers in Planning Policy and Economic Development to pursue completion of the cycle path from Coopers Hill, utilising identified S106 monies.

Whilst the Committee was content to approve the proposed fees and charges up to a maximum of the stated amount, Members were anxious not to make the season ticket fee prohibitive which might discourage visitors. Officers were therefore asked to confirm how many season ticket holders there were for Runnymede Pleasure Grounds and how the proposed increase in charges were arrived at in terms of bench marking with other facilities in the area in order to determine the fee to be set.

Resolved that –

- i) the proposed financial projection set out in Appendix 'A' of the agenda report be approved; and**
- ii) the proposed fees and charges set out in paragraph 2.14 of the agenda report be approved to take effect from 1 April 2024, subject to further discussion regarding the impact of the proposed increase in season ticket prices to be determined in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee**

64 SANG Infrastructure

The Committee received for information an update on progress with improving the effectiveness of the borough's six Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANG) sites.

Members recalled that the purpose of a SANG was to deter the public from accessing a Special Protection Area (SPA), by diverting them to visit a SANG site instead for recreational purposes, including dog walking. The closest SPA site to Runnymede was Chobham Common.

Officers advised that valuable research had been undertaken by the Council's Biodiversity Officer, to whom thanks were recorded, on the status of each of the SANG sites in the borough. These were Chertsey Meads, Hare Hill, Homewood Park, Ether Hill/Queenswood, St Ann's Hill and Timber Hill and Ottershaw Chase, the latter being bisected by the A320. So far, only Chertsey Meads had a full SANG management plan, and Officers were working diligently to rectify this and to explore how each SANG site's accessibility and facilities could be improved, full details of which were included in the report. Members noted the risk implications of non-compliance and thanked Officers for their work in mitigation of this.

Officers sought to prioritise which works could be undertaken immediately and the Committee approved the following next steps to ensure compliance as a SANG, noting the budgetary proposals:

Item	Site	Estimated Cost	Proposed Budget
Confirmation of parking arrangements	Hare Hill	TBC	SANG
Interpretation	St Ann's Hill, Hare Hill Chertsey Meads	£51,000	SANG
Waymarkers	St Ann's Hill, Hare Hill, Homewood Park Chertsey Meads	£20,000	SANG
Path improvement and clearance	St Ann's Hill Homewood Park	£39,000	General Fund

Officers would be exploring which works could be done in-house to reduce the burden on the General Fund, including opportunities to work with volunteers where appropriate; such as the removal of invasive species such as Cherry Laurel and Rhododendron from specific sites. It was noted that most of the works were not seasonal but vegetation clearance had to be done between September and March to avoid nesting birds.

Officers were asked to keep the Committee informed with regard to Hare Hill's status and the aspiration to designate it as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR), including any updates on its car parking issues. It was confirmed that SANG funding for Hare Hill would be unaffected if it attained LNR status.

Officers were thanked for their report which was duly noted.

65 Exclusion of Press and Public

The press and public were 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.

66 Core Judo Update

The Committee was asked to recommend that Corporate Management Committee approved a virement to enable work to complete the resurfacing of the car park facility at Thorpe Green.

The Committee was also given an update on progress to date to accommodate an organisation called 'Core Judo' on site, who sought to improve facilities and enhance the community offer, a venture well supported by Officers and Members alike.

The Committee recalled that for some time discussions had been taking place to facilitate Code Judo to enhance the facilities at the Council owned Thorpe Green. Part of this was making a successful application for funding to 'Your Fund Surrey' to make enhancements on a phased basis; the first of which was resurfacing the car park, as approved in March 2023. Independently, Members were assured that the installation of a green gym, could take place in the new year, for which funding had been secured, subject to all the necessary approvals being in place. The Committee noted that this work being undertaken by colleagues in Law and Governance was in hand.

Members were advised that subsequent to the grant from Your Fund Surrey being confirmed, there had been a number of legal and technical issues to be overcome, some of which were still being investigated, as detailed in the report. These were being discussed primarily by Officers in Law and Governance, Assets and Regeneration along with Surrey County Council and others, with a view to identifying a way forward to effect the opportunity to make progress with the project.

In terms of the next practical steps, and, pending resolution of the issues identified, Members were advised that colleagues in Assets and Regeneration had discovered that the cost of re-surfacing the car park was significantly higher than first envisaged, for which there was no budgetary provision. Therefore, as a temporary measure, the car park's surface had been levelled in December 2023. The full resurfacing was to be part funded by the grant awarded by Your Fund Surrey, leaving a shortfall as reported.

Officers in Community Services had identified an underspend in the budget pertaining to the Family Support Programme and had been advised by Surrey Heath Borough Council that the service did not require funding for the first three quarters of 2023/2024. Therefore, Members were assured that viring a sum from this budget would not be detrimental to the service.

The Committee noted the legal, financial and risk implications set out in the report and agreed to recommend to Corporate Management Committee approval of a virement in the sum reported to enable the car park to be resurfaced. Discussions were on-going as to the most appropriate material to use on site.

Recommend to Corporate Management Committee that –

the virement of a sum of up to (the sum reported) be approved from the 2023/2024 Family Support revenue budget to Assets & Regeneration, to complete the resurfacing of the existing car park facility at Thorpe Green, located opposite Core Judo.

67 Delegated Authority to enter into a contract to deliver CCTV Services

The Committee received a confidential report, owing to its commercially sensitive nature, requesting delegated authority to enter into an agreement with the local authority named in the report, and others that were in the process of early discussions.

The report also provided an update on other matters relating to Safer Runnymede including

an internal Service Review and ways to generate additional income to offset the cost of the service to the Council.

Members noted progress to date with discussions with the other local authorities named in the report and commended Officers whose hard work and experience had made Safer Runnymede as successful as it was, and so well regarded internally and externally.

If in the event that delegated authority was exercised, Officers would submit a report to the next scheduled meeting of the Committee in March 2024 on progress with the arrangements. It was noted that where possible reports would be brought to the Committee for deliberation, timing permitted, but that the need for speed and flexibility might not always make this possible.

Resolved that –

the request to delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive (Place), in consultation with the Leader and Chair of Community Services Committee to enter CCTV monitoring and maintenance services contracts with the Borough Council named in the report, be approved

(The meeting ended at 10.06 pm.)

Chair