

Runnymede Borough Council

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Thursday, 9 June 2022 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors N King (Chairman), D Coen (Vice-Chair), R Bromley, S Jenkins, A King (Substitute, in place of Councillor R King), S Lewis, N Prescott, D Whyte, and V Cunningham (Substitute, in place of Councillor M Heath)

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor J Olorenshaw

In attendance: Councillors A Berardi, L Gillham and C Howorth.

1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2022 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Olorenshaw

3 Declarations of interest

None received.

4 Air Quality Statement Annual Status Report 2020

The Committee was presented with a report which provided them with updated Air Quality information in the form of Runnymede's 2020 ASR which was recently submitted to Defra.

Runnymede's air quality monitoring capability was currently totally reliant on diffusion tubes. There were currently 31 diffusion tubes in the Borough, the tubes were moved around the Borough and were therefore used as dynamically as possible.

Over the past 20 years the Borough had seen a slow decline in nitrogen dioxide levels. However, when directly comparing the nitrogen dioxide levels of 2018 to 2019, the air quality situation within the Borough in 2020 showed a slight deterioration. There was one particular area of concern within the Borough being the four-way traffic light-controlled junction at Addlestone. This was a declared Air Quality Management Area. Officers had been in discussions with the Surrey County Council highway team to look at possibilities to improve the highway at that particular junction.

The Committee was particularly concerned to see that Particulate Matter and Sulphur Dioxide was not currently being monitored. Members appreciated the cost implications of further monitoring but asked Officers to explore other appropriate air quality measures and provide Members with costings at a future Committee meeting.

Members of the Committee were also keen for Officers to take a more proactive approach in liaising with the planning department, in relation to current and future planning applications which were likely to impact air quality in the Borough. Additionally, the importance of monitoring air quality around Schools was highlighted. Previous engagement with Schools in the Borough regarding idling engines outside of Schools and walk to School campaigns had been successful. Officers were therefore asked to consider

engaging with Schools in the Borough again in this regard.

Resolved that;

the 2020 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) be noted; and

note that Air Quality Monitoring was now a key indicator in the Climate Change Strategy approved on 21 April 2022

5 Food Service Plan 2022/23

Members received the proposed Food Service Plan for 2022/23. The Committee was advised that the Food Standards Agency (FSA) had introduced changes to the national food safety inspection programme in response to national shortfalls in inspection targets due to the Covid pandemic. This had evolved into a 'Covid recovery plan' with priority led expectations based on risk. Despite resourcing issues Runnymede had been able to maintain a high level of output and exceeded the minimum level of service outlined in the FSA recovery plan.

As well as delivering 336 interventions at food premises, 55 new businesses received an on-site inspection, and 132 written warnings were issued. This was in addition to responding to over 200 service requests and over 100 non-Covid infectious disease notifications. The skills and labour shortages within the hospitality sector had hampered the post covid recovery for many small businesses. Runnymede had introduced the option of in person training and online training on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) for local businesses. Officers advised the Committee that generally the hospitality industry appeared to have been recovered well from the effects of the pandemic, but the recent cost of living crisis now appeared to be having an effect.

The problem of business premises mis-handling food waste was raised. Officers advised the Committee that all businesses had to enter into a food waste contract and action could be taken against businesses in breach of this. Members were asked to inform the Environmental Services team of any problematic premises in their wards so the appropriate action could be taken.

Recommend to Full Council on 21 July 2022 that:

The Food Service Plan for 2022/23 be approved in accordance with Article 4 of the constitution

6 Great Big Green Week

Officers presented to the Committee a report giving information on the Big Green Week and its founder charity The Climate Coalition. The report was requested at the meeting of Full Council on 26 January 2022 in response to a motion being passed to promote The Big Green Week in September 2022.

The Committee was advised that The Climate Coalition was the operating name of the Climate Movement. The Climate Coalition's website claim they are the UK's largest group of people dedicated to action climate change. The main purpose of the organisation was to influence decision makers by bringing people together across society to unify and amplify voices, showing the broad support for climate action across the UK.

The first Great Big Green Week took place in September last year and was declared by the

Climate Coalition as the largest event for climate and nature ever seen in the UK. Across the country, over 5000 community led events took place. This year the Great Big Green Week would run from 24th September to 2nd October, and it was hoped it would be larger than last year. The Climate Coalition are calling for events within local communities that will celebrate how they are taking action to tackle climate change and protect green spaces and encourage others to get involved.

Members were presented with 3 options for participation by the Council to support and promote the Great Big Green Week. The Committee considered the options and the implications involved, particularly given the tight timescales. Whilst some Members supported Option 3 the work involved in road closures given the time restraints made this unfeasible this year. There was a concern from one Member that it was a “waste of time and just a green-washing exercise”. However, it was agreed by Members to go with Option 2 with a view to looking at Option 3 in 2023 when the success of this year’s level of input could be reviewed.

Officers advised the Committee that this was a community led movement and Runnymede’s role would be in advertising and facilitating the event, it was not Council owned. The Council would be encouraging uptake and participation by residents and local community groups and signposting/promoting events. A comprehensive communication pack was available from The Climate Coalition. The Committee was also keen to pursue this event in co-ordination with the Council’s Health and Wellbeing agenda. It was, however, noted that the Health and Wellbeing Member Working Party had not met since last September which was disappointing.

In order to enable all Councillors/wards to be involved a MS Teams briefing would be held so all Councillors and their residents could be informed on how they could be involved.

Resolved that:

Option 2 as detailed in the report be adopted; and

Officers evaluate the success of the Great Big Green Week and review the level of input required for 2023

7 Key Performance Indicators Quarter 1 to Quarter 3 2021/2022

The Committee received a report detailing the Key Performance Indicators for Quarter 1 to Quarter 3 2021/22, together with the annual overall performance for the same period.

It was noted that in relation to performance indicator ES1 and ES2, due to these figures being provided externally, they were not available as there was a lag period of between 3 and 6 months.

2021/2022 had seen an exceptional performance by the depot staff in both being able to deliver the KPI targets and continue to provide the full range of services to the residents of Runnymede. The Committee asked for their thanks and congratulations to be passed onto all staff at the depot.

Officers were asked why Runnymede charged residents to collect green waste. The Committee was advised that this was not a statutory service therefore a charge could be made. Defra were currently considering changes which may result in the collection of green waste having a set fee or possibly becoming free of charge in the future.

(The meeting ended at 8.47 pm.)

Chairman