

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 1

RBC ESC 17.11.22

Runnymede Borough Council

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Thursday, 17 November 2022 at 7.00 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors N King (Chairman), D Coen (Vice-Chair), R Bromley, S Jenkins, R King, S Lewis, J Olorenshaw, N Prescott and D Whyte.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors M Heath.

In attendance: Councillors A Berardi, L Gillham and I Mullens

1 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor M Heath

2 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 June 2022 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3 **Declarations of interest**

None received.

4 **Proposed Change to Restrictions at Aviator Park Recreation Ground Car Park - Review of Objections**

The Committee was advised that since regular enforcement had been re-introduced it had become apparent that the Aviator Park Recreation Ground Car Park had been used by both residents and businesses without charge for up to 6 hours per day. If they were to use other car parks within the town centre, they would have to pay for parking at around £7 a day depending on which car park they used.

Following a survey undertaken in 2018, it was confirmed that users of the park rarely stayed for longer than two hours, so amending the parking restriction order to retain the current maximum waiting period of three hours but increasing the no return from 2 to 5 hours would not impact current users but would ensure that the car park continued to be kept available for use by the public for recreational purposes and was in the spirit of the original intention of the car park.

This change would be achieved through an amendment to the Borough of Runnymede (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2008 (as amended). The Council therefore placed a public notice in the Surrey Advertiser on 3 December 2021 and arranged for copies of the public notice to be displayed in the car park and in the vicinity of the car park and advised by post local and statutory organisations of its intention to make an amendment order. The Council received seven objections to the proposed amendment order.

The car park consists of 12 parking spaces and 3 disabled parking spaces. Since the recent closure of the skate park, the car park is relatively empty albeit the same six cars being parked there most days. Occasionally, other cars have been seen there early in the morning but are gone within two hours which suggests these people are using the car park as intended.

Members were advised that recent monitoring of the site had concluded that the Council

could set aside up to six parking spaces which would require parking permits. This would leave six spaces for others as well as the three disabled parking spaces. The cost of an annual parking permit is £125 at the Council's smaller car parks. This would raise approximately £750 a year which would go towards maintaining the car park which has been neglected in recent years.

The Committee considered the objections received, the Officers rationale for change and details of the recent monitoring and agreed to this course of action.

Resolved that:

An Amendment Order to increase the period of no return from two hours to five hours be approved; and

The Corporate Head of Customer, Digital and Collection Services be authorised under delegated authority to approve up to six parking permits to permit all day parking for either residents or local businesses to apply for

5 Annual Review of Car Parking Charges in Off-Street Car Parks

The Committee reviewed the current charges in the Council's car parks, including the charges for permit and contract parking.

Officers advised the Committee that due to the current cost of living crisis to support both residents and businesses it was proposed that charges should remain unchanged.

Members were very supportive of this approach.

It was noted that ticket sales at Pooley Green Car Park had seen a -84% change and Officers were asked to look at this parking provision as due to changes in businesses in the area it was a less attractive parking provision for residents.

It was noted that RingGo now accounted for 52% (109,509) of all parking transactions compared to 78,797 for 2021/22. This was a small increase on the previous year so the Council should continue to provide a choice for customers to pay for their parking.

ANPR & EVC formed part of the Parking Services Review which was due to commence in 2023/24.

The Council currently paid the British Legion £20,000 per year to lease their car park in Virginia Water. The car park was not currently widely used, and the income generated no longer covered the cost of the lease agreement. The Committee was asked to authorise for the Corporate Head of Assets and Regeneration to engage with the British Legion regarding the current lease arrangement. It was, however, noted that with the development of Longcross, over time the car park may become more popular due to its proximity to Virginia Water station.

Resolved that:

Car parking and permit levels remain unchanged for the next year; and

The Corporate Head of Customer, Digital and Collection Services along with the Corporate Head of Assets and Regeneration be authorised to engage with the British Legion and local businesses to review the current lease arrangement with a view to renegotiating the contract

6 **Standing Order 42 - Hummer Road Car Park**

Proforma 1009 detailing action taken after consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee was noted by the Committee

7 **Standing Order 42 - NSL Parking Contract**

Proforma 1012 detailing action taken after consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee was noted by the Committee

8 **Business Runnymede, and relationships with other organisations relevant to the economic well-being of the Borough**

As requested under Standing Order 27.5. The Committee received an information report on Business Runnymede, and Council relationships with Chambers of Commerce and other organisations relevant to the economic well-being of the Borough.

Officers advised Members that Business Runnymede brought together the local business community, Chambers of Commerce, Surrey Police, schools, colleges and the Borough Council to tackle issues affecting business across Runnymede. Business Runnymede signposts businesses to support available via a monthly newsletter. Officers would welcome Members support by signing up to the newsletter.

There had been some interruption to meetings due to the pandemic, but meetings were now back, and it was proposed that the Business Runnymede Steering Group would meet three times a year to discuss Business Runnymede activities and events. The Group comprised of representatives from local businesses and other stakeholders such as the Police and Royal Holloway University of London (RHUL). In 2002, three events had been organised by Business Runnymede.

Business Runnymede in conjunction with Runnymede Borough Council was planning to host the first Runnymede Business Awards next May. Discussions had already started with businesses regarding sponsorship. The awards would be launched in January. The sponsorship brochure and information on entering the awards would be sent out to all Members so they could help promote the event.

Runnymede was home to three Chambers of Commerce in Addlestone, Chertsey and Egham. However, only Egham Chamber of Commerce was currently active. The Chambers are independent membership organisations and are not financially supported by the Council. A Member and Deputy Member from Runnymede Council are however nominated to each Chamber of Commerce.

The Committee asked Officers to provide more detailed information on the activities undertaken by external bodies prior to the nomination process. Additionally, Officers were asked to provide Members with details on how the organisations were chosen. Officers advised the Committee that some changes had already been made to the process within the work of the Constitution Member Working Party.

9 **Green Homes Grants and Environmental Measures for Housing in the Borough**

The Committee received a report which collated environmental measures in place or being considered for housing in the Borough, including private rented properties that captured the Green Homes Grants.

In July 2020 the Chancellor had announced a £2 billion Green Homes Grant scheme to upgrade homes across England. Under this, £500 million funding was allocated to local authorities through the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) scheme.

The LAD scheme aimed to improve the energy efficiency of homes of low-income households (typically those having a combined gross income of less than (£30,000) with low energy performance homes (those with energy performance certificate (EPC) ratings of E, F or G, including off-gas grid homes. Some Band D properties could be included)

The Committee received a summary of the different phases of LAD funding Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) were participating in.

RBC also had the Decent Homes programme in place for social housing residents to ensure that all Council owned properties were maintained to a good standard. Between March 2022 and March 2026 RBC planned to spend in excess of £30m to bring Council owned homes up to a 'decent standard'. Much of this expenditure would improve the energy efficiency of the Council's housing stock which included roof replacements and insulation work, new boilers and new doors and windows. £3.7m of the work qualified as contributing measures for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund bid. RBC planned to apply to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund for £3.3m to ensure all RBC owned social housing had an energy performance rating of C by March 2026.

It was noted that marketing of the schemes sometimes were perceived by residents as scams, so it was essential that any marketing give residents the assurance that the scheme was genuine. Officers were also asked to convey to residents within any marketing that help was available by delivery agents to assist with the application process. Officers reported that previously a targeted letter sent to appropriate residents had seen a good take up.

Members were pleased to note the work being done; it was a good start but still considered RBC to be lagging behind. Going forward the Committee requested Officers to report on the environmental impact of the funding schemes by providing data on the reduction in carbon emissions, relating from the environmental measures already taken.

10 **Climate Change - Stage 1 Update**

Under Standing Order 27 the Committee received an update on Scope 1 target, achievement and investment value indicators relating to Runnymede Borough Councils action on climate change.

The Committee was advised that the Carbon Baseline for Runnymede was currently being established. The Carbon Baseline would establish the reference datum against which the Council will measure and track progress towards the 2030 net zero target for its own emissions and the 2050 national target. The Councils progress towards its 2030 net zero target would be established with respect to its Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions as described in the Greenhouse Gas Protocol 2001 (GHGP)

Members received details of the stages in relation to the RBC Carbon Baseline Consultation. The Carbon Baseline and monitoring/measuring methodology would be utilised to measure the carbon emission impact and progress against the modelled carbon emissions trajectories to track the Council's overall progress towards the Council's 2030 and 2050 objectives. It was anticipated that project KPI's would be reported to their relevant committees on a regular basis.

The Council had awarded the contract to establish the Carbon Baseline for RBC's Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions to LUC. There was not the resources or expertise in-house to undertake this work.

There was some frustration amongst Members regarding the speed of the process considering the Council had set a 2030 target to be net zero. There was also frustration regarding the lack of take up on Green Bonds. Officers assured Members that actions/work was being done but there was no standardized approach which could be taken. Officers were asked to provide the Committee with a summary report by email on the actions currently being carried out in relation to Climate Change.

11 **Sustainable Planting Policy**

The Committee was asked to approve a sustainable planting policy which aligned with the Climate Change Strategy approved by Full Council on 20 October 2022.

Officers advised Members that following Idverde agreeing to end their contract early and a recent restructure of the open spaces team including manned parks, the grounds maintenance had moved in-house this week. This had given Officers the opportunity to look at how to run grounds maintenance going forward and look at a sustainable planting policy. The policy and principles would be applicable across all green spaces including existing manned parks, all unmanned green spaces, and all street scene planters.

Members were very supportive of the policy and asked Officers to consider sharing the policy with voluntary groups/charities. Officers were also asked to look at exploring peat free compost and mulch options. It was noted that biodiversity was paramount, and the use of mixed hedging would aid this.

Officers advised the Committee that a separate tree survey would be undertaken and a separate planting policy relating to trees would be presented to a future meeting. Officers were asked to consider planting of fruit trees when the policy was written.

Resolved that:

The Sustainable Planting Policy (not extending to trees) be approved

12 **Fees and Charges**

The Committee was asked to approve the fees and charges under the Committees remit for the next financial year.

The main fees and charges increased related to:

- Refuse Collection – Trade Waste and Domestic Waste (where chargeable)
- Recycling
- Recycling – Green Waste
- One off payments covering Trade, Refuse, Recycling and Green Waste
- Street Cleansing – Graffiti Removal
- Highways and Engineering
- Environmental Protection
- Animal Welfare Licences

With regard to trade waste, it was noted that places of worship were exempt from local non-domestic rating if the premises were not being used for commercial or charitable activities. Members were very supportive of this exemption. It was reported that a local place of worship had recently been subjected to some fly-tipping which they were dealing

with themselves. Officers advised Members that they could meet to discuss waste arrangement with individual places of worship on a case-by-case basis

Resolved that:

The proposed fees and charges as set out in Appendix 'A' be approved

13 Fleet and Fuel Strategy

This item was withdrawn under Standing Order 27.7

14 Exclusion of press and public

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the remainder of the meeting during the consideration of the remaining matters under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraphs 1 & 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

15 Surrey County Council On-Street Parking Contract

Members were advised that in August 2020, Surrey County Council extended the existing agency agreement for the provision of on-street parking enforcement to Runnymede for a further period of three years ending on 31 March 2023.

Following the retirement of the Parking Services Manager in July 2021, the Parking Team transferred to the management of the Corporate Head of Customer, Digital and Collection Services. Various operational changes were implemented to improve service delivery.

In May 2022 new legislation came into force which extended powers to Traffic Authorities outside of London to enforce moving traffic offences. Surrey County Council therefore wish to implement this legislation across the whole of the county and with all the agency agreements coming to an end in March 2023, they have decided to seek a county wide supplier for both parking and moving traffic enforcement.

Following a review of Parking Services in July 2021 Members in November 2021 approved the procurement of new software suppliers to replace the existing case management system which was outdated and becoming expensive to support. In November 2021 the Council entered a contract for the provision of a new case management system to administer both on and off-street parking enforcement.

The decision to end the agency agreement with Runnymede will raise issues including; IT costs and software implementation, customer complaints and overall financial impact

Resolved that:

The Surrey County Council decision to end the agency agreement for On-street parking enforcement from 1 April 2023 be noted; and

The additional £70,000 increase in costs in Parking Services following the discontinuation of the agency agreement be noted

16 Grounds Maintenance Update

The Committee was updated on a number of strands relating to Grounds Maintenance

insourcing project and concurrent restructure of Open Spaces staff and functions.

Members would recall that delivery options for grounds maintenance were considered at Corporate Management Committee on 24 February 2022. The model recommended was in house Direct Services Organisation/Community Services with the strategic development function to remain in Community Services and operational services to transfer to Environmental Services. This recommendation was approved by Full Council on 3 March 2022.

Functions that will move to Environmental Services are:

- Planting plans and grass cutting/hedge trimming schedules and rotas
- Maintenance, replacement, and repair of Green Infrastructure items. For example: bins, benches, paths and bridges
- Operational management of events in open spaces, checking application forms for correct insurance for example, collecting fees and deposits, arranging for any additional services or reparations as required
- Policies associated with operational issues such as the planting policy and in due course policies on memory benches and dog litter bins.

The early end of the agreement with Idverde in November 2021 which was mutually agreed will offer the Council additional time to build up a new team over winter.

As an interim measure until the depot refurbishment works are complete grounds maintenance operational staff will continue to be based at the Orchard.

Members were pleased to gain clarity in relation to grounds maintenance functions and staffing. Officers advised the Committee that an update report on grounds maintenance would be presented to every Environment and Sustainability Committee this municipal year. Members were advised that schedules for grounds maintenance works would be published on the Council's website when finalised.

(The meeting ended at 9.06 pm.)

Chairman