

## Runnymede Borough Council

### Environment and Sustainability Committee

**Thursday, 9 March 2023 at 7.30 pm**

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

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors J Olorenshaw.

In attendance: Councillors A Berardi, L Gillham and J Gracey.

#### 1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 January 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

#### 2 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor J Olorenshaw

#### 3 Declarations of interest

Councillor M Heath disclosed a NRI in item 8 as she is Chair of the SEP. Councillor Heath remained in the Chamber for the meeting but abstained from voting.

Councillor L Gillham disclosed an ORI in item 8 as she is the Runnymede appointed Member of the SEP. Councillor Gillham remained in the Chamber for the meeting.

#### 4 Climate Change Update

The Committee noted a report on the various activities which had been undertaken, were ongoing or were planned to help the Council and the Borough of Runnymede to meet its net zero targets by 2030 and 2050 respectively.

The current focuses within the Climate Change team were:

- Providing Members with a comprehensive update on the projects which are planned and will help in the Council's response to climate change. Officers would work with the Project Management Officer to ensure all future reporting on climate change activities was easily accessible to Members
- Ensuring the Forward Programme for Committee Meetings was kept up to date and sets out the climate change items being brought to various Committees
- Finalising stage 1 of the Council's Climate Change Study which would set the carbon emissions baseline for the Borough
- Plan an exciting week of events and activities for this year's Great Big Green Week
- Improving monitoring procedures and increasing capacity in readiness to start tracking our progress in reducing our carbon emissions over time

Officers were congratulated on the report, which was more accessible than previous reports and a joy to read. The Committee commented that it was good to see the great work done coming together.

The Committee was also keen for Runnymede to champion initiatives. It was agreed that the Environmental Place Shaping MWP would look into pursuing this.

The Committee commented on the success of the warm hubs and asked Officers where cool hubs would be located in the Borough. Officers confirmed that this information was not yet available, but Members would be notified when the information was available.

The Committee was advised that carbon literacy training for Members would be set up for early June following the election period.

## 5 **Damp and Mould Consultation Response Update**

The Committee received an update on the response submitted to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) following a letter from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, in the wake of the tragic and avoidable death of Awaab Ishak.

Runnymede's initial response to the DLUHC highlighted the following:

- With regards to proposal on addressing damp and mould issues in the private rented sector, Runnymede's private sector housing enforcement policy aligned with the Housing Act 2004 which stated that – The Council had a duty to take action in respect of category one hazards and discretion to take action in respect of category two hazards. Runnymede planned to continue to make use of the appropriate enforcement measures available to address any assessed hazard identified, whether it was a category 1 or 2 hazard, namely;
  - Hazard awareness notices
  - Improvement notices
  - Prohibition orders
  - Emergency prohibition orders
- The Private Sector Housing (PSH) team additionally planned to review the current measures available to the private rented sector
- The PSH team also proposed to take specific action in relation to damp and mould

It was noted housing associations and sheltered housing had different standards to that of private sector housing.

Councillor J Gracey, who was present at the meeting advised all Members that she was happy to be contacted with any problems reported to them in relation to Runnymede's own housing stock.

It was noted that residents living in mobile homes were sadly not covered by government legislation.

## 6 **Planning Policy Service Area Plan**

The Committee was asked to approve the 2023/24 Service Area for Planning Policy and Economic Development and note the general fund business cases requiring growth.

Members were advised that the planning policy team had recently been expanded to incorporate the Council's Corporate Climate Change function, with direct reporting by the Local Plans Manager to the Chief Executive. Additionally, a number of new appointments had been made to the Planning Policy and Economic Development Business unit over the last year. These appointments had strengthened the resilience and experience of the team, which was now well placed to react to changes and support delivery of various service areas priorities.

In order to support new key area of work within the service area plan in 2023/24, the following proposed initiatives required growth to enable them to be delivered.

- £43,000 to support delivery of the Local Plan review. Underspend in 2022/23 would be used to provide for this budget.
- £20,000 to support delivery of two Neighbourhood Plans required to cover the costs of two Examinations in 2023/24, (£10,000 was budgeted in the following year to cover costs for a third Neighbourhood Plan Examination). The Council would receive a retrospective grant to cover these costs after the examinations were completed)
- Up to £70,000/annum to enable recruitment of a transport planner to assist with the LCWIP and other transport schemes.
- £56,000 to support delivery of the Business Growth and Innovation Hub. This would be funded by SPF
- £30,000 to support delivery of town centre events and markets.
- £20,000 to support delivery of feasibility designs for Chertsey Town Centre urban realm improvement
- £10,000 to support other economic development activity

Members were pleased to note the recruitment of a transport planner to assist with the LCWIP. Officers confirmed the planner would be working jointly with neighbouring boroughs, Surrey County Council and have involvement in the Surrey Infrastructure plan

It was noted that whilst Runnymede in general was a relatively affluent Borough the Borough did have areas of deprivation. Councillor D Whyte would meet with Officers in this regard, with a view to focussing on these areas.

**Resolved that:**

- i) **The 2023/24 Service Area Plan for Planning Policy and Economic Development be approved; and**

- ii) **The General Fund business cases required growth subject to approval by Corporate Management Committee (or Full Council depending on the sums) be noted.**

## 7 **Surrey Environmental Partnership (SEP) 25**

The Committee was advised that the Surrey Environmental Partnership (SEP) provided waste disposal services for all 11 Surrey County Council districts and boroughs including Runnymede Borough Council.

Since the Resources and Waste Strategy (RaWS) for England was published in December 2018, the Government has consulted on several of the strategy's ambitions across a range of subjects, the anticipated results would provide policy direction.

The Surrey Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) was last updated in 2015. Although due for revision SEP have decided to wait for clarity with respect to the Resource and Waste Strategy before reviewing the JMWMS.

In the interim SEP have developed SEP 25 to bridge the gap between the existing JMWMS and a revised future strategy to allow for further guidance from central government.

SEP 25 reflected the vision of SEP and provided a clear direction for the partnership for the next three years to 2025 and a longer-term vision that would allow SEP to continue to follow the waste hierarchy and work towards zero waste.

The strategy included three key measures:

1. Invoke the 'polluter pays' principle and extend producer responsibility (EPR) for packaging. To commence from April 2024
2. Introduce a deposit return scheme (DRS) for drinks containers, to reward people for bringing back bottles and encourage them not to litter. Proposed for late 2024.
3. Improve recycling rates by ensuring consistency in household and business recycling collections which is proposed to tie in with the launch of EPR.

The Key national targets were:

1. 55% recycling rate by 2025 and 65% by 2035.
2. Fleet owners and operators work towards 100% of vehicle fleets being zero emission by 2030, or earlier when markets allow (COP26 ambition)
3. 50% reduction in residual waste by 2042 from 2019 level (proposed in the environmental targets consultation – March 2022)

Significant achievements within Surrey had already be made possible by working together as a partnership; the most notable being improved recycling rates, which in 2010-11 was 46.4% (13<sup>th</sup> highest nationally) to 55.1% (3<sup>rd</sup> highest nationally) by 2020-21.

It was noted that SEP 25 was aligned with the Runnymede Climate Change Strategy.

The SEP 25 was currently being taken through individual Council's democratic processes with hopeful formal adoption across the SEP by April 2023.

In relation to electric vehicles, it was noted that Runnymede's Climate Change Strategy had committed the Council to have electric vehicles by 2030.

**Resolved that:**

- i) The Surrey Environmental Partnership approach to waste prevention and recycling in Surrey for the next three years known as the SEP 2025 be adopted; and**
- ii) Runnymede Borough Council's Service Delivery plan relating to SEP 25 be approved**

**8 Bin Policy**

The Committee was asked to approve a programmed removal of separate dog waste bins and introduction of signage on all new litter bins to explain that dog waste could be disposed of in general litter bins and to approve a pilot scheme introducing recycled waste bins at Runnymede Pleasure Grounds.

Officers advised the Committee that at present Runnymede Borough Council had over 631 waste litter bins and 292 dog waste bins. Currently there were no litter recycling bins.

From May 2023 Officers proposed to pilot the installation of dual waste and recycling bins with clear recycling messaging at Runnymede Pleasure Grounds and Chertsey Recreation Grounds. The pilot would run for one year and if the new waste/recycling bins, along with clear messaging was successful, similar dual bins would be rolled out to other locations in the Borough. Members were supportive of this pilot approach.

In addition, Officers were proposing to initiate a programmed removal of separate dog waste bins across the Borough as since 2015 dog waste could be safely disposed of in a standard waste bin.

The Committee raised various concerns regarding the removal of dog waste bins. The Committee expressed concerns that residents had not been consulted. Officers advised Members that some dog waste bins were greatly used, and some got very little use. The Committee suggested this should be part of any consultation process.

It was noted that where some dog waste bins were already missing due to vandalism and if the frame remained this seemed to encourage some dog owners to just dump the dog waste where the bin used to be situated. This wasn't something we would want replicated. Additionally, the Committee strongly felt that there should be feedback prior to considering what areas should be on any priority list.

**Resolved that:**

- i) To approve a pilot scheme introducing recycled waste bins at Runnymede Pleasure Grounds and Chertsey Recreation Ground; and**
- ii) To approve a public consultation in accordance with Annex 4 of the Consultation for the proposed;**
  - a) Programmed removal and/or replacement of separate dog waste bins (to include the review of any bin locations), and**

- b) Introduction of signage on all new litter bins to explain that dog waste can be disposed of in general litter bins; and**
- c) Introduction of a new litter bin policy as set out in Appendix A**

## **9 Event Co-ordination Policy**

The Committee reviewed the proposed Event Coordination policy.

The policy covered two key areas of the event management process which were:

- Process of notification/requests to hold events
- Terms of reference and process for the Council's Safety Advisory Group

The policy addresses the need for a consistent approach to the Council being notified of events to be held, for considering requests to hold events on Council owned land and in the determination of whether events needed to be considered by the Safety Advisory Group.

It was noted that larger, long standing, annual events in the Borough would be prioritised in order to preserve their status and to ensure their dates were included with event calendars for the forthcoming year, before considering any other requests/notification.

The Committee thanked Officers for the policy which would provide much needed consistency on how events were booked.

## **10 Exclusion of press and public**

(The meeting ended at 10.34 pm.)

Chairman