

## Runnymede Borough Council

### Environment and Sustainability Committee

Wednesday, 13 September 2023 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors D Coen (Chair), V Cunningham (Vice-Chair), R Bromley, D Clarke, M K Cressey, S Jenkins, S Ringham, D Whyte and S Williams.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor N Prescott.

In attendance: Councillor R King

#### 16 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record

#### 17 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 18 Declarations of interest

Councillor S Jenkins declared an interest in item 4 as he is a PCC Governor at St Jude's Infant and Junior Schools. Councillor Jenkins left the room for the debate and did not partake in the vote on this item.

#### 19 Review of Informal Parking Arrangements at Various Schools within the Borough

The Committee was asked to determine which option presented in the report they wished to adopt in relation to parking by parents in car parks located near to schools.

Members were advised that the current arrangement was informal and potentially involved three schools in the Borough; St. Jude's, St Cuthbert's and St. Anne's.

The Committee raised concerns regarding the possible alternative parking options detailed in the report and didn't consider them as viable for various reasons including: needing to cross a busy A road, narrow footpaths, unpleasant/unsafe walk particularly during the darker months.

There was currently a wide inconsistency across the Borough and it was agreed there needed to be fairness and transparency for all parents/schools.

It was noted that the arrangement at St. Anne's school in Chertsey started in 2014 with the support of the then Runnymede Police Inspector. Stepgates school was in close proximity to St. Anne's but no such arrangement was available for the parents with children at Stepgates. The two schools had the same start and finish time which made the parking in that area very dangerous

It was agreed that the safety of the children attending the Borough's schools was paramount and there needed to be transparency and fairness.

**Resolved that:**

The existing arrangement should be regularised and extended to all primary schools across the Borough where Council owned car parks were within a reasonable walking distance and for the Council to cover the total cost within existing budgets. The arrangement would be managed through an electronic parking permit system administered by Runnymede Borough Council; and

A recommendation be made to Corporate Management Committee as part of the growth bids for 2024/25. If approved any changes would not be implemented until September 2024.

## 20 **Bin Policy**

A draft bin policy covering street recycling bins, litter bins and dog waste bins was proposed at Environment and Sustainability Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The introduction of recycling litter bins was approved at that meeting.

In respect of dog waste bins and litter bins the Committee agreed to a consultation exercise.

A survey was posted via Runnymede Borough Council's social media account on 9<sup>th</sup> May. The survey ran for four weeks.

There were 70 respondents, 60 (86%) agreed with the proposed policy to phase out dog waste bins and 10 (14%) disagreed.

The Committee reviewed the proposed sticker which would be placed on new litter bins. It was agreed that as some residents wouldn't have the capacity to scan a QR code a contact telephone number should also be added.

Members agreed it was a very sensible policy and were supportive.

It was noted that any replacement bins/new bins should be at a height and in a location that was wheelchair accessible.

### **Resolved that:**

The new litter and dog waste bin policy outlined in 1.2 of the reported be adopted.

## 21 **Street Trading Consent Application**

The Committee was asked to consider an application for a new street trading consent at The Broadway, New Haw.

The Council had one location in the Borough designated a consent street for street traders, which was The Broadway, New Haw.

A handful of enquiries about street trading were received on an annual basis, however this was the first formal application since January 2017, which was considered by this Committee and rejected.

The application under consideration was received on 7 July 2023 from Mr Costel Enache, who wished to set up a designated consent street location at The Broadway selling grilled meat with Romanian speciality dishes.

Officers had sought views from statutory consultees as detailed in 2.5 of the report. Comments received included concerns on the parking facilities at the location, with demand

often exceeding availability, impact on residents and potential customers. Concerns were also raised regarding the footway which was also likely to become congested which would impact on pedestrians' ability to pass safely.

The establishment of a food stall at the location would have a knock-on effect on antisocial behaviour, particularly the prospect of noise and littering. Additionally, cooking smell permeating into nearby homes was a concern.

It was agreed that all concerns raised were valid and was echoed by local Councillors and residents.

### **Resolved that:**

The application for a new street trading consent at The Broadway, New Haw be refused due to the reasons detailed in the report.

## **22 Flood and Sandbag Policy**

The Committee was asked to consider a new sandbag policy following a review carried out against current best practice implemented by the Environment Agency and other Councils in the region.

Members were advised that the proposed policy change was that the Council would not provide sandbags during a flood situation. The Borough was not mandated to provide flood risk management. The primary duty of district and boroughs was to support residents affected by flooding by providing refuge and/or emergency accommodation.

The Environment Agency advised that sandbags were not effective against flooding. They had no effect against clearwater flooding and were only partially effective against pluvial and fluvial flooding and only if deployed in sufficient numbers and wrapped in heavy duty polythene.

Government guidance was to not enter floodwater. It was not possible to distribute sandbags without entering floodwater. Additionally, sandbag distribution centres were not practical to man or maintain. Untrained volunteers were at risk of injury as sandbags are heavy, bulky and difficult to manage.

Sandbags also required significant storage facilities. The Council didn't have enough storage space for sufficient number of sandbags which would be needed. It was noted that a minimum of 30 sandbags would be needed to protect a residents from ingress of flood water at a level of 6 inches.

The Committee was keen to offer discretionary support to smaller localised flood issues. It was noted small, localised flooding happened quite often across the Borough and in these cases sandbags would be effective.

A member of the Committee suggested some amendments to the resolution, however the Committee felt that until the proposed amendments could be investigated by Officers for impact the Committee was unable to support.

Whilst Officers appreciated Members views it was agreed that any discretionary action could be open to challenge and was at risk of being mis-interpreted. The revised policy would need to ensure it was worded correctly to ensure it was transparent on whether a particular localised flood situation triggered the policy.

**Resolved that:**

Officers to prepare another draft sandbag policy taking into account concerns raised by the Committee; and

Draft sandbag policy to be emailed to all members of the Committee for individual comment prior to the November Committee agenda preparation; and

A further sandbag policy and report be brought back to the November Environment and Sustainability Committee

**23 Exclusion of press and public**

By resolution of the Committee, for the reasons set out in the agenda, 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 as set out in Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

**24 Tree Audit Proposal**

The Committee was advised that a budget provision had been made within the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account to undertake an audit of all trees owned by Runnymede Borough Council in the financial year 2023/24.

It was currently anticipated that the audit would take 12 months and would commence in January 2024.

It was estimated that Runnymede Borough Council owned 35,000 trees sited on communal land, in parks, open spaces, SANG sites, on amenity land and across estates etc.

The Committee were fully supportive of the audit taking place and agreed it was much needed.

The possibility of people adopting trees becoming wardens etc could be considered after the audit had taken place.

The Committee asked Officers to share the criteria for the tree audit with them. They were interested to establish whether carbon sequestration and biodiversity would be included in the audit.

**Resolved that:**

Officers be authorised to release the budget provision to undertake an audit of all trees owned by Runnymede Borough Council in the financial year 2023/24.

**25 Approval of ANPR in 4 Car Parks**

The Committee was asked to consider a report which detailed the delivery method and costs associated with the procurement and implementation of the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) systems in four Council owned car parks.

In July 2021, the Environment and Sustainability Committee approved the Parking Services Review where three distinct phases were agreed. Phase 1 and 2 had been successfully implemented.

The Committee was therefore asked to consider release of funds set aside in the 2023/24 budget to implement Phase 3 in four of the Council owned car parks: Woodland St Peters, Memorial Virginia Water, Waspe Farm Egham and Chertsey Library.

The Committee was supportive of this approach, but some concerns were raised regarding the ease of use for Blue Badge Holders and the loss of a cash payment option. Members were reassured by Officers that Blue Badge holders would be supported in various ways to ensure an easy transition. It was also noted that whilst the car parks would be cashless there would be an array of payment options available.

**It was resolved:**

**To recommended to Corporate Management Committee that** it approve the release of the provision for £250,000 set aside in the Capital Programme for the procurement and implementation of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) systems in four Council owned car parks; and

That the business case for the procurement and implementation of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) systems in four Council owned car parks be approved; and

That, subject to the Corporate Management Committee approving the provision set aside in the Capital Programme (as detailed above);

The Committee approve the release of the provision set aside in the General Fund Revenue Budget and Business Plan for this purpose.

## 26 **Procurement of Replacement Pay and Display Machines**

The Committee was asked to approve the procurement of Pay and Display machines in up to 20 of the Council owned car parks. Funds had been set aside in the 2023/24 budget, however, the Committee was asked to recommend that additional finance be approved following changes to the previous plans.

Officers advised members that the current pay and display machines were over 20 years old. The machines were now expensive to repair and getting parts for them was being increasingly difficult.

A procurement process would be undertaken. The contract term would be for 10 years with a five-year extension to ensure value for money on the capital investment.

The new pay and display machines would be cashless. Some Members raised concerns regarding the removal of a cash option. The Committee was advised that there would be various options for payment including; Ringo, a payment line, via our website or paying for tickets in advance by contacting the Council's customer service team.

Members were reassured that there would be a communication strategy included in the procurement process and details of the new machines would be communicated by various means, including via social media, signage and the Council's website.

The Committee supported the proposal but advised Officers that the use of the new

machines should be made as accessible as possible and include a freephone number for parking payments.

**It was resolved:**

**To recommend to Corporate Management Committee that:** a capital estimate in the sum of £146,000 for the purchase and implementation of the new pay and display machines be approved; and

That, subject to the Corporate Management Committee approving the capital estimate detailed above, the Committee approved;

- a) the release of the revenue provision set aside in the General Fund Revenue Budget and Business Plan for the ongoing additional support and maintenance costs; and
- b) a procurement process via the ESPO 509\_23 (Lot 1) Framework Agreement to provide pay and display machines in relation to Council owned car parks.

(The meeting ended at 9.55 pm.)

Chairman