

**Minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Committee
14 September 2021**

Present:

Councillor I.J. Beardsmore (Chairman)
Councillor O. Rybinski (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

J.T.F. Doran	V.J. Leighton	J.R. Sexton
T. Fidler	S.C. Mooney	V. Siva
K.M. Grant	R.J. Noble	

Substitutions: Councillors R.D. Dunn

Apologies: Councillors N.J. Gething, M. Gibson and N. Islam

In Attendance: Councillors C. Bateson and M. Beecher

337 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 30 June, 13 July and 23 August 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

338 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

339 Questions from members of the public

There were none.

340 Ward Issues

Councillor Rybinski spoke of the nuisance caused by bonfires to residents in her ward and the negative impact from both a health and environmental perspective.

Councillor Rybinski had initially considered it to be a ward issue, however, on further reflection she believed it relevant to the whole borough and intended to

raise it as a matter for future consideration under the Committee's forward plan agenda item.

341 Review of Rules and Regulations: Allotments - Key Decision

The Committee considered a report seeking its agreement to update the rules and regulations for allotments. These were last reviewed in 2012 and required updating in terms of format and presentation. There were no financial implications as a result of the change and plot holders would be sent the updated rules and regulations with their annual billing invoice in October.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

To retain the existing Rules and Regulations for Allotments.

The Committee **resolved** to agree the updated Rules & Regulations as set out in Appendix B to the report subject to the minor amendments discussed.

Reason for Decision:

The Rules and Regulations for allotment sites were last reviewed in 2012 and required updating.

342 Update on Government's Proposed Waste Strategy

The Committee considered a report summarising the Government's consultations on elements of its Waste and Resources Strategy for England. The Strategy combines actions and commitments for the coming years and gives a clear long term-policy direction in line with the Government's twenty-five-year Environment Plan.

Officers had responded to five consultation documents, three of which had significant consequences for all local authorities. The proposed Strategy was in the consultation stage and the authority would be required to comply with any legislation passed.

The Committee raised the possibility of participation in any pilot schemes, the need to be creative and look at greener options, concern about the financial implications for the Council and the importance of clear communications to ensure residents were aware of any changes.

The Group Head of Neighbourhood Services assured the Committee that future updates would be provided on the Waste Strategy as information became available.

The Committee **resolved** to note the report.

Reason for Decision:

The Government has consulted on different elements of its Waste and Resources Strategy for England. This report provides a summary of the

consultations and the potential impacts to Councils across England if the strategy was introduced.

343 Engine Idling Poster Campaign

In October 2020 the Council agreed a motion that Spelthorne should be declared a No Idling Zone, however responsibility for this sat with Surrey County Council as the Highways Authority and required their support to do this. Surrey do not consider engine idling to be a major source of air pollution.

Councillor Sexton believed that Surrey were not opposed to the proposal but that it related to a traffic order and agreed, in her role as a County Councillor, to discuss with them how this could be progressed and report back.

A poster campaign had been launched by Spelthorne in August 2021 to build awareness and encourage drivers in Spelthorne to reduce engine idling. The Committee were impressed with the posters and asked how the response to the campaign could be measured. Claire Lucas, Principal Pollution Control Officer, advised that the social media element was quantifiable and would be looked at after a three month period, however monitoring equipment for engine idling was not sufficiently developed or at an affordable level for the Council.

The potential link between dementia and exhaust fumes was raised and members asked if a further poster could be devised to increase awareness of this.

The Committee **resolved** to note the report.

Reason for Decision:

To help achieve behavioural change amongst drivers in Spelthorne and reduce air pollution.

344 Revenue Monitoring Report (Qtr. 1 April - June)

Terry Collier, Chief Finance Officer, presented the revenue monitoring report for the Environment and Sustainability Committee covering the period April to June 2021.

The Committee asked for further details regarding the breakdown of the garden waste income and whether the figure was the projected outcome or actual income to date and also if the underspend for the Local Plan related to specific elements and the likely impact by the end of the year. Terry agreed to provide a written answer to Committee members.

Just before the meeting closed, Terry advised that he had received confirmation that the underspend on the Local Plan related to examination of the Plan itself.

The Committee **resolved** to note the current level of revenue spend.

345 Capital Monitoring Report (Qtr. 1 April - June)

Terry Collier presented the Capital Monitoring report for the Environment and Sustainability Committee covering the period April to June 2021.

Terry drew the Committee's attention to an error in the report recommendation which should have stated the Committee were asked to note the projected overspend on capital expenditure of £83k. This related to additional costs to meet Environment Agency flood standards at Laleham Park relating to the pavilion.

The Development Sub-Committee, who were responsible for asset management, had recently agreed to the demolition of the pavilion at Laleham Park to make it safe, whilst the Environment and Sustainability Committee were responsible for parks and so there was some crossover of project responsibility whilst the new Committee system bedded in.

The Committee **resolved** to note the current level of projected overspend against its capital programme provision as at 30 June 2021.

346 River Thames Scheme update

The Committee received an update on the River Thames Scheme which will reduce flood risk to communities in the Surrey and South West London area. The scheme will involve the construction of a new river channel which will be built in two sections at Spelthorne and Runnymede.

Councillor Leighton expressed concern that the report included the widening of the Desborough Cut as she understood that plans had advanced from that and a new Thames landscape strategy was proposed which included rewilding of the island instead. The Group Head of Commissioning and Transformation advised the update only included publicly available information, and it was her understanding that the rewilding was a new plan from the consultants which was under consideration.

Councillor Mooney, as a County Councillor, undertook to obtain an update from the Surrey Cabinet member responsible on the financial aspects of the loan for defence scheme and circulate this to members.

It was anticipated that consultations would take place with residents in autumn of this year.

The Committee were advised that the next edition of the Spelthorne Bulletin would contain information on the River Thames scheme and advise residents of action to take and relevant contact numbers in preparation for any adverse weather conditions.

The Committee **resolved** to note the update.

347 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Update

Sandy Muirhead, Group Head of Commissioning and Transformation, advised the Committee that less progress had been made than hoped on this joint project with Surrey County Council and Atkins, their appointed consultants. Some consultation had taken place over the summer but it was considered insufficient.

Work had started on identifying priority cycling and walking routes and it was hoped that an outline of those for the 10 year infrastructure plan would be available for the next Committee meeting in November.

The Committee believed it was important that routes should focus on access to local schools.

The Committee **resolved** to note the update.

348 Updates from Task and Finish and/or Working Groups

Local Plan Task Group

Cllr Beardsmore and Cllr Mooney had been appointed Chair and Vice Chair respectively.

The task group had reviewed the 12 indicative green belt release sites and agreed to progress those to further review. The group would next consider Gypsy and Traveller sites and the draft policies.

It was likely that a joint meeting with the Staines Development Framework Group would be necessary as the plan progressed.

Staines Development Framework Group

Councillors Gibson and Bateson had been appointed Chair and Vice Chair respectively.

A preliminary update on the consultation response was provided by officers prior to the Extraordinary meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee on 6 October.

Local Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Spending Boards

Local spending boards had been set up and chairs appointed as follows:

Ashford: Cllr Islam

Shepperton, Laleham and Charlton Village: Cllr Leighton

Staines: Cllr Beecher

Stanwell and Stanwell Moor: Cllr Sue Doran

Sunbury and Upper Halliford: Cllr Fidler

Local CIL applications could be submitted up to 31 March 2022 after which the Local Spending Boards would consider schemes and award funding. Future spending rounds would be on an annual basis with applications welcomed between September and March and funding awarded by the summer.

Local Spending Board Chairs will also sit on the Strategic CIL Task Group and consider larger strategic bids before making recommendations to the Joint Committee. This group would meet in September to consider a number of strategic bids received, with final decisions to be made at the Joint Committee meeting scheduled for 22 November.

Climate Change Working Group

The Chair advised that Cllr Noble had been appointed Chairman of the Group. The Group had not formally met yet and the decision had been made to appoint a Chair as a result of pressure from Surrey for our involvement in a number of initiatives. Legal advice had been sought before the decision was made.

Councillor Siva believed that the appointment of Chairman should be a matter for the working group to decide and that others should be given the opportunity to stand. It was suggested that Councillor Siva discuss the matter with the Principal Solicitor after the meeting.

The Committee **resolved** to note the updates from the task and working groups.

349 Forward Plan

Councillor Rybinski proposed that a review of the Council's approach to dealing with bonfire complaints to make the rules more robust should be added to the forward plan. Cllr Rybinski reported that the number of complaints on this issue had increased by approximately 200%. Concern was expressed that bonfires were being used as a means of avoiding paying charges at the waste centre.

It was proposed that in the meantime a poster campaign should be introduced in a similar vein to the engine idling campaign to discourage bonfires and increase awareness of the negative impact on neighbours and the environment.

Councillor Beardsmore circulated redacted extracts of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to Public Health England relating to circumstances following the death of Zane Gbangbola which had been reported in the Mail on Sunday on 19 September. He had discussed the matter with the Leader and Deputy Leader and held discussions with the family.

It was agreed unanimously that the issue should be considered at an Extraordinary meeting of the Committee as soon as possible and that a report

was prepared to consider how a full investigation and examination of the site could be conducted by the Council as soon as possible.

The Committee **resolved** to note the items for future meetings on the Forward Plan subject to the inclusion of:

1. A review of the Council's approach to dealing with complaints relating to bonfires.
2. A report proposing how the Council will respond to new evidence relating to Zane Gbangbola's death. The report to be available for an extraordinary meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee to be held before 9 November 2021.