

**Minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Committee
10 January 2023**

Present:

Councillor I.J. Beardsmore (Chairman)
Councillor R.J. Noble (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

R.O. Barratt	N.J. Gething	L. E. Nichols
M. Beecher	K.M. Grant	O. Rybinski
J. Button	K. Howkins	J.R. Sexton
A. Brar	V.J. Leighton	
T. Fidler	S.C. Mooney	

In Attendance: Councillors C. Bateson

1/23 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

2/23 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

3/23 Questions from members of the Public

There were none.

4/23 Ward Issues

There were none.

5/23 Green Initiatives Fund Bid - Greenfield Recreation Ground

The Committee considered a request for funding from the Green Initiatives Fund to purchase and sow wildflower seeds through Greenfield Recreation Ground. Seeds would be purchased from a UK grower to support biodiversity and improve grassy areas of the recreation ground. The project would be monitored with the intention to improve other parks in future.

The Committee noted areas in the borough where similar projects had been completed and feedback received from residents. The Committee felt the project would improve the area and requested an update be given on its progress at a future meeting. This was agreed.

The Committee **resolved** to approve funding of £7,400 from the Green Initiatives Fund to purchase and sow wildflower seeds through Greenfield Recreation Ground.

6/23 23/24 Budget

The Chief Accountant presented the draft budget, fees and charges, growth bids, and savings bids for the committee's areas of responsibility.

The Chief Accountant apologised with regards to the late issuing of two updated documents due to an error with cost codes.

The Chief Accountant highlighted areas in the Net Expenditure Budget where there were differences between the current and previous year. The Committee noted the rise in water costs and that budget managers were exploring what could be done to mitigate costs.

The Chief Accountant introduced the growth bids to the committee's areas of responsibility. The Committee debated whether the bid for Conservation Area Appraisals was required in full for the financial year or if the cost and work could be spread across a number of years in an effort to make savings. The Committee recommended that the bid proceed as requested but that further detail on the proposed growth bids should be provided to members ahead of the budget being reviewed by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee. The Committee noted the costs related to the emergency planning budget were largely a statutory cost.

The Chief Accountant presented the savings bids.

The Chief Accountant presented the Fees and Charges. Following instruction by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, fees had been increased by at least 5% with some increased to a higher level.

The Committee **resolved** to recommend the draft 23/24 budget to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

7/23 Feedback on 23/24 Budget Setting Process

The Committee were asked to provide feedback on the changes to the budget setting process.

The Chief Accountant identified changes that had been implemented following feedback on the budget process the previous municipal year.

The Committee suggested that more information could be provided whether fees were discretionary or statutory. The Committee also felt that further information could be provided on some items and clarity that budget requests were linked to area service plans. The Committee also requested that budget books be tidied for future presentation.

8/23 Updates from Task and Finish and/or Working Groups

The Committee received updates on the work of the CIL Task Group and the Climate Change Working Group.

Councillor Noble provided a summary of items considered by the Climate Change Working Group.

The Committee **resolved** to note the updates from the CIL Task Group and the Climate Change Working Group.

9/23 Forward Plan

The Committee noted a recommendation from the Economic Development Committee to receive a presentation from Heathrow Airport Limited.

The Committee **resolved** to note the forward plan with the inclusion of the additional items agreed at the meeting:

- 1) A presentation from Heathrow Airport Limited
- 2) A Review of Car Parking in Staines from Strategic Planning
- 3) A Review of the Green Initiatives Fund