

**Minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Committee
21 November 2023**

Present:

Councillor M. Beecher (Chair)
Councillor K.M. Grant (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

S.N. Beatty	D. Clarke	K. Rutherford
L. Brennan	K. Howkins	J.R. Sexton
T. Burrell	M. Lee	J.Turner

Substitutions: Councillors C. Bateson (In place of L. E. Nichols)

Apologies: Councillors S.M. Doran, A. Mathur, L. E. Nichols and H.R.D. Williams

56/23 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 05 September 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

57/23 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

58/23 Questions from members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the public.

59/23 Ward Issues

There were no ward issues.

60/23 Update on the Air Quality Action Plan

The Committee considered a report from the Principal Pollution Control Officer on the advice from Defra regarding the Air Quality Action Plan and the Air Quality Management Area. Defra had advised the Council that a new plan would need to be in place by May 2024. The Group Head – Place, Protection and Prosperity had written to Defra to explain that a consultation process needed to be followed and to request an extension to the deadline.

The Committee queried how many air quality monitors there were in the Borough and were informed that there were 48 non-automatic monitors, one automatic one (located at Sunbury Cross), and a continuous analyser in Stanwell which is funded by Heathrow Airport.

The Committee asked why the May 2024 deadline set by Defra would not be met. The Principal Pollution Control officer advised that work had begun on a new plan in 2022 but had paused due to uncertainty relating to the ULEZ expansion. There was also a requirement to complete statutory reporting to Defra during the same time period.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Note the advice from Defra regarding updating the Air Quality Action Plan and the Air Quality Management Area.
2. Note the work required to complete the Air Quality Action Plan.

61/23 Local Plan Update

The Committee received a verbal update from the Service Lead for Strategic Planning and Enterprise, and the Group Head – Place Protection and Prosperity, on the Local Plan.

A summary of the update is included with these minutes.

The Committee queried whether the Environment Agency (EA) would be able to attend a future Committee meeting to discuss the flood risk issues. Councillor Beecher informed the Committee that he had spoken to the EA and been advised that they would be unable to attend any committee meetings due to volume of work and staffing issues.

The Committee asked whether the design codes, once established, would apply to developers looking to build within the borough and were advised that was the purpose of the codes.

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

62/23 Updates from Task and Finish and/or Working Groups

The Committee received an update from the Infrastructure Delivery Coordinator on Local CIL funding decisions.

There were no questions from the Committee on Local CIL decision.

The Committee received an update from the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee on the Climate Change Working Group. Councillor Beecher advised that the working group had discussed Sweeps Ditch, EV Hubs, and the use of the shared prosperity fund to assist small and medium enterprises to reduce their carbon emissions.

The Group Head – Commissioning and Transformation advised the Committee that there had been instances of flooding along the River Ash. The EA had been contacted and had modified the flow of the river which had resolved the issue.

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

63/23 Forward Plan

The Committee considered the forward plan for future Committee business.

The Committee **resolved** to note the forward plan.

64/23 Exclusion of Public and Press

It was proposed by Councillor Sexton, seconded by Councillor Grant and **resolved** to exclude the public and press be excluded for the following agenda items, in accordance with paragraph 4 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) because it was likely to disclose information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

65/23 Service Plans (as part of the 24/25 Budget Process)

The Project Accountant advised that the service plans were the first step in the budget process and that there would be further opportunities to scrutinise service requirements when the draft budget was presented to committees in January 2024.

The Committee considered the Planning Development Service Plan, presented by the Planning Development Manager.

The Committee considered the Strategic Planning Service Plan, presented by the Service Lead for Strategic Planning and Enterprise.

The Committee **resolved** to note the service plans.

Meeting ended at 20:10

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Environment & Sustainability Committee – 21 November 2023

Local Plan update

Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- Not yet published
- Advised it is still planned to be published in ‘autumn’
- Once published, Members will be briefed on the changes, what they mean for the Spelthorne Local Plan and be asked to consider next steps, including input from CRA (critical friend)

Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

- Weekly operational meetings and monthly monitoring meetings being held with DLUHC officials and SBC officers
- A timeline towards resuming examination hearings is in progress and will be shared and agreed by Members before being provided to DLUHC
- Timeline can only set out tasks and timescales for their completion until the revised NPPF is published, after which we will be able to set out dates

Environment Agency (EA)

- Ongoing engagement to seek to resolve outstanding issues
- Issues now provided within a spreadsheet to differentiate between ‘critical’ and ‘advisory’ comments
- Spreadsheet published 17 November (information from EA in ‘raw’ form released prior to that was published on 10 November)
- Officers and SBC’s flood risk consultants, AECOM, are now seeking a further meeting with the EA to focus on the critical comments
- AECOM are in the process of producing an updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as the EA has recently published the updated flooding model for the River Thames, which is likely to be ready in early January 2024

Design Codes

- Work has begun on the procurement of consultants to assist SBC in producing design codes at an accelerated pace
- Specification currently being drafted
- Andy Von Bradsky has been contracted to assist officers in this process
- An Interactive Briefing and Workshop for Members is scheduled for 28 November at 18:00. We encourage as many councillors as possible to attend. We would be grateful if you could confirm your attendance so that we can be prepared. Please do send us your pictures as per the invitation ahead of the meeting for use in the workshop.
- Awaiting outcome of bid for government funding (Planning Skills and Delivery Funding) to contribute to costs

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