

**Minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Committee
27 February 2024**

Present:

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

Councillors:

S.N. Beatty	S.M. Doran	J.R. Sexton
J.R. Boughtflower	M.J. Lee	J.A. Turner
T. Burrell	L. E. Nichols	P.N. Woodward
J.P. Caplin	K.E. Rutherford	

Substitutions: Councillors K. Howkins (In place of N. Islam)

Apologies: Councillors M.M. Attewell and H.R.D. Williams

In Attendance: Councillors C. Bateson

13/24 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

14/24 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

15/24 Questions from members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the public.

16/24 Green Initiatives Fund Bid - Home Canvassing Visits

The Committee considered a request for funding from the Green Initiatives Fund for the leasing of 20 electronic tablets to reduce paper output related to canvassing for the electoral register. A trial use of tablets was undertaken recently and feedback indicated that the canvassers found them easier to use, and more accurate and efficient in data collection.

The Committee queried the reasoning behind leasing the tablets rather than purchasing them, and the Electoral Services Manager explained that the tablets were only required for a six week period, and a majority of the cost was relate to licences which would require annual renewal. If successful, this would be an ongoing annual cost, however it was anticipated use of the tablets would enable savings in officer cost and time. The Committee suggested that if the bid was approved, an evaluation on efficiency should be undertaken to justify future expenditure.

The Committee **resolved** to approve the bid for funding from the Green Initiatives Fund amounting to £9272.50 to offset the cost of the leasing of 20 tablets and licences.

17/24 Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document

The Committee considered a report on the adoption of the Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) from the Climate Change Officer and Principal Planning Officer (Strategic Planning). A consultation on the SPD had been undertaken, and the responses evaluated. The document had been amended slightly to take responses into consideration. If adopted, the SPD could be used in conjunction with existing climate change policies and any future local plans from the date of adoption. All future planning applications would require the document to be completed when submitted.

The Committee noted that the measures set out in the document were guidance and queried how engagement with the guidance would be measured. The Climate Change Officer confirmed that officers would be evaluating the responses and further work on the document could be considered if response was lacking. Training would be given to assist with completion of the form. The Planning Development Manager confirmed that the document could be included in the list of forms required to be submitted for planning applications, and consideration would be given about how to capture the information from the SPD in reports for the Planning Committee.

The Committee **resolved** to approve the Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document and recommend to Council for adoption.

18/24 River Thames Scheme Consultation Response

The Committee received a presentation on the River Thames Scheme Statutory Consultation Project Group's Response from the Principal Planning Officer, and the Project Manager from Stantec.

The Project Manager from Stantec presented a summary of the Project Group's response which set out the wider benefits of the scheme to Spelthorne but explained that the main focus of the report was to cover areas of concern, areas where they felt detail in proposals were lacking, contradictory statements, and highlighted the ambitious timeline proposed. The response also recommended further engagement to address the concerns expressed in the consultation response, and suggested that engagement in the areas affected would need to be tailored to those areas.

Some Committee members expressed concern over the disparity of the information presented in the consultation response against the consultation events for the scheme that had taken place with residents. The Project Manager explained that it was not unusual for concerns to be raised at this point in the process for the applicant to address them before submitting their Development Consent Order to the Planning Inspectorate. An examination on the Order would then take place, and the Planning Inspectorate would not accept it if they did not believe that there were outstanding concerns.

The Committee noted that the response was a collective response from a number of stakeholders affected by the scheme, and expressed hope that control over development of the scheme would be addressed. The Group Head – Place, Protection, and Prosperity suggested that consideration could be given to independent monitoring of the scheme.

The Committee suggested that further concerns regarding Ferris Meadow Lake, and gravel extraction in Sunbury should be included in the consultation response. The Committee also noted some of the benefits the scheme would bring to some areas of Spelthorne.

The Project Manager further encouraged the Committee members and residents to respond to the consultation with individual concerns.

The Committee **resolved** to agree the Council's response to the River Thames Scheme Statutory Consultation.

19/24 Establishment of Spelthorne Design Code Task Group and Terms of Reference

The Committee considered a report from the Principal Planning Officer (Strategic Planning) to establish a Design Code Task Group. Development of a design code was a requirement of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, and a particular concern to residents and elected members. Establishing a task group would ensure effective and ongoing engagement with key stakeholders.

The Committee expressed concern that the group would only consist of four members, and two would hold chair positions. After some discussion, it was agreed that references to a vice-chair should be removed from the terms of reference. The Committee also suggested that minutes of meetings held should be taken, and it was confirmed that key matters discussed would be

reported to the Committee. The task group could not make decisions and any decisions would be referred to the Committee.

The Committee **resolved** to establish the Spelthorne Design Code Task Group and approved its terms of reference subject to the removal of references to a Vice-Chair.

It was proposed by Councillor Beecher and seconded by Councillor Sexton that Councillors Lisa Brennan, Tony Burrell, Howard Williams, and Michele Gibson be appointed as members to the task group.

The Committee **resolved** to appoint Councillors Lisa Brennan, Tony Burrell, Howard Williams, and Michele Gibson as members of the task group.

It was proposed by Councillor Beecher and seconded by Councillor Sexton that Councillor Burrell be appointed as Chair of the task group.

It was proposed by Councillor Boughtflower and seconded by Councillor Howkins that Councillor Brennan be appointed as Chair of the task group.

The Committee **resolved** to appoint Councillor Tony Burrell as the Chair of the Task Group.

20/24 Updates from Task and Finish and/or Working Groups

The Committee received an update on the work of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Task Groups and a verbal update on the work of the Climate Change Working Group.

The Group Head – Place, Protection and Prosperity notified the Committee that members on the CIL board were comfortable with Spelthorne Museum's request for phased payments.

The Chair provided a summary of topics and reports discussed at the last meeting of the Climate Change Working Group.

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

21/24 Forward Plan

The Committee **resolved** to note the forward plan for future Committee business.

Meeting ended 20:38