

**Minutes of the Neighbourhood Services and Enforcement Committee
5 October 2023**

Present:

Councillor K. Rutherford (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors:

M. Bing Dong

D. Clarke

J.R. Sexton

T. Burrell

Substitutions: Councillors M.M. Attewell, C. Bateson, and J. Button

Apologies: Councillors S. Bhadye, J. Caplin, J.T.F. Doran, and N. Islam

In Attendance: Councillor M. Beecher

27/23 Apologies and Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillor Bhadye, Councillor Caplin, Councillor J Doran, and Councillor Islam.

Councillor Attewell attended as substitute for Councillor Islam, Councillor Bateson attended as substitute for Councillor Caplin, and Councillor Button attended as substitute for Councillor Doran.

28/23 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

29/23 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

30/23 Questions from members of the Public

There were none.

31/23 Ward Issues

There were none.

32/23 Spelthorne Borough Council - Environmental Health & Building Control Enforcement Policy

The Senior Environmental Health Manager presented the report on the Environmental Health & Building Control Enforcement Policy.

The Committee had no questions.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Recommend to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee that they adopt the Environmental Health & Building Control Enforcement Policy (2023-2026)
2. Recommend to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee that they grant approval that minor changes can be made to the Policy with the approval of Deputy Chief Executive with responsibility for Place, Protection and Prosperity.
3. To note Spelthorne Borough Council's Environmental Health 'Procedure for Setting Financial Penalties – Banding the Offence and Determining Appropriate Sanctions'.

33/23 Review of Community Safety 2023

The Community Safety Officer presented the report on the 2023 Review of Community Safety and stated that this was the last of the three-year reports before a new strategy would be introduced in 2024.

Inspector Walton introduced himself as the new Borough Commander and thanked the Committee for inviting him to attend.

The Committee asked what the distinction was between hate crime and non-crime hate incidents. The Borough Commander advised that for non-crime incidents these would only be recorded if there was evidence to show it was specifically targeted against an individual.

The Committee queried what the police were doing with regards to domestic abuse, and violence against women and girls (VAWG). The Borough Commander informed the Committee that a Chief Superintendent was dedicated to this and had already done some targeted activity within Staines. The Community Support Officer advised that they worked proactively to identify locations where people felt unsafe and then targeted that area.

The Committee asked what the police were doing to address residents' concerns around burglaries in the Sunbury area. The Borough Commander responded that burglaries across the borough were not increasing and that most thefts were from vehicles, specifically tools. The Borough Commander

advised that they were present at various trade shows and offered a service to mark tools at point of purchase so that it could be added to a database. He further advised that the Autumn burglary programme had commenced and information would be made available to residents through a series of social media posts, flyers, and community engagement events. The Community Support Officer informed the Committee that they had 57 monitored CCTV cameras across the borough in addition to several unmonitored cameras.

The Committee asked what the police were doing about E-scooters and E-bikes, particularly when being used inappropriately. The Borough Commander responded that the Government would be looking at legislation around E-bikes and E-scooters but clarified that E-Scooters were not legal to use on public roads. He informed the Committee that the police were working to educate children using them as well as parents.

The Committee queried what the police were doing in relation to the increase of NOS cannisters, particularly the large variety. The Borough Commander reported that officers would seize cannisters if people were caught with them. The Community Support Officer added that they worked with Spelthorne Litter Pickers to identify hotspots and would place cameras to catch people who were dumping them.

The Committee stated that some residents felt that they did not see the police on the street enough. The Borough Commander acknowledged they could not respond to everything and stated that they have to prioritise based on a Threat, Risk, Harm assessment. He stated that criminality had changed, including an increase in online crime, and as such resources would not always be visible.

The Committee asked what they could do to help get information through to the police. The Community Support Officer advised the Committee that he would distribute Partnership Intelligence Forms to all Councillors and would diarise it to be sent out every six months.

The Committee asked what action the Police would take to protect Councillors being threatened by members of the public, highlighting a recent example in which the voting record of certain councillors had been posted online by an organisation which had led to two councillors expressing their concern. The Borough Commander advised that he could not comment on the specific matter highlighted but advised that it would need to be considered in regard to non-crime hate. If the social media post had specifically incited people to cause harm to specific individuals, then it would be a clear threat. The need to protect people's right to voice their opinion would need to be protected and voicing that opinion would not equal a crime.

The Committee asked what powers the police had regarding the smoking of cannabis outside an individual's residence. The Borough Commander advised that cannabis was still a class B drug and if someone was found to be in possession of it then they would be arrested. The Community Support Officer advised that they used the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

which allowed them to issue a warning notice if someone was found to be smoking Cannabis in their home. If it continued, then the Community Support Officer has the power to take them to court and prosecute.

The Committee asked whether the Borough Commander would provide an update that could go in the Bulletin and were advised that he would be willing to do that.

The Committee **resolved** to note the 2023 review of Community Safety.

34/23 Q and A with Borough Commander

This item was covered as part of the previous item.

35/23 Play Area Improvements

The Group Head – Neighbourhood Services presented the report on improvements to play area and stated that Shepperton Studios decided the location of what play areas would get improved.

The Committee queried if it would be appropriate to have a delay in the procurement process to enable consultation with residents. The Group Head of Neighbourhood Services advised that as part of the procurement exercise there would be engagement with both the community and councillors.

The Committee asked whether there was a Wheelchair Swing in any of the parks in the borough and if not, could one be included. The Committee were advised that would be investigated.

The Committee asked how much a new play area costs and were advised that it varies, examples of costs were given that included; cost of a bank of swings at around £6,000 - £7,000, and cost of surfacing at around £40,000.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Authorise the Group Head of Neighbourhood Services to commence a tender for the procurement of play area equipment;
2. Delegate authority to the Group Head Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Chair of Neighbourhood Services to appoint the chosen supplier/s; and
3. Authorise the Group Head of Corporate Governance to enter the contract with the selected supplier.

36/23 Road Channel Sweeping

The Group Head – Neighbourhood Services presented the report on Road channel sweeping.

The Committee queried whether it would be possible to let residents know the day the street sweeper would be attending each road. The Group Head –

Neighbourhood Services advised against this option and stated that there were many factors that could lead to a change in the schedule such as staff sickness and maintenance issues.

The Committee asked if roads could be added to the leafing schedule and whether the use of handheld leaf blowers had been considered. The Committee were advised that they could suggest roads which would then be inspected by officers and added if appropriate. Handheld leaf blowers had been considered but were very resource intensive.

The Committee advised that they would like for the Group Head – Neighbourhood Services to produce a new report which included options for improving the Road Channel Sweeping in the Borough. The Group Head – Neighbourhood Services advised they would bring the report in March 2024 which would allow them time to try potential solutions over the winter period.

The Committee suggested that those councillors that were also County councillors could raise the issue of road closures with Surrey County Council (SCC) directly to see if it would be possible to coordinate the road sweeping schedule with SCC's drainage works. The Committee further suggested a letter could be sent from the Committee to SCC.

The Committee **resolved** that a letter would be sent from the Committee to Surrey County Council. The letter would be drafted by the Group Head – Neighbourhood Services and approved by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee as well as Councillor Attewell and Councillor Sexton.

The Committee **resolved** that a report would be added to the Forward Plan for March 2024 with possible options to deal with the Road Channel Sweeping issue.

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

37/23 Forward Plan

Additions to the Forward Plan were requested by:

Councillor Bing Dong requested that a report on a Community Toilet scheme be added to the Forward Plan.

Councillor Sexton requested a report on charges for Blue Badge parking in Borough car parks be added to the Forward Plan.

Councillor Clarke requested a report on improvements to Littleton Recreation Area be added to the Forward Plan.

The Committee **noted** the forward plan with the above agreed additional items.

Meeting ended at 21:30