

**Minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Committee
3 December 2024**

Present:

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

Councillors:

S.N. Beatty	S.M. Doran	H.R.D. Williams
L.H. Brennan	A. Mathur	P.N. Woodward
T. Burrell	J.R. Sexton	
J.P. Caplin	J.A. Turner	

Apologies: Councillors M. Bing Dong, N. Islam and O. Rybinski

In Attendance: Councillors C. Bateson

50/24 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

51/24 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

52/24 Questions from members of the Public

There were none.

53/24 Environment & Sustainability - Budget, Fees and Charges, Capital bids, Revenue Growth and Savings for 2025/26

The Committee considered the Environment and Sustainability Committee budget, fees and charges, capital bids, and revenue growth and savings bids for 2025/26. The Joint Financial Services Manager advised a 4% uplift of discretionary fees and charges had been applied. Significant revenue savings and growth bids were highlighted as well as significant capital growth bids.

The Committee expressed concern that car park revenue had not reached anticipated income and were advised a consultation would be undertaken to inform any increased parking charges in future. The Committee noted the charge for memorial benches was in the incorrect column and that this charge would continue in future. The Committee acknowledged the return of the verge maintenance contract to the Council and the growth bid request for mowers to facilitate this.

The Committee were assured that any growth bids would be brought to the appropriate committee in future for approval.

The Committee **resolved** to

1. Approve the 2025/26 Budget, Fees and Charges, Capital Bids, Revenue Growth and Savings Proposals for Environment and Sustainability Committee
2. Recommend to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee that they approve the proposed 2025/26 Budget, Fees and Charges, Capital Bids, Revenue Growth and Savings proposals for Environment and Sustainability Committee.

54/24 Local Planning Enforcement Policy Updates

The Committee considered the updated Local Planning Enforcement Policy. The Planning Enforcement Team Leader advised that following adoption in March 2024, new enforcement legislation came into effect through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and the policy had been amended to reflect this. Key changes to the policy were summarised for the Committee.

The Committee expressed concern about the removal of references to the amount individuals could be fined, and requested wording be added to explain it would be for the courts to decide the amount of fines. The Committee noted that when the Council undertook successful enforcement action, this was usually advertised by a press release.

The Committee **resolved** to adopt the updated Local Planning Enforcement Policy.

55/24 Annual Planning Development Management Performance Report 2023

The Committee received the Annual Planning Development Management Performance report for 2023 from the Planning Development Manager. The report was presented annually to advise members of the performance of Planning Development Management against government targets and requirements. The performance was measured over a rolling two year period and was assessed against the speed of determining application for major and non-major development, and the quality of decisions made by the authority on applications for major and non-major development. Spelthorne Borough Council met and exceeded all four targets for the threshold periods.

The Committee noted the rise in planning enforcement complaints and the number of enforcement notices served.

The Committee **resolved** to note the Annual Planning Development Management Performance Report 2023.

56/24 Draft Air Quality Action Plan (Adoption of Spelthorne's Air Quality Action Plan)

The Committee considered the draft Air Quality Action Plan for adoption after undergoing public consultation. As part of its local authority air quality management responsibilities, the Council has a statutory duty to produce a plan setting out actions that it and other stakeholders would take to improve and safeguard air quality within Spelthorne's Air Quality Management Area. The consultation received a good response, and DEFRA had contacted the Council to confirm they were in agreement with the action plan.

The Committee acknowledged actions related to active travel and the collaboration that was required with key stakeholders to enable active travel schemes. The Committee expressed concern on the emphasis placed on electric vehicles and the lack of charging points in the borough. The Committee were assured this was being actively pursued by Climate Change Officers.

The Committee acknowledged pollution hotspots in the borough and requested further information on a notification app, airTEXT, that alerts residents when pollution levels are likely to be higher than usual.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Note the Air Quality Action Plan consultation report and
2. Approve the adoption of the final Air Quality Action Plan.

57/24 Update to Local Development Scheme

The Committee considered an updated Local Development Scheme for publication. An up-to-date scheme was a requirement for the Local Plan Examination, and following the resolution of Council to request the Examination resume, it required updating. A delegation to a key officer and the Chair of the Committee was encouraged to assist in meeting the Inspector's deadline for required documentation.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Agree the publication of the updated Local Development Scheme
2. Agree to delegate authority to the Group Head of Place, Protection and Prosperity in consultation with the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, to agree any modifications to Local Plan policy wording and its supporting text, and any minor modifications, to propose to the Inspector.

58/24 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 and the Design Code Task Group.

The Chair provided the Committee with a summary of topics and reports discussed at the last meetings of the Climate Change Working Group that the Committee could expect to see in future.

The Chair of the Design Code Task Group provided a summary of the work of the Design Code Task Group and the engagement with the Citizens Panel since the Committee last met.

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

59/24 Forward Plan

The Committee considered a request from Talking Tree to give a presentation at a future Committee meeting.

The Committee **resolved** to add a Presentation from Talking Tree to the forward plan for future Committee business.

The Committee were advised that since publication, a report on Heathrow's Easterly Alternation proposals has been added to the forward plan.

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

Meeting ended 20:52