

**Minutes of the Neighbourhood Services Committee
13 January 2022**

Present:

Councillor A. Brar (Chairman)

Councillors:

R.D. Dunn

V.J. Leighton

R.J. Noble

S.A. Dunn

S.C. Mooney

B.B. Spoor

Apologies: Councillors V. Siva

In Attendance: Councillors C. Bateson and M. Beecher

1/22 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

2/22 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

3/22 Questions from members of the Public

There were none.

4/22 Ward Issues

There were none.

5/22 Cashless Parking - Key Decision*

The Committee considered a report on the introduction of an additional type of cashless parking within Spelthorne Borough Council-owned car parks.

The Parking Services Operational Manager explained the report arose from member interest at a previous meeting, and that the introduction of this type of cashless parking would provide an additional choice to users of Spelthorne

Borough Council owned car parks. He clarified that under the financial implications in the report, options 3.1 (a) and 3.1 (b) should be swapped.

The Committee noted that introducing this type of payment would not eliminate cash payments within the car parks, but would introduce another option for cashless payment through mobile devices. The Committee debated whether the customer should pay the associated fees for the service or whether the fees should be incorporated into the cost of parking and paid through the Council. The Committee felt the fees should be paid directly by the customer as this would provide them with more transparency and control over the transaction, and these additional fees for using this payment method should be clearly advertised. Choosing this option would also save the Council from incurring additional costs.

Alternative options considered and rejected by the Committee:

- 1) Authorise the Group Head of Neighbourhood Services to introduce “Cashless” payment as an approved payment method in The Spelthorne Borough Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order, and for the transaction charges to be paid directly by Spelthorne Borough Council per transaction;
- 2) Reject the introduction of “Cashless” payment as an approved payment method in The Spelthorne Borough Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order, with the current payment methods being considered sufficient and proportionate to the needs of its customers.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Authorise the Group Head of Neighbourhood Services to introduce “Cashless” payment as an approved payment method in The Spelthorne Borough Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order;
2. Agree for the transaction charges to be paid directly by the customer, in addition to the existing tariff charges;
3. Authorise the Group Head of Neighbourhood Services to enter into a procurement exercise to tender for a Cashless parking provider;
4. Delegate the appointment of the contractor to the Group Head of Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Committee;
5. Authorise the Group Head of Corporate Governance to complete any legal documentation necessary to implement the new contract.

6/22 Electric Vehicle Charging Points in Car Parks

The Parking Services Operational Manager presented the report on electric vehicle charging points in Spelthorne Borough Council owned car parks.

The Parking Services Operational Manager explained the current status of options for electric vehicle charging points in the borough, and with the ban on sale of non-electric or rechargeable vehicles past 2030, that adaptation of car parks needed to be considered in future. He explained there would be a significant financial challenge to meet demand in future.

The Committee noted that third party suppliers may need to fill the gap in demand for electric vehicle charging points, but Spelthorne should strive to improve the number of charging points offered.

The Committee **resolved** to note the report on electric vehicle charging points in Spelthorne Borough Council owned car parks.

7/22 Domestic Abuse Update

The Chairman proposed the Committee hear this item before “Cashless Parking – Key Decision”, and the committee agreed.

The Community Safety Officer presented the update on the Domestic Abuse Strategy.

The Community Safety Officer explained the report arose from comments surrounding the community safety strategy at the 11 September 2021 meeting. He outlined Spelthorne Borough Council’s current domestic abuse strategy and provided updates on how the strategy would be adjusted to reflect changes in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

The Committee noted that instances of domestic abuse had risen within Spelthorne and encouraged more information and resources be made available on the Council’s website. The committee requested that opportunities to hear from domestic abuse survivors be made available to all members.

The Committee **resolved** to note the update on the Domestic Abuse Strategy for inclusion in the review of the Community Safety Strategy for 2022.

The meeting was adjourned at 20:23

The meeting reconvened at 20:30

8/22 Capital Bids 2022/23 (part of annual budget process)

The Chief Accountant presented requested capital growth bids to the committee and explained that as part of the annual budget process in the Committee System, each committee was asked to rate the proposed bids for their areas and make recommendations to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee. The Committee was asked to rate every proposal as either red (not supported), amber (supported, but the project could move forward in either 2022/23 or 2023/24), or green (commence in 2022/23). The

Chief Accountant also clarified that the document had been further updated since circulated (attached).

Officers were invited to provide justification for their capital growth bids and received questions from the Committee. The Committee debated whether the growth bids were an immediate need or whether they could be delayed.

The Committee **resolved** to rate both proposed capital growth bids as green (commence in 2022/23) for recommendation to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

9/22 Committee Review of Fees and Charges for Service Areas 2022/23 (part of annual budget process)

The Chief Accountant presented the proposed Fees and Charges that related to the Neighbourhood Service Committees areas of responsibility and explained that as part of the annual budget process in the Committee System, proposed changes to these recommendations would then be presented to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee. He advised the Committee that a number of cemetery charges had been missed and presented them to the Committee (attached).

The Committee reviewed the fees and charges relating to cemeteries, building control, car parks, environmental health, Spelride and licensing. The Committee noted that some of the rises in fees and charges were statutory and that a 3% increase had been put in place for most other charges. Officers present confirmed that many of the fees and charges were comparable to neighbouring boroughs.

The Committee **resolved** to agree all Fees and Charges as proposed for recommendation to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

10/22 Revenue Growth and Savings Bids 2022/23 (part of annual budget process)

The Chief Accountant presented the proposed revenue growth and savings bids to the Committee and explained that as part of the annual budget process in the Committee System, each committee was asked to rate the proposed growth and savings bids for their areas and make recommendations to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee. The Committee was asked to review the bids that had been rated by officers as either red (the item could be withdrawn), amber (the proposal could be deferred to 2022/23), or green (it must commence in 2022/23). The Chief Accountant also clarified that the document had been further updated since circulated (attached).

The Committee voted to suspend Standing Orders so that the meeting could carry on until 22:30.

The Committee invited officers to explain and provide justification for their revenue growth bids. The Committee debated whether the growth bids were an immediate need or whether they could be delayed. The Committee also noted that a number of revenue bids were statutory and their rating could not be changed.

The Committee **resolved** to agree every proposed rating by officers as presented to the Committee for recommendation to the Corporate Policy and Resources committee.

11/22 Forward Plan

The Committee **resolved** to note the Forward Plan for future committee business.

12/22 Urgent business

The Chairman proposed the Committee hear this item before “Cashless Parking – Key Decision”, and the committee agreed.

The Chair used her discretion to allow Councillor S. Mooney to make a brief statement about Covid-19 rates within the borough.