

**Minutes of the Neighbourhood Services and Enforcement Committee
18 January 2024**

Present:

Councillor J.T.F. Doran (Chair)
Councillor K.E. Rutherford (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

M. Bing Dong J.P. Caplin
T. Burrell J.R. Sexton

Apologies: Councillor J.R. Boughtflower

In Attendance: Councillor C. Bateson

1/24 Apologies and Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillor Boughtflower.

2/24 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

3/24 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

4/24 Questions from members of the Public

There were none.

5/24 Dog Control Public Space Protection Order

The Law Enforcement Officer presented the report on the proposed extension of the current Dog Control Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) and advised the Committee that there had been a minor change of wording to point 2.2 which clarified that the exclusion of dogs from sites within the Borough related to park areas which were enclosed by a fence.

The Committee asked what a member of the public could do if they observed someone with a dog in an exclusion zone and were advised that it should be reported. The Law Enforcement Officer informed the Committee that the Team worked flexibly and could arrange for patrols at whatever time of day was required.

The Committee queried whether the signage could include stronger wording and whether a QR code could be used to make it easier for residents to report incidents. The Group Head Neighbourhood Services advised that they understood the PSPO signs could not be altered but would check and let Committee members know. It was agreed that a QR Code linked to the Council's report it forms was a good idea and this would be discussed further with the Communications department.

The Committee **resolved** to adopt the proposed extension to the Dog Control Public Space Protection Order.

6/24 Fees and Charges for 2024-25

The Chief Accountant presented the report on the proposed Fees and Charges for the Committee and advised that as the budget was balanced, if any changes were requested the Committee would need to suggest how the shortfall would be rectified.

The Committee asked about the decrease in fees for some of the Car Parks in Staines and were advised that a full report on Car Parks would be presented to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and would include a full analysis and explanation of the changes to the fees. The Chief Accountant advised the Committee that this would be reviewed for the 2025/26 budget with a view to the report on Car Parks going to Neighbourhood Services Committee first and then to Corporate Policy and Resources.

The Committee asked what the maximum increase was for statutory services and were advised that these fees were set by external regulatory bodies or Central Government, and that the guidance from Corporate Policy and Resources Committee was to charge the maximum allowed under regulations.

The Committee queried what the standing charge for repairs to headstones related to and were advised that this was there to cover officer time relating to; checking that the person requesting the repairs was authorised to do so, site visits, and checks that the work has been completed to the correct standard. The Committee asked if this could be communicated to residents and whether the charge was being increased. The Group Head Neighbourhood Services advised that they would check and report back to Members ahead of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 22 January 2024.

The Committee discussed fees for child graves and expressed discomfort over the increase. The Group Head Neighbourhood Services advised that fees for child burials were fully recoverable from Central Government. The Committee requested that information needed to be communicated to residents and the Group Head Neighbourhood services advised that this would be discussed with the Cemeteries Manager to ensure this was happening.

The Committee asked why the fees relating to Gambling Licenses were not being increased and were advised that these were statutory fees and as the maximum amount was already being charged it could not be increased further.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Approve the proposed Fees and Charges for 2024-25 for this Committee.
2. Recommend to Corporate Policy & Resources Committee that they approve the proposed Fees and Charges for 2024-25.

7/24 Service Plans 2024-25

The Chief Accountant presented the report on the proposed Service Plans including Revenue and Capital bids, and Savings plans for each Cost Centre and advised the Committee that the recommendation in the report needed to be amended to include the approval and recommendation of the Capital Growth Bids.

The Chief Accountant advised the Committee of an error in Appendix C, stating that the figures in the last row were incorrect and it was agreed that these would be corrected.

The Committee asked if it would be possible to include more information on the Savings Plan to show exactly where the savings were being made and were advised that the Group Head Neighbourhood Services and the Chief Accountant would discuss to see if there was a better way to present this information.

The Committee observed that there was no cumulative total presented on the Savings Plan and the Chief Accountant advised that this would be rectified.

The Chief Accountant advised that the Growth Bid for Ground Maintenance related to the loss of the service for maintaining highway verges. The Committee queried whether there was a clearer way for this to be presented and it was agreed that the term Growth Bid could be replaced by 'budget adjustment'.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Approve the proposed Revenue Growth Bids, Capital Growth Bids and Savings Plans for 2024-25 for this Committee.

2. Recommend to Corporate Policy & Resources Committee that they approve the proposed Revenue Growth Bids, Capital Growth Bids and Savings Plans for 2024-25.

8/24 Forward Plan

The Committee queried whether the report on Road Channel Sweeping was still on the Forward Plan and were advised that while this had accidentally been missed off the plan it would be presented at the March 2024 meeting.

The Committee **noted** the forward plan.

Meeting ended at 20:55

9/24 Actions arising from Meeting

The following actions arose from the meeting:

The Group Head Neighbourhood Services agreed to check rules relating to PSPO signage and to discuss with Communications the possibility of using QR codes for residents to report incidents.

The Group Head Neighbourhood Services agreed to speak to the Cemeteries Manager regarding communications to residents relating to fees for headstone repairs and child burials.

The Chief Accountant agreed to correct Appendix C – Capital Bids which had an incorrect amount on the final line.

The Chief Account agreed to investigate whether there was a method to include additional information relating to the Savings Plan to clarify what each saving is, possible through the use of an URL link.

The Chief Account agreed to include a cumulative total on the Savings Plan.

The Chief Account agreed to look at the terminology used around a Growth Bid for Ground Maintenance.

The Committee Manager agreed to amend the Forward Plan to include the missing Road Channel Sweeping Report for March 2024.