

**Minutes of the Neighbourhood Services and Enforcement Committee
21 March 2024**

Present:

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

Councillors:

M. Bing Dong	T. Burrell	J.R. Sexton
J.R. Boughtflower	J.P. Caplin	
L.H. Brennan	N. Islam	

In Attendance: Councillor C. Bateson

10/24 Apologies and Substitutes

There were no apologies.

11/24 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

12/24 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

13/24 Questions from members of the Public

There were none.

14/24 Audited Financial Statements for Spelthorne Direct Services Ltd (SDS) for the year end 31 March 2023

To accommodate officer availability it was agreed that this item would be heard after item seven.

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report on the Audited Financial Statements for SDS for year end 31 March 2023 and highlighted that it was an unqualified audit report and that SDS was making a profit. The Deputy

Chief Executive advised that the report had been presented to the Audit Committee on 19 March 2024.

The Committee queried why the turnover had increased from £198,598 in 2022 to £373,587 in 2023 and was informed that this was reflective of the increased business being conducted, as the company has grown the level of resourcing has similarly increased.

The Committee **resolved** to note the report, and particularly the unqualified audit report.

15/24 Exclusion of Public and Press (Exempt Business)

It was proposed by Councillor Sexton, seconded by Councillor Rutherford and resolved to exclude the public and press be excluded for the following agenda item only, in accordance with paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) because it was likely to disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because, disclosure to the public would prejudice the financial position of the authority in being able to undertake even-handed negotiations and finalizing acceptable contract terms

16/24 Environmental Health Out of Hours Noise Service Provision

The Senior Environmental Health Manager presented the report on the Environmental Health Out-of-Hours (OOH) Services and highlighted the options set out in the report.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Note the contents of the report.
2. Decide that the council should continue to provide a reactive out-of-hours noise service.
3. Accept and approve the funding for the provision of the out-of-hours reactive noise service for the next three financial years (2024-25, 2025-26, 2026-27).
4. Give approval for the Group Head Corporate Governance to complete the legal documentation on the tender and contract, and for the Deputy Chief Executive (Chief Finance Officer) to enter into the contract with the winning service provider.

17/24 Group Training Licenses in Parks

The Leisure Development Manager presented the report on the new procedure for fitness training licence applications and highlighted that a pilot programme had been trialled and it was time to formalise the process.

The Committee queried whether a group of friends meeting regularly to work out would be charged for using the park and were informed that they would not, that the scheme was for instances where a professional trainer was charging a fee for participation in group training activities.

The Committee asked whether the process would seek to ensure trainers were appropriately insured and were advised that as part of the registration process evidence of a risk assessment would need to be provided along with proof of public liability insurance. The Committee suggested that personal trainers could be required to carry proof of insurance and qualification when carrying out activities in the parks.

The Committee expressed concern about the fees and felt that use of parks should remain free. The Committee further stated that any fee charged to the personal trainer would be passed on to residents and could deter residents from accessing fitness activities.

It was proposed by Councillor Sexton, seconded by Councillor Caplin and **resolved** that the report be reviewed and for officers to re-look at the charges to make it a nominal fee to ensure we can safeguard residents.

18/24 Local Planning Enforcement Policy Updates

The Planning Development Manager and the Planning Enforcement Team Leader presented the report on the updated Local Planning Enforcement Policy which was adopted in March 2022. The Committee's attention was drawn to the changes to the policy and the enforcement actions available. The Planning Development Manager highlighted that the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act had changed the time limits within which enforcement action could be taken and advised that this would be publicised in the Summer Bulletin.

The Committee queried what residents should do if they observe construction happening without planning permission and were advised that this should be reported to the Enforcement Team who can then investigate and if required take appropriate action.

Councillor Boughtflower left the meeting for part of the discussion on this item and as such did not vote.

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

19/24 Food and Health and Safety Service Plans for 2024/26

The Principal Environmental Health Officer presented the report on the Food and Health and Safety Service Plans for 2024/26 and informed the Committee that the plans set out the aims and objectives of each service as well as providing a review of the work carried out in the previous period.

The Committee enquired as to what types of premises were covered by the Food Safety Service Plans and were advised that there were 840 food premises registered which covered everything from large scale restaurants to home-baking business. The Committee were informed that there was a free registration process for businesses after which a risk assessment would be carried out.

The Committee asked how cases of food poisoning linked to a business were investigated. The Principle Environmental Health Officer advised that residents should report any suspected cases and a sample pot would be sent out to the effected individual. It was advised that information on this should be included in the Summer Bulletin.

The Committee **resolved** to adopt the proposed service plans for 2024/2026

20/24 Misuse of Public Land Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)

The Law Enforcement Officer presented the report on the proposed Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) relating to the misuse of public land, specifically tackling antisocial behaviour associated with the use of tents and barbeques, as well as antisocial behaviour exhibited by taxi and private hire drivers in communities close to Heathrow.

The Committee queried whether there was a specific reporting portal set up that residents could use and were advised that once the PSPO was approved one would be created.

The Committee asked for clarification around children using a tent for shade from the Sun. The Law Enforcement Officer advised that discretion would be used when deciding whether any action was required but children sheltering from the Sun would be listed as an exemption in the PSPO documentation.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Make a Public Space Protection (PSPO) relating to misuse of public land in accordance with section 59 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2015.
2. Adopt the Fixed Penalty Notices for breaches of the misuse of public land PSPO which currently stand at £100.
3. Delegate authority to the Group Head Neighbourhood Service to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for breached of the PSPO misuse of public land.

21/24 Road Channel Sweeping

The Group Head Neighbourhood Services presented the report on Road Channel Sweeping looking at ways to overcome some of the issues that prevented effective channel sweeping. The report highlighted a number of options that had been trialled and would continue to be tested over the next 12 months. The Group Head Neighbourhood Services advised that where

parking suspension signs had been put up, these had either been ignored, or in some case, removed completely. The Committee were informed that to date the most successful option had been community led, working with a Residents Association.

The Committee asked whether it would be possible for residents to be provided with a schedule, similar to the one provided for bin collection and were advised that this was not possible as in cases of sickness or vehicle breakdown the schedule would change which would lead to complaints. The Group Head Neighbourhood Services advised the Committee that she was very open to working with Residents Associations and would be willing to attend meetings with them to find a workable solution.

The Committee requested that when parking suspensions were arranged to facilitate road sweeping that Councillors (including Surrey County Councillors) were informed so that they could share that information with residents via WhatsApp groups and social media. It was further requested that if an e-mail was sent to Councillors that the subject line clearly stated which Ward the road closure would be in.

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

22/24 Creation of new dog fouling posters for parks and open spaces

The Group Head Neighbourhood Services gave an update on the production of new dog fouling posters and advised that various options were being considered with a view to having something finalised in the coming weeks.

The Committee queried how many fines had been given out for dog fouling and were advised that there had been very few as it was difficult to prove unless directly observed. The Group Head Neighbourhood Services advised that residents should report any instances, which would now be easier due to the inclusion of QR codes on signage and posters, however the aim of the campaign was not to catch people but rather to achieve compliance.

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

23/24 Blue Badge Parking - For Discussion

The Chair allowed Councillor Sexton to speak for three minutes on an issue related to Blue Badge Parking.

Councillor Sexton advised that Staines Health Centre had raised concern that there were only two blue badge parking bays at the Centre which were often used by people who did not hold an appropriate badge.

The Group Head Neighbourhood Services advised that Blue Badge holders were allowed to park on single and double-yellow lines where it was safe to

do so. The Group Head further advised that she would speak with Staines Health Centre about the matter.

24/24 Community Toilet Scheme - For Discussion

The Chair allowed Councillor Bing Dong to speak for three minutes on a request for a report on a Community Toilet Scheme to be presented at a future Committee meeting.

Councillor Bing Dong informed the Committee that residents in Sunbury complained that there were no easily accessible toilets in the Ward. Councillor Bing Dong cited a similar scheme that was run in Richmond, where premises that took part were paid up to £1000 to allow residents to use onsite toilets free of charge.

The Chair advised that if a scheme were to be introduced it would likely need to include all wards which would lead to significant costs, depending on how many premises were involved, and the need for someone to administer the scheme.

The Committee queried whether some public toilets could be reinstated and were advised that to put these in place would involve a significant cost of around £100,000 per year.

The Group Head Neighbourhood Services advised that if a decision was made to move forward with a Community Toilet Scheme, the Committee would need to be very direct as to what they would want in a report and to be aware that a decision would need to be made on how it was funded.

The Committee **resolved** to add a report identifying potential locations which could benefit from the Community Toilet Scheme to the Forward Plan.

25/24 Forward Plan

The Committee **noted** the forward plan.

Meeting ended at 21:48

26/24 Actions arising from Meeting

The following action arose from the meeting:

The Group Head Neighbourhood Services agreed that when parking suspensions were arranged to facilitate road sweeping that Councillors (including Surrey County Councillors) were informed so that they could share that information with residents via WhatsApp groups and social media. It was further agreed that if an e-mail was sent to Councillors that the subject line clearly stated which Ward the road closure would be in.