

**Minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Committee
17 September 2024**

Present:

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

Councillors:

S.N. Beatty	S.M. Doran	J.A. Turner
L.H. Brennan	O. Rybinski	H.R.D. Williams
T. Burrell	J.R. Sexton	

Substitutions: Councillors C. Bateson (In place of J.P. Caplin)
K. Howkins (In place of A. Mathur)

Apologies: Councillors J.P. Caplin, A. Mathur and P.N. Woodward

38/24 Minutes

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

39/24 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

40/24 Questions from members of the Public

There were none.

41/24 Refurbishment of the Lammas Play Area

The Committee considered a request to refurbish the older children's play area in Lammas Park. The Deputy Group Head Neighbourhood Services confirmed Section 106 funding had been provided for the refurbishment.

The Committee noted the popularity of the current play area and queried how extensive the refurbishment would be. The Committee were assured that views from park users on the current play area had been sought, and only outdated equipment would be removed or replaced. The rest of the play area would be enhanced.

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 to appoint the chosen supplier/s;
- 3) Authorise the Group Head of Corporate Governance to enter the contract with the selected supplier.

42/24 National Planning Policy Framework Consultation Response

The Committee considered the Council's response to the National Planning Policy Framework consultation. The Senior Planning Officer highlighted key proposed changes to the policy which included a new standard method for calculating housing need, demonstration of a five year housing land supply, approach to green belt release, and provision of affordable housing.

Councillor Rybinski proposed that wording be added to emphasise protection of the green belt and supporting the climate change agenda. This was seconded by Councillor Howkins. The Committee agreed by majority that the response be amended as suggested. The Committee noted that the reservoirs in the borough were calculated as highly performing green belt, and felt this added constraints to areas with large amounts of water. Councillor Williams proposed that further wording be added to request this be taken into account. This was seconded by Councillor Sexton and agreed by the Committee.

The Committee noted the suggestion for local authorities to assess for modernised economies and explored what this may mean. The Committee acknowledged the suggestion for local nature recovery strategies and confirmed that ecological surveys were undertaken, and if adopted, the Local Plan would require all development to provide at least 10% biodiversity net gain.

The Committee **resolved** to

- 1) Approve the submission of Spelthorne Borough Council's response to the Government's open consultation of changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and the planning system;
- 2) Give delegated authority to the Group Head Place Protection and Prosperity in consultation with the Chair of the Environment & Sustainability Committee to make any final amendments to the consultation response before it is submitted.

43/24 Green Initiatives Fund Bid - Electric Vehicle Charging

The Committee considered a request for funding from the Green Initiatives Fund for the reallocation of funds towards Electric Vehicle Charging at Knowle Green, the Depot, and the Council's nursery. The previous back-end operator was not meeting the requirements for the operational use of the Council's electric vehicles, so the software required replacement.

The Committee noted that all charging sites had been upgraded. The charging sites were also available for staff use, but staff were charged a fee for personal use.

The Committee **resolved** to

- 1) Authorise funding of £7,787.38 from the Green Initiatives Fund to offset the already spent cost of the provision sufficient electric vehicle charging.

44/24 Green Initiatives Fund Bid - Carbon Literacy Accreditation

The Committee considered a request for funding from the Green Initiatives Fund to apply for bronze and silver Carbon Literacy Accreditation for the Council. The Sustainability and Flood Risk Officer confirmed that the Council had met bronze accreditation and would shortly be able to apply for silver accreditation. The request also met one of the Council's corporate objectives to become a certified carbon literate organisation.

The Committee noted that further Carbon Literacy training would be offered for councillors in the coming months.

The Committee **resolved** to:

- 1) Approve the bid for funding of £2,500 from the Green Initiatives Fund towards the application for Carbon Literacy Accreditation.

45/24 Climate Change Strategy Progress Update

The Committee received a progress report on the Climate Change Strategy from the Sustainability and Flood Risk Officer. Following a declaration of a Climate Emergency by the Council in 2020, a Climate Change Strategy was developed and adopted in September 2022. Though there were many positive and completed actions to report, the Council's emissions had increased.

The Committee **resolved** to

- 1) Agree to the publication of the Climate Change Strategy Progress Report, and
- 2) Approve the changes to the Climate Change Strategy Action Plan.

46/24 Strategic Priorities for 2024/2025

The Committee received the strategic priorities that fell within the Committee's remit as part of the Corporate Plan.

The Committee **resolved** to note the strategic priorities.

47/24 Appointment of Environment and Sustainability Committee Chair to the Design Code Task Group

The Committee considered a request to amend the membership of the Design Code Task Group.

It was proposed by Councillor Burrell and seconded by Councillor Williams that the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee be added to the Design Code Task Group.

The Committee **resolved** to amend the membership of the Design Code Task Group to include the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee.

48/24 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 a summary of topics and reports discussed at the last meetings of the Climate Change Working Group and encouraged members to take part in upcoming Carbon Literacy Training.

The Chair of the Design Code Task Group provided a summary of the work of the Design Code Task Group since the Committee last met. The Committee requested that the Design Code definition be circulated to them after the meeting.

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

49/24 Forward Plan

The Committee received the forward plan.

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