Minutes of the Meeting of the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 20 January 2026

PRESENT -

Councillor Liz Frost (Chair); Councillor Alan Williamson (Vice-Chair); Councillors Arthur Abdulin, Steve Bridger, Julian Freeman, Julie Morris, Phil Neale and Kim Spickett

In Attendance:

Councillor Alex Coley

Absent: Councillor Christine Cleveland and Councillor Graham Jones

Officers present:

Sam Whitehead (Streetcare Manager), Ian Mawer (Head of Planning, Policy and Economic Development), Richard Chevalier (Parking Manager), Sue Emmons (Chief Accountant), Vanessa Newton (Senior Accountant), Jon Sharpe (Interim Assistant Head of Transport and Waste), Dan Clackson (Democratic Services Officer) and Angela Guest (Democratic Services Officer)

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15 QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions or statements from the public.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

17 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee confirmed as a true record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 14 October 2025 and the Chair signed them.

18 PLAYGROUND INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE POLICY

The Committee received a report that presented the Playground Inspection and Maintenance Policy for approval. If approved the policy would replace and supersede the previous Playground Risk Management Policy originally adopted in 2014 and renewed in 2018. The policy set out the Council’s formal approach to the inspection, maintenance and safety management of all Council owned and maintained playgrounds and associated facilities.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

(1) Approve the adoption of the Playground Inspection and Maintenance Policy

Councillor Julian Freeman arrived at 19.38 pm as this item was being introduced.

19 PROCUREMENT OF WORKS TO PLAYGROUNDS

The Committee received a report that sought approval to commence a Threshold 3 RFQ procurement process for the works to refurbish and replace playgrounds and recreation facilities across the borough, fully funded through Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Councillor Alex Coley attended the meeting and made a statement of support for the report.

In response to a Member question the Interim Assistant Head of Service - Streetcare explained that there were several options on the route to procurement to consider. She was working with the Procurement Team to decide on the best option but assured Members it would be timely and would be legal.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

(2) Approve the commencement of a tender process for the refurbishment and replacement of eight playgrounds/recreation facilities to a total value of £1,060,053, funded by Strategic CIL.

(3) Note a further report would be brought forward following completion of the procurement process, seeking approval to appoint the Preferred Supplier for the refurbishment and replacement of the eight playgrounds/recreation facilities.

(4) Nominate and authorise the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Environment Housing and Regeneration, in consultation with the Director of Corporate Services and Head of Legal Services to take all necessary steps to bring into effect the recommendations resolved by this Committee.

20 HOOK ROAD CAR PARK - SUNDAY

The Committee received a report that sought the agreement of the Committee to open Hook Road Car Park on a Sunday, subject to the result of a public consultation.

The Committee considered the following matters:

a) **Legality**. In response to a Member question about the need for a Traffic Order when the car park was already in operation the Parking Manager explained that it was a legal requirement as the opening times would change. The duty was to advertise and consult for a period of 21 days in order to take any objections.

b) **Local Plan**. A Member stated that the car park was part of the Local Plan and asked what the process would be for finding alternative parking. The Parking Manager reported that there was a proposal to bring a long-term parking strategy to committee but that the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) might also have something to say about it. However, the proposal to this Committee was being put with the assumption that it may only last for a year or so.

c) **Parking costs**. A Member asked how officers would differentiate between leisure centre users and others as the parking charge was different for the different users. The Parking Manager explained there would be two Ringo codes but accepted that it would be difficult to monitor and would rely on users' integrity. The Parking Manager agreed to consider the Member's suggestion of having a system in place whereby leisure centre users put in their car registration, but administrating this would lead to an administrative cost.

d) In response to a member question regarding promotion of this to shop staff. It was agreed that the opening would be publicised.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

(5) Approve to amend the opening hours of Hook Road Car Park to include opening on a Sunday from 9am – 5pm subject to the results of a public consultation.

(6) Nominate and Authorise the Head of Housing & Community and the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer to advertise the amendment to the current Traffic Order, as set out in this report, in accordance with the statutory process.

And

a) Subject to there being no objections following the statutory advertisement to make the new Traffic Order, with the amendment and any additional updates required, and have the same sealed to implement the current proposal

Or

b) If there are objections following the advertisement to bring back the representations received to the proposal to the Environment Committee in March 2026.

21 CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS UPDATE

The Committee received a report providing an annual update on the progress of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan. The Council approved its first Climate Change Action Plan at its meeting on 20 January 2020, along with a commitment to achieving net carbon neutral operations by 2035. The first action plan reached the end of its term on 31 December 2024 and had been succeeded by the Council's second Climate Change Action Plan (2025-2029), adopted by this Committee on 15 October 2024. It was agreed to review annually.

The Committee considered the following matters:

a) A Member asked in relation to LGR if there had been any discussion with future neighbouring councils on how the various plans would blend or had officers looked at the differences in them. The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development explained that there was a Surrey-wide working group that the Environment and Sustainability Project Officer attends and discussions are taking place.

b) The Chair passed on the thanks of the Committee to the Team for this huge piece of work.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

(7) Note the progress made on the delivery of the Council's second Climate Change Action Plan over the past year.

22 REVENUE BUDGET 2026/27

The Committee received a report setting out budget estimates for income and expenditure for Environment Committee services in 2026/27.

The Committee considered the following matters:

a) A Member asked for further clarification of paragraph 5.5.1 of the risk management table in relation to the need for extra parking. The Chair stated that until the Local Plan was adopted it was difficult to predict what was going to happen in relation to parking sites. The Chief Accountant explained that the MTFS originally stated £134K extra income from parking for 2026/27 but following discussion at the car park working group that had been reduced to £34k as shown in the fees and charges report on the agenda. Some of the increase in income would come from increased costs of permits but most was expected to come from increased volumes. Other car park charges would not increase this year.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved (7 for and 1 against) to:

(8) Recommend the 2026/27 service estimates for approval at the budget meeting of Full Council in February 2026.

23 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026/27

The Committee considered a report that summarised the proposed 2026/27 capital programme and a provisional programme for 2027/28 to 2030/31.

The Committee considered the following matters:

a) A Member commented that, whilst it was unfortunate that the works at the Alex Rec Dojo did not proceed, she welcomed the return of the allocated funding to capital receipts.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved (7 for and 1 against) to:

(9) Submit the capital programme for 2026/27 as identified in section 3 of this report to the Council for approval on 10 February 2026

(10) Agree that the two schemes detailed in section 4 be removed from the existing capital programme and the allocated budget returned to the balance of capital receipts available for funding the 2026/27 capital programme;

(11) Note the provisional forecast of schemes for the capital programme for 2027/28 to 2030/31.

24 FEES AND CHARGES 2026/27

The Committee received a report that sought approval of new fees and charges for which this Committee is responsible and with the new charges being effective from 1 April 2026.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved (6 for and 2 abstentions) to:

(1) Agree the fees and charges for 2026/27 as set out at Appendices 1 and 2 of the submitted report.

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.15 pm

COUNCILLOR LIZ FROST (CHAIR)