

Minutes of the Meeting of the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE held on 7 June 2016

PRESENT -

Councillor John Beckett (Chairman); Councillor Lucie Dallen (Vice-Chairman);
Councillors Richard Baker, Liz Frost, Rob Geleit, Keith Partridge, Jane Race,
Mike Teasdale and Tella Wormington

Absent: Councillor Steve Bridger

Officers present: Joy Stevens (Head of Customer Services and Business Support),
Richard Chevalier (Parking Manager), Michael Smith (Chief Accountant) and Fiona
Cotter (Democratic Services Manager)

1 QUESTION TIME

No questions were asked or had been submitted by members of the public.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Councillors regarding items on the agenda.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held on 12 April 2016 were agreed as a true record subject to noting that Councillor Richard Baker was in attendance.

4 COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR "SIMPLY WEEKLY RECYCLING"

The Committee received and noted a report which set out the overall programme of publicity regarding the introduction of new refuse and recycling arrangements in the spring of 2017.

A comprehensive communications plan would underpin the launch of "Simply Weekly Recycling" and was designed to ensure that residents clearly understood the benefits of the service as well as how it worked. It included "The Big Switch" of green and black wheelie bins.

It was noted that the estimated cost of the publicity campaign was £60,000. £30,000 had been built into the base budget for 2016/17 as a growth item but the remaining £30,000 had yet to be identified.

19 roadshows had been confirmed and would be advertised in Borough Insight and on the Council's website. It was requested that the dates also be included in "Members Update" for their information.

Officers were aware of the need for very clear communications around the changes to the service and took on board that particular messaging needed to go out about the cessation of the nappy collection service, the acceptance of ordinary plastic bags in food waste bins and the disposal of pet waste.

5 FOOD SAFETY/HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE PLANS

As a result of the recent committee restructuring, environmental health matters, previously the remit of the former Social Committee, now fell under the remit of the Environment Committee. The Environmental Health Team Leader, Oliver Nelson gave a brief overview to members of the new services which now came under their remit.

As best practice, and in response to statutory obligations, a report setting out proposed service plans relating to Health and Food Safety had been considered on an annual basis by the Social Committee. It was proposed that this now be considered by the Environment Committee.

In considering the plans, it was noted that of the 501 food premises in the Borough, 152 fell into the high risk categories of A to C. These were not necessarily failing premises – the classification also reflected the inherent risk in certain businesses – for example, catering for vulnerable people. Whilst it was not mandatory to display certificates issued under the Food Hygiene Rating scheme, ratings were publically available on a national website: www.food.gov.uk/ratings.

Accordingly, the Committee adopted the service plan for food safety, the intervention plan for health and safety and agreed to receive revised food and health and safety plans for 2017-18 at the Environment Committee meeting in the summer cycle of meetings in 2017.

6 REVISED FEE STRUCTURE AND CHARGING POLICY FOR STRAY DOGS COLLECTION SERVICE

The Committee received and considered a report which proposed a revised fee structure for the stray dog collection service and the policy for charging customers.

The stray dog collection service operated as a 24 hour a day service on an outsourced contract. The Council was entitled to recover all of its costs from the owners of the dogs but only sought to recover 80% of the costs in the case of night time seizures. This was on the basis that this offered a pragmatic solution to the heightened problem out of hours of non-payment and abandonment of the animal which in the long term represented a greater drain on resources.

Overall, the proposals in the report sought to strike a balance between economical cost recovery whilst being sensitive to genuine cases of hardship

and would be reviewed after the first year of operation. However, the report highlighted that the option to pay by direct debit was dependent on an individual presenting during office hours to the Town Hall as the dog warden contractor had no facility for setting up direct debits.

The Committee:

- (1) Adopted the following revised fee structure:

Service	Cost to the Council £	Proposed fee £
Full Day Service	165	165
Day service (dogs taken back directly to owners and NOT booked in at dog kennel)	130	130
Full Night Service	270	216
Night Service (dogs taken back directly to owners and NOT booked in at dog kennel)	245	196

- (2) Agreed, except where there was an outstanding amount owed from a previous seizure, and for cases of genuine hardship where payment was made during the day, to permit half the appropriate fee to be taken up front followed by the remainder taken by monthly direct debit over no longer than four months;
- (3) Delegated to Officers the ability to waive or vary the fee payable in individual circumstances where it was judged to be necessary.

7 PROPOSAL ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF PARKING SUSPENSIONS AND WAIVERS

The Committee received and considered a report which outlined the proposal that Epsom & Ewell Borough Council assume responsibility for managing Parking Suspensions & Waiver Certificates for current on-street parking restrictions on behalf of Surrey County Council.

The report highlighted that Epsom & Ewell Borough Council was currently the only Borough/District carrying out parking enforcement on behalf of Surrey County Council which did not also manage parking suspension and waiver certificate requests.

The County Council made a charge for waivers. If administered by this Council, all income received would be placed in this Council's on-street parking account. Any surplus on the relevant account would be split out between the parties at the end of a financial year. However, the report further highlighted that this Council had been unable to obtain any information from the County Council regarding the previous operation of suspensions and waivers in this Borough and concern was

expressed that there appeared to be little incentive for the County to set realistic charges which would cover the administrative costs.

It was proposed to mitigate the potential financial risk to the Council by running a trial scheme after which time the position could be reviewed. A trial period represented a good opportunity to properly monitor costs, particularly additional staff time and administration, which would be charged into the on street account along with the corresponding income. It had been agreed between the parties that any financial loss incurred by this Council during the trial period would be met by Surrey County Council and this Council would have the option of handing back the administration of this service at the end of the trial period or continue to carry out the operation if future costs were covered by Surrey County Council.

It was currently proposed that the trial period would commence in July thereby lasting for eight months but it was confirmed that this timeframe could be extended should Officers consider it prudent to do so.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- (1) Agreed to Epsom and Ewell Borough Council assuming responsibility for the management of parking suspensions and waiver certificates on behalf of Surrey County Council on a trial basis until the end of financial year or such additional period as considered appropriate by the Head of Customer Services and Business Support;
- (2) Agreed the Parking Suspension and Waiver Certificate Policy set out in Annexe 1 to the report;
- (3) Delegated agreement of the start date of this trial period to the Head of Customer Services and Business Support.

8 BUILDING CONTROL FEES AND CHARGES

The Committee received and noted a report which reviewed the Building Control chargeable account following the end of the 2015/16 financial year.

It was noted that the building control account had performed strongly in 2015/16 with surpluses contributing towards overspends in other service areas. The chargeable account contributed c£81,000 annually towards the Council's central service charges (fixed costs). The budget for 2016/17 had taken the increased income received in 2015/16 into account and had been built into the Council's 4 year financial plan. Current forecasts suggested that 2016/17 would be another strong year for building control income.

9 OUTSTANDING REFERENCES

The Committee noted references to Officers outstanding as at 7 June 2016.

10 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee resolved to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the business involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended) and that pursuant to paragraph 10 of Part 2 of the said Schedule 12A the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

11 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee confirmed as a true record the Minutes (considered exempt from publication) of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held on 12 April 2016 and authorised the Chairman to sign them. This was subject to noting that Councillor Richard Baker was in attendance at the meeting.

12 PROPOSAL TO SITE BREAST CANCER SCREENING UNIT IN HOPE LODGE CAR PARK

The Committee agreed a way forward as set out in the Minutes

Note: The details of the decision are considered officially sensitive at this time and the Minute for this item will be exempt from publication.

13 EPSOM HOSPITAL PARK AND RIDE SCHEME

The Committee agreed a way forward as set out in the Minutes

Note: The details of the decision are considered officially sensitive at this time and the Minute for this item will be exempt from publication.

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 9.09 pm

COUNCILLOR JOHN BECKETT (CHAIRMAN)