

**Minutes of the Meeting of the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
held on 27 October 2015**

PRESENT -

Councillor John Beckett (Chairman); Councillor Mike Teasdale (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Steve Bridger, Lucie Dallen, Liz Frost, Rob Geleit, Keith Partridge, Jane Race, Tella Wormington and Peter O'Donovan (as nominated substitute for Councillor Hannah Dalton)

Absent: Councillor Hannah Dalton

Officers present: Kathryn Beldon (Director of Finance & Resources), Simon Young (Head of Legal & Democratic Services), Ian Dyer (Head of Operational Services), Joy Stevens (Head of Customer Services & Business Support), Jon Sharpe (Transport & Waste Services Manager), Michael Smith (Chief Accountant), Michael Hill (Building Control Manager) and Eddie Nowak (Democratic Services Officer)

11 SUBSTITUTIONS

The Committee noted that Councillor Peter O'Donovan was present as nominated substitute for Councillor Hannah Dalton.

12 QUESTION TIME

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

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Councillors in items on this agenda.

14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held on 16 June 2015 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

15 FUTURE STRUCTURE OF REFUSE AND RECYCLING COLLECTIONS

The Committee received and considered a report concerning the current refuse and recycling arrangements that continue until March 2017 and proposing that they should be replaced with new, streamlined collections arrangements from April 2017, on a date to be confirmed.

The report advised that in June 2015 the Committee was presented with a background report and presentation that advised that the Council now recycled c.45% of its collected household waste compared to the average Surrey councils' rate of c.52%. Epsom & Ewell's rate had remained more or less static since 2009. Recycling rates were stagnating or declining across Surrey and the whole of the UK and pressure remained to recycle more to save money and help the environment.

The Council's current refuse and recycling collection arrangements would run until March 2017, at which point vehicle leases would expire and the Council would need to acquire new vehicles. At that point, 'Kerbsider' vehicles (currently used to collect paper, glass, cans and textiles) would no longer be available and therefore, some change would be inevitable. The Committee must, by October 2015, decide on the future structure of refuse and recycling collections after March 2017 in order that suitable, new vehicles could be acquired within the replacement of the Council's overall transport fleet contract, for the provision of services thereafter. It was recommended that from April 2017 (exact date to be confirmed) the Council should adopt the new, streamlined refuse and recycling collections that officers have called "Weekly Premium Recycling".

The Committee discussed the proposals when the following points were noted:

- Textiles would continue to be collected on a weekly basis in line with the current arrangements.
- The communication plans would include guidance for residents and businesses on the proposed new arrangements for the disposal of refuse and recycling including nappies and glass.
- The proposals for missed bins were all either equal to or better than the existing return timescales, as well as being much simpler for residents to understand.
- Weekly refuse collections removed the need for additional domestic refuse capacity except in exceptional circumstances.
- The removal of paid-for additional refuse bins would mean the loss of c.£5,000 pa in income from such charges. However, the constraint of refuse capacity would be an important part of ensuring that valuable recycling was maximised and costly refuse minimised.
- Subject to approval of the proposals, communication with residents and businesses would commence shortly including road shows, attendance at resident's meetings, press releases, distribution of leaflets and information on the Council's website.

Accordingly, it was agreed that:-

- (1) From April 2017 (exact date to be confirmed) the Council should adopt the new refuse and recycling collections structure that officers have called 'Weekly Premium Recycling', as outlined in Annexe 1 to the report.
- (2) 'Weekly Premium Recycling' should be launched in phases:
 - a) Officers be authorised to enter into negotiations with the Council's transport fleet provider for the temporary, short-term extension of some existing vehicles to facilitate this, and that Contract Standing Orders be waived to enable this on the grounds as set out in CSO 23.1 (i) and (j).
 - b) Detailed launch and communications plans, timings and funding requirement be presented to the Committee at a future date.
- (3) With the launch of 'Weekly Premium Recycling':
 - a) Green and black bins are switched i.e. green 240-litre bin becomes for recycling; black 180-litre bin becomes for refuse and that detailed operational plans and funding requirement be presented to the Committee at a future date.
 - b) Lost, stolen or damaged black 180-litre refuse bins are replaced with 140-litre versions, funded from within existing annual bin replacement budgets.
 - c) The Council's missed bin return timescales are rationalised i.e.:
 - i) No return for missed weekly collections of dry recycling or refuse (2 sacks of excess refuse collected on next collection, no limit to excess recycling).
 - ii) Retention of the existing two-working-day return for missed food and garden waste recycling.
 - d) The Council's policy on additional refuse bins at houses be amended i.e.:
 - i) A free black 240-litre refuse bin in replacement of the black 180-litre bin, available to households of 10 or more on request, subject to an officer visit to confirm need and establish the proper use of recycling services.
 - ii) Removal of the existing option of charged, additional refuse bins.
 - iii) Maximum one refuse bin per house, with no refuse bin larger than 180-litres unless agreed as above.

16 BUDGET TARGETS FOR 2016/17

The Committee received and considered a report that set out the Council's revenue budget targets approved by the Strategy and Resources Committee and sought support for changes to service and any further guidance on the preparation of the Committee's service estimates for 2016/17 and for the next 3 financial years.

The budget targets required operational/efficiency savings across the organisation and these would need to be identified during the preparation of the detailed estimates. Service Managers had been asked to identify savings options across the Council's services that would deliver £650,000 for 2016/17 and a further £1,644,000 for years 2017/18 to 2019/20 to balance the overall budget. The delivery of the savings options should assist in the Council being able to deliver services in a sustainable way going forward with no reliance on the Council's limited working balances. There were 4 savings options proposed in the 2016/17 budget for the Committee to consider namely:

	2016/17 £'000
Introduce Planning Performance Agreements	12
Charging to variations to Section 106 Agreements	4
Charging for Enabling Officer	2
Parking income above 6% yield	328

The Committee was also asked to support in principle saving options that would assist in addressing the funding shortfall over the 3 year period 2017/18 to 2019/20. The Committee discussed the proposals and it was noted that the allocation of resources in respect of additional car parking enforcement and CCTV provision would be reviewed as part of the 4 year programme. The Committee did not provide any further guidance on specific issues to be covered in the preparation of service estimates for 2016/17.

Accordingly, it was agreed that:-

- (1) The implications of the budget targets approved by the Strategy & Resources Committee be noted.
- (2) The changes to services identified be supported and that these be included within the budget presented to the Committee in January 2016.
- (3) The future savings options identified be supported in principle for further work and inclusion in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- (4) The work plan set out in the report be endorsed.

17 PARKING FEES AND CHARGES

The Committee received and considered a report that sought views in respect of possible adjustments to off street parking fees and charges for 2016/17.

It was noted that many tariffs had not been increased since 2013 or earlier. However, in April 2014 a new maximum tariff charge was introduced across six of the Epsom Town Centre car parks. The maximum tariffs were in time bandings starting from 13:00. It was proposed that this approach be continued for 2016/17. The Committee discussed the proposals and noted that the proposed fees & charges were designed to maintain Hook Road, Upper High Street and Depot Road as longer term parking options in Epsom Town Centre with Town Hall, Hope Lodge and the Ashley Centre for shorter term parking. It was proposed to increase the hourly charge in Ewell Village as no increase had been implemented since 2013. It was further noted that the proposed increases were necessary to also address maintenance and running costs for the upkeep of the car parks. Discussions had been held with the Town Centre Manager and local businesses on the proposals in the interests of the vitality of the Town Centre and other locations in the Borough, and these discussions would continue for future years. The proposed Car Parking Working Group would look at matters such as introducing barrier control arrangements at other locations in the Borough.

The changes in the fees for permits were based on a recommended increase of 6% rounded up to £5 or £10. It was also proposed that the annual fee for parker cards be increased to £15 and the fees for parking dispensation permits be increased to bring these more in to line with current fees in surrounding council's in Surrey.

Accordingly, it was agreed that:-

- (1) The changes to car park fees set out in Annexe 1 to the report be approved.
- (2) The changes to business and residential permit fees set out in Annexe 2 to the report be approved.
- (3) The changes to parker card fees set out in Annexe 3 to the report be approved.
- (4) The changes to fees for parking dispensation permits set out in Annexe 4 to the report be approved.

Note: Councillor Jane Race asked that her objection to the decision of the Committee be recorded in the Minutes.

18 CAR PARKING WORKING GROUP

The Committee received and considered a report that sought approval for the constitution of a Car Parking Working Group comprising the Head of Customer Services and Business Support, with other officers involved as necessary, and no more than five elected members to serve upon it.

Accordingly, it was agreed that:-

- (1) The constitution of a Car Parking Working Group comprising the Head of Customer Services and Business Support and no more than five elected members be approved.
- (2) Councillors Michael Arthur, John Beckett, Neil Dallen, Rob Geleit and Jane Race be appointed as members of the Working Group.
- (3) Terms of Reference to be outlined by the Working Group be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for approval.

19 BUILDING CONTROL FEES AND CHARGES

The Committee received and considered a report that set out the position on the chargeable account for 2014/15.

The Building Regulations chargeable account for 2014/15 showed a surplus of £43,400, for the year and this compared to a £1,711 surplus for the previous year. This had come about due to the upturn in the economy and more confidence in the building industry. The Audit Commission had agreed in previous years for the chargeable account to generate a deficit or surplus of approximately 15% of total expenditure. The chargeable account for 2014/15 generated a surplus of 18.79% of gross expenditure. In view of this it was not proposed to change the Council's standard charges.

The Committee noted that the budget for 2015/16 on the chargeable account had been reduced by £28,000 mainly due to the increase in income. The budget for 2015/16 assumed that the Council would generate £250,000 from building control charges, compared to £220,000 in 2014/15. With a surplus of £1,711 in 2013/14 on the chargeable account, this had increased to a surplus of £43,400 on the 2014/15 chargeable account. A review of the level of charges had been undertaken and the charges altered within the provision previously agreed to ensure that the service would break even. These charges were implemented on 1 September 2014.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed that delegated authority be granted to the Building Control Manager for the future adjustment of Building Control charges scheme upwards or downwards by 20%, in consultation with the Council's Head of Financial Services and the Head of Service, to ensure that income would cover the cost of the chargeable service.

20 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: PROGRESS REPORT ONE 2015/16

The Committee received and considered its first Performance Management Progress report for 2015/16 and what issues, if any it considered required additional action over and above that identified in the Progress Report.

Annexe 1 to the report provided the Committee with an extract from the Progress Report One 2015/16 covering all the Service Plan actions for which the Committee was responsible. Overall, the Environment Committee had 7 actions for the financial year 2015/16. Of the 7 actions 1 had been "Achieved", 5 were "On Target" and 1 "Not Met". The Committee discussed the Progress Report and it was noted that revised performance indicators would be set once the new Corporate Plan was in place.

The Committee did not identify any issues which required action over and above that set out in the Progress Report.

21 OUTSTANDING REFERENCES

The Committee received and noted the outstanding references to officers as at 27 October 2015.

The meeting began at 19.30 hours and ended at 20.23 hours

COUNCILLOR JOHN BECKETT
(CHAIRMAN)