

Runnymede Borough Council

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

28 February 2008 at 7.30 p.m.

Members of the Committee present: Councillors J R Furey (Chairman), A J Davis (Vice-Chairman), A Alderson, M J Brown, Mrs R M Denby, J M Edwards, Mrs L M Gillham, Ms C M Simmons, P J Waddell and G B Woodger.

Members of the Committee absent: None.

Councillors D W Parr and P B Tuley also attended.

552. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Conservative Group had notified the Chief Executive Officer of its wish that the change listed below be made to the membership of the Committee. The change was for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting and thereafter the Councillor removed would be re-appointed.

Remove from Membership	Appoint Instead
Councillor C J Norman	Councillor M J Brown

The Chief Executive Officer had given effect to this wish in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

553. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 31 January 2008 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

554. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PITT REVIEW – ‘LEARNING LESSONS FROM THE 2007 FLOODS’

The Committee noted the recommendations and interim conclusions of the Pitt Review and considered a response to the consultation which would conclude on 31 March 2008.

During August 2007, Sir Michael Pitt (former Chief Executive of Cheshire and Kent County Councils) had been asked by ministers to carry out a review of the flood-related emergencies which had occurred during the summer of 2007. The report had been published to identify issues which needed urgent action, to set out the direction for the remainder of the Review and to provide a document for consultation before the final report was published in summer 2008. It was not expected that the Government response to the final report would be published in the near future.

The three months from May to July 2007 had been the wettest since records began and the flood events that followed had been linked to the deaths of 13 people and had resulted in a level of disruption which had not occurred before. From an emergency response standpoint, this was a new level of challenge. The flooding triggered a series of emergencies which had stretched local resources to the limit.

The Review recognised the findings of other reports, such as Stern and Foresight, which predicted climatic change and stated that the United Kingdom could expect more extreme weather, with periods of intensive rainfall. The Review suggested that the impact of the floods and the high level of risk involved could have been significantly reduced with stronger local leadership of flood risk management, clarification of roles, more effective cooperation between responsible organisations, better protection of infrastructure and wider and deeper public engagement.

The Review contained 15 recommendations and 72 interim conclusions, (IC)s which were described as strategic in nature but with implications for every locality in the country. The Review suggested that these recommendations should be implemented urgently in order to prevent or mitigate future flooding. The Review would monitor work against these urgent recommendations and would publish commentary on progress at the end of March. The Committee noted the recommendations, together with an indication as to who the Review identified as being responsible for implementation. Four of the recommendations rested with the Local Resilience Forums and one was for Category 1 responders. The former was a County-wide organisation including the County Council, Government Office, Environment Agency, district councils and emergency services. The lead authority for the Local Resilience Forum was the Police. Category 1 responders included both the district and county councils. Recommendation 2 affected a range of organisations. In Surrey, the Local Resilience Forum had met at the end of January to discuss the recommendations and move forward towards implementation. The Local Resilience Forum would identify who would be the lead authorities for various aspects of emergencies. The six recommendations identified above, and the ICs that were directly relevant to local authorities, were considered individually with suggested comments from Officers.

The Council's Strategic Plan 2005-2010 included policies on emergency planning to work with partners to enable the Borough to respond effectively and ensure that the Safer Runnymede Centre was able to provide an effective communications centre in the event of any major emergency. The Council had Major Incident Plans in place. In the event of a flood, most of the local authority statutory involvement was through the Housing Department through provision of rest centres. Specific policies in the Strategic Plan encouraged the Environment Agency to deliver a flood alleviation scheme at Chertsey and urged Thames Water to address problems of surcharged sewers. The Council already put considerable resources into flood risk management by retaining specialist drainage engineers and an in-house maintenance team as well as a special works programme for major maintenance and improvement works. Runnymede's drainage records were more extensive than most local authorities. In terms of emergency resilience, the Council benefited from the 24/7 Safer Runnymede Control Room that not only co-ordinated communications between the Council and other agencies, but provided reassurance around the clock to residents. Similarly, the Council's depot in Chertsey (which was in a low – medium flood risk area) provided an operational base for staff, vehicles, specialist equipment and communications to respond to an emergency.

Whilst many of the recommendations in the Pitt report were sensible, there was concern where the onus was on local authorities to take the lead in certain areas, unless adequate resources were provided. IC 21, for example, effectively provided for local authorities to provide an audit of all drainage assets and their condition. There was no disputing the need for this, but the work recently undertaken by Surrey County Council in respect of flooding from highway gulleys had highlighted the lack of data in this regard. Nationwide this would be a huge undertaking, requiring very substantial resources. On IC 38, the Committee agreed that while the County Council's emergency planning teams had a key role in preparation for emergencies, it was the emergency services, usually led by the Police, who should lead on responses. Furthermore, the County Council's emergency planning team had been reduced under their Business Development Review. On IC 65, the Committee agreed that the automated flood warning system currently operated by the Environment Agency required improvement. IC 66 stated that advice by telephone during a flood emergency should come from just two sources, the Environment Agency for flooding information and local authority contact centres for local advice. While the recognition that the public wanted easy lines of communications was understood, this did not require other agencies such as highway authorities and water companies to provide detailed information about flooding of, and from, their assets to both the Environment Agency and local authorities. Past experience was that water companies in particular were not resourced to properly communicate in an emergency and to pass their responsibilities to others was unreasonable.

The Committee agreed the response subject to the following changes:-

- i) the response should be prefaced with the fact that the comments were based on experience in Runnymede of two major (as defined by the Environment Agency) floods in the last five years.

- ii) In the response to Recommendation 12 on “door-knocking” by local authorities, the last sentence should be deleted and instead details of the amount of urban area within the floodplain should be included and reference made to Environment Agency flood plain maps showing that 1,000 properties in Runnymede could be at risk in a 100 year flooding event. The Committee noted that the extent of door knocking which the authority could undertake would depend upon the seriousness of the flood.
- iii) In the response to IC 9 on impermeable or hard surfaces it should be made clear that the Council sought control of all hard surfaces, not just those in the flood plain.
- iv) In the response to IC 15, on extension of eligibility for grants and loans to householders, it should be made clear that not all householders wished to carry out works to their properties when affected by flooding.
- v) In the response to IC 16, the encouragement of the uptake of property – level flood resistance and resilience measures should also be promoted with statutory undertakers.
- vi) In the response to IC 60, it should be added that the Annual Review of Plans by Scrutiny Committees would only be supported if Scrutiny Committees were given extra legal powers.
- vii) In the response to IC 65, on warnings to the public, the word “some” should be deleted in the first line.

RESOLVED that –

the comments on the recommendations and Interim Conclusions of the Pitt Review as set out in the report to Committee be substantially adopted, subject to the amendments set out in the preamble to this resolution, and be forwarded to the Review as this Council's response.

555. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2007/08 – THIRD QUARTER PROGRESS

The Committee noted progress against Best Value Performance Indicators for the period October to December 2007.

BV 202, the number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the area of the authority, was calculated by the local authority asking the CAB and the Police if they had reports of rough sleepers and if there were more than 10, then a formal rough sleepers count had to be undertaken.

The general picture was positive, but there were certain areas where targets had not been met. Average time to re-let local authority housing was below target and this was due to a large number of sheltered properties being void for this quarter. This reflected the success of other Housing policies and the fact that people were able to stay in general needs housing for a longer time. The Pinefields scheme had been vacated for redevelopment because of an excess of sheltered housing and the Bemonds scheme would be reviewed later this year. The target for BV 12, which was the number of working days/shifts lost to the authority because of sickness absence, would not be met in the current year, although the level of sickness absence was reducing. Further initiatives were being considered. On BV 8, payment of invoices within 30 days, a performance plateau had been reached. It was agreed that arrangements for invoice payments to sub-contractors should be looked at, when the procurement strategy was reviewed later in the year.

There had been some good performance in a number of areas. The number of local authority tenants with more than seven weeks of gross rent arrears as a percentage of the total number of council tenants had decreased and exceeded the target. Performance in all community safety Performance Indicators had improved this quarter. The Committee was pleased to see the good third quarter result for processing of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claims. Results for recycling were steadily improving. The Committee congratulated Officers on the excellent performance for Development Control Indicators.

556. PRIORITY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE 2007/08 – THIRD QUARTER PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee noted the third quarter position for 2007/08 in the priority indicators of service delivery performance that formed the basis of more detailed scrutiny. The overall picture was positive with corrective action required in only a few cases. A report would be submitted to the Committee on the Government's new performance framework when more details had been released by the Government, which would also ask the Committee to decide upon appropriate local indicators of performance. It was suggested that sickness absence should be one of the new local indicators. The percentage of Council Tax collected shown in the report related to the amount due in the current financial year. It did not include adjustments to previous years' liability, so the figures were not affected by refunds resulting from rebandings in previous years.

On the percentage payment of invoices within a 30 day period, if Managers provided reasons why invoices had not been paid, that would be taken into account in calculating the number of days that had elapsed since receipt. Although the third quarter performance of 92.2% was good, the figure had not improved for a number of quarters. It was therefore agreed that Officers should look into ways of improving performance on invoice payment and the Committee asked for a report on this.

The Committee was pleased to note the good results for telephone answering. On the number of kilograms of household waste collected per head, although Runnymede collected the highest weights per head in Surrey, the Runnymede total continued to fall and the target had been met in the last quarter. Although the last overall survey of tenant satisfaction showed a slight drop in satisfaction levels, this was also the case in other local authorities, reflecting rising expectations. However, the level of tenant satisfaction with repairs completed for the third quarter of 2007/08 was 98.45%, substantially above the 90% target.

RESOLVED that –

it be recorded that the Committee is content with progress, and where appropriate, the corrective action.

557. URGENT ACTION - STANDING ORDER 42

The following action taken after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee under Standing Order 42 was noted.

<u>Officer</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Central Index No</u>
Director of Housing and Community Services	Agreeing a proposal to provide assistance to vulnerable households in the private sector to pay for energy efficiency improvements to their homes.*	654

(* Consultation had also been undertaken with the Chairman of the Economic Development Committee).

558. ANNUAL PAY AND WORKFORCE PLAN

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The Committee considered the third Pay and Workforce Plan which had replaced the former Annual Personnel Report and was intended as an additional tool for Members and Managers in the effective utilisation of the Authority's staffing resources and consequential improvement in service delivery. In addition to comparative, quantitative and statistical data, the Plan included comprehensive narrative on historic, contemporary and anticipated staffing issues both departmentally and for the Authority as a whole. Where appropriate, approval was sought for varying establishment levels and conditions during the coming year.

The 2007 National Pay and Workforce Strategy produced by the Government set out key actions for authorities, regional bodies and national bodies over the next few years. The five priorities were organisational development, leadership development, skill development, recruitment/retention and pay/rewards. Each of these areas accordingly was addressed in detail in the Council's Pay and Workforce Plan. Appropriate action had been identified in Action Plans, as summarised in Appendix 'A'. The Committee also noted sections in the Plan on the performance related pay scheme, staff training and associated development needs, the establishment and grading policy, communication with staff and trade union liaison, Member/staff relationships, recruitment and retention, an analysis of the Performance Related Pay Scheme, staffing data, staffing implications of Council policies and priorities, major issues identified during the appraisal process, sickness absence, age profile of staff (which being fairly high showed a need for succession planning), training courses undertaken by staff, and reports from the various departments of the Council.

The Committee agreed that staffing structures should be revisited consequent upon outcomes of the joint working initiative, legislative requirements and revised policy targets. The Committee agreed that the achievement of the Government's continuing efficiency savings should be included within the Action Plans. The Chief Executive Officer and leading Members had been pursuing further opportunities for partnership working with neighbouring Authorities. If opportunities for efficiencies and improved service delivery were identified then partnership or joint working initiatives would be pursued. However, the principle would not be followed where no benefits to Runnymede could be identified or, indeed, where there was a risk of a potential for diminution of current service standards. The Committee agreed that the Chief Executive Officer should bring forward a comprehensive report with an evaluation of the various opportunities for joint working, together with specific recommendations.

In 2007, 'The Times' newspaper had introduced the "Best Councils to Work for" Awards, based on the results of feedback on the various Councils from employees, via a questionnaire. From the many authorities that had entered (Runnymede had not participated in this first survey), 20 had been identified as achieving the highest scores and the Committee noted the initiatives they had in place that had contributed to their success as employers. Many of these initiatives were already in place in Runnymede, but a number of others might be worth pursuing. The Committee agreed that Councillors Davis and Mrs Gillham should confer and advise the Personnel Manager of a list of Best Council initiatives which they would like Runnymede to pursue. It was also agreed that Runnymede should be entered for the 2008 Best Councils Award competition. In view of the delay in the move to the new offices, the Committee agreed that a staff survey should be undertaken in the current Municipal Year rather than the late summer, in order to identify effects on the organisation following the move to the new offices.

The Council had achieved Level 2 of the Equalities Standard during 2006. The Committee agreed to include the target of achieving level 3 of the Equalities Standard within the next 12 months in the Action Plans. Runnymede had been one of the first authorities in the country to introduce a comprehensive Staff Appraisal and Development Scheme and a Performance Related Pay Scheme. The Personnel Services Member Working Group had recommended the introduction of competencies into the assessment process and a pilot exercise would be undertaken in March. The Committee agreed that following the pilot exercise and evaluation, appropriate recommendations should be brought forward for the appraisal scheme during the summer of 2008.

It was important that Runnymede Members were equipped with the skills and knowledge to enable them to undertake their roles effectively. It was agreed that the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Group Leaders, should prepare a methodology for identifying and delivering a training and development plan for Elected Members and review the level of financial investment in Member training and development in Runnymede. Senior management training needs were identified through the annual appraisal programme. This activity could be most effectively delivered on a joint basis with other Surrey authorities who had similar needs. Options were currently being investigated by the Surrey Training Officers Group (STOG). The appraisal process not only addressed training and development needs that related to the individual's current post but also identified potential for future growth. The Committee agreed that further management training be promoted in the authority, utilising, where appropriate, the resources of the STOG joint training initiatives. A set of core requirements for Runnymede managers had been introduced and now formed part of the appraisal process and would be further developed. It was agreed that specific recommendations for required competencies should be brought forward following the pilot exercise for reviewing the appraisal process. Runnymede had a long established reputation as an employer

that placed high importance on staff training and development. The Committee agreed that greater emphasis should be placed on identifying skills gaps as part of an outcome from the current review of the appraisal process.

Whilst it was a requirement that managers involved in selection interviews were fully trained, no such requirement existed currently for Elected Members who were involved in senior appointments. It was therefore agreed that the requirement that all managers involved in selection interviews be fully trained should be extended to those Elected Members who could potentially be involved in senior appointments. Party Leaders would be approached to seek appropriate nominations.

The current general overall level of staff turnover in the authority was acceptable. However, concern remained about pockets of high turnover exceeding 50%. Whilst the nature of the work involved tended to lead to a higher level of turnover, this did not, in itself, account for the high levels currently being experienced in these areas and needed to be addressed. It was therefore agreed that appropriate Directors be charged with addressing issues of unacceptably high staff turnover in areas within their control.

Often the need to recruit was for a short term period only such as to cover for a staff absence, to assist with work peaks or to undertake a particular one-off project. In order to improve the quality of agency temporary staff, it was agreed that Officers should undertake a detailed evaluation of the arrangements for engaging such staff and bring forward appropriate recommendations. In order to further increase flexibility for staff in managing their annual leave, it was agreed that the facility to carry forward unused annual leave to the next leave year be increased from a maximum of three days to a new maximum of five days.

The Committee agreed that the Pay Policy agreed in February 2007 should be kept under review to ensure that it continued to meet the authority's needs. It was also agreed that the authority's salaries should be kept under review to ensure that they remained in line with the authority's pay policy. Revised Performance Related Pay arrangements, incorporating competency assessment, would shortly be piloted with recommendations being brought forward in time for the 2008 appraisal programme. The advent of equal pay legislation required employers to demonstrate a greater degree of fairness, objectivity and transparency in determining salary levels, to ensure parity between jobs of equal value and to eliminate gender bias. The authority had undertaken a comprehensive review of its salary scales, brought in single status for all its staff, and had undertaken an Equal Pay Audit. It was agreed that a further Equal Pay Audit be commissioned in 2009/10 to ensure that the authority's remuneration packages remained appropriate.

The filling of specialist posts where there was a skills shortage continued to be a problem where, due to the high cost of housing, most recruitment was restricted to candidates already living in the local area. Initiatives such as the graduate incentive scheme, mortgage subsidy scheme and rental equalisation scheme continued to provide a valuable recruitment incentive and to attract applicants from further afield. However, 82% of the Council's staff lived within Runnymede or adjoining Boroughs. It was important that Runnymede's employment package remained competitive. The Council's pay policy had been reviewed in 2007 and the policy of paying upper quartile salaries had been revised to the median. The policy would be kept under review in the light of recruitment and retention experience.

The Committee was pleased to note that 2007 had seen a decrease in sickness absence in Runnymede. A detailed analysis of sickness absence was included in the Plan. Whilst long term absences were in the minority, they accounted for the highest number of total day absence. All cases of long term absence were referred to the Council's Occupational Health specialist in order to facilitate an early return to work strategy where possible. Revised absence management procedures had resulted in a more proactive approach by managers to ensure early and timely interventions and, where appropriate, referrals to Occupational Health. Personnel provided regular reports to Directors identifying cases of regular short term absences requesting a response from the appropriate line managers. Long term absences were referred to Occupational Health, with a view to securing an early and effective return to work. The Committee noted and approved the implementation details of the revised sickness management arrangements, as set out in Appendix 'B'. Following further discussions with UNISON and the Safety Advisor, the Personnel Manager would be submitting proposals for further developments to the absence policy to the next Safety Committee. If supported, these would be presented to the Committee for consideration in due course.

As reported in the 2006/7 Pay and Workforce Plan, the Government had consulted on further revisions to the Local Government Pension Scheme, to be introduced in 2008. Following these consultations, the main elements to be introduced on 1 April 2008 were noted. Amongst these main elements, tiered employee contribution rates were particularly welcome. It was noted that there were concerns amongst the Surrey districts about the future affordability and sustainability of the Scheme. The Surrey Pension Fund Investment Advisory Group had been rigorous in its assessment of Fund Manager performance, in order to secure the best results possible. Given the turmoil in the markets, recent Fund performance had been good.

Last year the Council had introduced a Flexible Retirement Policy. During the year, one case had been granted and two further cases were under consideration. As it became more well known it was anticipated that further applications would be forthcoming in future years. Members would be kept apprised of developments.

Following a prolonged period of high claims and escalating costs the Council had withdrawn the Private Health Insurance Scheme in June 2007. An allowance equivalent to the cost of providing the scheme (£335 per annum) had been offered for a period of three years to current scheme members which the individual could, if they wished, put towards the cost of making their own private health arrangements. A health insurance specialist had been retained to advise interested staff on available options. All other qualifying staff continued to be offered membership of the HSA cash plan scheme. The Council had now been advised by HSA of a substantial increase in costs from 1 June 2008, following a four year period of frozen premiums. The Committee considered that the best option now available would be to increase the Council's monthly contribution up to a maximum of £15 and give staff four options. The individual could either i) take a lower level of HSA cover, or ii) pay an additional monthly premium to retain the current level of cover, or iii) take the HSA Dental Plan, or iv) opt to contribute the sum towards cover under the National Deposit Scheme. The potential resource implications of the payment of the additional monthly premium were noted.

The National Deposit Scheme, which was in operation at Surrey Heath Borough Council, worked on the basis that each individual built up a fund from which they could draw to pay for medical and other expenses. Ultimately, if no claims were made, the individual could receive a refund of the amount remaining in the fund. The monthly premiums (which were age related upon joining) were fixed for the individual's lifetime. Claims could be made for most items included in conventional health insurance schemes as well as the HSA scheme. A modest additional premium could be paid in order to provide for additional funding cover in the early years. Unlike many health insurance schemes, once the individual's fund had run out, they would have to transfer to the National Health Service (NHS) or to continue to pay for private cover themselves. The Committee noted the comments of the Council's current specialist Private Medical Insurance broker who had stated that the National Deposit Scheme was effective, providing that the client realised that there was a set limit at any one time (depending upon the size of their fund), and was happy to transfer back to the NHS if it ran out. The broker had offered to explain the scheme to interested staff.

The Committee agreed that the National Deposit scheme appeared to offer a potentially worthwhile alternative health cover facility for staff and would go some way in restoring a valued staff benefit at a significantly reduced cost. UNISON had been consulted and on the basis of the information provided had no objections to the Scheme. UNISON urged Officers to take up the offer from the Council's specialist Private Medical Insurance broker to arrange sessions with interested staff to explain the scheme to them. UNISON also understood that the National Deposit Scheme could also arrange briefing sessions which would provide a useful forum for staff to ask questions.

In the report on the Finance Department, it was noted that the Council was still pursuing a reduction in the external audit fee. Three posts within the Housing Department of Housing Finance Assistant, Private Sector Resettlement Officer and Tenancy Management Assistant, were currently temporary and therefore gave rise to the potential for staff turnover. The costs incurred for these posts were currently contained within the budget and the 5 year forecast and it was therefore agreed that in order to assist with staff retention, these posts be made permanent. There had been difficulties in recruiting to the post of a Housing Building Services Engineer, which was a post which required specialist expertise to ensure that the various electrical and gas appliances within the Council's stock were operating safely. The Committee therefore agreed a market supplement, in the sum reported, which would be an additional charge to the Housing Revenue Account.

Over the past few years the Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) had been used to support additional staff resources and support systems in Development Control to meet the earlier targets set by the Government. The PDG would be replaced by the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant that changed the emphasis of the targets towards the planning policy framework and the delivery of housing. The development control service was now meeting Government targets, but grant support was still required to maintain that level of success. The Committee therefore agreed that these arrangements be maintained for another two years at a total cost as reported. Additionally the PDG had been used to support the new Local Development Plan process and two full time equivalent Policy Officers had been created. The current policy post holders were employed until 31 March 2008. Their contracts had been renewed on an annual basis and had reflected the uncertain nature of the PDG. On the basis of the work that would be required to be undertaken by the post holders, and to provide some degree of continuity, it was agreed that they be confirmed for a further period of 3 years from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2011, to correlate with the Local Development Framework timescale.

The Council had agreed to introduce a tariff regime on development in the Borough from April 2008 to provide for infrastructure needs. The policy provided for 4% of income to be used for monitoring purposes to ensure that contributions were received, properly distributed and spent. The role could not be properly covered by existing resources. It was therefore agreed that a new post of Planning Coordinating Officer be created at Grade 10, with funding from this income stream. The Committee noted the job description for the new post. A graduate package was in operation in Technical Services to assist in recruiting and retaining planners. It was also agreed that a sum as reported was necessary in 2008/09 to fund consultancy work on the Local Development Framework and other system support costs.

The Committee agreed that the staffing and consultancy arrangements in Technical Services referred to above should be funded from external income from Housing and Planning Delivery Grant, planning tariffs and income from the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS). The Committee noted that after taking into account the total cost of the above measures in Development Control, there was still a surplus at the end of the period to 2011. The expenditure beyond 2010 to 2011 might need to be revised to fall in line with any anticipated grant income changes and could be reviewed next year.

In the Engineering Division of Technical Services, Depot Services required frequent use of agency staff, especially for refuse crews to replace sick or absent staff. The quality of Agency staff was not always high. It was therefore agreed that five supernumerary posts at Grade 4 be created, with funding from the present budget for agency staff. These staff would be first priority for refuse rounds, but if not needed for this, would be assigned to tidy the recycling 'bring' sites, or other street cleansing duties. Absence management would be undertaken as well, to endeavor to reduce sickness levels. A potential bonus scheme for the Depot funded from existing performance related pay would be the subject of future discussions with Personnel, the trade union and staff.

It was agreed that Officers should seek to achieve uniformity of approach, including on costs, when presenting business cases for extra staff in future reports.

The comments of UNISON on the Plan were noted. UNISON welcomed a number of the proposals for action contained within the Plan and the Committee placed on record its appreciation of UNISON's constructive response. UNISON had asked that consideration be given to granting staff who were in credit on their working hours at the end of each month two flexi-days per month, rather than the current one day. The Committee decided not to change this, noting that most Surrey districts operated a one day policy.

The Committee commended Officers on a comprehensive, well structured and informative Plan.

RESOLVED that –

- i) the staffing issues detailed in the first chapter of the Pay and Workforce Plan be noted;**
- ii) the Action Plans summarised in Appendix 'A' be adopted;**

- iii) Councillors Davis and Mrs Gillham confer and advise the Personnel Manager of a list of Best Council initiatives which they would like Runnymede to pursue;**
- iv) the implementation details of the revised management arrangements on sickness absence as set out in Appendix 'B' be noted and approved;**
- v) with effect from 1 April 2008, the Council's monthly contribution for health cover be increased up to a maximum of £15 in order to enable the individual either a) take a lower level of HSA cover or b) pay an additional monthly premium to retain the current level of cover or c) take the HSA Dental Plan or d) opt to contribute the sum towards cover under the National Deposit scheme;**
- vi) the temporary posts in Housing of Housing Finance Assistant, Private Sector Resettlement Officer and Tenancy Management Assistant be made permanent;**
- vii) a market supplement in the sum reported be added to Housing post EO240 Building Services Engineer;**
- viii) the planning and administrative posts in Technical Services previously funded from Planning Delivery Grant continue to be funded for a further two years;**
- ix) the contracts of the two Technical Services full time equivalent temporary planning officers be extended to 31 March 2011;**
- x) a sum as reported be set aside in Technical Services for consultancy as part of the Local Development Framework;**
- xi) a post of Planning Co-ordinating Officer in Technical Services be created at grade 10;**
- xii) the staffing and consultancy arrangements referred to at resolutions viii) to xi) above be solely funded from external income from Housing and Planning Delivery Grant, planning tariffs, and income from the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS); and**
- xiii) five supernumerary refuse loader/street cleansing posts be created in Technical Services at grade 4, to be funded from the present budget for agency staff.**

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 9.30pm)