

Runnymede Borough Council

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

4 March 2010 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors P J Waddell (Chairman for the meeting), A Alderson, M J Brown, J M Edwards, Mrs L M Gillham, D R Hamilton (Vice Chairman), H W V Meares, P I Roberts, J J Wilson and G B Woodger

Member of the Committee absent: None

Councillor P B Tuley also attended.

609. CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING

In the absence of the Chairman of the Committee, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Councillor D R Hamilton, indicated that he wished another Member of the Committee to chair the Committee, for this meeting only. The Mayor, Councillor P B Tuley, indicated that he did not wish to chair the Committee. The Committee accordingly elected Councillor P J Waddell to be Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

610. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Group mentioned below had notified the Chief Executive of its wish that the changes listed below be made to the membership of the Committee. The changes were for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting and thereafter the Councillors removed would be reappointed.

Group	Remove from Membership	Appoint Instead
Conservative	Councillor J R Furey (Chairman)	Councillor J J Wilson
Conservative	Councillor P Taylor	Councillor J M Edwards

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

611. FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Chairman read out the Fire Precautions.

612. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 February 2010 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

613. REVISED FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

The Committee considered revised financial projections in the light of the Council's decision to increase the Council Tax by 2.98% in April 2010.

In December 2009 the Council had considered its Financial Forecast for the period from 2010/11 to 2014/15 and had approved increases in the Council Tax of 5% per annum and a target to generate further revenue reductions of £847,000 on top of the annual savings of £1,365,000 already approved. At its last meeting, the Committee had recommended an increase of 2.98% in the Borough's portion of the Council Tax for the 2010/11 financial year which had been agreed by the Council and had expressed the view that it was no longer realistic to forecast future tax rises of 5% and requested a further report showing the impact of tax rises of 2.5% in 2011/12 and 2012/13 and 3% in 2013/14 and 2014/15. The Committee noted an amended report on the 2010/11 Budget and Council Tax prepared with these assumptions on the level of Council Tax

and, to ensure that the General Fund working balance was at least £1.5 million (in accordance with the Council's approved strategy) by March 2015, showing an increase in the annual savings target from £847,000 to £1,375,000. This was the version of the Budget that now appeared on the Council's website.

The Committee noted three summary projections. The first of these was based on Council tax rises of 2.5% in 2011/12 and 2012/13 and 3% in 2013/14 and 2014/15 and maintaining the current savings target of £847,000 rather than increasing it to £1,375,000. The second projection showed the effect of Council tax rises of 2.5% in 2011/12 and 2012/13 and 3% in 2013/14 and 2014/15 and increasing the savings target to £1,375,000. The third projection showed Council tax increases of 2.5% in 2011/12 and 2012/13, and 5% in 2013/14 and 2014/15, resulting in a reduction in the savings target from £1,375,000 to £1,299,000.

The service review programme was well under way. Early indications were that there were significant opportunities for savings and efficiencies but that savings might take longer than expected to materialise. Therefore, Officers were preparing a list of savings which could be achieved in the short term (from the financial year 2011/12 or before) to address the need to reduce expenditure and increase income generation within the next twelve months. This would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

As a 1% increase in Council Tax yielded approximately £45,000 in revenue, the lower rise in Council Tax led to a more demanding savings target than previously required. Members of the Committee expressed the view that the service review programme had made a good start in meeting the demanding targets required. There might be a need to build in more margins or contingencies and take more account of downside risk in moving forward with the programme. Deferment of decisions was not an option as there was a need to achieve economies or efficiency savings urgently. Better use of assets was required. A view was also expressed by some Members that in order to manage the financial position, the Council needed to employ fewer staff and recruit fewer staff in future and only undertake training and development of staff when necessary. Concern was expressed at the level of Council reserves which it had proved necessary to expend. It was noted that there were plans for greater utilisation of assets, that every post was already scrutinised to ensure that it was required and training and development had been reduced by £15,000 per annum. Certain training was needed to achieve professional qualifications, and to comply with health and safety and legal requirements. A report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on training and development for all staff.

614. FINANCIAL MONITORING STATEMENT

The Committee noted the latest financial projections for the 2009/10 financial year for corporate and business services.

615. NET REVENUE REDUCTIONS - PROGRESS

The Committee noted progress in achieving the Council's revenue reductions targets.

The Council's Financial Forecast had identified a need to make further revenue reductions and proposals to reduce net revenue expenditure by £712,000 per annum by 2013/14 had been approved by Council on 18 December 2008. Following a report on the deteriorating financial outlook, the Council had approved further savings of £653,000 at its meeting on 15 October 2009, resulting in a total of £1,365,000. The latest Financial Forecast approved by Council on 17 December 2009 showed that these savings would not be sufficient to produce a sustainable budget and the Council had initiated a programme of service reviews with the aim of identifying further savings of at least £847,000.

The Committee noted the status of the savings initiatives totalling £1,365,000 up until the end of 2013/14 that had already been approved by the Council. Of those savings that were expected to be achieved in 2009/10, the latest projections showed that £409,700 was likely to be achieved compared with the target for the year of £547,500. The Committee noted the status of the initiatives for 2009/10 including a risk rating for each of the initiatives and a projection of the savings through to 2013/14. Officers had now given a risk rating to those initiatives which were not programmed to start yielding savings until after 2009/10. It was agreed that future reports should include totals for each of the risk indicators.

The full value (£4,000) of the saving from transferring the costs of the speed camera initiative to the police was shown, although the police had withdrawn unrelated funding for Safer Runnymede of £30,000 which negated the benefit of the saving. The Police had also cut their £7,800 contribution to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. It was noted that the Council would be making joint representations to the Police with other neighbouring authorities to seek to achieve an appropriate contribution from the Police. It was noted that the recent increased pressures on public expenditure generally meant that public sector organisations might seek to transfer costs, particularly where partnership working was taking place. The income stream from the contract with Azzurri to manage the five-a-side football pitches at Egham Leisure Centre had been adjusted to match the statement reported in the Budget Book. For 2009/10, £25,000 of savings had been achieved from various restructurings and a further £32,000 had been saved from deletion of posts in Technical Services administration and a Benefits Visiting Officer. £15,700 of savings were also expected at the two Leisure Centres in a full year, resulting from the deletion of a marketing post and the transfer of duties to other posts. There was provision in 2009/10 for a reduction of £15,000 in the Council's training budget and this saving was expected to be achieved. There was also provision for the saving to continue in each of the years up until the end of 2013/14. The details of the expenditure on training and the savings that were expected to be realised from the training budget would be included in the future report to the Committee on training and development for all staff. As there would be a delay in any savings which might accrue from the Surrey First initiative on the potential realignment of back office staff, discussions were taking place with other Surrey authorities on the potential for back office savings that could be achieved more quickly.

It was noted that a review of energy use had been undertaken in the Council's day centres. It was agreed that a report be submitted to the Committee's next meeting on energy efficiency initiatives being undertaken across all of the Council's services and buildings.

616. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN RUNNYMEDE – DECEMBER 2009

The Committee noted a report based on a County-wide summary developed by the Surrey Economic Partnership, which provided a snapshot of the economic conditions in Runnymede in December 2009. Where available, statistics relating to Runnymede and neighbouring districts were provided. The information in the report had had an effect upon the priority performance indicators third quarter outturn, which was the next item on the Committee's agenda. Overall, the report suggested that Runnymede was not being particularly badly affected by the recession. Unemployment in Runnymede was under 2%, although there were some concerns regarding youth unemployment and there was evidence that highly skilled people over the age of 40 years were suffering in the downturn and that employment opportunities for graduates were limited. A Member would be advised of the maximum length of time for which a claimant could receive Job Seekers Allowance. The recovery was likely to be patchy, with some sectors declining and others benefitting from changes to the economy. The Committee was pleased to note that the Surrey Economic Partnership was co-ordinating a Surrey-wide Future Jobs Fund which had the aim of delivering new jobs for young people. It was suggested that the Council should aim to employ as many people under the age of 20 years as possible.

617. PRIORITY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE 2009/10 – THIRD QUARTER PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee considered third quarter performance against the Council's priority performance indicators.

The figures for anti-social behaviour had decreased in the third quarter, but the levels of fraud and non domestic burglary had increased. These matters would be considered by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. It was noted that the number of households living in temporary accommodation was low in Runnymede and the proactive work and early intervention being undertaken by the Council's Housing Department in this area of activity was helping to keep the figure low. Addlestone Leisure Centre usage had increased and this might be an example of the recession working in the Council's favour, as private sector facilities were usually more expensive and customers were transferring in the difficult economic climate. Affordable housing targets would be difficult to achieve after 2011 and other possible sites were being looked at as possibilities.

National Indicator (NI) 195 on improved cleanliness was based on a snapshot sample taken across the whole borough. Residents' surveys had shown that cleanliness was a key priority for the public. The results for this Indicator had improved and the six barrow beats in all town centres had made the borough cleaner and increased the public perception of a cleaner borough. Regarding NI 180 and 181 on Housing and Council Tax Benefit, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had frequently changed the criteria for the indicator and Northgate, in common with other software providers, had as a consequence been unable to produce reliable data, so no figures were available. It would be helpful for the future if the DWP could simplify the indicator, as this would increase the likelihood of software providers being able to produce satisfactory data. Although the numbers of Section 106 agreements and planning infrastructure contributions had reduced during the economic downturn, income was being received for schemes that had started prior to the recession. The Council was currently involved in discussions on several major schemes that might give rise to significant Section 106 agreements over a two year period, including the Brunel College site, Thorpe Park, Royal Holloway, the former DERA site and St Peter's Hospital. It was noted that flytipping was on the increase. The Council had publicised information on flytipping fines and disposal of waste, had updated flytipping signs and was working with the Environment Agency and Hounslow and Spelthorne Borough Councils on this issue.

RESOLVED that –

it be noted that the Committee is content with the progress in achieving the new priority performance indicators.

618. LOCAL TAXATION RECOVERY - AUTHORISATION OF OFFICER TO TAKE PROCEEDINGS

The Committee considered the authorisation of a temporary Recovery Officer to take proceedings on behalf of the Council in the recovery of local taxes (Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates).

The Council applied to the Magistrates' Court for liability orders and committal orders as part of the process to recover local taxes that were outstanding. These functions were undertaken within the Revenues Division of the Finance Department. In order to act in a Magistrates' Court on the Council's behalf for this purpose, Officers who were not practising solicitors needed to be formally authorised by the Council. As a result of long-term illness it was necessary to employ a Recovery Officer temporarily for a period which would depend on the length of the illness, to provide adequate cover. The Committee accordingly agreed to recommend that the Officer below be authorised for this purpose

RECOMMEND that -

the following Officer be authorised under Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1972 to take proceedings in the Magistrates' Court to recover Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
Mr R Wheeler	Recovery Officer

619. 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	Obtaining authority to appoint an Occupational Therapist within the Private Sector Housing Team.	714

It was noted that it was proving difficult to recruit this Occupational Therapist and it may prove necessary to obtain this service on a contract basis.

620. 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 to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee noted that the Council's Personnel Manager, Mr David Thomas, would be retiring at the end of March after 31 years of service to the Council. The Committee recorded its thanks to Mr Thomas for his long service.

The Annual Pay and Workforce Plan 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 Committee commended the Plan which contained much detailed and helpful information but considered that in the future all of the recommendations in the Plan should be set out in one place in the Plan.

The five areas addressed in detail in the plan were organisational development, leadership development, skill development, recruitment/retention and pay/rewards, which followed the key actions identified by the Government in the 2007 National Pay and Workforce Strategy. The Committee 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, staffing implications of Council policies and priorities, major issues identified during the appraisal process, sickness absence, age profile of staff, the Local Government Pension Scheme, disciplinary and grievance procedures, regrading of certain senior posts within the Council, and reports from the various departments of the Council. The Committee also noted the comments of UNISON on the Plan. UNISON considered that most of the Plan should have been considered in public to promote two way communication, to allow departments to see the activities of other sections and so that issues raised in appraisals could become more generally known.

The issue of reviewing the size of the Council's workforce was discussed. The Council had an aging workforce. 30% of staff might retire within the next five years, which would present opportunities and challenges for the Authority. In the case of long serving staff, redundancy costs to the authority would be considerable and it might work out less expensive to Runnymede, and better from a service delivery perspective, to allow such staff to continue in office until their retirement date. Many of the Council's working units were small. This provided less scope for reductions. Any reductions would mean that a service could either not be provided or carried out to a more limited degree. Yet public expectation of action might still be high, e.g. in planning enforcement. Additional hours were being worked by remaining staff in areas where staffing had been cut, yet demand for services was still high and demand was also increasing in some service areas, e.g. private sector housing. All possible opportunities to reduce or redeploy the workforce were examined by Directors and the Chief Executive whenever vacancies occurred. Equipping staff with transferable flexible skills to allow them to move around departments would assist in meeting the challenges ahead. However, staff would need to be properly trained to transfer and that would have resource implications. It was agreed that a report should be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on staff training and development in the Council's IT Section. In some cases, extra employees had been needed to take on new functions, e.g. grass cutting.

The Council did benchmark its support costs, i.e. compare the cost of support services at other authorities with those at Runnymede. The solution to the Council's financial position did not lie in merely reducing staff. Efficiencies had to be looked at (e.g. operating in a different way and/or reducing costs), marketing and enhancement of services had to be investigated, the possibility of winning contracts for work from other organisations had to be explored and better use of assets was needed.

UNISON wished to see more consultation on staffing matters and stated that it had had little involvement, so far, in the service review programme. The Chief Executive stated that a

consistent approach to consultation had been put in place, frequent staff briefings were held on various matters relating to Council policy and regular meetings were held with UNISON to apprise them of latest developments.

It was agreed that staffing and service structures would be revisited consequent upon outcomes of the Service Reviews, Surrey First and other joint working initiatives with neighbouring Surrey Councils, legislative requirements and revised policy targets and that the Chief Executive would bring forward a comprehensive report updating the various opportunities for joint working, together with any specific further recommendations. It was also agreed that the Council would continue to achieve Government's continuing efficiency savings. UNISON had observed that few details had as yet emerged on the scope, timescale or level of involvement of Runnymede in the Surrey First initiative on the potential realignment of back office staff or on other joint working initiatives with other Surrey Authorities. The Committee noted that further details on the Surrey First initiative had recently become available and a further report would be received on this subject.

UNISON considered that there had not been an acknowledgement by Members of the efficiencies and savings that had already been achieved by staff, or of the contribution to the Council's operation that had been made by staff on lower grades. The Committee did not accept that Members had not recognised the efforts and achievements of staff in responding to the Council's financial position and reiterated its appreciation of the work done by staff.

Suspension of the Performance Related Pay scheme, the two year pay freeze and the withdrawal of the loyalty bonus for long serving high performing staff had not helped staff morale. Last year, when considering the Pay and Workforce Plan, the Committee had agreed that a staff survey be undertaken at an appropriate time in the future. The Committee now agreed that undertaking a survey would only confirm what was known already. Staff appreciated the current financial situation and were keen to participate in identifying efficiencies and actions to safeguard services and jobs. Focus groups and other opportunities for engagement could harness that potential. It was therefore agreed that the Chief Executive should set up focus groups and other opportunities for staff engagement during 2010. UNISON was sceptical about the value of focus groups and wished to see more information on how they would operate.

The Council had been awarded Level 3 of the Equalities Standard in the autumn of 2009. As part of the assessment process, a number of recommendations had been made for improvements in the authority's equalities practices and processes. It was agreed that these recommendations should be followed up during 2010/11. UNISON welcomed the redrafted Equality Impact Assessment Forms and guidance but had stated that additional resources would be required if the Council was really committed to equalities. UNISON had also observed that the Council employed few people who were disabled or from minority ethnic groups at management level. The Committee reaffirmed that the Council was fully committed to equalities and fairness across the organisation and in the way that the Council operated.

It was agreed that, with regard to training for next year, opportunities for jointly identified and jointly organised programmes of Member training and development should be agreed by all of the Surrey local authorities, supported and financed by the Surrey Improvement Partnership. Further management training would continue to be promoted in the authority, utilising, where appropriate, the resources of the Surrey Training Officers Group (STOG) joint training initiatives. In view of the success of the 'Runnymede Challenge' programme for Officers held last summer at Walton Firs, a further Challenge would be run in 2010 as well as a residential development event for potential future leaders. The importance of providing appropriate skills training, where appropriate, would continue to be acknowledged. Whilst UNISON saw benefit in the STOG programme and the Runnymede Challenge, and welcomed the varied and continued programme of staff training, it could not, in the current financial climate, support a residential course to identify potential future leaders. UNISON also considered that there was too much emphasis on "on the job" training and a general lack of cover for posts throughout the authority, arising from the need to make economies. UNISON had also stated that there had been some problems in working in the new Civic Centre, arising from reliance on information technology and the commitment to the open plan environment.

While levels of turnover had reduced because of the economic downturn, it was agreed that appropriate Directors be charged with addressing issues of unacceptably high staff turnover in areas within their control if this were to occur and that Directors should continue to monitor and

address sickness absence in their departments. UNISON considered that, in some cases, genuinely ill staff had been coerced into attending work and that stress related absence needed to be acknowledged and a commitment shown to the Health and Safety Management Standards for stress. The way in which staff absence was reported was currently being discussed between UNISON and management.

The Council had employed agency office staff for short term periods. Surrey County Council had entered into an agreement with Manpower, a staff agency, and there would be an opportunity for Runnymede to participate in this agreement in the future if it proved to be successful. It was agreed that Officers would continue to monitor and evaluate the arrangements for engaging agency temporary staff and bring forward any further recommendations as appropriate, including the possibility of participating in the Surrey County Council arrangement with Manpower, if appropriate. UNISON restated its commitment to provision of services in-house and sought a list of all posts that had been deleted, downgraded, out-sourced or filled by agency staff in the last five years.

It was agreed that the continued suspension of the Performance Related Pay (PRP) scheme be reviewed towards the end of 2010, and that the pay policy and the salaries of staff employed by Runnymede should also be kept under review. As it was anticipated that there would be an upturn in the building industry and demand for Building Control posts, it would be appropriate to retain the market supplement in the sum reported for Building Control posts for the time being and to review the situation on an annual basis. UNISON continued to oppose the Council's pay policy (while supporting the market supplement) and considered that a pay benchmarking exercise should now be undertaken. An Equal Pay Audit had been undertaken during 2009 to ensure that the Council's remuneration packages remained fair and free from any discriminatory elements. It was agreed that further Equal Pay Audits should be undertaken on a regular basis to ensure that the authority's remuneration packages remained fair and free from any discriminatory elements. UNISON considered that the Council's 2009 Equal Pay Audit had some merit, but had failed to identify some inequalities.

The Committee agreed the Action Plans summarised in Appendix 'A'. It was agreed that it would be appropriate to regrade upwards four senior posts within the Council's staff to the grades as reported and thereby to increase the remuneration of these posts in line with the duties and responsibilities of these jobs. One post would be regraded with effect from the date of application for regrading and another would be regraded with effect from the beginning of the next financial year. The other two post holders affected did not wish to receive a pay adjustment upwards while their colleagues were facing a pay freeze. It was therefore agreed that the pay adjustment for these posts be deferred until either such time as the Council implemented a pay increase for all staff or in the event of either post being made redundant and that the pay adjustment for these posts be made as a lump sum for an amount equivalent to monies foregone, calculated on the basis of scale maximum.

The Council had engaged the services of an urban design consultant to provide specialist advice on planning applications. During the past eighteen months, the consultant had provided valuable support to Planning Officers when discussing schemes with developers, which had been reflected in the finished developments of several major schemes. It was agreed that this service should continue to be financed for a further year from the Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) provision. SANGS was funding offered by developers to take advantage of Council-owned land as mitigation/avoidance of impact of their residential developments on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas. The preparation of the Local Development Framework required a considerable amount of evidence gathering. Much of this could only be undertaken by specialist consultants. A provision for consultancy had been allocated in 2008/09 and 2009/10 and a reduced amount would also be required for 2010/11. It was agreed that this be again funded from the SANGS contributions.

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) **one post be regraded, as reported, with effect from the date of application for regrading and the pay adjustment be implemented with immediate effect;**
- iv) **one post be regraded, as reported, with effect from 1 April 2010 and the pay adjustment be implemented with immediate effect;**
- v) **two posts be regraded, as reported, and the pay adjustment for these posts be deferred until either such time as the Council implements a pay increase for all staff or in the event of either post being made redundant;**
- vi) **the pay adjustment at v) above be made as a lump sum for an amount equivalent to monies foregone, calculated on the basis of scale maximum;**
- vii) **supplementary budgetary provision be made in the sum reported from 2010/11, to meet the cost of the regradings referred to iii) to vi) above;**
- viii) **the urban design consultant be retained, financed by funding received in relation to SANGS contributions; and**
- ix) **consultancy to support the Local Development Framework be provided in the sum reported, financed by SANGS contributions.**

621. VARIATION OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS – ANNUAL LEAVE FOR SECOND AND THIRD TIER OFFICERS

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 paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

This report was withdrawn.

622. WRITE OFFS

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 paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

RESOLVED that –

the non domestic rates arrears of £36,872.85, as detailed in Exempt Appendix '3' to the Agenda, be written off as irrecoverable.

623. VICTORY PARK PAVILION, ADDLESTONE – REPAIR

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 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Chairman had agreed that this item be considered by the Committee as a matter of urgency as a resolution to the future of the Victory Park Pavilion in Addlestone which was acceptable to all parties had only recently been shown to be viable and the future of the Pavilion needed to be decided quickly in the interests of the pre-school group which used it and to prevent further deterioration in the condition of the Pavilion building. The Chairman had also agreed that it was appropriate for the Committee to determine the matter and not make a recommendation to the Council for a capital estimate, as provided for in paragraph 1.3 of Committee Responsibilities in the Council's Constitution. In view of the urgency, the Chairman of the Leisure and Environment

Committee had agreed to those matters which fell within the purview of that Committee being dealt with by the Corporate Management Committee, as provided for in paragraph 1.12 of the Corporate Management Committee's Responsibilities in the Council's Constitution.

The Pavilion in Victory Park in Addlestone had been closed since January 2010 as one of the structural timber posts had moved, possibly because of contraction resulting from the intensely cold winter weather. Further movement might result in the roof at this point becoming unsupported. Accordingly, the building had been fenced off and the local Minus 5 pre-school, who had used the Pavilion for many years, had been prevented from returning for the Spring term. It was agreed that it would be undesirable to demolish and remove the building as it provided changing accommodation for sports teams using the park which did provide the Council with some limited income and was now a well established home for the pre-school which served a number of local families, and represented a good example of co-operation between authorities. The Pavilion also helped to increase usage of the park because of the facilities it offered and provided public conveniences for park users. It was not possible for the Bowls Pavilion, which was located nearby in the Park, to be adapted so that it was suitable for pre-school use.

At its meeting in September 2009, the Leisure and Environment Committee had considered a report on the future of the Victory Park Pavilion building, which had highlighted the need for a replacement. At that time Officers were investigating the feasibility of a new purpose built structure in another part of the Park, but this could only be made affordable by external funding. Officers had been asked to report back after investigation, but the unexpected deterioration of the present building required a solution in a much shorter timescale. Officers had therefore obtained indicative costs for a series of options relating to the immediate future of the building.

The Committee noted the estimated indicative costs of demolishing the entire building (option 1), demolishing the building except for the toilets and refurbishing /adapting the toilet block to stand alone (option 2), demolishing the building and providing portacabin type toilets (option 3), replacing the changing accommodation and toilets only with bare modular units (option 4), undertaking repairs to the existing building (option 5), replacing the existing facilities with bare modular units (option 6), and replacing the existing facilities by modular units with a pitched roof and brick slip finish (option 7). All of the costs included contingency and were subject to tender prices, which it was hoped would be slightly lower than currently estimated. Each option would cost more than the previous one, so option one was the least expensive and option seven was the most expensive. Although options one to four were the least expensive options, Surrey County Council's Early Years Unit was only prepared to make funding available for an option which allowed the Minus 5 Pre-School to continue. This meant that this Surrey County Council Funding would only be available if one of the options from five to seven inclusive were to be adopted. This offer of funding from Surrey County Council, which would meet most of the cost for options 5 to 7, was only available for a limited period.

It was agreed that options 1 to 4 did not provide acceptable solutions as there would be limited benefits arising from this expenditure and it was not appropriate to leave a town centre park with minimal facilities. The Committee agreed that it was therefore necessary to select an option which would result in Surrey County Council funding so that a range of facilities could be provided. While some concern was expressed at having to make a decision on the commitment of expenditure with limited time to consider the matter, the Committee decided that the least expensive of the three options from 5 to 7 should be pursued, which was undertaking repairs to the existing building (option 5). Included within the price of option 5 would be the complete renewal of the structure between the brick plinth and the roof and a new disabled toilet to meet modern regulations. The repaired building should have a length of life which was at least equivalent to the original building, (in excess of 20 years), and this option would be comparable to the more expensive option 6 and option 7, in terms of facilities provided. Repairing the building should also result in a better appearance to the structure than proceeding with options 6 or 7.

It was agreed that option 5 should only be pursued with the continued availability of funding from the Surrey County Council Early Years Unit and with the approval of the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED). In considering the estimate for the build cost for option 5, a Member of the Committee suggested that the build cost should be based on a particular sum per square foot and it was agreed that this proposal should be noted by Officers. Most of the funding for repairs to the existing building could be met from Surrey County Council's Early Years Unit. The remainder could be met from diversion of funding in the Capital

Programme for capital grants in 2010/11 and 2011/12 and, if necessary, through a contribution from the Building Maintenance Revenue Budget. Officers were continuing to explore potential sources of grant from outside organisations so it was possible that the call on Council resources could be further reduced, even if no improvement on the estimates was achieved on the return of the tenders. There would be no adverse impact on the Financial Forecast from the funding of the repair to the Pavilion. Monies would be allocated from the existing Capital Programme provision for grants and, if required, from the existing revenue budget for maintenance.

The Leisure and Environment Committee would normally approve the tender list for a contract of this value. As it was necessary to proceed quickly to secure good tenders and to complete the facility to a timescale that guaranteed the continued existence of the pre-school, it was agreed that Officers in the case would agree the tender list with the Chairman of the Leisure and Environment Committee and that the appropriate Standing Orders be waived accordingly.

RESOLVED that –

- i) the Director of Technical Services, in consultation with the Director of Administration and Leisure, be authorised to proceed with the repair of Victory Park Pavilion, noting the view expressed by a Member of the Committee as to an appropriate level of build cost, to be funded by the contribution as reported from the Surrey County Council Early Years Unit and such grants as can be secured, with the balance made up from a new Capital Programme provision achieved by reduction of the Capital Grant Aid budget for 2010/11 and 2011/12 as reported and, if necessary, a contribution from the Building Maintenance revenue budget, as reported;**
- ii) the action at i) above be subject to the continued availability of the funding from the Surrey County Council Early Years Unit and the approval of OFSTED;**
- iii) budgetary and capital programme provision and a capital estimate for the action at i) above, be approved accordingly; and**
- iv) subject to ii) above, the Director of Technical Services be authorised to approve the tender list for the works with the agreement of the Chairman of the Leisure and Environment Committee, and Standing Order C3.3 and Standing Order 4.4 be waived accordingly.**

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 9.55pm)