



Position Paper

Leader's Statement

2004-05

Runnymede Borough Council
Civic Offices
Station Road
Addlestone
Surrey
KT15 2AH

LEADER'S POSITION STATEMENT 2004/5

1. Foreword

We have as an Authority over the last three or four years continued to refine a range of existing plans and strategies, as well as developing new ones in key policy areas. This is so that we achieve a better focus in what we do, and Members, staff, residents and other stakeholders understand what we are about, where our priorities lie, and that the Council does not just act at the behest of Government.

The time therefore seems right to shift the emphasis and structure of this annual Leader's Position Statement, which continues to play a central part in explaining our purpose, service priorities, new initiatives, financial planning and resource allocations. This year it takes the form of an overarching document and does not seek to replicate the detail and content of the strategies and plans that cover both corporate and service committee based activities.

I am grateful to Members and Officers, as well as our statutory partners, clients and residents, many of whom play a significant and most constructive part in helping to develop our broad and strong portfolio of strategies, plans, review and improvement mechanisms.

There is a considerable legislative programme before us proposed by Government, much of which will directly affect us. This includes assuming new licensing responsibilities, decriminalised parking enforcement, Freedom of Information Act and Disability Discrimination Act requirements, and new Housing and Anti-Social Behaviour Bills. There are major consequences in the Local Government Act 2003 for the existing financial flexibility that we enjoy, in particular the pooling of capital receipts from Right-to-Buy sales of Council houses. This is likely to cost Runnymede in excess of £1 million a year when fully implemented. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill proposes a new planning framework developing the role of the Regional planning bodies and the replacement of the current County Structure Plans and Borough Local Plans by new Regional Spatial Strategies and district authority Local Development Frameworks. There is much more besides.

We will continue to ensure that proper resources are made available to discharge our legislative obligations. Equally, however, we want to maintain the flexibility to develop a local agenda that

explicitly meets local needs in line with our long-standing aim to enhance the quality of life for all our residents. As Councillors we spend a great deal of time listening to residents and amenity or interest groups, as well as business. Politically we will pursue our philosophies and we are happy to be held accountable at the ballot box. We have a great deal of material prepared by Officers and many briefings and discussions which seek to identify coherent local policies which have a sound evidence base as well as public support. This document also seeks to reflect the lessons we have learnt over the last year to ensure that future practices improve the way the Council delivers its services. The major policies will be translated into Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time related targets as part of our Service Plans and performance management arrangements.

We are equally clear, for the time being at least, that we should not pursue new arts and sports related facilities that generate significant revenue deficits or do not improve the financial performance of existing services. With the demographic data beginning to emerge from the 2001 Census and the changing needs of Social Services and the Primary Care Trust, it would equally seem inopportune to consider major new investment in our significant Day Centre provision.

Delivering high quality Council services remains at the top of our agenda. We continue to seek upper quartile performance across the range of Council services. The professionalism and strong performance management of our officers will continue to serve us well in the challenging times ahead. As a Council we continue to spend more per head on services than any other Surrey District. We aim to uphold that record of spending on front line services to ensure that we continuously improve.

The Best Value regime, associated service reviews, and our preparation for the Comprehensive Performance Assessment later this year all provide useful learning opportunities, as well as an increased awareness of our performance, both for Members and Officers.

The extensive work we led to achieve the Community Strategy has been very worthwhile. This Statement sets the context and priorities for those targets that we can properly discharge, and identifies the advocacy and representative role we will pursue where other agencies have principal responsibility.

As can be seen from the following pages our key priorities remain substantially unchanged and we make no apology for that. We are particularly anxious to maintain our hard earned financial flexibility which has enabled us over the years to produce attractive and well thought out new policies that make a real difference to residents, businesses and visitors to the Borough. We recognise that we are setting a challenging agenda but our track record of delivering our promises over the last ten years or so will inspire us to successfully deliver the initiatives laid out in this Statement.

Roger Habgood

Leader of the Council

August 2003

1. CONTEXT

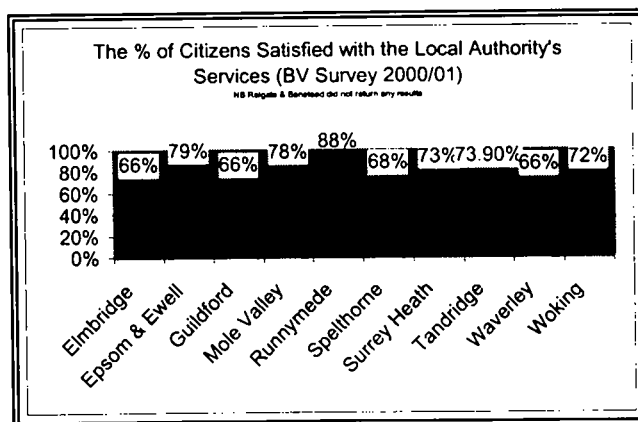
A great deal has been achieved over the last year with high levels of residents' satisfaction. Major strides have been made in the processing of planning applications and benefit administration. Upper quartile performance is the norm rather than exception. Good progress is now being made in call handling and in the payment of invoices. There has been major progress in the areas of housing investment, both in our own stock and by way of new provision and key worker housing has received a big boost with the completion of Sandgates for health staff. The new Hythe Centre, completed in December 2002, now provides very attractive community facilities. Our recycling initiative is well on target to exceed the levels set out by Government. We are working closely with the Environment Agency on Flood Risk Action Groups following the flooding on the Thames and Bourne rivers early in 2003.

The following shows how we are doing against our core aims (see page 7):

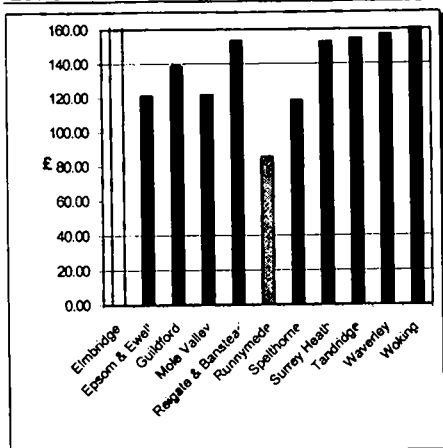
"Ensure we play an effective role in enhancing the quality of life for all our residents and visitors and provide an attractive environment for those who conduct their business in the Borough".

In 2001 the Council's satisfaction rating was the second highest in the country. A similar survey conducted in June 2003 suggested that the Council has maintained its high satisfaction levels, recording 86.9%.

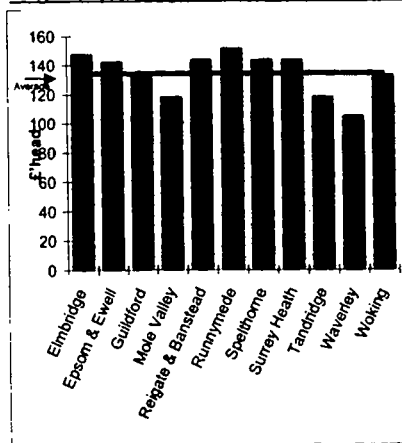
"Maintain rigorous financial control of the Council's affairs to ensure we keep to a minimum any additional call on Council Taxpayers"



Lower Council Tax (Band D in Surrey 2003/04)



Higher spending per head (2003/04 Budgets)



2. CORPORATE STANDARDS

In pursuing our policy aims we are anxious to maintain our approved set of standards that seek to guide the way we operate and serve the community of Runnymede.

- Committed to providing community leadership within Runnymede.
- Ensuring we provide a customer-focused quality service delivery to residents and businesses.
- Committed to achieving and maintaining clearly stated service standards.
- Committed to sound financial management, maximising flexibility and achieving value for money.
- Engaging with and being responsive to public opinion through consultation on important issues, ensuring clear communication of our policies.
- Working with other agencies to achieve community benefits while ensuring no dilution of accountability where there is clear responsibility.
- Setting an example in the way we operate both in respecting the environment and in our dealings with our suppliers and customers.
- Exercising policies that are non-discriminatory in our dealings with, and service to, our customers and also in our employment practices.
- Involving, valuing, developing and rewarding our staff in their employment and providing a good, safe working environment.
- Valuing, supporting, encouraging, and acknowledging the many organizations, groups and individuals who voluntarily provide a wide range of services of benefit to our community.

3. THE COUNCIL'S VISION

Aims

1. Achieving Quality and Excellence

"Ensure we play an effective role in enhancing the quality of life for all our residents and visitors and provide an attractive environment for those who conduct their business in the Borough".

2. Achieving Added Value

"Maintain rigorous financial control of the Council's affairs to ensure we keep to a minimum any additional call on Council Taxpayers".

Strategic Objectives

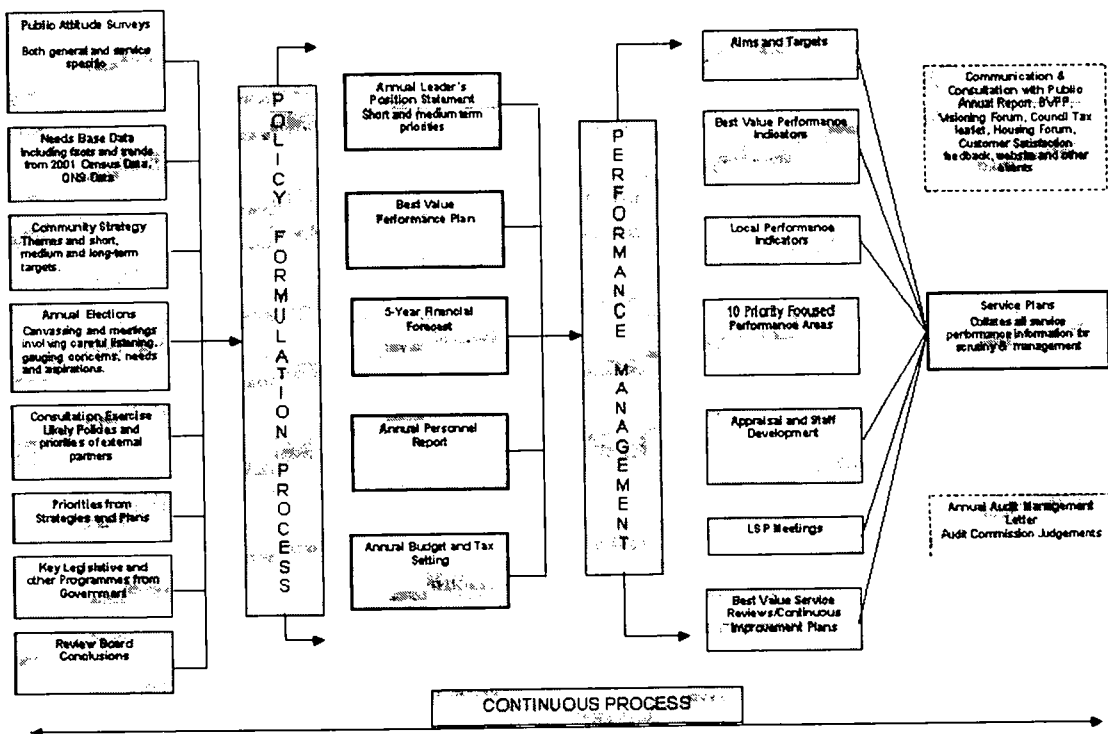
By being informed through a number of strategies and plans, the Council has identified five strategic objectives that underpin the work to achieve the two principal aims, and form the basis for the Council's work. On behalf of residents the Borough Council wants to:

- i) achieve quality services*
- ii) achieve value for money*
- iii) improve the quality of life*
- iv) achieve economic prosperity*
- v) achieve continuous improvement*

4. INFORMING THE LEADER'S POSITION STATEMENT

The Council has a number of Strategies and Plans, some of which are statutorily guided and others which, the Council believes, add direction and focus to its business. These strategies and plans, together with lessons learnt or areas of underperformance, inform the Council in achieving its objectives, prioritise its business and underpin its core values and two main aims.

We have a coherent structure for policy development, service delivery and review, as the following diagram demonstrates.



5. CORPORATE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Key Roles:

- i) Continue to exercise control of income and expenditure, particularly that which has not been delegated to the appropriate service committee via the budgetary process.*
- ii) Manage performance in finance, corporate policy, staffing and other administrative functions.*
- iii) Work to achieve quality services, value for money, improvements in the quality of life of residents, economic prosperity and continuous improvement.*

Principal Committee Objectives:

5.1 Achieve Quality Services

- 5.1.1 We want to ensure that we deliver 21st Century services via the most modern work processes through implementing e-government. We will continue to invest in smart systems that will improve Council processes, help us stop doing repetitive low value tasks and help free people to provide excellent customer services.
- 5.1.2 We will promote best practice across the Council and drive for upper quartile performance in all service provision.
- 5.1.3 We will continue to work with adjacent boroughs to achieve better service delivery targets and to share best practice for the benefit of residents.
- 5.1.4 We will further develop a framework to manage risk across the organisation and further embed this approach into our financial planning.
- 5.1.5 We will continue to urge our Education partners and particularly Surrey County Council to deliver the agreed Community Strategy targets under the "Exciting Future" Task Force.

5.2 Achieve value for money

- 5.2.1 We will seek to maintain our position as the lowest taxing District authority in Surrey.
- 5.2.2 We will complete the current programme of reduction in net revenue expenditure by the end of 2005/06.
- 5.2.3 We will balance income and expenditure without recourse to reserves by 2008/09 subject to further Government funding shortfalls or additional centrally imposed local tax burdens.

5.3 Improve the Quality of Life

- 5.3.1 We will continue to work with Surrey County Council and other Surrey Districts to develop a partnership Public Service Agreement that will benefit the Borough. We will also work with Surrey County Council and its Local Area Committee to develop partnership working where mutual benefit can be demonstrated.
- 5.3.2 We will oppose the development of a directly elected South East England Regional Assembly as proposed by Government requiring the abolition of our current County Council and District authorities and the formation of a new unitary authority.
- 5.3.3 We will seek to make further improvements in the way we work with partners to deliver services in the Borough. We will develop and be informed by the Borough Community Strategy through the established Local Strategic Partnership to maximise partnership working and deliver on those areas for which we are accountable.
- 5.3.4 We will protect the Borough's interests in responding to proposals which have a major impact and in particular will continue to oppose the Central Railway proposals and Motorway Service Areas.

5.3.5 We will support the Airtrack initiative but would also wish to see appropriate related infrastructure improvements and changes to the Borough's level crossings.

5.4 Achieve Economic Prosperity

5.4.1 We will review Human Resources policy and procedures, and make recommendations in readiness for the Council Office re-provision. We will pay particular attention in the short to medium term on issues relating to the retention and recruitment of staff given the current demographics within the Council, and with regard to the local employment / economic climate.

5.5 Achieve Continuous Improvement

5.5.1 We will learn from and act upon the improvement plan that emanates from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process, bringing about any necessary response at the earliest opportunity for the benefit of all within the Borough.

5.5.2 We will review and improve corporate governance processes and procedures looking to develop and adopt emerging best practice.

5.5.3 We will continue to focus on Best Value Continuous Improvement Plans and enhance services with particular emphasis on key core delivery areas.

5.5.4 We will further develop the Performance Management Framework, to build in continuous improvement to Service Plans, rationalise targets and further integrate into departmental management.

5.5.5 We will continue to involve staff in developing the corporate standards of the organisation and in monitoring and improving service delivery performance.

5.5.6 We will review the appropriateness and performance of our ten current priority Performance Indicators.

5.5.7 We will revise the Council's Race Equality Scheme in light of Best Value Performance Indicator requirements and pursue Level 2 of the Equality Standard.

5.5.8 We will develop the Communication Strategy and implement the necessary improvements to enhance internal and external communications that will aid access to services and the efficiency of services.

5.5.9 We will implement the approved Consultation Strategy to form a detailed corporate framework for learning from our community.

6. PLANNING COMMITTEE

Key Roles:

- i) *To deliver a planning service fulfilling the requirements of the Planning Acts that is efficient, expeditious, consistent in quality and commands the respect of users.*
- ii) *To develop the policies to be included in the new Local Development Framework that reflect the needs of Runnymede in terms of economic, social and environmental development and that recognise the importance of sustainability.*
- iii) *To deliver a service with regard to Building Control and the control of dangerous and dilapidated buildings.*
- iv) *To take timely action in respect of breaches of planning control through enforcement action.*
- v) *To contribute to the delivery of policies and initiatives for reducing traffic congestion, assisting transportation and providing parking standards appropriate to Runnymede.*

Principal Committee Objectives:

6.1 Achieve Quality Services

6.1.1 We will aim to deliver a prompt and efficient service to all planning applicants, but quality of outcome should not be sacrificed in order to meet targets for determination, particularly for major developments involving legal agreements. We will aim to process:

- 60% of major applications within 13 weeks (subject to achieving quality design and securing by negotiation other benefits through Section 106 Agreements under the Town and Country Planning Act).
- 65% of minor applications within 8 weeks
- 80% of other applications within 8 weeks.

6.1.2 We will take vigorous and timely enforcement action in accordance with the policies and priorities set by the Planning Committee to deter abuse of planning regulations. Acknowledging that enforcement action can be protracted, regular communication and monitoring reports of progress will be brought to Committee. Liaison with Ward Members and concerned members of the public will be maintained.

6.2 Achieve Value for Money

6.2.1 We will maintain budgetary control; monitor income from planning applications, set fees for building regulation services and adjust building regulation fees to meet budgetary outcomes in line with charges regulations. Financial statements will be reported to the Planning Committee to ensure targets are met.

6.3 Improve the Quality of Life

6.3.1 We will work to produce a Local Development Framework for Runnymede which has regard to the Community Strategy and which safeguards the quality of our environment, makes best use of land resources, promotes economic activity, delivers recreational facilities and encourages an integrated approach to issues of traffic and transportation management. Developments will be assessed in terms of quality and sustainability.

6.3.2 We will continue to resist any inequitable increase in housing allocations and the premature release of reserve sites. Any changes to our present Green Belt boundaries will only be considered in the context of a future Local Development Framework.

- 6.3.3 We will maintain the character of established residential areas and resist inappropriate and cramped development that manifestly detracts from the environmental quality. Increase in housing density driven by Government policy must satisfy design criteria to ensure high quality housing is achieved.
- 6.3.4 We will invite statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency and Highway Authority to provide reasoned explanations of their policies and challenge them to provide reasoned argument to justify their position on controversial planning applications.
- 6.3.5 In considering Tree Preservation Orders, we will consider the impact on owners and the location balanced against the tree's quality, type and suitability as well as its public amenity value.
- 6.3.6 We will review the application of conservation areas and whether to seek listed building status where appropriate.
- 6.3.7 We will continue to monitor proposals for Motorway Service Areas and be vigilant to protect the Green Belt. Every such proposal will be considered against this and other relevant policy background.

6.4 Achieve Economic Prosperity

- 6.4.1 In conjunction with Housing and Community Services Committee, we will look to provide affordable and key worker housing to meet identified need and seek to bring back into residential use properties that have previously been used for commercial purposes such as flats over shops.
- 6.4.2 We will require development briefs to be prepared for consultation for major sites and those that enhance our town centres and villages and seek to preserve our rural environment.

6.5 Achieve Continuous Improvement

- 6.5.1 We will seek to continue to develop and make best use of Information and Communication Technology to enhance efficiency and improve service delivery, including submission and inspection of planning applications, Local Development Framework information and consultation, and general planning information.
- 6.5.2 We will encourage public speaking where the agreed criteria are met. We will monitor the outcome and review after twelve months whether any changes are desirable or necessary.
- 6.5.3 We will provide the opportunity for Members to receive training in all aspects of planning law and related matters and ensure Members have access to the current edition of Probit in Planning, the adopted Code of Conduct for Members, and the adopted Code of Conduct for Planning Matters.

7. HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Key Roles:

- j) With the Planning, Economic Development Committees and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners seek to secure adequate affordable and Key Worker housing provision.*
- ii) To ensure the effective management and maintenance of the Council's housing stock.*
- iii) To provide attractive and responsive community services to older people in the Borough.*
- iv) To provide an efficient, effective and secure service that helps Runnymede residents statutorily entitled to benefits to maintain payment of their rents and/or Council Tax.*

Principal Committee Objectives:

HOUSING

"People who are decently housed have a stronger sense of security and place. Decent housing strengthens communities and provides a better setting in which to raise families. It improves health and educational achievement and provides a long term asset that can be passed on to future generations".
"Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All" Housing Green Paper 2000

The Borough Housing Strategy must reflect and reconcile

- The aspirations of the people of Runnymede*
- The resources available – funding, land and the existing housing stock*
- Local market forces*

It must also take into account

-
- The South East England Regional Housing Board draft strategy*
- The Surrey Structure Plan*
- The Borough Local Plan*

The Housing Strategy Statement 2003-2006 sets out how we propose to deliver our housing policy in detail. There are three major initiatives that we propose to carry forward.

- Homes First*
- The Housing Improvement Programme*
- Runnymede Renewal*

7.1 HOMES FIRST

These initiatives deals with the provision within the Borough of new affordable homes for our residents and others who need special support or for whom we are required to provide assistance with housing. The withdrawal of Local Authority Social Housing Grant will cause uncertainty in respect of our ability to meet social housing needs.

7.1.1 Achieve Quality Services

7.1.1.1 *We will assess the housing and support needs of those residents who, for various reasons, are unable to provide adequately for themselves.*

7.1.1.2 *We will work with Surrey County Council to consider how best to meet the housing needs of vulnerable people in our community.*

7.1.1.3 *We will seek to keep homelessness to a minimum by providing advice, assistance and temporary accommodation according to need and available resources, and by working with outside agencies.*

7.1.2 Achieve Value for Money

- 7.1.2.1 We will find cost effective ways with strategic partners to meet our affordable housing target of 750 homes over five years. Our RSL partners will be selected according to the standard of their services, their record of delivery and their ability to provide value for money.
- 7.1.2.2 We will actively promote any alternative methods of providing housing using DIYSO (shared ownership schemes) and whatever Government financial support may be available.

7.1.3 Improve the Quality of Life

- 7.1.3.1 We will agree with the Planning Committee how best to increase housing densities in order to make the best use of scarce building land whilst meeting the desire of residents to protect the Green Belt and achieve quality development.

7.1.4 Achieve Economic Prosperity

- 7.1.4.1 We will continue our strong and proven assistance to both private and public employers in their search for accommodation for key workers on lower incomes and build on our success in these areas.
(Key workers are defined in the Government's Starter Homes initiative primarily as nurses and other essential health workers, teachers and police, although others such as social workers and fire fighters have been accepted. The Council's Housing Strategy Statement extends these categories to include workers within residential care homes.)
- 7.1.4.2 We will work with the Planning and Economic Development Committees to ensure the housing types, size and tenure meet the current needs and census trends for a balanced community and vibrant local economy.

7.1.5 Achieve Continuous Improvement

- 7.1.5.1 We will ensure that the range of housing alternatives and benefits offered through the Council is easy to understand and is also accessible electronically over the Internet.
- 7.1.5.2 We will seek to maintain the upper quartile performance now achieved for the administration of Benefits.

7.2 HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

These initiatives cover the extensive programme of work we are undertaking on upgrading and improving housing owned or controlled by the Borough.

7.2.1 Achieve Quality Services

- 7.2.1. We shall monitor the quality of services provided to tenants and continue to encourage the role and growth of tenants' groups.

7.2.2 Achieve Value for Money

- 7.2.2.1 We require from tenants the prompt payment of rents and also expect tenants to respect the properties they are living in and the neighbourhood.

7.2.3 Improve the Quality of Life

7.2.3.1 We will operate a zero tolerance policy for the small minority of tenants who act in an anti-social manner.

7.2.4 Achieve Economic Prosperity

7.2.4.1 We will seek to maintain a good standard and range of affordable housing via our municipal housing stock and so ensure that those working, but on lower incomes, can contribute effectively to the local economy.

7.2.5 Achieve Continuous Improvement

7.2.5.1 Our own housing stock will be maintained and, when appropriate, improved or redeveloped, so that it continues to meet the 'Decent Homes Standard'

7.3 RUNNYMEDE RENEWAL

These initiatives concerns the Council's intention under existing and proposed legislation to seek to improve the condition of private housing with particular emphasis on properties in multiple occupation.

We shall seek to bring back into use empty privately owned houses; and where houses are rented out in poor condition, we shall use the powers we have to bring about improvements. For example, we will work with the Universities to improve the state of many students' private sector lodgings.

We will utilise all available schemes to improve private housing through loans and grants with priority for those who are unable by reason of finance or health to improve their own properties.

7.3.3 Improve the Quality of Life

7.3.3.1 We will act to make owners repair and refurbish sub-standard properties, and if necessary, compulsorily purchase those properties which owners have wilfully neglected and which blight their neighbourhoods

7.4 BENEFITS

7.4.1 Achieve Quality Services

7.4.1.1 We will aim to provide effective and secure Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit services that are customer-focused, confidential and efficient.

7.4.1 Achieve Value for money

7.4.2.1 We will endeavour to process all benefits claims speedily and to ensure that all customers receive their correct benefit entitlement.

7.4.2.2 We will aim to reduce the level of fraud and error.

7.4.2.3 We will seek to recover overpayments of benefits effectively with due regard to how they arose, the circumstances affected and the policies of the Council.

7.4.3. Improve the Quality of Life

7.4.3.1 We will endeavour to ensure that those entitled to benefit receive it so that they are able to find and pay for decent housing.

7.4.4 Achieve Economic Prosperity

7.4.4.1 We will help people to achieve social inclusion by alleviating poverty, preventing homelessness and reducing barriers to work through access to their benefit entitlement.

7.4.5 Continuous Improvement

7.4.5.1 We will seek to maintain the upper quartile position now achieved in the national performance standards for the administration of Benefits.

7.5 COMMUNITY SERVICES

7.5.1 Achieve Quality Services

7.5.1.1 We will acknowledge the aspirations expressed in the Council's Community Strategy and use them to inform policy, whilst ensuring Health and Social Services partners are pressed to achieve the targets of the Task Group.

7.5.1.2 We shall continue, within the bounds of affordability, to support our high level of discretionary Community Services to reinforce and to complement the County Council Social Services, for the benefit of our elderly and vulnerable residents.

7.5.2 Value for Money

7.5.2.1. Our overall strategy is to develop a robust strategy continuing to offer the many discretionary community services we already provide whilst ensuring these services are delivered effectively and economically.

7.5.2.2 At our Day Centres, we will try to reduce net costs by increasing usage for other revenue generating activities at times of low demand.

7.5.3 Improve the Quality of Life

7.5.3.1 We will encourage the active participation of residents in reporting issues, nuisances, problems and repairs through a semi formal volunteer network – 'Runnymede Eyes', and the reassurance initiative as part of the Safer Runnymede initiative (under Leisure & Environment Committee).

7.5.4 Achieve Continuous Improvement

7.5.4.1 We shall seek to review and improve service delivery in the provision of: --

- Community Meals
- Careline
- Care and Repair
- Community Transport

We will strive to ensure that these services are rationally organised and cost effective through all available means including external sponsorship.

7.5.4.2 We shall keep under review all these policies in the light of new legislation, new events, and changing needs.

8. LEISURE & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Key Roles:

- i) We will further the interests and facilities for the youth of our Borough, in partnership with other agencies involved in this field.*
- ii) We will continue to progress the availability of sports activities in our area with a focus on our Sports Centres and with a particular interest in provision in the south of the Borough.*
- iii) The provision of a reliable service for the collection of refuse and recycling materials is considered essential by our residents. We will endeavour to continue the highly-rated service we provide and develop the collection of recyclable materials further.*

Principal Committee Objectives:

ENVIRONMENT

8.1 Achieve Quality Services

- 8.1.1** We aim to maintain a first class refuse collection service to residents, with targeted performance criteria.
- 8.1.2** We aim to meet Government recycling targets and to investigate the viability of extending the scheme to additional materials, including green waste, and to include schools, colleges etc. in our collection service.
- 8.1.3** We will continue to provide additional bins for dog fouling until they are available in all Wards. In conjunction with this, we will continue to employ a dog warden during the summer months to encourage responsible pet ownership.
- 8.1.4** We will fulfil our statutory duties and form a Licensing Committee to comply with the proposed Licensing Act, under which very substantial additional responsibilities for licensing public houses, etc are being placed upon us, and we will seek additional funding to support the costs of providing this service.

8.2 Achieve Value for Money

- 8.2.1** We will seek to optimise discretionary income.

8.3 Improve the Quality of Life

- 8.3.1** We will continue to remove abandoned vehicles from the public highway and Council controlled land according to the procedures and timescales required by Abandoned Vehicle Regulations and within the protocol agreed with Surrey Police. Existing procedures will be developed using increased powers for quicker and safer vehicle removal. End of life vehicles will be economically disposed of under environmentally sound conditions.
- 8.3.2** The growing problem of graffiti throughout the Borough is being addressed. Where graffiti appears on property it will be removed speedily. We will offer a graffiti removal service to private owners, and we will work with Surrey Police to apprehend those causing graffiti damage and to recover the cost of removal.
- 8.3.3** We will continue to liaise with the Highways Agency in respect of M25 widening to ensure that pledges to use quiet road surfacing and install sound absorbent barriers are honoured. We will monitor the environmental impact of works due to start in January 2004 and we will represent residents' interests in seeking to minimise the adverse impact of these works.

- 8.3.4 In partnership with other agencies, we will use all lawful powers to prevent illegal incursions and to remove travellers as rapidly as is lawfully possible.
- 8.3.5 We will support all measures to curb speeding traffic, using cameras and other technology as it becomes available, co-operating with Surrey County Council, the Highway Authority and Surrey Police in dealing with areas where there are habitual problems.
- 8.3.6 Collaboration with the Air Quality Group for Surrey in monitoring air quality in the Borough will continue. We will monitor and receive reports on the levels of PM10's. We will continue to respond to all other pollution issues, including noise and odour. Train horn noise has become a particular problem in parts of the Borough. In partnership with the Health and Safety Executive we will seek to ensure safe working environments throughout the Borough.

8.4 Achieve Economic Prosperity

- 8 We will seek to exercise the Council's community safety and other functions so as to create an attractive environment for businesses and residents.

8.5 Achieve Continuous Improvement

- 8.5.1 As part of the Safer Runnymede Campaign, CCTV coverage has been established across the Borough. The system will be maintained and updated, and we will seek external funding to support the installation, replacement and running costs of any new cameras. We will develop a dedicated CCTV section in the proposed new Council Offices that can be used for control of major incidents such as flooding, and will seek to provide a multi-purpose area that can be used as a viewing area for visitors.
- 8.5.2 We will engage the public in helping to deliver safer communities working in partnership with Surrey Police. With our partners we will fully participate in the Runnymede Crime and Disorder Partnership to implement the local Community Safety Strategy and seek to maximise opportunities for external funding of projects.
- 8.5.3 We are committed to working with partners to reduce the growing problem of anti-social behavior throughout Runnymede. We will investigate funding sources where appropriate and ensure they are directed to the areas of greatest need.
- 8.5.4 The principle of Community Safety Officers, implemented by Surrey Police, will be supported, and we will encourage the management of this resource to maximise the impact on public confidence. We will work with Surrey Police to use public surveys to obtain an informed view that also services the Best Value Performance Indicators both parties are required to measure.

LEISURE

8.6 Achieve Quality Services

- 8.6.1 The development of the Abbey Fit Centre, in partnership with the Jubilee High School, will be progressed in order to provide a first class affordable sports facility in the south of the Borough.
- 8.6.2 We will support Egham Sports Centre in order to maintain its high public esteem, achieve its performance targets and to drive up its membership. We will consider further enhancement of the facilities based upon a realistic and achievable business plan.
- 8.6.3 The popular Play and Splash Schemes operated in our parks and elsewhere will continue and we will work in partnership with sponsors in order to ensure adequate funding is in place. Investigation of extended provision will continue.

8.7 Achieve Value for Money

- 8.7.1** We will ensure the provision of sufficient allotment plots to meet sustained demand and explore options to release under-utilised allotment land for other purposes. Where possible we will seek to encourage self-management of allotment sites with improvement incentives. Following the discovery of contaminants, we will explore options for an alternative use of the Beomonds allotment site.

8.8 Improve the Quality of Life

- 8.8.1** We will continue to encourage the relocation of the Swan Sanctuary to a new site. This will enable us to pursue the possibility of creating parkland with allotment facilities in Egham Hythe.

8.9 Achieve Economic Prosperity

- 8.9.1** In partnership with the neighbouring Borough of Spelthorne, the establishment of a Tourism Forum will be progressed with the participation of those directly affected in the tourism industry and bodies such as the South East England Tourist Board and Surrey Tourism.

8.10 Achieve Continuous Improvement

- 8.10.1** The aims and objectives of the Cultural Strategy will be kept under review within the Community Strategy in order to ensure it remains up to date and relevant to Runnymede and appropriate in the event of it being required to support any future external funding bids.
- 8.10.2** We will continue to work with other agencies to widen the range of leisure activities as a contribution to the Surrey Youth Strategy and continue our support of the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme, the scouts and guides movement and other organised youth groups and the Runnymede Splash scheme.
- 8.10.3** We will explore the options available to maintain cemetery provision at Addlestone where there is limited capacity for future interment, and keep cemetery land available in the Borough under review to meet demand while releasing surplus lands.
- 8.10.4** We will keep under review the management of our parks and open spaces that are highly regarded by residents, and we will seek to maintain the current high standards of service we provide.
- 8.10.5** Following the successful completion of the Chertsey Museum extension, the plans for the Runnymede room, interpreting the history of the local area, will be brought forward, and sources of external funding explored.

9. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Key Roles:

The Economic Development Committee will work with residents and partners to:

- i) Maintain and improve the economic prosperity of Runnymede.*
- ii) Stimulate and promote employment opportunities for all within Runnymede.*
- iii) Improve the environmental quality of life within Runnymede.*

Principal Committee Objectives:

9.1 Achieve Quality Services

- 9.1.1** We will continue to work with the Highways and Transportation Authority (Surrey County Council) and private sector providers to progress, develop and expand alternative transportation to the motor vehicle.
- 9.1.2** With the Housing and Community Services and Planning Committees, we will seek to play our part in delivering the affordable and key worker housing policies.

9.2 Achieve Value for Money

- 9.2.1** We will seek to secure prudent and effective management of the Council's asset portfolio, land acquisitions and disposals to assist both in the medium term financial strategy and support other major corporate goals and those of this Committee.

9.3 Improve the Quality of Life

- 9.3.1** We propose to continue to improve the general environment of our three main town centres whilst encouraging and maintaining local and village economic vitality, and will develop some specific goals and timetables for the emerging proposals, whilst also encouraging and maintaining local and village economic vitality.

9.4 Achieve Economic Prosperity

- 9.4.1** We shall seek to maintain and improve the current economic prosperity of Runnymede by working closely with business and those wishing to locate or expand in the Borough. The Economic Strategy will be kept under review to ensure its relevance to any changing economic trends.
- 9.4.2** We will stimulate and promote, through the Business Partnership and the Runnymede and Spelthorne Education Business Partnership, employment opportunities for all within Runnymede.

9.5 Achieve Continuous Improvement

- 9.5.1** We will seek to develop a range of benchmarks and targets around our corporate property management and associated activities.
- 9.5.2** We will seek to examine the benefits, in consultation with business partners, of the creation of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) when legislation permits.

10. THE REVIEW BOARD

Key Roles:

- i) Review and scrutinise decisions made by, and performance of, policy Committees and Council Officers, both in relation to individual decisions and over time.*
- ii) Review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas.*
- iii) Question Members of policy Committees and Chief Officers about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects.*
- iv) Make recommendations to the appropriate policy Committee and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process.*

Principal Committee Objectives:

10.1 General

We will continue to develop an added value to the role of Scrutiny and Review. Building on the experience gained to date, we aim to continue to shape Scrutiny and Review activity over the coming year to that appropriate for an "Alternative Arrangements" status Borough Council. Central to the development of the Review Board will be the training and development needs of Members, given the increasing recognition that the review Member role is very different in nature to a traditional committee Member role.

Scrutiny and review is part of the Council and not separate from it. It is important that the Review Board uses scrutiny and review to the benefit of the residents and communities we serve.

10.2 Policy Development and Review

The Board will develop a small number of well focused reviews covering key policy areas thereby assisting the Council to develop its policy framework and, importantly, adding value.

10.3 Scrutiny

We will carry out Member led investigations into internal and external processes as necessary and appropriate, recognising the opportunity afforded to Members to use the 'call in' procedure if they need to do so.

The Review Board will continue to encourage scrutiny reviews acting independently as a "critical friend" to the authority.