

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL21 July 2005 at 7.30 p.m.The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Mrs F.J. Barden) in the Chair

Members of the
Council present:

Councillors A. Alderson, Mrs F.J. Barden, Mrs P.I. Broadhead, J. Broadhead, M.J. Brown, A.J. Davis, J.B. Dean, J.M. Edwards, J.R. Furey, Mrs C.E. Gant, Mrs E. Gill, Mrs L.M. Gillham, J.E. Haas, R.K. Habgood, Ms R.E. Haylor, Miss M.N. Heath, Mrs S.E. Jacobs, Mrs C.Y. Jones, C. Knight, Prof. A.M. Moore, C.J. Norman, Mrs J. Norman, D.W. Parr, R. Pate, R.J. Ray, B.J. Relph, Mrs M. Roberts, C.J. Ruane, Ms C.M. Simmons, N. Thewlis, A.P. Tollett, P.J. Waddell, K.J.T. Walmsley, J.R. Whiteley, and G.B. Woodger.

Members of the
Council absent:

Councillors Mrs F.M. Angell, J.R. Ashmore, Ms.D.V. Clarke, P.A. Greenwood, Mrs Y.P. Lay, H.W.V. Meares, and P.B. Tuley.

181. IN MEMORIAM

The Council stood in silence to commemorate the former Chairman of Chertsey Urban District Council, Mr Ken Furlonger, who had died recently. The Council also remembered those who had died in the London Bombings on 7 July.

182. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 21 April 2005, 12 May 2005, and 13 June 2005 were confirmed and signed as correct records.

183. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor pointed out that the media had largely ignored the victor of the Global Challenge Yacht Race, an arduous event which involved sailing 30,000 miles around the world against the prevailing currents. The Princess Royal Trophy had been presented by Chay Blythe to the skipper of the winning yacht, Andy Forbes. The Mayor was pleased to point out that Mr Forbes was from Addlestone and that several of the crew also hailed from Runnymede.

The Mayor reminded the Council that she was still seeking nominees for her Citizen of the Year Award, and that names should be forwarded to her Secretary, Mandy Smith, by 30 October.

184. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs Angell, Ashmore, Ms Clarke, Greenwood, Meares and Tuley.

185. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Alderson and Relph both declared interests of a personal nature under the Runnymede Code of Conduct in agenda item 9(ii)(c) - "Frank Muir Memorial Field - Environmental Improvements" by virtue of their positions as Directors of the Association for Improvement of Runnymede (AIR).

186. HIGH HEDGES - PROCESSING OF COMPLAINTS

RESOLVED that -

the recommendation of the Planning Committee as set out in paragraph 688(i) on page 1087 (Minutes of 11 May 2005) be approved.

187. CRIME, DISORDER AND DRUGS REDUCTION STRATEGY

RESOLVED that -

the recommendations of the Leisure and Environment Committee as set out in paragraph 98 on page 64 (Minutes of 16 June 2005) be approved.

188. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SERVICE PLAN 2005/06

RESOLVED that -

the recommendation of the Leisure and Environment Committee as set out in paragraph 99 on page 65 (Minutes of 16 June 2005) be approved.

189. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - CORE POLICIES FOR CONSULTATION

RESOLVED that -

the recommendation of the Planning Committee as set out in paragraph 117 on page 130 (Minutes of 22 June 2005) be approved.

190. LICENSING CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS AND RULES OF PROCEDURE

RESOLVED that -

the recommendation of the Licensing Committee as set out in paragraph 124 on page 158 (Minutes of 23 June 2005) be approved.

191. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - DRAFT HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICIES FOR CONSULTATION

The Council considered a recommendation from the Planning Committee which had met on 6 July 2005.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the draft preferred policy options of the Development Control LDD set out in Appendix 'A' of the Council Summons, as amended, be approved for the purposes of consultation in Autumn 2005;**
- ii) the draft preferred policy options of the Housing LDD set out in Appendix 'B' of the Council Summons, as amended, be approved for the purposes of consultation in Autumn 2005; and**
- iii) authority be delegated to the Director of Technical Services, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, to make non-material alterations to the LDDs prior to consultation.**

192. FINAL ACCOUNTS 2004/2005

The Council considered a recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee which had met on 7 July 2005.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the methods of financing capital expenditure in 2004/05 be as set out in Appendix 'C' of the Council Summons;**
- ii) the capital expenditure in 2004/05 that was to be met from revenue reserves now be financed from capital receipts in hand; and**

iii) the disposition of the General Fund reserves be approved.

193. FRANK MUIR MEMORIAL FIELD - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

The Council considered a recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee which had met on 7 July 2005.

RESOLVED that-

a supplementary Capital Estimate in the sum of £57,300 for the above scheme be approved, subject to grant funding being available.

194. AMENDED BUDGET FOR THE 2005/2006 FINANCIAL YEAR

By reason of special circumstances, namely the need to set a new budget within 21 days of the making of the anticipated Statutory Instrument, the Mayor was of the opinion that this item should be considered as a matter of urgency under Section 100B of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with Standing Order 10.4.

The Council noted that on 23 March 2005 the Minister of State for Local and Regional Government had announced that the Government had decided to designate Runnymede Borough Council pursuant to Section 52(D) of the Local Government Act 1972. This was the first stage in a process that would lead to a maximum budget requirement being imposed on the Council's 2005/06 budget (popularly known as "capping") or "nomination" whereby a maximum budget requirement would be imposed by the Government for the subsequent financial year. The Council had been given 21 days to accept or challenge the 'cap'.

On 12 April 2005 the Council had lodged representations under S.52E(5) of the Act urging that its original budget requirement should not be lowered. This had been followed by a meeting with the new Minister for Local Government, Phil Woolas, on 23 May 2005. Representations had been made on the following grounds:-

- Runnymede had received an "Excellent" Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) score and Ministers had originally undertaken not to cap excellent authorities.
- Runnymede was responsive to community needs and was delivering services demanded by residents. ODPM Residents' Satisfaction Survey showed that Runnymede was 5th in the country in 2003/04 (2nd in 2001/02).
- Runnymede's grant had reduced in real terms by 29% since 1995/96 and tax rises had been necessary to offset the loss of grant.
- Runnymede's tax increases were part of a well publicised long-term financial strategy to manage through these external challenges. The Council's financial prudence had been constantly endorsed in the external auditor's Annual Management Letter.
- Runnymede's Council Tax of £117.99 was the 8th lowest in the country. It was £64 less than the Assumed National Council Tax and £52 less than the average. It was also below the capping criteria used in 2004/05.
- Runnymede's tax had increased by 34 pence per week (£17.65 p.a.). The overall Band D tax for the area had increased from £1,136.88 to £1,192.95 (an increase of £56.07 p.a. or 4.93%). While Runnymede Borough Council's element of the tax had increased by 17½%, this was small both in absolute terms and as a proportion of the overall bill.
- There were no parishes in Runnymede so Runnymede's tax of £117.99 paid for all local services in the area. No allowances for this was made in the capping criteria or when comparing with others.
- Runnymede had a record of levying amongst the lowest district Council Tax in the country over the last 13 years.

Notwithstanding the Council's representations, the cap had been set at the level first proposed by the Government. Consequently, the Council would be obliged to reduce the original budget it had set on 15 February 2005 by £271,400. This would reduce Runnymede's portion of the Band D Council Tax from £117.99 to £109.65, a reduction of £8.34, (16p per week). It would cost some £36,000 to issue new bills.

Councillor Woodger, Leader of the Council, said it was a sad day for local democracy, local government, and Runnymede's residents. Three of the eight capped local authorities (including Runnymede) had been rated as "Excellent" under Comprehensive Performance Assessment. The previous Minister for Local Government had promised that "excellent" Councils would not be rate capped since they could be trusted to deliver cost-effective services. The Government had reneged on that promise. This Council had a medium term strategy, agreed by the District Auditor, which would have seen a staged increase in Council Tax accompanied by a £2m reduction in expenditure.

Whilst there were a variety of views about how the situation could have been avoided, Members on all sides expressed great disappointment with the Government's action.

A named vote was requested in accordance with Standing Order 25.2.

For the Motion: Councillors Alderson, Mrs Barden, Broadhead, Mrs Broadhead, Brown, Davis, Dean, Edwards, Furey, Mrs Gant, Mrs Gill, Mrs Gillham, Haas, Habgood, Ms Haylor, Miss Heath, Mrs Jacobs, Mrs Jones, Knight, Moore, Norman, Mrs Norman, Parr, Pate, Ray, Relph, Mrs Roberts, Ruane, Ms Simmons, Thewlis, Tollett, Waddell, Walmsley, Whiteley and Woodger (35).

Against the Motion: Nil (0).

Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED that -

- i) the amended 2005/06 Budget be approved;**
- ii) the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2005/06 in accordance with sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-**
 - (a) £50,736,800** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 32(2)(a) to (e) of the Act.
 - (b) £42,543,800** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act.
 - (c) £8,193,000** being the amount by which the aggregate at ii)(a) above exceeds the aggregate at ii)(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.
 - (d) £4,624,200** being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund calculated in accordance with section 33(1 and 3) of the Act.
 - (e) £109.65** being the amount of ii)(c) above less the amount at ii)(d) above, all divided by the Council Tax Base of 32,547 calculated in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

f) **Runnymede Borough Council**
Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£73.10	£85.28	£97.47	£109.65	£134.02	£158.38	£182.75	£219.30

(being the amounts calculated by the Council in applying the figure set out at ii)(e) to the formula in section 36(1) of the Act) as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- iii) it be noted that for the year 2005/06, Surrey County Council has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Precepting authority - Surrey County Council
Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£613.80	£716.10	£818.40	£920.70	£1,125.30	£1,329.90	£1,534.50	£1,841.40

- iv) it be noted that for the year 2005/06, Surrey Police Authority has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Precepting authority - Surrey Police Authority
Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£102.84	£119.98	£137.12	£154.26	£188.54	£222.82	£257.10	£308.52

- v) having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (ii)(f),(iii) and (iv) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amount of Council Tax for the year 2005/06 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£789.74	£921.36	£1,052.99	£1,184.61	£1,447.86	£1,711.10	£1,974.35	2,369.22

195. **HEAD OF CORPORATE ADMINISTRATION - RETIREMENT OF IAN LANGMEAD**

The Mayor informed the Council that this would be the last Council meeting that Mr Langmead would attend before his retirement. Members warmly endorsed the Mayor's expression of thanks to Mr Langmead, who replied suitably.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.25 p.m.)