

Runnymede Borough Council

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE13 September 2007 at 7.30pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors Ms C.M. Simmons (Chairman), D.A. Cotty (Vice-Chairman), A. Alderson, M.J. Brown, H.A. Butterfield, D.R. Hamilton, Miss M.N. Heath, R.N. Jones, D.W. Parr, and J.W.C. Perschke

Members of the Committee absent: None

Councillor J.R. Furey also attended.

241. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

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

Group requesting change	Remove from Membership	Appoint Instead
Conservative	Councillor Mrs R.M. Denby	Councillor D.W. Parr

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

242. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 August 2007 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

243. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor D.A. Cotty declared a personal interest under the Runnymede Code of Conduct for Members in the item on 'Free Car Parking in Council Car Parks for Black Cherry Fair', as he was a member of Chertsey Rotary Club who organised the Fair.

244. SERVICE PLAN 2007/08

The Committee was advised on the outturn performance of the 2006/07 Service Plan and considered the 2007/08 Service Plan.

The Chairman requested that the Service Plan 2007/08 should include more focussed wording for actual targets. In addition, a target regarding delivery of key worker housing would be reconsidered as this was more appropriately within the remit of Housing and Community Services Committee.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the Service Plan Outturn for Economic Development Services for 2006/07, be noted; and**
- ii) the Service Plan for 2007/08 be approved, subject to the deletion or revision of the target regarding delivery of key worker housing and specification of clearer targets, where appropriate, and a progress report be made to the November meeting.**

245. FINANCIAL MONITORING STATEMENT

The Committee noted the latest financial projections for the 2007/08 financial year for Economic Development and Highways services.

246. BLACK CHERRY FAIR - FREE PARKING IN COUNCIL CAR PARKS

(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, January 2007, page 674, para. 467)

The Committee gave consideration to a request from the organisers of Black Cherry Fair for the provision of free public car parking in future years in Council operated car parks in Chertsey for the annual Black Cherry Fair.

In previous years, the organisers of the Black Cherry Fair had made a formal approach to the Council for the waiving of parking charges in the car parks in Chertsey for the day and the applications had been approved. However, the organisers applied for the concession very late this year and Officers were unable to obtain the approval in time for the event.

The Black Cherry Fair was held on one Saturday in July every year and attracted a large number of visitors who parked in Chertsey town centre car parks as there was inadequate parking near the Abbey Fields where the main event took place. The actual loss of income through the provision of free parking on the day of the Fair would be approximately £500.

The Committee acknowledged that the Fair was an annual event of historic standing and that the provision of free parking helped attract visitors to the Fair, which in turn helped the various charitable causes supported by the Fair. Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED that -

approval be given for the offering of free parking in Council car parks in Chertsey for the Saturday of the Black Cherry Fair each year.

247. OFF-STREET CAR PARKING CHARGES - REVIEW

(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, September 2005, page 441, para. 263 and September 2006, page 274, para. 233)

The Committee gave consideration to the annual review of car parking charges in the Council's off-street car parks.

The Council had in the past suffered a substantial deficit on the car parking budget, the costs of which had to be borne by local Council Tax payers. In the financial year 2004/05 the deficit was £136,000. The increased charges that were introduced on 28 January 2006 had reduced the deficit to £15,000 in 2005/06 and in 2006/07 there was a surplus of about £83,000. This surplus was mainly achieved from a combination of maintenance and salary savings and increases in income from parking and penalty charges. It was also helped by the introduction of pay and display at the St. Jude's Road and Victoria Street Car Parks in Englefield Green. Revised figures for the current financial year estimated a surplus of about £50,000 with the current scale of charges, compared to a predicted deficit of £6,000 when the estimates were produced in November 2006.

The increase in parking charges in January 2006 only produced a slight reduction in car park usage. The introduction of the 50p one hourly charge in December 2006 resulted in a fall in income from the short term tariffs. However, this was offset by an actual increase in the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's), a significant number of these resulted from drivers overstaying the one hour limit. In reviewing the charges, Members were mindful of the delicate balance between ensuring that reasonable income was maintained and not driving the public to other areas. Analysis of other local centres showed that Runnymede charges were lower than those at comparable car parks in neighbouring Boroughs.

The Committee considered the following options for increasing parking charges:-

Time Period	Current Charges	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Up to 1 Hour	£0.50	£0.60	£0.60	£0.80
1 to 2 Hours	£0.80	£1.00	£1.00	£1.20
2 to 3 Hours	£1.00	£1.20	£1.50	£1.50
3 to 4 Hours	£1.20	£1.50	£2.00	£2.00
4 to 5 Hours	£1.50	£2.00	£2.50	£3.00
5 to 6 Hours or All Day (where applicable)	£2.50	£3.00	£3.50*	£4.00

*Existing rate at Network Rail operated commuter car parks.

The Committee in considering these options agreed to maintain a consistent charging structure in all Borough car parks where charges were levied.

The estimated income from the above options had been calculated on the basis of 5% reduction in car park usage for Options 1 and 2, and 10% reduction for Option 3.

Options 1 and 2 would result in an increased surplus and the charges would still be substantially less than those in similar car parks in neighbouring Boroughs. Option 3 would result in a minimum charge of 80p for 1 hour and also would take the All Day tariff above that charged by Network Rail at their commuter car parks, which were adjacent to some of the Council's car parks.

The Committee supported Option 2, but considered that the one hourly charge of 50p should not be increased in order to encourage local residents to visit local stores/businesses. Option 2, as modified, would give a net surplus of £170,000.

The Committee also asked Officers to report to a future meeting on the viability of introducing parking charges in the free car parks in the Borough and the revision of charges for season tickets/contract parking. Officers were also asked to undertake a marketing exercise to encourage people living near car parks to avail themselves of resident permits.

RESOLVED that -

with effect from January 2008 the off-street car parking charges be as set out below:

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Charge</u>
Up to 1 hour	£0.50
1 - 2 hours	£1.00
2 - 3 hours	£1.50
3 - 4 hours	£2.00
4 - 5 hours	£2.50
5 - 6 hours or all day (where applicable)	£3.50

248. POOLEY GREEN RECREATION GROUND CAR PARK - INTRODUCTION OF PAY AND DISPLAY PARKING

The Committee gave consideration to the implementation of Pay and Display parking in the currently free car park adjacent to Pooley Green Recreation Ground, Egham.

Representations had been received from the Egham Chamber of Commerce that the car park was almost always full to capacity during the day. The nearby business of the MOT centre, in Pond Road, made almost exclusive use of the facility for its customers' vehicles. As a consequence this reduced the opportunity for members of the public to make use of the businesses in the nearby shopping parade also adjacent to the car park.

Business premises in The Parade and adjacent to the Car Park had been consulted on the proposal to make the facility a Pay and Display Car Park using the same charging system as the rest of the Borough Car Parks. In response, the proprietor of the hairdressers supported the proposal as her customers had considerable difficulty parking nearby. The proprietor of the MOT Centre was against the proposal on the grounds that it would prevent pensioners and customers using the shops and the Car Repair Centre proprietor commented that his staff would be disadvantaged by the proposal as they currently parked in the Car Park.

The Egham Chamber of Commerce had asked if it would be possible to implement a Pay and Display scheme that provided free parking for the first hour. There was no other parking arrangement like this elsewhere in the Borough and the Committee reaffirmed that there should be a consistent charging structure in all Borough Pay and Display car parks.

The Committee fully supported the introduction of parking charges as it would increase availability of the car park to shoppers and other users during the day, overcome long stay parking abuse by local businesses, and generate income of approximately £17,000 per annum for the Council.

RESOLVED that -

the introduction of a Pay and Display regime at the Pooley Green Car Park, Egham be approved and the financial betterment be noted.

249. YELLOW BUS SERVICE - FUTURE FUNDING

The Committee was advised of the future funding arrangements for the Yellow Bus Service.

For the period February 2002 to March 2006 the cost of the service had been covered by fares collected from students, Section 106 money and business sponsorship. However, for 2006/07 there was a shortfall of £113,411 owing to reduced Section 106 income and lower fare and business income.

The Committee remained supportive of the Yellow Bus Service and was informed of future funding sources to address the shortfall.

There was already a commitment to provide £441,000 Section 106 money from several schemes that had received planning permission. In addition there were some schemes that were very large, complex and would take some time to process. These were anticipated to provide in the region of £250,000. The Interim Advice Note on the TBH-SPA was now facilitating residential planning applications and this would improve receipt of income.

The Council had also approved for consultation, policy guidance on 'planning obligations', also known as Section 106 Agreements. The main difference between the current practice for securing Section 106 funding for yellow buses, and that proposed in the emerging advice, was that it would apply to most residential and commercial development, not simply the larger schemes, and therefore draw in additional funding each year.

The business sponsorship scheme would also be revised to include a 'carbon trading' concept to reflect the reduction in CO₂ emissions by students using the yellow bus service instead of being driven to school. Companies would be able, by sponsoring the buses, to associate themselves with this important local contribution to reducing CO₂ emissions. This would be associated with a publicity campaign by the Business Partnership to secure the projected sum of £70,000 for 2007/08.

Officers were also exploring a scheme contained in the Education and Inspections' Act 2006 to promote sustainable school travel. The Department for Children, Schools and Families was co-ordinating bids for up to 20 pilot schemes that would provide innovative travel to school schemes. The pilots would run from 2009 to 2012 with funding made available to support the scheme. A bid was being packaged together and negotiations were taking place with the County Council, who would need to endorse the bid, as Education Authority.

In endorsing these funding arrangements, some Members considered that there might be scope to increase student fares.

RESOLVED that -**the initiatives to secure medium term funding for the yellow bus service be approved.**250. URGENT ACTION - STANDING ORDER 42

The Committee noted that the following action had been taken after consultation with the Chairman of this Committee under Standing Order 42.

<u>Officer</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Central Index No</u>
Director of Administration and Leisure	Formalising earlier agreed action in respect of the sale for development of the former cemetery land at Blays Lane, Englefield Green. (Consultation was also undertaken with the Chairman of the Corporate Management Committee).	642

251. CIVIC OFFICES AND ADDLESTONE POLICE STATION - PROPOSED SALE

(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, June 2006, para 59, page 39 and August 2007, para 251, page 185)

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 the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee was updated on the current position regarding the disposal of the Civic Offices and Addlestone Police Station site.

Since the last meeting, Officers had undertaken verification of shortlisted bids in design terms and financial assumptions and reduced the shortlist of 6 bids to 3. Housebuilders on the shortlist had been requested to provide further information on design proposals and prices by 21 September. Officers would then meet the shortlisted firms on 27 September and thereafter select a preferred purchaser who could work up a suitable scheme.

252. HYPHE PARK PROJECT - CONTRACT WITH WOODLAND ENVIRONMENTAL

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 the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee was advised of negotiations with Woodland Environmental for the landscaping of the park.

Written agreement to the landscaping plans and the levels of land had recently been received from the Environment Agency (EA)

The Committee had in March 2004, instructed the Director of Administration and Leisure to negotiate with Woodland Environmental for the design and construction of the park, subject to further approval of the terms, and waived Standing Order C2.5 in order to dispense with the need for tenders. At the time it was thought that some of the costs would be offset by the company bringing in soil for the landscaping, but this was not now possible as the EA would only allow the reprofiling of the site with soil already there.

Woodland Environmental had, over the last couple of years, spent considerable time working with Officers on the plans and specifications, including changes necessary to accommodate EA requirements. Some initial site clearance work had been carried out although further work was

required before landscaping could start. Woodland Environmental had confirmed that they were still able to carry out the initial phase of work to include the landscaping and wet/dry area, which involved the movement of soil around the site to create the required levels. A final specification of work would be produced based on the agreed plans with the Environment Agency (EA). Staff in the Technical Services Department had been working on specifications for paths, fencing, lighting, boardwalks etc and these would be put in once the landscaping had been completed.

The Committee supported the continued use of Woodland Environmental for the landscaping of the new park in order to progress the project. The landscaping specification would include contract rates based on the current schedule of rates for such work and it was important that the cost of the work met these indicative costs.

It was anticipated that the existing budget would be sufficient to carry out the initial landscaping, but Officers were currently reviewing this in the light of the changes required by the EA. The current budget was not, as originally anticipated, expected to be sufficient to fund the new allotments, lighting, MUGA, play areas or the formal/sensory garden. Accordingly, further external funding was currently being explored. The potential contribution from Woodland Environmental included a payment in respect of the landscaping of the area adjacent to Barrsbrook Allotments and this was also still being explored.

Funding had been obtained for both the Wet/Dry Area and Toddlers Play Area with grants through AIR and the landfill operators of £74,000. The Committee wished its appreciation to be passed onto AIR for its assistance.

Funding bids for the MUGA and Adventure Play Area had been made to the Big Lottery Fund programme for Play. The outcome of the bids would not be received until the New Year, so it was likely that works would not start on these elements until after Easter 2008. The Committee noted the timetable for the project was as follows:

- Clearance of site and work on landscaping/paths - October/November 2007
- Wet/Dry Area completed - October/November 2007
- Toddlers Play Area - Jan/Feb 2008
- Formal/sensory Garden Area - May 2008
- MUGA/Adventure Play Area - June 2008
- Allotments - when funding identified
- Lighting - when funding identified

The Committee requested that Officers consider the provision of lighting earlier in the project timetable and, in this regard, investigate possible match funding from Surrey County Council or assistance from Procter and Gamble.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the waiver of Standing Order C2.5 be continued and the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised to continue negotiations and agree contract terms with Woodland Environmental on the landscaping element of the new Hythe Park, provided that the cost of the work does not exceed the indicative price, which will be based on the revised specifications and schedule of rates; and**
- ii) the work be put out to tender should the quote from Woodland Environmental exceed the indicative price.**

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.42pm)