

Runnymede Borough CouncilLEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE19 June 2003 at 7.30 pm

## Members of the

Committee Present: Councillors C. J. Norman (Chairman), Mrs C. Y. Jones (Vice Chairman), Mrs P.I. Broadhead, A.G. Collins, A. J. Davis, Mrs C.E. Gant, A. M. Moore, Mrs J. Norman, R. J. Ray and B. J. Relph.

## Members of the

Committee Absent: None

Councillors J.M. Edwards, J. R. Furey, R.K. Habgood, Ms. C. M. Simmons, P.J. Waddell and G.B. Woodger also attended.

113. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Conservative Group had notified the Chief Executive Officer of its wish that Councillor Mrs S. E. Jacobs be removed from Membership of the Committee and that Councillor Mrs J. Norman be appointed in her place for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting. Thereafter Councillor Mrs Jacobs would be reappointed.

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

114. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 20 March and 15 May 2003 were confirmed and signed as correct records.

115. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Mrs C.E. Gant, Ms. C.M. Simmons, and G.B. Woodger, declared a personal interest under the Runnymede Code of Conduct for Members in respect of the report 'Abbey Fit – Business Plan Evaluation'. All three were members of the Abbey Fit Joint Management Committee. In addition, Councillor Mrs Gant was a user of the facilities.

As all three had been appointed by the Council to serve on the Joint Management Committee, their interests were not considered to be prejudicial. Therefore, they remained in the room, participated in discussion of the report and in the case of Councillor Mrs Gant, as a Member of the Leisure and Environment Committee, voted thereon.

Councillor B.J. Relph declared a personal interest under the Runnymede Code of Conduct for Members in respect of the report 'Programme for the Refurbishment and Reprovision of Play Areas'. The approval of the proposed improvements at Warwick Avenue Play Area were subject to funding being secured through the Association for the Improvement of Runnymede (AIR) of which he was the Project Manager.

116. AIMS AND TARGETS 2002/03 – OUTTURN REPORTS

The Committee received the Outturn reports for the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003 for Leisure Services, Environmental Services and Safer Runnymede.

Leisure Services

Members were interested in the variety of Leisure activities within the Surrey Youth Strategy, to which Runnymede had made a contribution. The Committee commended Officers on their work, particularly in facilitating the Surrey Youth Games.

It was confirmed that in response to a request from users of the facility, additional main hall blinds were due to be installed at the Hythe Centre in Egham Hythe.

With regard to Thorpe Village Hall, Members noted that Officers were awaiting further information from the developers on progress with the works on site following a recently approved revised planning application.

### Environmental Services

Although Members were aware there had been teething problems with the introduction of Kerbside Recycling, the Committee was pleased to note that the Council had already modestly exceeded the 2003/04 target of recycling 10% by 4%.

Air Quality monitoring had been expanded in anticipation of the widening works on the M25/M3 by way of diffusion tubes which had been funded by the Highways Agency and by the commencement of a transect survey. It was confirmed that monitoring would continue at a point to the north of the Borough which would take these works into account. The Committee would receive full details of the absorbent barriers which the Council had been making representations to the Highways Agency for at the next meeting.

### Safer Runnymede

The Committee noted that Safer Runnymede's report attached at Appendix 'D' of the Agenda had been updated by the receipt of new figures. Accordingly, a replacement was tabled at the meeting.

The Council had achieved £112,041 in grants funding and £150,061 in sponsorship and monitoring fees.

Members were informed that the Government would shortly be proposing legislation which would in turn affect the protocol for reacting to illegal trespass by travellers. The Council would need to review the protocol with Surrey Police in light of any new or revised legislation.

#### 117. SAFER RUNNYMEDE ANNUAL REPORT 2002/03

Members were impressed that Safer Runnymede had enjoyed another successful year. CCTV was an integral part to Policing, and Safer Runnymede had contributed to over 300 arrests being made. The centre was engaged in a large variety of work, 24 hours per day; including the valuable 'Careline' service, which had received 22,623 calls during the year. Staff were praised for coping with the heavy workload within a concentrated environment. The Committee appreciated that the centre was working close to capacity, and that this should be taken into consideration in plans for the new civic offices, particularly in terms of where the section would be located.

The Committee was informed that with the advent of decriminalised parking due to be introduced towards the end of 2004, there would be an opportunity for Safer Runnymede to become involved in its enforcement. A full report on the subject would be submitted to the Committee for consideration in due course.

#### 118. SPEED REDUCTION PROJECT

The Committee received and noted a report on progress with the Council's Speed Reduction Project. The mobile speed camera had been deployed successfully, and the system was being replicated elsewhere in the country. The interactive signs had been equally well received.

Officers were confident that the independent evaluation being conducted by the Transport Research Laboratory would be positive; and a full report would be submitted to the Committee later in the year.

Members welcomed the introduction of a speed indicating trailer, together with a list of sites at which it could be left that had been agreed with Surrey Police. It was stressed that as the list was not exhaustive, Members wishing to propose a particular site should contact the Safer Runnymede Manager, or the Community Safety Officer. They would arrange for an assessment of the site to be made.

#### 119. REVISIONS TO GRANT AID CRITERIA

Members agreed that the revised draft grant aid criteria were easier for applicants to understand and less prescriptive in respect of the purposes for which funding may be awarded.

Together with minor drafting changes, Officers had presented a more general statement of the type of schemes which the Council might be prepared to support. Officers had also taken the opportunity to include guidelines for the newly established provision of £20,000 for Community Shows and Events. The Housing and Community Services Committee had recommended approval of the revised draft grant aid criteria at its meeting on 11 June 2003. Accordingly, the Committee

**RECOMMEND that –**

**the grant aid criteria as attached at Appendix ‘A’ of the Minutes of the meeting on 11 June 2003 of the Housing and Community Services Committee be adopted.**

120. EGHAM SPORTS CENTRE – DIRECT SERVICES ORGANISATION (DSO)

The Committee recalled that Egham Sports Centre was, as a result of a Compulsory Competitive Tendering exercise, operated on a separate trading account. The Centre was managed by the in-house DSO who had won the bid for a 10 year contract from 1 January 1997. The Centre was overseen by a Contract Steering Group, chaired by the Council's Chief Executive Officer.

Although the Committee was disappointed that membership at the Centre had fallen by 200 in the last year, it was understood that actual visits were only slightly below expectations and compared well with local competition.

Improvements at the Centre including Dance Studios and a Fitness Suite, together with a major Capital Scheme of works, approved by the Committee in January 2003, had contributed to the strong trading position of the DSO account. As required by the terms of the bid, a sum of £232,400 had been transferred to the Council's client side account in 2002/03. This would increase to £238,200 for 2003/04.

The Centre's trading account had shown a deficit on the year of £16,475 after the aforementioned transfer of £232,400 to the Council's client side account. The business plan for 2003/04 showed a projected deficit of £10,000 if the current trends continued. Nevertheless, the net return to the Council was excellent.

The trading account deficit would be financed from the DSO reserves and Members agreed that the facilities were excellent and should be supported in accordance with the Leader's Position Statement 2003/04. Accordingly, the Committee

**RESOLVED that –**

**the continuation of the current arrangements for the overseeing of the DSO trading account by the Egham Sports Centre Contract Steering Group be endorsed.**

121. ABBEY FIT – BUSINESS PLAN EVALUATION

The Committee considered a report on the Abbey Fit Business Plan Evaluation. Members were presented with four options for the future of the sports facility at Abbey Fit.

The Chairman welcomed members of the public who had come to the meeting to listen to the views of the Committee. Members had been asked to decide which of the four options for the future of the facility they wished to pursue. The options were;

- |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a) Status Quo:                                                       | Continue with the existing arrangements whilst looking at an improved maintenance regime and new equipment for the existing gym. Likely to continue to trade at a substantial deficit.                                                                                                       |
| b) Seek a Partner:                                                   | Not recommended by the consultants due to the size and nature of the current facility.                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| c) Invest in a new health and fitness suite, aerobics area, changing | Projected to yield a substantial improvement in financial trading position so as to make an operating surplus, but unable to cover all the capital and depreciation costs. Would require a Capital Estimate and instructions to Officers to appoint a suitable architect and project manager |

accommodation and reception facilities, £1.2m: and report back on the implications for the trading account of the Sports Centre during the construction period.

- d) Closure: Two year notice period to be given to the school. Possibility of negotiating an earlier exit strategy and possibility of the school running the facility themselves in a reduced manner if suitable terms cannot be agreed. There would be significant savings but it would not be possible to extinguish all the Council's fixed costs, which were allocated to the sports centre.

The projected financial impacts of status quo, new investment and closure options are shown in the table below. After five years the financial effect of investment and closure turns out closely.

Based on the 2003/04 Abbey Fit budget and the business plan drafted by the consultants, the Committee was informed that the options listed above would produce the following estimated savings against current budgeted costs:

	Year 1	Year 3	Year 5
Do Nothing	0	0	0
£1.2m investment	£34,800	£81,500	£86,200
Close the Centre	£70,000	£91,000	£91,000

It was stressed that despite strong demand in the Community for improved swimming provision at the site, and the possibility that the swimming pool would attract more visitors, none of the options before the Committee provided for the future of the swimming pool owing to the age and state of repair of the school's pool and the expenditure likely to be incurred in rebuilding and running such a facility.

The Committee made comparisons between this and other facilities in the Borough. Members noted that Egham Sports Centre's trading position which had been in substantial deficit in the past had improved and whilst recognising the differences between the two establishments it was suggested that the same could be achieved at Abbey Fit, provided all those involved were fully committed to its future.

The Committee discussed the options at length. A number of Members considered the community needs and service provision issues to be of primary importance in addition to debating business viability.

Some Members were unconvinced by the consultant's projected business plan and stressed that if the Council were to proceed with the investment, it should be committed to the community case.

A number of Members were keen for the Council to incorporate protective measures in any agreement reached which would enable the Council to retain security of tenure and an element of flexibility in the arrangements. Therefore, an amendment to request Officers to negotiate a break clause and the option to assign or sublet the proposed lease of the new facilities with the Foundation's agreement was accepted into the motion by the proposer and seconder with the Chairman's agreement.

Some Members also expressed concern about the quality of the partnership between the Foundation and the Council. However, the Committee believed that a sound working basis could be established in the context of the investment and improvement.

The Committee agreed that the recommendation below based on the Committee's resolution endorsing Option C, would be presented to the next meeting of Corporate Management Committee. The policy and financial elements would also need consideration by Full Council.

Recommendations (ii) and (iii) would normally be for the Economic Development Committee to endorse, but to avoid a wait until September the Chairman of that Committee would be requested to agree that they might be considered by Corporate Management Committee. The Committee

**RECOMMEND that –**

- i) the option of investing approximately £1.2 million in the Abbey Fit Facility be adopted as described in the agenda report;**
- ii) the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised to settle terms with the Foundation and with Surrey County Council for a 30 year lease of the proposed fitness suite extension and a modified dual use agreement for the facilities shared with the school, on the basis set out in the report;**
- iii) Officers seek to negotiate provisions enabling the Council:**
  - a) to serve not less than 12 months notice terminating the lease and the agreement at any time after the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the term, with the Foundation having the option of either taking the leased premises for use or re-letting, or requiring the Council to demolish the building and reinstate the site; and**
  - b) to assign or sublet the Lease with the Foundation's consent.**
- iv) Capital Programme provision be approved for the project in the sum of £1.2 million, to be expended over the years 2003/04 and 2004/05;**
- v) from this provision, a Capital Estimate of £30,000 be approved for the engagement of Architectural and other professional advice on the final detail and cost of the scheme for report to the Committee;**
- vi) a further report be submitted for approval of the requisite Capital Estimate for the works, after the terms of the documentation have been settled and the further advice has been received on detail and costings; and**
- vii) a project group of the relevant Officers and any necessary consultants, together with a Member of this Committee, be formed to carry the project forward, and the Foundation and the School each be invited to nominate a representative to attend and participate.**

122. PROMOTION AND TOURISM IN RUNNYMEDE

The Committee received for approval a report which presented progress on the development of promotion and tourism in Runnymede, including proposals for a Tourism Forum.

Although not a statutory function of the Council; tourism generated £95.6 m for the area through staying and day visits to the Borough. In addition, 2,660 jobs were supported by tourism in 2001.

Members complimented staff on all their work to promote the Borough and were pleased that joint working between Runnymede, Spelthorne and the Countryside Agency had resulted in an advert being placed in 'Discover Surrey', a publication produced by the County Council under its 'Surrey Tourism' umbrella.

In addition, a new accommodation guide for Runnymede and Spelthorne would be published later in the year entitled 'Visit Surrey's Thames', also jointly funded.

The Committee recognised the value of partnership working between agencies and authorities to promote tourism in the area. Accordingly, the Committee

**RESOLVED that –**

**Officers continue to explore the establishment of objectives and terms of reference for a Tourism Forum for Runnymede and Spelthorne, initially focusing on the promotion of tourism for the River Thames.**

123. PROGRAMME FOR THE REFURBISHMENT AND REPROVISION OF PLAY AREAS

Members received a report which outlined proposals for a phased programme of refurbishment and reprovision of play areas in the Borough.

Members were informed that a General Fund Capital Programme for the first, five year phase of a longer term programme for replacement of play equipment had already been approved by Corporate Management Committee in October 2002 as set out below;

2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
£80,500	£75,000	£50,000	£62,000	£62,000

However, Officers considered it necessary to present the Committee with a detailed programme for approval as set out below;

Financial Year 2003/04		
Site	Work	Approximate cost
Pooley Green Recreation Ground	Consider new location within site. Re-provide all the play equipment, furniture and fencing. Consider graffiti wall.	£34,000
Sayes Court Open Space, Addlestone	Replace swings, roundabout and fencing.	£20,000
Victory Park, Addlestone	Replace 2-2-7 (toddlers maze) unit.	£11,000
Edgell Close Play Area, Stroude Road, Virginia Water	Replace Flat swings, rollover bars and seesaw.	£10,000
Thorpe Green	Replace flat swings.	£5,500
Total for year £80,500		

Financial Year 2004/05		
Site	Work	Approximate Cost
Heathervale Recreation Ground, New Haw	Replace Swingabout.	£8,000
Spring Rise Play Area, Egham	Consider relocating play area within site. Re-provide all play equipment, fencing and furniture.	£37,000
Ottershaw Memorial Field	Replace roundabout, 2-2-7 (toddler maze) unit, wooden animals, seesaw, caterpillar slide and flat swings.	£30,000
Total for year £75,000		

Financial Year 2005/06		
Site	Work	Approximate Cost
Chertsey Recreation Ground	Replace log cabin & slide, see saw and wooden donkey.	£6,500
King George V Playing Field, Virginia Water	Replace flat swings.	£5,500
Gogmore Farm Park, Chertsey	Replace 2-2-7 unit.	£12,000
Victory Park, Addlestone	Replace Discovery unit.	£26,000
Total for year £50,000		

Financial Year 2006/07		
Site	Work	Approximate Cost
Brookside Play Area, Chertsey	Remove equipment and return to grass.	£5,000
Sayes Court Open Space, Addlestone	Complete replacement of remaining equipment and furniture.	£11,000
Edgell Close Play Area, Stroude Road, Virginia Water	Replace roundabout.	£4,500
Heathervale Recreation Ground, New Haw	Replace flat swings and wooden animals.	£7,500
Runnymede Pleasure Grounds, Egham	Replace Discovery unit and tractor slide.	£34,000
Total for year £62,000		

Financial Year 2007/08		
Site	Work	Approximate Cost
Bishopsway Open Space, Egham Hythe	Replace all equipment, fencing and furniture. Create separate toddler and junior areas.	£41,000
Charta Road Recreation Ground, Egham Hythe	Replace slide.	£3,500
King George V Playing Field, Virginia Water	Replace cradle swings.	£5,500
Thorpe Green	Replace seesaw, tractor slide, and wooden animals.	£12,000
Total for year £62,000		

The five year programme had been designed to tackle those play areas and pieces of equipment in urgent need of attention. The first phase of the programme would bring eight of the Council's play areas completely up to date whilst addressing the most urgent works at a further eleven sites. However, the programme could be altered at any time to take account of changing circumstances or as a result of consultation with Ward Members, local residents and local young people.

The Committee was informed that a scheme for an upgrade of Warwick Avenue Play Area had been put together by a local resident with the assistance of Officers. The resident had approached the Association for the Improvement of Runnymede (AIR), which then registered the project with ENTRUST. Subject to approval of the scheme by the Committee

AIR would apply for funding in the sum of £35,000.

The application for external funding would require the Council to make a 10% contribution to the cost of the project.

The Committee welcomed the programme of works, including the proposals for Warwick Avenue Play Area, and accordingly

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) a phased refurbishment and replacement programme for play equipment be implemented, as set out in the report;**
- ii) the Corporate Management Committee be requested to approve a Capital sum of £329,000 for the first five-year phase of the programme;**
- iii) the Corporate Management Committee be requested to approve a Supplementary Revenue Estimate in the sum of £6,800 for the associated Capital Charges and the additional maintenance for the play equipment to be transferred from Housing;**
- iv) a further report, seeking approval and funding for the second phase of this programme, be brought before the relevant Committees in 2007/08; and**
- v) Members approve the refurbishment of Warwick Avenue Play Area, subject to the necessary funding being provided through AIR.**

124. HEATHERVALE RECREATION GROUND - PROPOSED EXTENSION TO BOWLS PAVILION

The Committee received and considered a report which sought approval for a Capital Scheme to provide a modest extension to the bowls pavilion at Heathervale Recreation Ground, as provided in the Capital Programme.

The extension if approved, would enlarge the seating area and provide additional storage for the three well established clubs which had been using the facilities for at least the last twelve years. The clubs provided the Council with an income of approximately £4,000 per season.

However, an additional Capital Charge in the sum of approximately £1,000 per annum would be needed to fund the extension, although Members noted that part of this could be recovered from users of the facility via an increase in playing fees.

Members suggested that Officers enquire of the clubs if they had undertaken any fundraising themselves to meet some of the costs, and that this approach be adopted for other proposed schemes in the future.

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) the Corporate Management Committee be requested to approve a Capital Estimate in the sum of £15,000 for the extension of the bowls pavilion at Heathervale Recreation Ground;**
- ii) subject to the approval of a Capital Estimate by the Corporate Management Committee and the granting of relevant planning permission, Officers implement the scheme;**
- iii) Officers continue to negotiate with the three bowls clubs with a view to entering into a joint lease/licence of the pavilion building; and**
- iv) the fees for the use of the facilities be adjusted, once the extension is available for use, to reflect the additional Capital Charge attracted by it.**

125. SERVICE PLAN 2003/04

Members considered the Service Plan for the Services within the remit of the Leisure and Environment Committee for 2003/04.

The Committee liked the new format of the document because it gave more information on each of the service areas. There were additional headings to cover linking source documents with particular aims and targets, identification of potential barriers to their implementation, as well as reference being made to resource and property requirements and a statement of what the benefit of the policy would be for the public.

Subject to a small number of minor amendments being made to the document, the Committee

**RESOLVED that –**

**the format and current content of the draft Leisure and Environment Service Plan attached at Appendix 'S' of the Agenda be approved as a basis for the monitoring and review of the Committee's objectives.**

126. LICENSING BILL

The Committee considered a report advising Members of the progress being made towards the enactment of the Licensing Bill, and highlighting the implications for this Authority should the Bill become law.

Members were aware that the Authority would need to be well prepared for the transitional period, due to commence in January 2004. There would be additional work for both Members and Officers, and the Council would have to bear additional expenses in order to implement the legislation fully.

A policy statement would have to be produced, although there was a possibility that a County-wide outline policy document could be drafted. Officers were meeting with colleagues from other Surrey Districts together with Trading Standards, the Fire Service and the Police to discuss this and other resourcing issues.

The Committee learned that a new Licensing Committee and Sub-Committee(s) beneath it would have to be established. The former would only meet twice a year, However, it was anticipated that the smaller Sub-Committees would have to meet much more frequently in order to meet the strict timetable for the consideration of applications and appeals proposed in the Bill.

The need for political balance on the new Committee(s) and day time meetings, were discussed, together with the suggestion that Members would not be able to consider applications for licences from within their own ward.

In addition, Members noted that the House Of Lords were debating amendments which had been made to the Bill in the House of Commons; for example the status of a national database for the holders of Personal Licences.

A further and more detailed report to Committee would be submitted as and when these and other issues had been clarified and the resource implications became more apparent.

127. FOOD SERVICE AND HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE PLANS FOR 2003/04

The Committee received the Food Service Plan 2003/04 and the Health and Safety Service Plan 2003/04. The production of these annual service plans had been a requirement of both the Food Standards Agency and the Health and Safety Commission respectively since 1 April 2001 and 2002.

Accordingly, the Committee

**RECOMMEND that –**

- i) the Food Service Plan for 2003/04 as attached at Appendix 'A' be approved; and**

**RESOLVED that –****ii) the Health and Safety Service Plan for 2003/04 be approved.**128. NIGHT FLYING RESTRICTIONS AT HEATHROW, GATWICK AND STANSTED

The Committee considered a report which set out a draft response to a consultation paper from the Department of Transport entitled 'Night Flying Restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted'.

One of the key issues which the Committee discussed was when the night quota should start and finish. It was suggested that night flying should not be extended, and could even be restricted further, reducing the start time to 10.30 p.m.

It was understood that the policy background to night flying restrictions would be changing shortly due to European Union legislation, human rights considerations and the Government's own consultation on the future of air travel in the UK.

In view of these issues, Members agreed that only general comments could be made at this stage and that it would be sensible to review the issues in depth after 31 October 2004, but to seek expert advice first in order to do this properly.

**RESOLVED that –****a response to the consultation paper entitled 'Night Flying Restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted' based on the comments set out in the report be forwarded to the Government.**129. REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY – CONSULTATION DRAFT

The Committee considered a draft response to a consultation paper entitled 'No Time to Waste' – a regional waste management strategy produced by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA).

The proposed strategy formally covered the period up to 2016, setting out a planning framework to 2026, which focused on recycling as the main form of waste management.

The paper suggested two options for the future together with a third variant option.

The first option (identified as the preferred option in this Strategy) would try to exceed the targets for recycling and recovery set by the Government and the European Commission.

The second option would envisage at least meeting but not exceeding the statutory targets. This would see the creation of new facilities running at a slower pace.

The third option was a hybrid of the two previously outlined options; combining a slow build up to meeting recycling targets in the early stages, with rapid increases in recovery, including recycling in the latter stages of the Strategy.

It was agreed that it was important for the Committee to focus on the impact of the three options, and that resolving the problems presented would be difficult in the long term. It was also an issue of waste minimisation not just waste disposal.

The Planning Committee on 4 June 2003 had also considered the consultation paper and their comments were incorporated into the draft response, as set out below in the report to this Committee;

- Runnymede has suffered considerably in the past from the environmental impact of mineral extraction, and then by the filling of voids with waste. Both these processes take many years to complete, and even then problems may linger concerning release of leachate and gas and impact on the ability of land to store floodwater.

- Where minerals are extracted adjacent to and in the Thames floodplain an additional problem arises where impervious clay-lined cells are created for subsequent waste infill and land raising occurs. This removes the ability for land to store water and exacerbates the flooding potential from run-off of capped waste.
- In terms of restoration of mineral sites with waste materials, past experience has shown problems of general bad practice, pollution, land raising resulting in alien land-forms, and loss of water storage in flood plain areas adding to the propensity for flooding. Given these environmental problems, the timescale involved in restoration and the current shortage of inert fill, leaving extraction sites as open water in floodplain areas should not be precluded.
- Landfill sites will continue to be required in the immediate future and, due to existing sites and mineral reserves in the area, Runnymede will remain vulnerable to these pressures. The emphasis must be on restoration of environmentally degraded sites. To prolong their use by recycling or other waste processing facilities is unacceptable.
- There needs to be strong emphasis on waste management rather than waste disposal, and in this regard, the strategy's waste hierarchy of 'prevent, re-use, recycle, recover, dispose', is supported. Reduction of waste at source is a key issue and should be vigorously pursued. Recycling is part of the solution subject to properly planned allocation of sites.
- The Council is gravely concerned by the fact that the Consultation Draft proposes that in future the planning policy constraint of the Green Belt "should not be considered a barrier to development of waste management facilities".
- This weakening of Green Belt policy when coupled with the locational criteria for waste management facilities provided for in Policy W24 gives rise for even greater concern. Policy W24 sets out the following such criteria or "characteristics" to guide the location of such facilities:
  - previous or existing waste management land use; or
  - previous or existing industrial land use; or
  - contaminated or derelict land; and
  - accessible from existing urban areas or major new or planned development; and
  - good transport connections including, where possible, rail;
  - representing the Best Practicable Environmental Option.
- The suggested significant undermining of Green Belt policy proposed in the strategy is considered to be totally unacceptable. The principles of appropriate and inappropriate Green Belt development are well-established, as is the need to put forward special circumstances to permit inappropriate land uses. It will become a self-fulfilling prophecy that will drive waste facilities away from appropriate urban areas, and is contrary to the principle of locating such facilities close to areas of greatest demand. The presumption should be against the use of Green Belt sites for waste processing facilities unless suitable sites can be more conclusively demonstrated as part of a sequential search.
- The strategy should aim to achieve reasonable and equitable distribution of facilities across the region and not seek to take the easy option of perpetuating environmental damage in areas that have suffered years of degradation from waste disposal in the past.

The Committee was pleased to endorse the views of the Planning Committee.

**RESOLVED that –**

**the response on the consultation paper dealing with the Regional Waste Management Strategy be based on the comments set out above and forwarded to SEERA as the formal views of the Council.**

130. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STATEMENT

The Committee's approval was sought for a revised approach to updating the Council's Environmental Policy Statement which had originally been adopted in 2000 and the auditing of service delivery.

Members received a detailed explanation of how the Environmental Policy would fit within the context of Comprehensive Performance Assessment and the new regime of providing baseline data in order to undertake a 'sustainability audit' of services.

The aim was to facilitate the capture, assembly, storage, distribution and analysis of robust data relating to the Borough that would adequately describe, set, monitor and manage its baseline condition.

**RESOLVED that –**

**the revised approach for updating the Council's Environmental Policy Statement and the auditing of service delivery be approved.**

131. HEALTH PROTECTION AGENCY: APPOINTMENT OF PROPER OFFICERS UNDER PUBLIC HEALTH (CONTROL OF DISEASE) ACT 1984 AND THE NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACTS 1948 AND 1951

The Committee received a report which sought approval to change the way in which proper officers would be appointed under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 and the National Assistance Acts 1948 and 1951.

This was really a housekeeping item, necessary in order to comply with changes in legislation and the introduction of the National Health Protection Agency and local Surrey Health Protection Unit. These agencies which came into force on 1 April 2003, had brought together several health protection related functions.

In recent correspondence, the Local Government Association considered it necessary for the local authority to appoint relevant Health Protection Agency (HPA) staff under the aforementioned acts.

Members noted that the consultant in communicable disease control at the former West Surrey Health Authority was appointed as proper officer under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984; and until recently, by virtue of the default provisions in Standing Orders, the Council's Chief Executive Officer or the Director of Administration and Leisure were the proper officers for the purposes of the National Assistance Acts 1948 and 1951.

The Committee was presented with three options for the appointment of staff;

- a) maintain the status quo, by a continuance of the existing system as set out above;
- b) extend the remit of the consultant in communicable disease control to cover the National Assistance Acts 1948 and 1951; or
- c) delegate power to the Director of Technical Services (the preferred option) to appoint HPA staff as proper officers under both acts as and when necessary.

The Committee agreed that the third option was the most sensible as it would allow changes in staff to be considered and appointed without delay.

Accordingly, the Committee

**RESOLVED that –**

**the Director of Technical Services be authorised to appoint Health Protection Agency Staff as proper officers for the relevant purposes under both the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 and the National Assistance Acts 1948 and 1951.**

132. KERBSIDE RECYCLING AND HOME COMPOSTING UPDATE

Members received an update on progress with the kerbside recycling scheme in the Borough. Earlier in the meeting the Committee had been informed that the Council had already exceeded the target 10% for 2003/04. However, there was still room for improvement and plans to expand the scheme to include all residential properties such as flats and sheltered housing were under way. Officers had also received positive feedback from the Contractors about including schools.

A number of local businesses had also expressed an interest in taking part; for example those which produced large amounts of glossy brochures. Although the benefits would be obvious, this would present problems with the inclusion of commercial operations within what was essentially a household recycling service.

The Committee learned that the presentations at St Paul's school for the slogan competition had been very successful, and had highlighted a need for educational work to promote the ideology behind recycling in schools.

Officers intended to investigate recycling cardboard in the near future, and make representations to the County Council to provide a plastics recycling facility if a cost effective method could be secured.

A further report on progress would be brought back to this Committee later in the year.

133. ANTI-GRAFFITI AND STREET CARE TEAM

The Committee received a report which gave an update on progress with the anti-graffiti and street care team.

Members recalled that the Annual Personnel Report 2002/03 had highlighted the growing problem of graffiti in the Borough. Accordingly, Corporate Management Committee had approved the appointment of two additional staff. They had now joined an existing team, and been trained on using the new equipment.

A van had been purchased, that would prominently display a free phone hotline number which people could phone to report the presence of graffiti. The team would then aim to remove the graffiti as quickly as possible, ideally within 24 hours, if it was offensive or obscene.

Members were particularly pleased that the problem of chewing gum on pavements and street furniture would be addressed.

In addition, working with Surrey Police, individual perpetrators of graffiti could be traced through the 'tags' they used.

The Committee agreed that initially the service would be provided free of charge to owners of private property and businesses. However, once the scheme had been operating for a long enough period to give Officers an idea of how successful the scheme was and what its associated costs were it would be sensible to review the need for a charging regime at that time.

The Committee recognised the importance of requiring owners to sign a disclaimer absolving the Council of responsibility for any damage that might result from the normal process of removing graffiti from their property.

In order to fund the operational costs of the anti-graffiti team it would be necessary to require Full Council to authorise a virement of £60,000 from other Council services as attached at Appendix 'B'.

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) the graffiti removal service be offered free for private property belonging to residents and businesses in the Borough, subject to the prior signing of a waiver in respect of damage; and**
- ii) Officers report back to Committee on progress in removing graffiti and, if necessary, review the need for a future charging regime.**

**RECOMMEND that –**

- iii) **a £60,000 virement from various Council Services as attached at Appendix 'B' to fund the annual operational costs of the anti-graffiti team be approved.**

134. APPOINTMENTS TO LEISURE SUB-GROUPS**RESOLVED that –**

**the following appointments be made for the Municipal Year 2003/2004;**

- i) **The Director of Administration and Leisure and the Director of Finance be appointed to the Cabrera Trust Management Committee for the period between the end of the Management Committee's Annual General Meeting in 2003 and the end of the said same meeting in 2004;**
- ii) **Councillor C.J. Norman be appointed as Chairman and Councillor Mrs P. I. Broadhead be appointed as the second Runnymede Borough Councillor to serve on the Chertsey Meads Management Liaison Group;**
- iii) **Councillor B.J. Relph be appointed to serve on the Runnymede Access Liaison Group;**
- iv) **Councillor A.J. Davis be appointed to serve on the Runnymede Arts Development Steering Group; and**
- v) **the second appointment to the Runnymede Arts Development Steering Group be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.**

135. REFERRALS FROM EXTERNAL APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE**RESOLVED that –**

- i) **the appointment of a representative to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Forum for the Municipal Year 2003/04 be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee;**
- ii) **Councillor A.J. Davis be appointed to represent the Council on Runnymede Association of Arts for the Municipal Year 2003/04;**
- iii) **the appointment of a second representative be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee; and**
- iv) **Councillor R.J. Ray be appointed to represent the Council on the Surrey Museums Consultative Committee for the Municipal Year 2003/04.**

136. ABBEY FIT JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Management Committee held on 4 March 2003, as attached at Appendix 'C', were received and noted.

137. CHERTSEY MEADS MANAGEMENT LIAISON GROUP – MINUTES, REVISED CONSTITUTION AND PROGRAMME OF WORKS

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2003, together with the updated Constitution of the Group, as attached at Appendix 'D' were received and noted.

138. RUNNYMEDE ARTS DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP – MINUTES

**RESOLVED that –**

**the Minutes of the meeting of the Arts Development Steering Group held on 1 April 2003 together with the revised Terms of Reference as attached at Appendix 'E' be received and adopted.**

139. LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE – MINUTES

**RESOLVED that –**

**the Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Sub-Committee held on 15 April 2003, as attached at Appendix 'F', be received and adopted.**

(The meeting ended at 10.29 p.m.)

Chairman