

Runnymede Borough Council

LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

23 January 2003 at 7.30 pm

Members of the  
Committee Present: Councillors C J Norman (Chairman), Mrs C Y Jones (Vice Chairman),  
A J Davis, Mrs S E Jacobs, A M Moore, R J Ray, B J Relph and  
Ms C M Simmons and G B Woodger

Members of the  
Committee absent: Councillor P C Elding

Co-opted Members  
of the Committee  
absent: Mrs B Miller and Mr T Watson

Councillors Mrs L M Gillham and P A Greenwood also attended.

571. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Conservative Group had notified the Chief Executive Officer of its wish that Councillor A G Collins be removed from Membership of the Committee and that Councillor G B Woodger be appointed in his place for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting. Thereafter Councillor Collins 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.

572. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 November 2002 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

573. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs C Y Jones declared a personal and prejudicial interest under the Runnymede Code of Conduct for Members in respect of the report 'The Friends of Englefield Green Youth' in view of her position on the organisation's committee. Councillor Mrs Jones left the room during the discussion of this report.

Councillor A M Moore declared a personal interest under the Runnymede Code of Conduct for Members in respect of the report 'Egham and Thorpe Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Association – Application for Core Revenue Funding', as his property was near Mrs Caddey's Field where the Egham Show was held. Councillor Moore remained in the room but he did not take part in the debate and abstained from voting.

Councillor B J Relph declared a personal interest under the Runnymede Code of Conduct for Members in respect of the report 'Revisions to Grant Aid Criteria' in so much as para. 3.4 referred to the Association for the Improvement of Runnymede (AIR) of which he was the Project Manager. Councillor Relph remained in the room and provided the Committee with factual information related to the item.

574. AIMS AND TARGETS

(Ref: Minutes of the Leisure and Environment Committee, June 2002, page 229 para. 119)

The Committee received details of the interim performance reports on Leisure Services, Environmental Services and the Safer Runnymede Initiative for the period April – September 2002 and the proposed Aims and Targets for the period 2003/2004. The latter are attached at Appendix 'A'.

With regard to the interim performance on Leisure Services, Members were pleased to note the variety of schemes in which the Council was involved which facilitated the Surrey Youth Strategy.

With regard to the interim performance on Environmental Services, Members learned that the Council's relationship with the Highways Agency continued to be mutually beneficial with good results being achieved in the monitoring of air quality and representations on the M25.

Members considered the proposed Aims and Targets for 2003/2004 for each service area.

Regarding Leisure Services, the Committee requested that Officers provide Members with details of the latest progress in negotiations with Jubilee High School over the future of the dual use facility at Abbey Fit Sports Centre. Members were informed that Officers had met with the school but no feedback had been received. If the school and governing body responded positively to the proposals, further action would depend on the outcome of a consultant's report on the business plan. The Committee was keen to find a way forward regarding Abbey Fit so that various outstanding issues concerning maintenance and future expenditure could be resolved shortly.

Regarding Environmental Services, the Committee welcomed the new policies to deal with the removal of Abandoned Vehicles and Graffiti in the borough and it was agreed that Officers be requested to draw up a protocol of reaction to Graffiti. Members considered it important to establish where the Council could legitimately remove graffiti from in terms of public and private property and Officers would negotiate with private owners to ensure a smart borough.

With regard to the Safer Runnymede Initiative, although objectives two and three regarding measures to curb speeding traffic and the introduction of Neighbourhood Officers were not strictly within the control of the borough council, Officers would be discussing these items with Surrey Police through the Safer Runnymede Management Group.

Accordingly Members

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) the interim progress report in respect of the 2002/2003 Aims and Targets be noted; and**
- ii) the proposed Aims and Targets for 2003/2004 attached at Appendix 'A' be adopted.**

575. REVENUE ESTIMATES 2003/2004

The Committee received and considered the draft Revenue Estimates and fees and charges for the services under its remit for 2003/2004. These are attached at Appendix 'B'.

Members noted that the Economic Development Committee at its meeting on 16 January 2003 had agreed to transfer some land from the Housing Revenue Account to the Parks and Open Spaces budget. This would increase the Leisure Services budget to £2,537,600.

Members were advised that Capital Charges were significantly less for 2003/2004 due to the reduced interest rate applied in determining capital charges.

The recent restructuring of the former Environmental Services department together with the implications of Kerbside Recycling and the introduction of the five year strategic maintenance programme had large impacts on the combined totals in the capital and revenue budgets for 2003/2004.

Subject to minor factual amendments, the Committee

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) the proposed fees and charges for 2003/2004 as set out in Appendix 'B' be approved to be effective from 1 April 2003 or as appropriate; and**
- ii) the draft Revenue Estimates for 2003/2004 be approved as submitted and the Corporate Management Committee be requested to make provision accordingly**

576. KERBSIDE RECYCLING AND HOME COMPOSTING UPDATE

(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee November 2002, page 774 para. 438)

The Committee received an update on progress with the introduction of Kerbside Recycling in the borough including the trial for Members and considered a report on the outcome of the home composting research, which also sought approval for further research and support for a subsidy on new home composters which would be offered for sale to residents.

Members were pleased at the successful outcome of the Council's bid for Landfill Tax Credits funding from the Sita Environmental Trust and two payments from the Government which had been secured recently as this would give further financial stability to the kerbside recycling scheme.

Members noted that the kerbside recycling scheme was due to be introduced in two fifths of the borough on 24 February 2003 with the remaining areas commencing on 3 March 2003.

Leaflets advising residents of the arrangements together with delivery of the blue boxes and bags would be undertaken two weeks prior to the above mentioned dates.

The Committee was very supportive of the recycling scheme and interested in the results of the trial in which they had been actively participating.

Members learned that the recent home composting research carried out by Imperial College on 64 volunteer homeowners in the borough had found that the average input

of waste to the bins was 400 kg per household per year. A field trial which assessed the end use of composted products emphasised the value of composted residue as an effective replacement for peat as a soil conditioner.

A further waste management research project had been proposed for which support in the sum of £10,000 was sought from this Committee. The project aimed to weigh individual wheeled bins from 400 volunteer residents' homes in order to analyse and assess patterns in waste management at householder level. Members learned that the proposed research if supported would be the first of this nature to be carried out in the UK and as such could bring significant benefits to the authority. The research also complimented the introduction of kerbside recycling and the new home composting initiative.

Members were shown an example of the Blackwall Ltd 'Compost Converter' which it was proposed to sell at a subsidised price of £10 to residents. It was noted that although the design was more basic than those previously sold, this was not thought to be detrimental to the efficiency of the model or to their resilience to attack from rats and other small mammals.

The home composter promotion would cost a maximum of £10,000 over the life of the project and could be funded from the waste minimisation rolling programme provision in the Capital Programme for 2003/04.

Officers were confident that the scheme would be a success. Accordingly, the Committee

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) the Imperial College Research Project be supported, and a contribution of £10,000 be approved from the proposed budgetary provision for 2003/04; and**
- ii) the Corporate Management Committee be requested to approve a Capital Estimate in the sum of £10,000 for the purchase and promotion of 2,000 Blackwall 'Composter Converter' home composters and agree to a £5 subsidy for each one.**

577. GRANT AID CRITERIA – REVISIONS

The Committee considered a report on proposed changes to the Council's Grant Aid Criteria.

Grant Aid was awarded to local voluntary and community groups as well as individuals involved in sporting, artistic, charitable and educational activities and included occasional grants, annual core revenue funding, bottle bank donations, rent grant aid and discretionary rate relief.

Officers had felt it appropriate to comprehensively update the grant aid criteria since its last overhaul in 1995, in order to take into account changing policy priorities, funding needs and working practices.

Officers also intended that the new criteria would form a single set of corporate guidelines which could be used to assess applications for most forms of funding, and where appropriate tied to the Community and Cultural Strategies which reflected the Council's broader policy framework.

It was proposed that the scope of grant aid be extended into areas such as social inclusion and health awareness, that would not traditionally have been seen as part of the Council's core functions. Existing sources of public funding would not be

replaced, but complemented by the new criteria. As now, assistance would not be given to services and projects which were customarily the responsibility of other statutory agencies.

The revised set of criteria had been considered by the Housing and Community Services Committee at its meeting on 15 January 2003. Some Members of that Committee were concerned that the criteria were a little prescriptive and might exclude from funding some potentially worthy schemes which might not necessarily meet the proposed priorities and objectives. Therefore, Officers were asked to make a number of amendments which would address the concerns of that Committee.

Members expressed their appreciation of Runnymede Sports Council who had given their full support to the document.

Members discussed the criteria fully and were generally supportive, subject to a number of suggestions, the more significant of which are included in the resolution below. Officers would give further consideration to the criteria and report these to a future meeting.

At the request of a Member it was agreed that the advice of the Association for the Improvement of Runnymede (AIR), be sought with reference to the section of the criteria dealing with Environmental Improvement Schemes.

The Committee agreed that the allocation of £50,000 for community halls and general grants should not be amalgamated with that of the £3,000 provision for scouts and guides which Officers had originally proposed. It was felt more appropriate that only the scouts and guides provision could be carried forward to the next financial year unless a specific project or allocation from the other provision had been identified to justify it.

Officers confirmed that the grant aid application forms including those for funding from the Arts Development Steering Group would be available on the Council's website. Accordingly, the Committee

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) the draft Grant Aid criteria set out in Appendix 'D' of the Agenda be approved in principle subject to minor drafting changes and consideration to the following suggestions;**
  - a) the inclusion of Affordable Housing, Access and Transport, Community Safety and Health and Social Care be reviewed and made more substantive to justify their inclusion**
  - b) Officers seek advice from the Association for the Improvement of Runnymede (AIR) on the section concerning Environmental Improvement Schemes**
  - c) Community Halls be included in the section entitled 'Council Halls and Assets Managed by the Community'**

**and a further report be presented to the next meeting of the Committee**
- ii) the view of this Committee is that Capital Grant Aid allocation for community halls and general grants should be amalgamated into one provision of £50,000 to allow greater flexibility when dealing with Capital Grant Aid**

**applications with any under spend not to be carried forward unless a specific project or allocation had been identified to justify it; and**

- iii) the view of this Committee is that Capital Grant Aid allocation of £3,000 for scouts and guides should be kept separate from the above**

578. EGHAM AND THORPE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL AND HORTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION – APPLICATION FOR CORE REVENUE FUNDING

The Committee considered an application for core revenue funding in the sum of £15,000 per annum from the Egham and Thorpe Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Association for the Egham Royal Show. Members were also asked to give consideration to the establishment of a specific budget from which financial support could be given to community shows and similar local events.

Members indicated a number of events which could receive financial assistance from the new provision such as The Egham Show, Black Cherry Fair and the Chertsey Agricultural Show and it was agreed that community events which met the grant aid criteria and organisations which could provide Officers with satisfactory accounts could be supported.

The sums awarded would be proportionate with the size of the event taking place.

With regard to Egham and Thorpe Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Association Members agreed that a one off payment of £5,000 could be made available subject to their compliance with Officers' requests to see their accounts and to their meeting the grant aid criteria.

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) subject to satisfactory sight of the accounts of the Egham and Thorpe Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Association and to their meeting the grant aid criteria a grant of no more than £5,000 be awarded for the financial year 2003/2004;**
- ii) community events such as the Black Cherry Fair, Chertsey Agricultural Show and the Egham Show and any others of a similar nature who might apply for financial assistance be funded from an annual provision of £20,000 with amounts awarded being consistent with the size of the event in question and subject to their meeting the grant aid criteria; and**
- iii) the draft estimates be amended to reflect this £20,000 provision to cover assisted funding for such community events**

(Councillor Moore requested that his abstention be recorded)

579. 'CARELINE' DISASTER RECOVERY

The Committee considered a report recommending the implementation of a disaster recovery system in partnership with Mole Valley to ensure continuity of the Council's 'Careline' service in the event of any form of disaster rendering the call centre at Safer Runnymede unusable.

In order to comply with the Code of Practice drawn up by The Association of Social and Community Alarms a business continuity plan was required to be in place to address foreseeable circumstances. The Safer Runnymede Centre had a plan in place for all such circumstances except the unavailability of rooms.

Members also learned that the Safer Runnymede Centre contained a large amount of electrical equipment which heightened the risk of fire. In addition the centre could be vulnerable to attack from aggrieved persons due to the centre's links with Surrey Police.

The Committee agreed that out of the options available, the most operationally effective was to pair with a similar centre at Mole Valley District Council. Each centre would install a receiving terminal in each other's centre. In the event of a crisis rendering one of the Centres unusable, staff would relocate temporarily to the other Centre.

Members agreed that as the current system was supplied by Jontek Limited, and that the proposed equipment would be an integral part therein, it was the only viable option to return to Jontek for the new equipment. The Committee agreed that Standing Order C2.1 be waived in order to facilitate the proposal.

**RESOLVED that -**

- i) the Corporate Management Committee be requested to approve the purchase of the recovery terminal and associated software from within the existing Capital CCTV Replacement Budget;**
- ii) the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised to enter into a service level agreement with Mole Valley District Council to the mutual benefit of both Authorities; and**
- iii) this equipment be purchased from Jontek Ltd., as the only practicable supplier, and Standing Order C2.1 be waived for this reason.**

580. THE FRIENDS OF ENGLEFIELD GREEN YOUTH

The Committee considered a report which recommended that The Friends of Englefield Green Youth be given financial assistance in the sum of £7,000 towards provision of an external floodlit multi-use games area and more flexible internal space with the Englefield Green Youth Centre.

The Friends would also be making an application for 'Connexions funding' in order to increase the times the centre was open during the week.

Members were pleased to note that since the Friends had formed the crime rate in Englefield Green had fallen and wished the Friends every success with the project.

**RESOLVED that -**

**a contribution of £7,000 be made to the Friends of Englefield Green Youth to assist with improvements to Englefield Green Youth Centre, funded from the Capital Grant Aid budget.**

581. EGHAM SPORTS CENTRE – CAPITALISATION OF PREMISES AND OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE

The Committee received a report which sought approval of capital expenditure in the sum of £99,500 for a programme of improvements and essential works at Egham Sports Centre.

Members learned that one of the boilers had failed recently, and that a subsequent inspection had revealed the need for urgent and essential repairs to both the boiler and the sports centre's water system at a cost of £19,000.

In addition a number of improvement and repair schemes had been identified as set out below:

<b><u>Egham Sports Centre</u></b>			
<b><u>Capitalisation</u></b>			
<b><u>Programme of Works</u></b>			
	<b><u>Summary of Capital Costs</u></b>	<b><u>Estimate (£)</u></b>	<b><u>Year</u></b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Client Costs</b>		
	a) <b>Urgent repairs and improvements to boiler and water system.</b>	<b>17,000</b>	<b>2002/03</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>DSO Costs</b>		
	a) Replacement telephone system	<b>4,000</b>	<b>2002/03</b>
	b) Replacement of Shower units and refurbishment of Gents changing Room	<b>20,000</b>	<b>2002/03</b>
	c) Clean and repaint surface external multi use courts	<b>3,500</b>	<b>2002/03</b>
	d) Repairs/Replacement to lift and Sports Hall Lights	<b>4,000</b>	<b>2002/03</b>
	e) Refurbishment of air change units in Fitness Suite	<b>2,500</b>	<b>2002/03</b>
	f) Kitchen refurbishment	<b>1,000</b>	<b>2002/03</b>
	g) New lockers for Fitness Suite	<b>3,500</b>	<b>2002/03</b>
	h) Purchase of defibrillator	<b>3,000</b>	<b>2002/03</b>
	i) Reseal studio floor	<b>5,500</b>	<b>2002/03</b>
	j) Ventilation to Squash Courts	<b>7,000</b>	<b>2003/04</b>
	k) Upgrade Microcache Computer System	<b>8,500</b>	<b>2003/04</b>
	l) Replace handrail/balustrading to two stairwells	<b>19,500</b>	<b>2003/04</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99,500</b>	

Although the expenditure was high, the works were necessary in order that the Council fulfilled its aim of ensuring that both the quality and level of service to users was maintained in accordance with the Leader's Position Statement for 2003/04.

**RESOLVED that –**

**the Corporate Management Committee be requested to approve a capital estimate for a range of repairs and improvements at Egham Sports Centre in the sum of £99,500.**

582. PARKS AND OPEN SPACES ANTI-INCURSION PROTECTION MEASURES – CAPITAL SCHEME

(Ref: Minutes of Services Review Board, July 2001, page 246, para.186, and Leisure and Environment Committee, November 2001, page 624, para. 392).

The Committee gave consideration to a report seeking approval for a Capital Estimate in the sum of £66,500 for the installation of anti-incursion protection measures on vulnerable parks and open spaces sites as set out below:

	LOCATION	PROTECTION MEASURES	ORDER OF COST (£)
i)	Englefield Green	Reprofile ditches, extend existing bund and install wooden posts	20,000
ii)	Thorpe Green	Reprofile existing ditches, alter height barrier to car park, replace bridge sleepers	35,000
iii)	Coopers Hill Car Park	Install two height barriers to car park entrances	3,500
iv)	Ottershaw Memorial Field Car Park	Install height barrier and speed humps	4,500
v)	The Meads Playing Field Car Park	Install height barrier	1,750
vi)	Gogmore Farm Park	Install wooden posts around car park	1,500
vii)	Truss's Island Car Park	Improve height barriers	250
			Total 66,500

Members noted that although the cost was relatively high, the works were considered to be a necessary and sound investment, given the even greater cost of clearing up after incursions had occurred. In particular, Members recalled the Homewood Park incursion which resulted in expenditure of £82,000.

Members were informed that the Police were supportive of local authorities that had taken steps to prevent incursions and accordingly;

**RESOLVED that –**

**i) the Corporate Management Committee be recommended to approve a Capital Estimate in the sum of £66,500 for the above mentioned anti-incursion protection measures to parks and open spaces; and**

- ii) a sum of £3,000 be incorporated in this Committee's draft estimates for 2003/04 onwards in respect of the associated Capital Charge**

(The meeting ended at 10.08 p.m.)

Chairman