

Runnymede Borough CouncilLEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE21 June 2007 at 7.30 p.m.

Members of the Committee present: Councillors C.J. Norman (Chairman) M.J. Brown and Miss M.N. Heath (Vice-Chairmen), A.J. Davis, R.J. Edis, M.T. Kusneraitis, A.D. Mills, A.M. Moore, B.J. Relph and P.I. Roberts.

Members of the Committee absent: None

Councillors A. Alderson, I.O. Angell, J.R. Furey, C. Knight and N. Stewert also attended.

85. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Group mentioned below had notified the Chief Executive of its 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 J.W.C. Perschke	Councillor A.J. Davis

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

86. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 January 2007, were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

87. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor B.J. Relph declared a personal interest in items 14 and 15 concerning 'Frank Muir Memorial Field – facilities for young people' and 'Brookside Play Area Chertsey – refurbishment'. His interest arose from his capacity firstly as a Council appointed trustee of the Frank Muir Memorial Field and secondly as project manager for the Association for the Improvement of Runnymede (AIR) which was involved in seeking funding for both projects.

88. FINANCIAL MONITORING STATEMENT

(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, January 2007, page 703, para. 484)

The Committee received the latest budgetary projections and performance indicators for significant budgets within the Leisure and Environmental Services remit.

Members noted the details and the anticipated variations in the current budget together with the projected variations in future years up to 2009/10.

Members were concerned by three shortfalls in Leisure but were assured that two of these - Leisure Centre membership and Public Halls fees and charges - should recover. The shortfall on the football pitches at Egham Leisure Centre had occurred as a result of missing the start of the football season. Officers were currently engaged in more intensive marketing to promote the facilities for 2007.

Members were pleased to note that Green Waste Collection was meeting income targets and the sale of bags was exceeding the current target.

The carry forward of an underspend on the previous year had been approved in respect of Refuse to help fund the employment of temporary staff to assist with the recently introduced enforcement regime on Refuse regarding side waste and over-filled bins.

89. SERVICE PLAN 2007/08

(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, November 2006, page 516, para. 353)

The Committee noted the outturn performance on the Service Plan 2006/07 and approved the targets, subject to minor amendments and updates for 2007/08 on the many and varied functions that came under the Leisure Service Plan.

In respect of Leisure, Members noted progress with seeking QUEST accreditation for leisure centres and sports development and green flag status for two local parks and open spaces.

Members were hopeful that a positive outcome could be obtained from the Environment Agency on design of elements of the new Hythe Park, particularly regarding the flood risk angle which concerned them.

Officers confirmed that the question of signing up to the River Thames Alliance Marketing Partnership was still under investigation.

Members expressed concern for local organisations which had previously enjoyed hire of the Literary Institute in Egham. It was reported that Strode's College who now managed that facility had increased hire charges to the point where local groups considered their future use of the institute might be jeopardised. Members were advised that alternative accommodation was being actively sought and hopefully secured by the groups. However, it was agreed to provide the Committee with a comparison of the charges between the Council's meeting room venues and the Literary Institute.

The Committee was very pleased with the performance of Chertsey Museum, noting it had recently taken on a project to conserve the original 16<sup>th</sup> Century Charter of the Feoffees of Chertsey Market.

Moving on to Engineering and Environmental Services, Officers confirmed that no prosecutions for dog fouling had as yet been undertaken. Members were reminded there was no enforcement resource for this and identification of the owners of offending dogs was problematic. Therefore, priority was given to cleaning fouled areas.

With regard to noise pollution the acoustic screening of parts of the M25 and A3 was discussed. Members were advised that Runnymede had been more successful than other places in securing screening owing to strict rules about screens and proximity of residences. Officers were pleased however to be contacted by Members to discuss particular areas of concern in the borough.

Officers agreed to provide Members with a link to the latest air quality report on the Council's website.

Members touched on recycling and the issue of trade waste. It was noted that including smaller businesses in recycling was being researched.

The Committee noted amongst the information provided by Surrey Police for Safer Runnymede's section of the plan that there was not perceived to be a problem with drug misuse and discarded drug related paraphernalia. Members considered they had anecdotal evidence to the contrary and requested Officers to discuss this further with Surrey Police and relay their comments back to the Committee.

**RESOLVED that –**

**the Service Plan for Leisure and Environmental Services, be approved subject to appropriate deletion of completed targets and any other necessary amendments.**

90. DESIGNATED PUBLIC PLACES ORDER (DPPO)

(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, March 2006, page 956, para. 640)

The Committee noted positive feedback from Surrey Police in respect of the effectiveness in reducing crime and disorder in areas of Chertsey since the introduction of a Designated Public Places Order (DPPO) in March 2006.

Members were pleased that the purchase of alcohol by over 18's for under-age drinkers had been considerably reduced.

91. REFUSE COLLECTION AND RECYCLING

(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, September 2002, page 546, para. 321, January 2006, pages 744 and 745 and paras. 506 and 507 and January 2007, page 7067, para. 489 and Corporate Management Committee, November 2005, page 560, para. 352 and Full Council March 2007, page 1045, para. 584)

The Committee received an interim report on refuse collection and recycling based substantially on the recent findings of the Member Officer Working Group established for the purpose in January 2007.

The Working Group had been investigating a series of different options and combinations of refuse collection, recycling (based on weekly and alternate weekly collection of either and/or both) and the various bring site facilities. The costs of these options varied and were dependent on a number of internal and external factors put in the context of risk management.

Members discussed the options in some detail. All were agreed that the refuse service needed to be maintained at a high standard and that the Council should greatly enhance recycling provision by whatever affordable means.

Members were keen to dispel public perception that changes to the service were about reducing service and costs rather than being environmentally driven.

Officers advised that a pilot was being undertaken by Imperial College with regard to food waste but its findings would not be available to inform the report to the next meeting of the Committee in September. However, other surveys were on-going across Surrey with Imperial College utilising a grant from DEFRA to look at the contents of bins with a view to increasing recycling.

The Committee expressed concern about trade waste and contractor's waste on construction sites constituting approximately 80% of total waste generated; both of which were an issue, but which were largely outside the Council's remit. It was agreed that more publicity was needed about reducing waste and increasing recycling. This could be done through direct contact with householders and through Runnymede's magazine 'The Voice'.

The Committee concurred with the view of the Working Group there were still too many uncertainties about the operational and risk factors around such fundamental service change to make a firm recommendation at this stage as to the way forward.

It was agreed that further work be undertaken to bring greater certainty that any future course of action will be robust in terms of environmental quality, public perception, proper efficient and resilient service delivery and cost-effectiveness.

Officers agreed to produce a more user friendly table of costed options and give consideration to including figures for in-house recycling on a weekly as well as fortnightly basis.

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) a further report of the Working Group's deliberations be brought forward in the next Committee cycle; and**
- ii) the Working Group consider further means of publicising the Council's current position on recycling and refuse collection issues.**

92. SMOKE-FREE ENFORCEMENT PROTOCOL

The Committee received a report seeking endorsement of the Council's new Smoke-free Enforcement Protocol, produced under the Health Act 2006. The Act had brought in five sets of regulations; these were:

- The Smoke-free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006
- The Smoke-free (Signs) Regulations 2007
- The Smoke-free (Exemptions and Vehicles) Regulations 2007
- The Smoke-free (Penalties and Discounted Amounts) Regulations 2007
- The Smoke-free (Vehicle Operators and Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007

Members noted that from 1 July 2007 smoking would be against the law in all shared workplaces and enclosed and substantially enclosed premises which were open to the public. Limited exemptions were in place for some vehicles and certain accommodation.

There were four main offences under the Act. These were:

- Permitting others to smoke in a smoke-free premises.
- Smoking in a smoke-free premises.
- Failing to display warning notices in a smoke-free premises.
- Obstruction or failing to give information/assistance to an authorised Officer

Officers confirmed their approach would be in accordance with the Enforcement Concordat: education first, to raise awareness and understanding to ensure compliance, focussing on working closely with local businesses to build compliance through advice and support.

Members were pleased that this Government initiative was being facilitated for local authorities through funding of approximately £40,000 from the Department of Health for 2006-2008, although no funding would be available after that date.

Smoke-free Runnymede was being launched at Thorpe Park on 1 July with the release of balloons by a Member who had recently given up smoking.

In respect of offences by young people Members requested details of the PACE Code C requirements referred to in the protocol.

It was noted that guidance was being issued to local publicans who wished to provide smoking shelters for their customers.

In order to implement the protocol effectively it was agreed to authorise the Director of Technical Services to issue Fixed Penalty Notices and the Director of Administration and Leisure to instigate prosecution in accordance with the enforcement protocol, following appropriate consultation.

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) the 'smoke-free' enforcement protocol be adopted; and**
- ii) the Director of Technical Services be authorised to issue Fixed Penalty Notices and the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised to instigate prosecution, both in accordance with the adopted enforcement protocol.**

93. PLAY STRATEGY

(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, September 2006, page 288, para. 254)

The Committee received a report which sought approval of a draft Play Strategy which had been the subject of a previous report and an extensive consultation exercise.

Members recalled that in order to draw on funding of £200,000 from the Big Lottery Fund's allocation for Runnymede it was necessary to produce a strategy and work up a number of projects for consideration.

Members were pleased that three projects had been identified. These were:

- Play Workers to carry out outreach work in parks and other facilities as well as working with existing local groups for example providing equipment and resources.
- Adventure Play Area at the new Hythe Park; and
- Multi-Use Games Area at the new Hythe Park

Officers confirmed that funding of the three projects identified in the Runnymede Strategy would be in the form of a one off capital receipt for each of the two Hythe Park projects and revenue funding over three years for the Play Workers.

The aim of the revenue project would be to enable the work to be carried on after this time by the local community without any additional investment from the Council.

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) the draft play strategy be adopted as the Council's approach to developing play provision in the Borough between 2008-2011; and**
- ii) the projects identified in the strategy for BLF funding be further developed and submitted for consideration by the BLF in September 2007.**

94. ETHER HILL – PROPOSED HORSE ROUTE

(Ref: Minutes of the former Leisure Services Committee, June 1996, page 98, para. 122)

The Committee received a request to approve the dedication of part of public footpath 63, as it ran through Ether Hill between Chobham Road and Foxhills Road, Ottershaw, as a public bridleway and the undertaking of the necessary works.

Members learned this request was part of plans to improve facilities for horse riders in the borough and had been envisaged by the Runnymede Riders' Horse Riding Strategy adopted by the Council in 1992.

Runnymede Riders had pledged £8,000 and the remaining costs estimated to be £2,000 would be met by Surrey County Council, whose Rights of Way Officers had been discussing the proposals for some time.

Officers had also undertaken a consultation exercise and positive feedback had been received from Natural England who considered there would be minimal impact on the 'suitable alternative natural green space' status of the area as a result of the proposed upgrade.

It was noted that Surrey County Council had indicated they would maintain the route to the minimum statutory standard for a public bridleway.

In approving the proposal Members noted that some of the trees on the route were covered by Tree Preservation Orders and consent would be needed for felling these.

**RESOLVED that –**

**the relevant section of public footpath No. 63 be dedicated as a public bridleway, subject to the necessary consent being obtained for removal of the oak trees in Chobham Road covered by Tree Preservation Orders.**

95. HEATHERVALE RECREATION GROUND – YOUTH SHELTER

The Committee considered proposals for a youth shelter to be installed on a trial basis at Heathervale Recreation Ground in New Haw and for the pedestrian access to the park to become unrestricted to facilitate use of the shelter outside its usual opening times.

Members noted that Heathervale Recreation Ground was approximately five hectares with a number of well used facilities including two football pitches, a cricket square, sports pavilion, bowling green, play area, tennis courts, multi-use games area, street skating area, basketball ring, putting green, paddling pool, public conveniences, picnic benches, ornamental plantings and a short circular walk.

The proposal to install a youth shelter and have unrestricted access to it and the park had originated from the Joint Action Group, on which Officers, the Youth Service, Surrey Police and other agencies were represented. It was hoped that the youth shelter would provide young people with somewhere to go and avoid them congregating in local residential and retail areas.

Members were assured that the shelter would be monitored closely by Safer Runnymede day and night during the first few weeks of the six month trial and that staff at the recreation ground would also be attentive.

The youth shelter was likely to cost £6,000 and could be funded from the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to whom an application for funding would have to be made.

Some Members expressed concern about possible vandalism, noise nuisance and encouragement of gangs staking their claim on the shelter. They were anxious that Surrey Police did carry out promised patrols of the park if the plans went ahead and that if there were complaints they were dealt with promptly.

Other Members expressed a desire to place responsibility and trust with the young people that wanted the facility, noting that problems with a minority should not dictate provision to the majority of law abiding young citizens. This was tempered with the caution to young people to use the facilities wisely and to respect property and local residents.

The Committee was advised that youth shelters installed in Kings Lane, Englefield Green and Aviator Park, Addlestone had been successful and that local concern had subsided as the facilities had been sensibly used.

The Committee noted a degree of local opposition to the scheme, including a petition containing approximately 200 signatures received in 2006. However, given there was a commitment to withdraw the facilities should the trial prove unsuccessful they were content to approve the proposals.

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) A youth shelter be installed at Heathervale Recreation Ground as soon as possible and the pedestrian gates then be left open overnight for a trial period of 6 months;**
- ii) the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised to alter or abandon the trial should he feel it necessary following consultation with other relevant Officers, agencies and Ward Members; and**
- iii) a further report be bought to this Committee at the end of the trial period.**

96. FRANK MUIR MEMORIAL FIELD – FACILITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Committee's in principle support was sought for new facilities, namely street skating and a BMX track, at Frank Muir Memorial Field in Thorpe.

Members learned that although there were facilities for young children, the only one for older children was a single basketball practice net.

The Friends of Frank Muir Memorial Field had put forward the proposals and it was understood that planning permission would be required, as would external funding, for the scheme to go ahead. It was noted that discussions were taking place with AIR to help secure funding for the project.

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) the provision of additional facilities for young people at the Frank Muir Memorial Field be supported in principle, subject to sufficient external funding being made available; and**
- ii) a detailed and costed proposal be brought before this Committee at the appropriate time for consideration and approval.**

97. BROOKSIDE PLAY AREA, CHERTSEY – REFURBISHMENT

(Ref: Minutes of the Leisure and Environment Committee, June 2003, page 188, para. 123)

The Committee considered a report which sought approval for the refurbishment of Brookside Play Area in Chertsey.

Members recalled that in June 2003 the removal of the play area at a cost of £5,000 had been approved as part of the Play Area Refurbishment and Replacement Programme. Officers had informed residents who objected to its removal and it was decided that following a short closure of the area in 2006, owing to safety concerns, it was now better to re-furbish and re-open the facilities rather than remove them.

Members were pleased with the plans which included removing existing equipment, furniture, fencing and surfacing and installing new equipment, bow top fencing, furniture and fixings and tarmac pathways.

Members welcomed the input of AIR which had confirmed that a local land fill company would put £38,770 towards the project. The Council would contribute £7,100 to the scheme from the existing Parks and Amenities revenue budget, which comprised the balance of £3,230, plus the required 10% contribution on AIR projects of £3,870.

**RESOLVED that –**

**the refurbishment of the Brookside play area be approved.**

98. APPOINTMENTS TO LEISURE SUB GROUPS

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) the Director of Administration and Leisure and the Director of Finance be re-appointed to serve on the Cabrera Trust Management Committee for the Municipal Year 2007/08;**
- ii) Councillor C.J. Norman and Mrs J. Norman be re-appointed to serve on the Chertsey Meads Management Liaison Group for the Municipal Year 2007/08;**
- iii) Councillor B.J. Relph be appointed to serve on the Runnymede Access Liaison Group for the Municipal Year 2007/08**
- iv) Councillor A.J. Davis and Councillor Miss M.N. Heath be re-appointed to serve on the Runnymede Arts Development Steering Group for the Municipal Year 2007/08; and**

**v) Councillor A.M. Moore be appointed to serve on the River Thames Alliance for the Municipal Year 2007/08.**

99. CABRERA TRUST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 January 2007 as attached at Appendix 'A' were received and noted.

100. RUNNYMEDE ARTS DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP- MINUTES AND REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Group held on 6 February and 3 April 2007 as attached at Appendix 'B' were received and noted.

In addition, Members approved revisions to the Group's Terms of Reference in respect of membership to remove out of date organisations and increase flexibility to allow recognised disciplines of the Arts as well as specific bodies to be represented on the Group.

101. ADDLESTONE LEISURE CENTRE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 February and 5 June 2007 as attached at Appendix 'C' were received and noted.

102. CHERTSEY MEADS MANAGEMENT LIAISON GROUP – MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Group held on 13 March 2007 as attached at Appendix 'D' were received and noted.

Officers confirmed that a report on extended cattle grazing at Chertsey Meads would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee in September.

103. URGENT ACTION –STANDING ORDER 42

The Committee noted that the following actions had been taken since this Committee's last meeting after consultation with the Chairman under Standing Order 42.

<u>Officer</u>	<u>Action Taken</u>	<u>Central Index No.</u>
Director of Administration and Leisure	To increase the charges for the hire of the sports hall at Egham Leisure Centre for indoor team sports  The new charges had to be included in the Budget Book being considered prior to the next meeting of this Committee	631
Director of Technical Services	The purchase of a Dennis Eagle Phoenix 4x2 17 tonne narrow track refuse collection vehicle to replace a 23 tonne narrow refuse collection vehicle severely damaged in a fire on 3 January 2007.  The temporary hire costs of a replacement vehicle necessitated a quick decision to avoid incurring hire costs at a minimum of £875 per week	634

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 9.46 p.m.)