

DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FUNCTION – 2009/10

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Function in Runnymede is undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee. The Committee's Terms of Reference are set out in Article 6 of the Council's Constitution, which is attached at Appendix '1'.

1.2 With effect from 15 October 2009, the name of Runnymede's Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee changed from Review Board to Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee. Every local authority is required to maintain at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee with power to review or scrutinise decisions or other action taken by the Authority, to make reports and recommendations to the Authority regarding the discharge of its functions, and to make reports or recommendations on any matters affecting the Authority's area or its residents. On the introduction of this legislation in 2001 and during a pilot period beforehand, Runnymede had constituted three Overview and Scrutiny Committees, which it titled Review Boards. This was later reduced to two Committees and then a single one as it became clear that Runnymede, as a fourth option authority with a traditional Committee structure, operated in such a way that much of the role of Overview and Scrutiny Committees was already taking place within the policy Committees, so large numbers of Overview and Scrutiny Committees were unnecessary. The position might be different in an authority operating a small single-party executive. Concern had been expressed by some Members of the Council that the title 'Review Board' was not sufficiently explicit to define the role of the Committee to the public, or indeed to make it clear that the Review Board was the Council's statutory Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Council, therefore, decided to re-title the Committee to the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee in order to make clear both the statutory role and the comparisons with the Select Committee system operated in Parliament, a connection referenced by several other authorities, including Surrey County Council.

1.3 Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006, effective from 1 April 2009, requires all District Councils to have a Crime and Disorder Committee, with power to review or scrutinise decisions and action taken by responsible authorities in connection with their crime and disorder functions, and to make reports or recommendations about those functions. The Council has decided to have the same membership for the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee and Crime and Disorder Committee. The Crime and Disorder Committee has met since February 2010 solely to exercise responsibilities under the Police and Justice Act 2006. The Crime and Disorder Committee does not undertake any overview and scrutiny functions outside the crime and disorder remit. All overview and scrutiny, apart from crime and disorder, is carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee.

1.4 This report summarises the areas of the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee's activities for the Municipal Year 2009/10.

2. REVIEW OF CAR PARKING PROVISION AT ST. PETER'S HOSPITAL, CHERTSEY AND PLANNING MASTERPLAN FOR THE SITE

2.1 At its October 2008 meeting, the former Review Board reviewed car parking provision at St Peter's Hospital, Chertsey because of public concerns about the adequacy of the provision and the ability of patients, visitors and staff to adequately access the site and its services. The Board welcomed three representatives of the Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Trust to the meeting. These were the Finance Director, the Capital Projects Manager, and the Acting Facilities Manager, who advised the Board on the Trust's policies. The Trust representatives were asked to advise on what policies the Trust had for parking at St Peter's Hospital in the future, whether the Trust intended to produce a comprehensive plan of proposed parking provision either as a separate document or as part of a planning masterplan, and whether the Trust had plans to implement previously approved decked car parking. They were also requested to provide an update on progress regarding the implementation of the St Peter's Travel Plan and its impact, as well as current and future plans for parking management at the

site and measures to promote alternative means of transport to and from the site. The Hospital representatives were able to answer Members' questions, but also took back the clear message that more car parking was required at St Peter's for patients and visitors and that there should be measures put in place to reduce staff car parking so that people who lived close to the site would not be entitled to a space. The Trust had also been urged to finalise a master plan that set out their development needs that would allow Runnymede Borough Council as planning authority to understand their longer term aspirations on a comprehensive basis, rather than through a series of ad hoc planning applications.

- 2.2 At its meeting on 3 December 2009, the Committee noted the current position in relation to the submission of a master plan for the future development of St. Peter's Hospital, Chertsey and the arrangements for parking which would be included in the master plan. The purpose of the planning application would be to create a framework of development zones and parameters that would allow future planning applications for individual buildings or works. The zones would be based upon operational and ownership boundaries and it was expected that the redevelopment of the campus could take up to twenty years to achieve. The intention was that the site would remain entirely in healthcare related uses. The rationalisation and reconfiguration would facilitate major improvement through the demolition of existing and construction of new buildings. The resultant campus would have a floor area of around 125,000 square metres, compared to the existing floor area of around 99,000 square metres. However, the intention was that the building envelope and developed portion of the site would actually reduce, producing a greater amount of openness and thereby reducing the visual impact on the Green Belt. The application would include a site parameters plan indicating the extent of the proposed building envelope and the strategic master plan would explain land use within the development zones.
- 2.3 The plan would aim to be comprehensive by addressing the needs of all the complementary organisations that operated at the campus. The Trusts and other service providers located at the site together employed between 2,500 and 3,000 (the exact figure remained to be clarified) full and part-time staff, often working in shifts. The number of voluntary staff was also uncertain. The aim of the redevelopment was to make the site more visitor friendly than at present. The road layout was to be simplified and the layout and architecture of buildings would be designed to help patients and visitors orientate themselves within the site. The entrance to St. Peter's Hospital would be most prominent and its internal space designed to allow visitors to find their destination quickly and easily.
- 2.4 There were currently officially 1,553 formal parking spaces of which 55 (3.5%) were for disabled users. An additional 272 spaces were available within the housing areas and 100 of these were available for staff on a daily basis. Surveys indicated that, at peak times, not only were all spaces utilised, but an additional 366 vehicles were parked haphazardly around the site. Council Officers had, however, counted the numbers more recently and there were 1,435 formal spaces and 539 haphazard, informal or unofficial spaces. The initial proposals were for visitor parking in front of the new entrance to the hospitals, in three main areas that were linked, allowing visitors to hunt for a space. There would also be a large overspill car park to the west of the main access road. It was proposed that staff car parking could be provided in two decked car parks to the rear of the site. In total (staff, patients and visitors) it was proposed to provide 2,151 parking spaces, although this would replace official and unofficial parking at the site and the exact comparison between existing and proposed car parking numbers had yet to be clarified. In deciding on the number of spaces to be provided, Runnymede had taken a middle view between Surrey County Council's position which was to have unrealistically few spaces and the Trust's position, which was to have many spaces. Runnymede took into account informal spaces in its assessment, whereas Surrey County Council did not. The parking position was likely to worsen as Surrey County Council were proposing to reduce bus services to St. Peter's as part of their budget reductions, and if St Peter's became a renal centre, demand would increase. Having the support of the local authority in developing proposals for the site would help the Trust in seeking to become a renal centre.

- 2.5 The ethos behind the proposed master plan was to direct visitors most logically to their destination and remove the current confusion inherent in both the road network and collection of buildings presently at the site. It was currently very difficult for visitors to find their way around the St. Peter's site and the master plan would introduce "legibility" by directing people into the central car park. The plan would look at the site comprehensively, including all ownerships at the site and hopefully provide a clearer vision of the long term development requirements at the site and provide certainty with reasonable flexibility for the healthcare providers, the local community and the planning authority. It was difficult to estimate what effect the Trust's funding position would have on its ability to deliver its proposals for the site, although Foundation status should be helpful in attracting more resources.
- 2.6 It was noted that the Trust did not ring fence their parking revenue, which therefore could be used for any purpose. In pursuing their negotiations with the Trust, the Committee asked Officers to request the Trust to increase the numbers of disabled parking bays available on the site. It was noted that there was no requirement to provide a specific number of disabled spaces, although, in view of the people visiting them, hospitals should provide more disabled spaces than businesses. Officers were also asked to pass on to the Trust the Committee's views that the new scheme for St Peter's should provide sufficient formal parking to prevent landscaping of the site being affected by informal parking and that there should be more policing of parking on the site, as there was at the Royal Surrey Hospital in Guildford.
- 2.7 At its meeting on 15 April 2010, the Committee noted that a report on an outline planning application for St. Peter's Hospital had been submitted to the Planning Committee on 10 March 2010, which included a master plan for the site. The Committee noted an abbreviated version of that report, a site parameters plan and an illustrative site layout. The Planning Committee had decided to grant planning permission, subject to the prior signing of a Legal Agreement relating to a Travel Plan. This agreement had now been completed and the permission had been issued.
- 2.8 The proposed master plan envisaged a healthcare campus of 130,407 m² floor space which would result in an increase in floor space of 26,652m² over a period of 20 years. The site parameters plan divided the site into a series of six development zones. The proposed functions within each of these six zones were noted. The parameters plan showed the existing and proposed floor space, footprint and storeys for each zone. As the site was within the Metropolitan Green Belt various illustrative site layouts had been included to show existing and proposed built envelope, developed proportion of the site, undeveloped and ancillary open space and hard standing areas. The development proportion of the site fitted the Green Belt openness criteria. The Committee noted the existing and proposed car parking on site. Staff parking had been moved to more peripheral areas. There were 257 more visitors' spaces and less staff spaces. The master plan would form the basis of a series of detailed planning applications over the next few years.
- 2.9 The Committee considered that the Hospital management should be looking to explore ways of increasing public transport to the facility including increasing the frequency of the Peter Bus which ought to be linked more closely to local railway stations, particularly Chertsey station. As people visiting Hospitals were sometimes too ill to use public transport, adequate car parking was still a priority. The Committee was pleased to note that the Hospital management had taken heed of the points they had raised in their review in October 2008.

3. AIR QUALITY

- 3.1 At its meeting on 3 December 2009, the Board was updated on work carried out on air quality. The Committee noted the work being carried out in the Borough by the recently appointed, temporary part-time air quality Officer relating to air quality and the progress on issues relating to air quality in Runnymede. The Committee had last considered air quality at its meeting in July 2008 and was now updated on the current position.
- 3.2 Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 introduced new responsibilities to both national and local government throughout the UK. These responsibilities included the requirement to

develop an Air Quality Strategy (AQS) for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland designed to seek improvements in air quality for the benefit of public health. Local air quality management (LAQM) had also been introduced which required local authorities to periodically review and assess air quality across their areas. The LAQM process required a phased approach to ensure that each local authority undertook a level of assessment that was commensurate with the risk of an air quality objective being exceeded. A Draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) had been developed as a result of the assessments that had been carried out and Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAS) had been declared along the M25 and in Addlestone, where levels of pollution were higher. The only way to effectively reduce levels on the M25 would be to close the motorway, which was not feasible.

- 3.3 Much of the air quality work in recent years had been carried out by consultants. The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had supported the air quality work of local authorities by providing a limited amount of funding and the Council had been awarded £32,500; £30,000 for developing the Council's Air Quality Action Plan and £2,500 for additional diffusion tube monitoring of nitrogen dioxide, the pollutant of primary concern in Runnymede. The DEFRA award had been used to fund a part-time, temporary Environmental Health Technician (Air Quality) post. The Officer had commenced work on 7 April 2009. Budgetary provision was in place for ongoing air quality work in Runnymede.
- 3.4 Additional liaison had taken place with Ward Councillors over the siting of the diffusion tubes, and additional monitoring of nitrogen dioxide was now under way. Runnymede now had a total of 29 sites monitoring air quality throughout the Borough, 8 of which were in Addlestone. There was a focus on monitoring in the Air Quality Management Areas (M25 and Addlestone) and also in the towns of Egham and Chertsey, which had busy roads and junctions, with many shops, cafes and bars and relatively high traffic flows and were therefore considered to be at risk of exceeding nitrogen dioxide objectives. Officers would be unable to draw definitive conclusions from the results for at least a year, as there was some considerable seasonal variability in concentrations, which tended to be higher in winter than summer. For that reason, nitrogen dioxide concentrations tended to be presented as an annual mean. The Committee indicated that as there were wide variations in the results between months, it would be helpful if monthly data could be circulated to the Committee, if it was available. Another important fact was that the accuracy of diffusion tubes varied between +/- 25% so the results always needed to be adjusted for bias. This was done by siting tubes next to real time monitoring sites and comparing results from diffusion tubes with actual results from the more accurate monitors. Real time monitoring sites were much more expensive and accurate than diffusion tubes and measured air quality constantly.
- 3.5 An Updating and Screening Assessment (USA) had been submitted to DEFRA. The USA covered all regulated pollutants, and monitored data, road traffic sources, other transport sources, industrial sources, commercial and domestic sources, and fugitive or uncontrolled sources. The USA had concluded that there was no requirement to proceed to a Detailed Assessment for any of the pollutants. DEFRA, and its consultant, the University of the West of England, had confirmed that it accepted the conclusions of Runnymede's USA.
- 3.6 Work had been ongoing on the siting of 'turn off car engines' signs at level crossings in the Borough. The size and number of the signs had been largely dictated by Surrey County Council in its role as the Highways Authority, who had agreed to 4 signs per crossing. The signs had recently been placed on lamp columns in Addlestone (1 crossing) and Egham (3 crossings) as these were regarded as being the most strategic locations. The problems with level crossings in Egham had been highlighted in a Transport Works Act application. The visibility and effectiveness of the signs in Egham and Addlestone had now been evaluated and it had been agreed to supplement the existing signs with larger ones located in the immediate proximity to the barriers, in areas belonging to Network Rail. Permission from Network Rail had now been obtained for larger additional signs to be installed in Addlestone and Egham. Some of the smaller signs would be relocated to Chertsey to adhere to the Surrey County Council requirement of 4 signs per crossing.

- 3.7 Officers had recognised that it was also important to raise awareness of air quality issues and to engage the general public in the ongoing air quality work. The Committee noted the measures being taken to promote public awareness. Work on updating and finalising the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) was now in progress. The proposals to update the AQAP would be reported to the Council's Leisure and Environment Committee for consideration and approval before the final document was produced. The main sources of pollution were considered to be the canyon like layout of town centres (where dispersion of emissions was restricted), stationary vehicles and emissions from Heavy Duty Vehicles (dependent upon traffic composition, i.e. the 'mix' of different types of vehicles and their age). Surrey County Council and Highways Agency remained the key stakeholders that could influence changes to traffic behaviour and infrastructure. The Planning Division of Technical Services had assisted with the collection of information on transport related projects so far implemented by the Council. These included the Cycling Programme, Yellow Bus Schemes for schools and the Council's Travel Plan. The work being done in conjunction with Surrey County Council on air quality was noted.
- 3.8 In May 2009, a consortium entitled Connect Plus had been appointed as the contractor for the M25 DBFO (Design, Build, Finance and Operate) project. Connect Plus had started widening works on the M25 between junctions 16 and 23 and other sections of the motorway would also be widened. The WS Atkins Company, who were a member of the consortium, had been commissioned by Connect Plus to contribute to development of an M25 Air Quality Management Plan. Officers had contacted WS Atkins requesting information on the measures that were proposed and were under way to improve the air quality within the M25 AQMA in Runnymede.
- 3.9 The Committee noted a number of Road Transport actions being considered by Runnymede as part of the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) work. Officers would be consulting on these possible actions before finalising the AQAP.
- 3.10 Apart from the fact that the Council was statutorily required to measure air quality, it was useful to do so, as results could be used as base data for planning appeals, or when the Council was opposing developments involving large numbers of vehicle movements, as a means of demonstrating adverse effects of pollution, by referring to data.
4. ENFORCEMENT OF PLANNING CONTROL – PROGRESS REPORT
- 4.1 Throughout the year, the Committee has continued to be advised and updated on the latest circumstances on sites where Committee authorisation to take planning enforcement action has been obtained and where there are matters still outstanding.
- 4.2 The progress report the Committee receives provides a record of those cases where the Council's Planning Committee has decided to take action. There are numerous other cases which are investigated by Enforcement Officers which do not provide grounds to bring Officer recommendations to that Committee and which do not therefore appear on the report to the Board. Once persons who have infringed have complied or a case has finished, the fact is recorded on the progress report on one occasion and thereafter the item is removed from that report. Enforcement action has always been viewed by Officers as a last resort after failure of all attempts at negotiation.
- 4.3 At its meeting on 9 July 2009, the former Review Board asked whether the resources which were allocated to enforcement work were sufficient. It was noted that this was difficult to determine because of the fluid nature of the work. For example, as the result of activity over one weekend, two cases had finished in the High Court. This could take up the entire enforcement resource for a limited period as very swift action had been needed, which meant that time could not be spent on other cases. The various and continued breaches at Padd Farm were taking up about 90% of the time of a locum solicitor, in preparation for the forthcoming public inquiry. Runnymede was noted as an authority which would proceed against breaches of planning control to a greater extent than other authorities that did not give this activity the same priority. The Board commended Officers on the work being done.
- 4.4 At its meeting on 3 December 2009 the Committee noted that the Council's Planning Committee would also be receiving this progress report in future. The Council now

employed three enforcement Officers, one of which was full time and the other two part time. The Committee noted that Officers were not able to give priority to all sites and had to act in accordance with Planning Committee priorities. The Committee discussed whether taking action against certain sites by allocating resources would save money over the longer term. It was noted that in prioritising action against a breach of planning control, the Council had to calculate the likelihood of success in the appeal process. The Council also, however, did not want to be seen as an authority which would not take action against unauthorised development, because it would cost too much to do so, as this could lead to a lack of public confidence in the effectiveness of the authority. In taking proceedings against unauthorised caravans on sites, the Council needed to be able to show that it had done all it could to provide specific areas for travellers or gypsies to live, as this would strengthen its case in seeking to evict them from unauthorised areas. The Council had to be mindful that in seeking to enforce injunctions, courts would often consider that the human rights of the persons proposed to be evicted outweighed planning considerations.

- 4.5 At the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee meeting on 15 April 2010, it was reported that a senior Enforcement Officer would be leaving the authority shortly. It was noted that Members could play no role in the enforcement of planning issues, as they were elected and had no powers of enforcement, which were only vested in Officers of the authority. Members had a vital role to play in reporting breaches in their wards and in informing the public that, when reporting cases, actual evidence of contraventions rather than hearsay reports was necessary in order for matters to be progressed further.

5. NET REVENUE REDUCTIONS – PROGRESS

- 5.1 As part of its work programme, the Committee periodically reviews the Council's progress in achieving net revenue reductions. At its meeting on 9 July 2009, the former Review Board noted that the Council, on 18 December 2008, had approved proposals to reduce net revenue expenditure by £712,000 per annum by 2013/14. At its meeting on 25 June 2009, the Council's Corporate Management Committee had noted a projected saving of £196,700 in 2009/10 compared with the target for the year of £350,000 and the schedule of reductions up until 2013/14.
- 5.2 The Corporate Management Committee had noted three items in particular. Regarding the reduced strategic maintenance provision, spending plans for 2009/10 were still based on achieving the reduced budget. However, this would not reduce the revenue budget by £78,000, because the reductions were on the capitalised element of the planned maintenance works. A number of late items from contractors had affected the strategic maintenance provision. The saving in the capital programme resulted in a revenue saving of approximately £3,000. There was a target of £25,000 for the disposal of Queen Elizabeth House, Englefield Green, to General Practitioners. However, the plans to convert the premises into a health centre had been abandoned and alternative options were now being examined, with a saving being unlikely in 2009/10. Concerning Egham Leisure Centre savings from football pitches, in March 2009, the Leisure and Environment Committee had resolved to accept the bid from Azzurri Sports and Leisure Ltd to manage the five-a-side football pitches at the Egham Leisure Centre. This was expected to save £45,500 by improved marketing in the first full year compared with the current in-house arrangements. Although the proposed contract with Azzurri was still expected to achieve the planned savings, the deteriorating outlook for income generally at the Centre meant that the overall operating position was unlikely to improve in 2009/10.
- 5.3 The Council's Financial Forecast had identified a number of risks which could threaten the financial projections. In the intervening months, the economic outlook had deteriorated and the likelihood of these risks materialising had increased significantly. The financing of the Council's capital programme and the creation of reserves to generate investment income had been heavily dependent on the Council being able to yield significant receipts from the disposal of assets. The downturn in property prices and the reduction in bank lending had had a severe impact on receipt generation, particularly the disposal of the old civic offices site. The Bank of England's analysis of changes in real property prices published with their February 2009 report suggested that a period of five years was likely to elapse between the nadir in the market and a renewed

peak. The balance of probability was that there was little chance of an early recovery in development activity which might trigger a disposal of the civic offices site by 2010/11, as previously forecast. This had two implications for the Council. Firstly, it would reduce the available receipts that the Council was able to invest. Secondly, it would mean that the Council would have insufficient capital receipts to finance the capital programme, so it would be forced to borrow. It was not realistic to sell assets at the absurdly low prices that were often being offered in the current market.

- 5.4 The former Review Board noted that the collapse in share prices would result in a large increase in the deficit of the Surrey Pension Fund when the Actuary undertook the next triennial valuation in March 2010. The Council's Surrey Pension Fund deficit might increase to over £18 million. Interim calculations undertaken by the Actuary suggested that employer contributions to the fund as a whole might have to increase by a colossal amount and possibly by as much as 71%. If this were applied to Runnymede's share, it would result in additional annual contributions of £1.3 million from 2011/12. This compared with an additional provision of £100,000 in the current Financial Forecast. No Government was likely to tolerate additional costs of this magnitude falling on the public purse, but the figures provided a clear warning that the existing provision in the Forecast was inadequate. Runnymede did have the advantage of having funded its Pension Fund to a greater extent than any other district Council in Surrey. The Council did not have the option of undertaking a money purchase pension scheme, which had been the route taken by a number of private sector organisations.
- 5.5 Generally the financial prospects for the Council had deteriorated since the last Financial Forecast had been produced. The Corporate Management Committee had noted a series of potential scenarios for future years and both the worst case and likely scenarios suggested that General Fund working balances would only be sufficient to support the budget for the next two financial years (2009/10 and 2010/11). The scenarios assumed worse prospects for both Pension Fund contributions and Government grant than the last Financial Forecast. The outcomes illustrated that the cumulative impact could be very significant. The need for further action to address the budgetary deficit was urgent.
- 5.6 The former Review Board noted that reduction of discretionary services was not the only way to make savings. Statutory services could be delivered in different ways which could meet minimum requirements but could reduce costs, for example, by being provided by different organisations or on a less frequent basis. Rather than reducing the level of a service provided which would produce disappointment amongst customers as they were not receiving the same service, it might sometimes be a better option to not provide that service at all. The Board considered that reductions in staffing would need to be carefully evaluated and while they should be avoided where possible, it may not be realistic to do so in some cases. The Council had very restricted freedom of action. It was limited in the amount of receipts it could generate, in the total of investment and other income that it could achieve, in the amount by which it could increase the Council Tax and by a potential large increase in the funding required for pensions. Therefore a number of different scenarios for achieving savings would need to be considered and decided upon by Members and Officers and Members would have to work together to deliver them. Some of these scenarios would need to be radical in nature. The Corporate Management Committee, when considering options for reductions at its next meeting, noted the Board's concern at the Council's financial position, and the Board's view that radical action may need to be taken, and preferably taken sooner rather than later, to mitigate any adverse affects of reductions.

6. SCRUTINY OF TREASURY STRATEGY AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

- 6.1 At its meeting on 3 February 2010, the Committee was informed of a new duty to scrutinise the draft Treasury Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy and considered these Strategies prior to their consideration by the Council's Corporate Management Committee. The revised CIPFA Treasury Management Code had created an enhanced role for Members, especially in relation to scrutiny of treasury management strategy, policy and processes. The Committee considered the degree of scrutiny required and level of training required to fulfil this duty and considered it important to undertake scrutiny of the strategy in the form of a 'critical friend'. The Committee also considered it would be of more value if it scrutinised the strategy after consideration by Corporate

Management Committee, but, prior to its approval at full Council. In order to effectively undertake this new scrutiny duty, the Committee considered it useful to undergo training from the Council's Treasury Consultants, Sterling Consultancy Services. The training would cover various matters including the regulatory framework, management of treasury risk, borrowing powers and details of the treasury portfolio.

7. MAGNA CARTA 2015 CELEBRATIONS

- 7.1 At its meeting on 3 December 2009, the Committee considered the long range planning for Magna Carta celebrations in 2015, to commemorate the passing of 800 years since the signing of the document on Runnymede Meadows. The Chief Executive reported that the Magna Carta Trustees had decided to set up a Steering Group under the Chairmanship of Sir Robert Worcester which would take forward plans for the celebrations. The membership of the Steering Group had yet to be decided. It was noted that there were ambitions to develop facilities for visitors and students and that all interested parties, including Brunel University, should be represented on the Steering Group. Other representation would include Royal Holloway College, the English Speaking Union, the American Bar Association (who owned the Runnymede Memorial), and the National Trust. Runnymede Borough Council would be a leading player and other local authorities with a significant interest would be represented. The Chief Executive was meeting Sir Robert Worcester to discuss the preparation for the celebrations (which were already the subject of great national and international interest) and the promotional lead up.
- 7.2 The Chief Executive considered that Runnymede should be the centrepiece and the focal point of the 2015 celebrations as it was the place where Magna Carta had been sealed. Sufficient funds would, however, be needed to finance the various activities. There were current ideas from Brunel University for a possible education centre on Runnymede meadows and the possible conversion of a Thames boathouse. These proposals were, however, still at an early stage. The enhancement or replacement of the Runnymede Memorial was also being considered. The contributions of the American Bar Association, the Magna Carta Trust, the media, the various sponsors, and the academic resource of Royal Holloway would all have to be clearly defined and it was agreed that this should be done before any information on the celebrations was placed on the Council's website. The Committee agreed to continue to receive periodic reports on the arrangements for the Magna Carta 2015 celebrations.
- 7.3 At its meeting on 27 May 2010, the Corporate Management Committee agreed to set up a Member Working Group to advise on the celebrations and on the legacy from them, to recommend any application for grants, to be a conduit for communication, to liaise with the Magna Carta Trustees and the national 2015 Steering Committee and to refer any proposals with resource implications to the Corporate Management Committee.

8. SURREY INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY PROJECT

- 8.1 At its meeting on 3 February 2010, the Committee was informed of the background to and progress on delivering the Surrey Infrastructure Capacity Project (SICP). The Project was now in its second year and was funded by the South East Improvement and Efficiency Partnership and managed by a Programme Board chaired by David Hill, the Chief Executive of Guildford Borough Council. The project had been set up in response to the housing, employment, population and economic growth forecasts in the South East Plan and concerns about existing under-provision of infrastructure in some parts of the County. This project would help Surrey prepare for projected growth with a county-wide infrastructure study to help manage development. The study would assess the overall impact of the 57,920 new homes to be built by 2026 on Surrey's roads, rail, schools, hospitals and other infrastructure. The work involved all 12 Surrey Authorities (County Council and 11 Districts and Boroughs), key infrastructure providers (transport, utilities, education, health) and other interested stakeholders (the voluntary sector, community services, business). The project would identify historic deficits in current infrastructure provision and assess the condition of existing infrastructure as well as assess future infrastructure needs. The key output from the project would be a set of infrastructure schedules (backed up with the financial costs for delivering them) that would form the blueprint for infrastructure provision in the County. The schedules would

be used by a range of stakeholders (wider than local government) when managing growth demands placed on Surrey.

- 8.2 The first year's work had culminated in the publication of three detailed reports in June 2009. The first part included a demographic analysis, governance arrangements, funding outlook and the costs associated with non-delivery. The second part consisted of the infrastructure baseline and future need analysis. The third part was service guides that were written for county and borough and district planning Officers which detailed the sequential steps, key information sources and methodologies that were commonly used to undertake a baseline analysis of current provision and project forward future needs for each infrastructure domain considered in the main report. The second year would focus on development of District and Borough infrastructure delivery plans. The project had so far been very successful in bringing together a range of infrastructure providers and raising awareness of planned housing and economic growth, to ensure that resources were targeted in the most effective ways. Areas of under or overprovision of infrastructure were being highlighted, to focus attention on priorities.
- 8.3 Two key outcomes were firstly, a toolkit that would enable Districts to roll forward infrastructure schedules, so as to avoid a 'snapshot' of infrastructure provision at a given point in time, but more of a dynamic document which would be used in the future. The second was a model that was replicable elsewhere and in that sense this was a unique project. The Committee endorsed the progress made by the Project.
9. FORMER DERA SITE, LONGCROSS – GREEN BELT BOUNDARIES CONSULTATION
- 9.1 At its meeting on 15 April 2010, the Committee considered an item raised by a Member of the Committee, requesting that the decision of the Planning Committee on 27 January 2010 to approve the proposed DERA site boundary and to authorise the undertaking of consultation on that proposed boundary, be considered by the Committee to allow the Committee to examine and comment upon the matter.
- 9.2 The Committee noted that the South East Plan had identified the former DERA site in Longcross for mixed-use development and required a review of the Green Belt status of the site to accommodate this. Whilst there was an allocation of 2,500 dwellings at the site, the policies stated the precise housing contribution and the precise scale of development, mix of uses and provision of avoidance and mitigation measures to protect nearby environmental sites which would be tested through the Local Development Framework (LDF) process. The Core Strategy, which was the main document which would form part of the LDF, would need to identify the extent of the site that would be removed from the Green Belt and would need to set out the key elements that needed to be delivered on the site. A subsequent Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) would set out a masterplan for the site identifying the distribution of uses and areas of access and open space. This would provide the detail that would then be translated into a planning application. As the site was being allocated for development in the Core Strategy it would be important for the boundaries of the site to be shown on the LDF Proposals Map, which would be updated as each new document in the LDF was completed. The proposals map would need to be made available for consultation along with the publication of the Core Strategy in Summer 2010. From a procedural point of view it was important to establish any public views on the suggested boundary ahead of this stage of consultation.
- 9.3 In preparing the Core Strategy, Officers in the Council's Policy and Implementation team had met an LDF Inspector to consider the various issues that needed to be addressed prior to the publication of the Core Strategy in 2010. In his note to the Council the Inspector had stated that a strategic allocation required the Proposals Map (PM) to be changed when the Core Strategy was adopted and this change had to be signalled by a submission Proposals Map (most often by small extracts of the map being included with the Development Plan Document (DPD) at publication/submission). At Longcross there appeared to be two important changes to the PM. Firstly, the removal of the Green Belt designation and secondly the specific allocation of land for the development proposed. Whilst the two boundaries were closely related, the Inspector had stated that they might not be the same, bearing in mind that Green Belt boundaries should endure for the long term. When Green Belt boundary reviews were undertaken, the South East Plan

envisaged the boundary reflecting potential development needs to 2031. The new Green Belt boundary did not necessarily equate to the ownership of the intended developer of the allocation. Only a DPD could trigger these changes to the PM. The Inspector had suggested that further focussed stakeholder consultation would be required on the proposed boundaries. It was clear from the comments of the Inspector that a consultation was required so that the Council could keep on course to develop its Core Strategy, meeting the timeframe set out in the approved Local Development Scheme.

- 9.4 The Conservative and Liberal Democrat national political parties had suggested that if elected to power in the forthcoming General Election, they would abolish regional plans and their housing allocations to individual districts and empower those districts to set their own local housing targets. There had been suggestions therefore that Councils should not progress their LDFs in the light of this. However, Councils were not in a position to anticipate the likely outcome of elections, nor presume that pre-election policy aspirations would either be implemented at all, or if so, over what timescale. The implications of delay in the progress of LDFs gave cause for concern. Firstly, it would fundamentally delay the production and adoption of the Core Strategy and without this, the policy framework for determining planning applications would become more out of date. Secondly, failure to comply with the already agreed timetable would lead to a substantial loss of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant funding.
- 9.5 The Committee noted a map showing the proposed DERA site boundary and the consultation material on the proposed boundary that had been used. The suggested boundary had been devised using existing features to create a logical area to identify on the proposals map and to remove from the Green Belt. The boundary consisted of the Reading to Waterloo rail line, the Borough Boundary, Longcross Road and Kitsmead Lane. These were all defensible boundaries that could be justified and that treated the properties along the northern side of Longcross Road and the eastern edge of Kitsmead Lane in the same way, by including them within the area that would be removed from the Green Belt. The Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee noted that at its meeting on 27 January 2010, the Planning Committee had approved the proposed DERA site boundary for consultation and that the boundaries of the site were likely to be determined by the Planning Committee when it received a report on the outcome of the consultation.
- 9.6 As the Inspector had stated, the allocation of the boundary did not mean that all land within the site would be developed. 40 hectares of open space would have to be provided on or close to the site to avoid new residents walking on Chobham Common and disturbing protected birds there. Whilst some of this open land would be on the periphery of the site, much would be integrated with developed areas, providing recreation and landscaped areas which both served and broke up the built form. At this early stage it could not be predicted where such areas would be located.
- 9.7 The consultation on the proposed DERA site boundaries had taken place between 8 February and 5 March 2010 (but comments had been accepted beyond this point). The consultation was targeted to involve those who had a key interest in the site. All responses would be used in the formulation of the boundary which would be shown on the proposals map which would accompany the "Publication" Core Strategy. Currently there had been in the region of 140 responses. Most of these responses had not considered the question of where the Green Belt boundary should be, which was the purpose of the consultation, but had either stated that the site should not be taken out of the Green Belt or should not be developed, or had made both of those comments.
- 9.8 The LDF would form the local elements of the Council's Development Plan. It was therefore important that the Core Strategy was founded on a sound and credible evidence base and that the appropriate level of consultation on the issues had taken place, so that it was likely to be approved following an Examination in Public by a Government appointed Inspector. In order to have a sound Core Strategy the document needed to be in general conformity with the existing national and regional development plan (Planning Policy Statements and the Regional Plan). It also needed to have been appropriately consulted upon so that procedurally the document could be found sound. The results from this single issue consultation would be used to inform the final version of the Core Strategy and proposals map which would be consulted upon in the summer of 2010.

- 9.9 The Committee noted that the South East Plan indicated that development on the site was not envisaged until 2016. If there were to be a new national Government elected in May 2010 there would effectively be a period of 18 months before the LDF Core Strategy was adopted. Members asked about how utilities would be provided for any new development and were advised that utility companies were aware of the development timescale. There had previously been a proposed allocation in the Council's Local Plan to build houses and a mixed use development on the northern part of the DERA site. This development had been opposed by Surrey County Council and the Local Plan Inspector on the grounds that it was not large enough and therefore was not sustainable. The allocation had therefore been deleted. The Committee noted that the site had been used as the Ministry of Defence's main vehicle research establishment. It had never been used for military manoeuvres or live firing and there was no evidence of radioactivity. A small section of the site in the western boundary lay within the Surrey Heath local authority area but the owners at this stage had no intention of proposing any development in this section of the site.
- 9.10 The Committee stressed that the role of the Council was to protect the Green Belt. The Committee noted that the South East Plan required the former DERA site, Longcross to be released for development and there was nothing that could be done at present to prevent this, due to legal requirements. However, the Committee also noted that if there were to be a change of national Government, regional plans and their housing allocations to individual districts might be abolished and districts might be empowered to set their own local housing targets. The Committee requested the Planning Committee to note its opposition to the removal of the DERA site from the Green Belt. The Committee considered that the Council should take a proactive approach in the event of a change of national Government and should seek a commitment from any new Government to empower districts to set local housing targets at the earliest possible time.
- 9.11 At its meeting on 12 May 2010, the Planning Committee noted the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee. In view of the recent change of Government, the Planning Committee, after a recorded vote on the matter, decided to authorise the Chairman to write to the new Minister to clarify the Government's intentions in respect of the status of The Regional Spatial Strategy (The South East Plan) with particular regard to the proposed development of the former DERA site, considering that it was appropriate to mention the site as it was specifically identified in the South East Plan. Some Members of the Committee, who were in the minority, considered that reference to the DERA site should be deleted as the Council should have the freedom to decide the future location of development in the Borough.
- 9.12 The Planning Committee also agreed that the boundary of the former DERA site should be unchanged from that suggested in the consultation for the purposes of the 2010 Core Strategy to be issued in the summer and that the comments received through the consultation should be used to help inform the Core Strategy Policy and Supplementary Planning Document for the former DERA site.
- 9.13 Following the creation of the Coalition Government in May 2010, the Secretary of State issued a letter indicating an intention to abolish Regional Strategies and allow local authorities to determine housing targets locally. However, the position at July 2010 is that until the Regional Strategies are formally removed, they remain a material consideration and are part of the development plan. If the Runnymede Local Development Framework Core Strategy was put forward at the time of writing this report (July 2010), it would have to comply with the development plan including the South East Plan, to be 'sound'. It would therefore have to reflect the DERA allocation as part of the strategy. Work on publishing the Core Strategy has therefore been held in abeyance until the position becomes clearer.
10. EXAMINATION OF MEMBERS' REMUNERATION IN OTHER SURREY LOCAL AUTHORITIES
- 10.1 In approving the new Scheme of Members' Allowances for Runnymede at its March 2010 meeting, on the recommendation of the Corporate Management Committee, the Council

had resolved that the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee be asked to examine the reports of the Independent Remuneration Panels and subsequent Council decisions of other Surrey authorities on Members' Allowances to establish the reasoning behind them and whether any elements of common approach could be commended, and to make their report available to the Independent Remuneration Panel and the Runnymede Members before the commencement of the next review.

- 10.2 The next review of the Scheme would take place during the latter part of 2012 with a view to implementation in April 2013. In order that up to date information was available to the Independent Remuneration Panel (whose membership was to be considered before the next review) and subsequently to the Council, the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee agreed at its meeting on 15 April 2010, that it would be appropriate to commence work on this report in April 2012, to take account of the latest reports of any authorities reviewing their Schemes that April. The Committee also agreed that, in addition to this report, a brief report should be prepared for their consideration on Members' Allowances decisions of other Surrey district local authorities.

11. IT ISSUES

- 11.1 The Chairman of the Committee had requested a report on broadband facilities being provided to Councillors, details of IT department support provided to Councillors and a preliminary report on the benefits and disadvantages of the Windows 7 operating system.
- 11.2 The Council provided a basic level of computing facilities for all Councillors consisting of a laptop computer, a wireless ADSL router, a broadband connection and a laser printer. Usually the telephone line used to deliver the broadband connection remained the one already connected to the Councillor's home. The Council arranged for the broadband upgrade and all the costs associated with the broadband connection to be billed directly to the Council unless the Councillor already had a broadband line in place and was content for that to be used for Council business. If a Councillor had a broadband connection in place for another purpose, e.g. for business requirements, a separate line was installed by the Council. As far as was practical this configuration matched the facilities provided for staff in their working environment both in the Civic Centre and remote sites such as the leisure centres, the depot, the museum and staff working from home. This meant a standardisation of operating systems and the use of corporate software for email, word processing, spread sheets etc (Microsoft Office), financial systems, GIS (Geographical Information Systems) and DMS (Document Management – Vignette IDM). A laptop computer was made available when the Councillor was elected and as a general rule was expected to last the whole of the four year term of office without a hardware upgrade.
- 11.3 Broadband connections for each of the Councillors were purchased from a supplier who held the contract for a twelve month period and the individual contracts were renewable after 12 months. As bandwidth prices reduced, each new contract had for the past 4 years involved a better specification line. In the recent past the marketplace for broadband provision had been very volatile. There had been considerable consolidation among providers with the early suppliers being bought up by the competition or larger companies. The distribution of the different broadband connections to Councillors between suppliers was noted by the Committee. As a result of the volatility of the market, with levels of support and value for money offered by suppliers fluctuating, there were three suppliers currently for Councillor broadband – Pipex, BT and Multidata and Officers would be moving all Councillors on to Multidata. The first half a dozen accounts that had been transferred to Multidata had proved to be far more satisfactory than Pipex or BT and they were offering a better bandwidth and contention ratio than had been used up to now. Experience had taught Officers that when the new line was installed there may be a short period of intense support required.
- 11.4 Regarding IT department support provided to Councillors, calls that were resolved almost immediately on the phone had not previously been recorded on the Help Desk system as this had been largely used to manage ongoing work. The procedures had been altered and as from 1 April 2010 all calls would be logged so that a comprehensive picture could be obtained. Time spent on each activity was not allocated to specific calls

so there was no record of the time spent on each call in detail. The Committee noted a table listing the Help Desk calls logged for Councillors, showing the problem that was recorded at the time the call was logged. The table showed that 50% of Councillors had not asked for Officer support or had only asked for support once. The same Councillors tended to ask for repeated support. As a result of an earlier version of this listing, the IT Member Working Group had commissioned the production of a Councillors Handbook aimed at answering some of the basic questions that might make the user more self sufficient and cut down calls to the Help Desk. A copy of the latest draft of this document was noted by the Committee. The document would incorporate the comments of the IT Member Working Group Members before being issued to all Councillors immediately after the May 2010 elections. In connection with the draft Handbook, the Committee also agreed that the appropriate Council Member Working Group should look at the Council's policy of blocking access to social networking sites for Members, (e.g. Face book, Twitter) on the grounds that these were non-productive. It was suggested that Councillors should have access to these sites, in order to keep in touch in particular with younger members of the community and to engage with them on those issues which were of concern to this section of the population. Training had also been identified as a key element in improving Councillor use of the supplied facilities. The training programme for Councillors for 2010 was noted. This was to be considered by the May meeting of the IT Member Working Group and would be finalised after their wishes had been incorporated.

- 11.5 The Committee suggested that the IT Member Working Group should look at asking Councillors to meet the cost of their own broadband connection, noting that the cost of each broadband line to the Council was £30 a month or £360 a year for each Councillor that did not meet the cost. It was, however, noted that the level and cost of IT support provided to Councillors in Runnymede was not unusual and some other authorities provided more. Difficulties with accessing emails were reported by Members, including problems with redirection and forwarding. It was agreed that the IT Member Working Group should consider writing to all Councillors to ask if they were prepared to pay for their Council broadband line, should consider changes to the way in which Councillor email accounts operated, and should also look at drawing up an Outlook contact list for Members.
- 11.6 In common with the public in general, the level of Council computer literacy had increased greatly in recent years. For this reason it was agreed that the IT Member Working Group should review the facilities offered to Councillors with a view to ensuring that the provision matched the requirements of all Members enabling them to carry out their Councillor duties as effectively and efficiently as possible. This would address questions such as whether the Council still needed to provide a minimum standard of equipment and connectivity, and if so, whether a different mix of hardware, software and connectivity would be more appropriate to achieve this ambition most economically, whether the Council should be offering enhanced facilities to match emerging Councillor working practices and lifestyles and the business case for such enhanced facilities.
- 11.7 The Committee also considered an analysis of the Windows 7 operating system. Microsoft licensing was treated as a revenue item since the Council had moved to an Enterprise Volume licence with Microsoft. Under the terms of that agreement the Council was entitled to use the latest or any previous version of any registered product. This licence, purchased at the best possible rate through Buying Solutions (formerly the Organisation of Government Commerce (OGC)) who negotiated discounts based on the buying power of the whole public sector, was for three years and had started in September 2008. At the end of the agreement the Council could continue paying maintenance of approximately one third of the purchase price of the licenses which would entitle the Council to continue using the latest versions of all registered products, or continue using the registered products with a version up to the one that was current when the agreement ended, (in Runnymede's case September 2011), but pay no further maintenance, or migrate to Open Source software.
- 11.8 Based on the fact that the Council's strategy was only to adopt new products when they had been fully tried and tested, and that the suppliers of software to the Council tended to be slow in approving new versions of operating systems, browsers and databases for all of the Microsoft products in use at any one time had been released for more than

three years. If this speed of take up remained then the Council would not have to refresh its Microsoft portfolio until 2014, at which stage a complete review of the place of Microsoft at the centre of much of the delivery of computer services would be reviewed. If the Microsoft licensing model had not changed at that date then the Council could enter a new 3 year agreement and then again start using the latest versions of Microsoft products. For instance, Windows 8 was scheduled for release in 2011 and so should be tried and tested by 2014 and would be an option for upgrade at that date. Alternatively the Council could switch to Open Source software which had not at this stage made any substantial inroads into the public sector but might be a more viable option at that time. It was within this framework that the adoption of the next version of the operating system both on the desktop, laptops and servers ought to be viewed. Early evaluation of Windows 7 on a desktop and a laptop confirmed that it should be the successor to Windows XP for Runnymede and that Vista should not be adopted at all. This matched the results reported in the computer and general press from early adopters who had also found that Windows 7 was much more stable than Vista.

- 11.9 Three issues had been identified that would need resolving in terms of upgrading existing equipment and running the site with two desktop operating systems, Windows XP and Windows 7. The first of these was that roaming profiles for the two operating systems were not compatible. The second issue was that operating systems running under Windows 7 had at present compatibility issues with some of the key corporate systems not being supported. The third issue was that some of the Council's systems that depended on browser based client access did not yet support IE8 which was an integral part of the version of Windows 7 that the Council would use. These last two issues would be resolved in time as the Council's suppliers upgraded their products.
- 11.10 The Microsoft recommended way of upgrading Windows XP to Windows 7 was to perform a "clean install". This involved running routines to save all the settings in XP to an external storage device, clearing the operating system down by reformatting the disk, installing Windows 7, importing all of the settings and then reinstalling the applications. The preferred way forward was to synchronise the upgrading of the desktop hardware to new machines with Windows 7 pre-installed with a Runnymede configuration. This opportunity would not arise until the summer of 2011 at the earliest when most desktop PCs would be 3 years old. At that point in time the Council should reassess the possible life of the PCs and decide whether upgrading them to Windows 7 would give them sufficient extension to their life to make this worthwhile (the year 2014 would be significant as this would be when the Microsoft maintenance 'holiday' would probably end) and also look again at virtualising the desktop, which when reviewed in 2006 had been too expensive. If virtualisation was the preferred way forward there should then be an assessment of whether this should be implemented in 2011 or 2014.
- 11.11 At present no crucial application or facility had been identified that would tempt Officers to abandon this timetable and move swiftly to Windows 7 implementation. Currently Microsoft had committed to providing security patches for XP until April 2014, although XP was now no longer being developed. From a functionality point of view, XP still provided all the facilities required by most Runnymede staff and Councillors in terms of performing their Council functions. This position should be constantly reviewed and if an essential Windows 7 application came to light then the possibility of bringing forward the adoption of this version of Windows ought to be considered in terms of the time and cost involved balanced against the financial benefits. Thus from a security and functionality point of view Officers could see no compelling case for moving to Windows 7 at this stage. The Committee noted this analysis and agreed that the issue should be kept under review by the Working Group.
- 11.12 The Committee resolved that in order to ensure that the desktop hardware replacements scheduled for 2011 were carried out using the most appropriate hardware and operating systems, the IT Member Working Group should prepare a report before the end of 2010 recommending to the Corporate Management Committee the desktop hardware that should be replaced in 2011 and the specification of any new equipment, the operating system and any virtualization technologies to be used, and the staff training implications of any changes both for IT staff and computer users. The Committee also resolved that the computing and telephony facilities provided for Councillors should be reviewed by the IT Member Working Group in the light of Members' changing computer literacy levels, working patterns and information requirements.