

Runnymede Borough CouncilCORPORATE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE8 November 2001 at 7.30 p.m.

Members of the Committee present : Councillors G.B. Woodger (Chairman), J.M. Edwards (Vice-Chairman), K.J. Clark, D.P. Easton, J.R. Furey, R.K. Habgood, Mrs S.E. Jacobs, C.J. Norman, R. Pate and Mrs. E.E. Price

Members of the Committee absent : None

Councillors P.J. Poole and J.R. Whiteley also attended.

339. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 October 2001 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

340. MEMBERS ALLOWANCES - REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

(Ref: Minutes of Council July 2001, page 225, para 172)

The Committee received the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel established to advise on an appropriate scheme of Members Allowances.

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2001 required the Council to pay a basic flat rate allowance to all Members and gave discretion for special responsibility, childcare and dependant carers allowances. However, there was no longer statutory provision for the payment of attendance allowances. The Remuneration Panel, which comprised representatives from the local business community, a residents group and the voluntary sector, had made the following recommendations:

- i) A Basic Allowance of £1,600 should be paid to each Member (paragraph 6.3 of the report at Appendix 'A').
- ii) The following Special Responsibility Allowances should be paid (paragraph 6.9):-

Allowance	Amount
Chairmen of Policy Committees	£1,600
Vice-Chairmen of Policy Committees	£800
Chairmen of Review Boards	£1,200
Vice-Chairmen of Review Boards	£600
Chairman of Planning Committee	£2,400
Vice-Chairman of Planning Committee	£1,200
Chairman of Standards Committee	£400
Chairman of Englefield Green Committee	£400
Chairman of Licensing Sub-Committee	£400
Members of Planning Committee	£600
Members of Corporate Management Committee not otherwise entitled to a special responsibility allowance	£400
Leader of the Council	£3,200
Deputy Leader of the Council	£800
Leaders of Minority Groups	£1,200

- iii) Dependent Carers' and Childcare Allowances should be paid to reimburse actual costs incurred (paragraph 6.15).

- iv) The new allowances should be introduced with effect from 1 January 2002 (paragraph 7.3).
- v) The allowances should be the subject of an inflationary uplift with effect from the commencement of the 2003/04 municipal year with annual uplifts thereafter (paragraph 7.4); and
- vi) The Council should allow no more than three years before it commissioned a further independent review (paragraph 7.5).

Members noted that the Panel had also recommended that the Council pay travel allowances on the basis of one mileage rate regardless of size of vehicle, if Government proposals to allow local authorities to determine their own travel and subsistence allowances were eventually enacted. In respect of the present arrangements the Panel was of the view that Members of the Planning Committee ought to be entitled to claim expenses when visiting a site that was the subject of a planning application on the Committee's agenda. It had also been recommended that procedures for claiming travel expenses should be made easier for Members. Finally, in endorsing the Council's package of IT support for Members the Panel had felt that greater control should be exercised over the acquisition of IT equipment by Councillors in future.

On the basis of these recommendations the annual cost of Members Allowances would increase from £60,594 to £100,600 per annum. This had not been reflected in the recently approved three year Revenue Forecast. A supplementary estimate of £7,200 would be required to meet the additional costs, including the cost of giving the statutory public notice of the proposals, in the current financial year.

The Committee welcomed the findings of the Panel and thanked its Members for the diligent manner in which they had undertaken the review. It was agreed that a scheme of allowances based upon the Panels recommendations should be presented to Council for consideration.

RECOMMEND that -

- i) the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel attached at Appendix 'A' be accepted, and Council approve a Scheme based upon them with effect from 1 January 2002;**

RESOLVED that -

- ii) the Borough Treasurer, in consultation with the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer, be instructed to draft an appropriate Scheme for consideration by Council, including a provision for travel allowances which will allow Members to follow a simplified claim procedure in respect of travel to meetings of Council, Committees and Sub-Committees at the Civic Offices; and**
- iii) subject to approval of the Scheme by Council, a supplementary revenue estimate of £7,200 be agreed to cover the balance of the current financial year.**

341. HIGHWAYS DIRECT SERVICES ORGANISATION
(Ref: Minutes of Executive Committee 16 May 2001, page 1722, para 870)

The Committee gave consideration to the proposed arrangements for the winding up of the Highways Direct Services Organisation (DSO) and the establishment of a small residual group within the DSO to give a limited emergency planning capability and assist with other tasks.

At its meeting of 16 May 2001 the Executive Committee had agreed that the Highways DSO should be wound up during the present financial year, subject to the contractual consent of Surrey County Council, following the County's decisions to terminate Highways Agency Agreements across the County and introduce 'Supertenders' for highway works currently undertaken by the DSO and other contractors. However it was now understood that the introduction of the 'Supertenders' was to be delayed from April 2002 to the Summer of 2003 at the earliest. As a consequence the County Council would need to make alternative arrangements for the works for at least 15 months. It was therefore also less likely that the TUPE Regulations which provided for continuity of employment and protection of terms and conditions would apply to the DSO staff at the end of that period.

Members noted that the County Council had yet to clarify whether Runnymede would be liable to pay any compensation for withdrawing prematurely from its contractual arrangements. Whilst informal discussions suggested that the County Council recognised the difficult position in which it had placed the Borough and was committed to resolving issues amicably, the County might be faced with significant costs for highway maintenance works during the interim period.

The Committee emphasised that its primary concerns were to maintain the level of service to residents and safeguard the interests of the Runnymede staff involved. It was not considered practicable to retain the entire Highways DSO until the summer of 2003. Not only would this result in a further period of uncertainty for the workforce and difficulty in adequate resourcing, but it would also increase the potential for substantial financial losses and, contrary to agreed policy of minimising public confusion as to responsibilities, result in the DSO operating beyond the end of the Agency Agreement. Members, were, however, of the view that there was scope to assist the County Council by continuing to deliver the winter maintenance and street lighting services under the current contractual arrangements until they could be absorbed into the 'Super Tenders'. These were areas where the DSO enjoyed a particularly strong reputation and there was a relatively low risk of significant financial loss. The County Council would be asked to agree not to pursue Runnymede over other contractual obligations in return.

Members also considered that a residual taskforce of three DSO staff should be retained on an experimental basis in order to undertake some of the numerous other duties currently performed by the Highways DSO and provide a limited emergency capability. It was proposed that the team consist of an Electrician/Supervisor, HGV Driver/Construction worker and a general building tradesperson redeployed from the DSO. In addition to some of the DSO's current duties there was also scope for a variety of other work currently performed by contractors including maintenance of bus shelters, street furniture and street and amenity signage, and some of the work commissioned by the town centre co-ordinators.

The net cost of maintaining such a group, assuming a potential "income" of £82,000 p.a. (which would otherwise be paid to contractors) and allowing for operating costs, staffing, plant, equipment and overheads, was estimated at £60,000 - £70,000 p.a. The alternative would be to make the three men redundant at a cost of approximately £60,000 and rely entirely on the use of contractors. While this might be more cost effective Members did not believe that relinquishing the total in-house resource would be in the Council's or the public's best interests. There would be some in-house ability to respond to emergencies, but it was fundamentally important to recognise that the capability and availability of such a small resource would be extremely limited. From April 2002 the Council would be reliant primarily on private contractors and the co-operation of staff from other DSO's in the event of an emergency. It was emphasised that regardless of the public expectations the statutory duties associated with highways emergencies would pass to the County Council with the termination of the Agency Agreement. The usefulness and financial viability of the residual taskforce would be re-evaluated at the end of 2002/03.

The Committee recognised the extent of the uncertainty facing those Members of the Highways DSO who were not due to be redeployed. The County Council had not yet been able to provide any assurances on the position of the staff, some of whom were already demotivated and concerned about their futures. If they could not continue to be employed by Runnymede the majority of staff had expressed a preference to take redundancy in order that they were free to make their own arrangements. Subject to the agreement of UNISON and each individual member of staff, it was therefore proposed that

redundancy and, where appropriate, early retirement be offered to the non-redeployed staff once the DSO was wound up in March 2002. Those staff wishing to remain with the

authority would be given every consideration for redeployment. Redundancy costs were estimated at a maximum of £100,000.

RECOMMEND that -

- i) the main Highways DSO be wound up on 31 March 2002;**
- ii) the Borough Environmental Services Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, be authorised to undertake street lighting and winter maintenance work up to the date of the expiry of the original contracts, subject to suitable agreement with Surrey County Council and with the consent of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman;**
- iii) a residual taskforce of three staff with appropriate plant and equipment be established at an estimated net cost of £60,000 to £70,000 per annum, to include the acquisition of a mini gritter and sandbag filler, for which a capital estimate of £10,000 will be provided;**
- iv) subject to the agreement of UNISON and individual members of staff, redundancy and early retirement be offered to non-redeployed Highways DSO staff at a maximum cost of £100,000; and**
- v) opportunities for the redeployment of other Highways DSO staff be taken as they arise.**

342. CHERTSEY DEPOT REDEVELOPMENT - PHASE 1 WORKS

(Ref: Minutes of Executive Committee 13 December 2000, page 1036, para 494)

In accordance with Standing Order C18.5 the Committee was informed that a contract with a local building firm in connection with the refurbishment of the Chertsey Depot site had exceeded the approved sum by more than 5%. Members noted that the proposed termination of the Highways DSO operations in 2002 had led to the accommodation originally intended for use by the Highways DSO being converted into a mess room and pest control store, thereby increasing contract costs from £42,900 to £52,535. Overall, however, the project was progressing well and it was anticipated that works would be completed within budget.

343. DRAINAGE SECTION - IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMME AND STAFFING

(Ref: Minutes of Executive Committee 13 December 2000, page 1030, para 484)

The Committee gave consideration to the staffing structure within the Drainage Section in the light of a previously identified potential for revenue savings.

Members recalled that following consistent underspends of the drainage improvement ("specials") budget the possibility of staff savings of £20,000 had been reported to the Executive Committee in December 2000. A vacancy had now arisen in the section offering an opportunity to undertake a needs assessment and review the staffing levels.

The Committee noted that the specials budget had been underspent in recent years, largely because it reflected what was effectively an aspirational rolling programme of improvements which could not all be achieved in the same year. By reassessing the ability of the section to undertake the works and devising a prioritised rolling programme costed over several years it would be possible to reduce the budget from £363,900 to £233,900 per annum, thereby achieving a reduction in the budget estimate of £130,000 as identified in the revenue forecast. In the view of Officers, however, this would still require the filling of the vacancy to achieve.

Members also noted that the unusually wet weather conditions in the previous 12 months had placed considerable pressure on the three Officers within the Drainage Section. There was a perception on the part of the public that the Council had the primary responsibility to provide advice and investigate and

resolve flooding issues, including those which were subsequently found to be private matters between landowners or the responsibility of other agencies. The inability of Thames Water to respond

adequately to complaints and reports of flooding had led to the intervention of Council staff to help relieve public exasperation. Resources had inevitably been largely devoted to flooding emergencies and continued maintenance of the drainage network with little scope to progress improvement schemes. If the vacancies were not filled, Officers considered that the emphasis on maintenance rather than improvement would have to continue.

The Committee emphasised, however, that there was a need to balance the service requirements with the opportunity for a revenue reduction. The section's statutory duties had diminished in recent years and it was considered important that the other relevant drainage agencies were encouraged to fulfil their own responsibilities, thereby relieving the burden on Runnymede. Prior to any decision on the vacant post, or the prioritisation of the work programme, Members were therefore of the opinion that Officers should examine the structure of the Engineering Division in order to establish whether the present duties could not be undertaken through a more flexible use of existing staff and the services of private contractors.

RESOLVED that -

Officers be asked to examine

- i) the structure of the Engineering Division, to see if it might be possible to achieve some or all of the additional capital work by more flexible use of existing staff; and**
- ii) the opportunities for carrying out some or all of the capital schemes listed in the Agenda report by the use of consultants or contractors;**

and to report further on what can be achieved without filling the present vacant post.

344. MAGNA CARTA TRIENNIAL CELEBRATIONS - OUTTURN

(Ref: Minutes of Executive Committee 13 December 2000 page 1034, para 489)

The Committee received details of the financial outturn from the Magna Carta Triennial Celebrations held in Runnymede during June. The programme of events had been well received by the public and Members considered the success of the occasion to have been due in large part to the efforts of the volunteer Council staff who had assisted on the day. The outdoor weekend events had, however, been adversely affected by very wet weather. Attendance at the Craft Fayre held at Runnymede Pleasure Grounds amounted to only 3,309 against an advance estimate of 10,000 - 15,000, leading to a shortfall in gate receipts of £22,000. The Council had been unable to claim against wet weather insurance as the event was not cancelled. A net sum of £4,076 was, however, received from the Council's insurers in respect of the open air re-dedication ceremony which had to be cancelled due to torrential rain. Overall net expenditure on the celebrations exceeded the budget of £40,000 by £23,471 requiring a supplementary revenue estimate.

RESOLVED that -

a supplementary revenue estimate of £23,471 be approved to meet the shortfall in income from the Magna Carta Triennial Celebrations.

345. STAFF APPOINTMENTS - EVALUATION AND SHORTLISTING PROCEDURE

(Ref: Minutes of Standards Committee January 2001, page 1250, para 602)

In accordance with a request from the Standards Committee, Members gave consideration to a detailed report reviewing the arrangements for evaluating and shortlisting candidates for appointment with the Council.

The Committee noted that arrangements for a recent appointment had given rise to a grievance appeal being lodged by a member of staff who had considered that his internal application for appointment to a

more senior post had not been dealt with appropriately. The subsequent investigation had concluded that the staff recruitment process, and particularly the consideration of

internal candidates, should be reviewed. The report considered the particular procedures raised in the grievance appeal and also others involved in staff selection.

Members agreed that there was a need to amend the procedure if the majority of the interview panel were to disagree with the decision of the Appointing Manager. It was considered that this could lead to (unfounded) claims of prejudice, victimisation or bias. In order to overcome this the Committee felt that where a decision on a candidate was not supported by the majority of the selection panel the candidate should be re-interviewed and then, if no agreement on a suitable appointee could be reached, the post should be re-advertised.

Members also noted that the traditional interview was not always a reliable method of staff selection. While assessment of 'hard' facts such as qualifications and experience was relatively easy, 'soft' factors such as personal qualities, interpersonal skills and aptitude were more difficult to assess. A further complication was that internal candidates were likely to be known to the panel which could place them at a distinct advantage or disadvantage to external candidates.

One method of addressing this situation was to use an independent Assessment Centre to assist in determining suitability through a specifically designed battery of psychometric tests, group and individual exercises, role plays and in depth interviews. All candidates, whether internal or external, would be assessed on the same basis although the final decision would remain at the discretion of the selection panel following a conventional interview. Research indicated that Assessment Centres were more than twice as likely to accurately predict 'above average performers' as other methods. Given the cost of such centres, however, it was suggested that their use be restricted to Chief Officer and appropriate second tier appointments. At the current level of turnover this would require the provision of up to £12,000 per annum. Objective performance tests were already carried out in-house for many more junior positions but the level of expertise required to assess Senior Managers in this way demanded the use of an external provider.

Finally, the Committee agreed that internal candidates should be asked to supply a copy of their most recent appraisal and performance banding to the Appointing Manager. This would provide the manager with a better informed view than one based on informal comment or anecdote and place the candidate in a similar position to external applicants from whom references were already sought.

RECOMMEND that -

- i) where a decision to appoint or not appoint a candidate does not accord with the majority view of an Interview Panel, the candidate(s) in question shall be re-interviewed by the Panel and then if no agreement on a suitable appointee is reached the post shall be re-advertised;**
- ii) Assessment Centres be used for all first and appropriate second tier appointments (as determined by the Chief Executive Officer at the time of filling the vacancy);**
- iii) staff who are applying for other positions in the Authority be invited to supply to Appointing Managers a copy of their most recent appraisal and performance banding; and**
- iv) appropriate estimate provision be made for 2002/03.**

346. WORKING TIME REGULATIONS - PAID HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT FOR CASUAL STAFF

Members reviewed the way in which holiday entitlement was accrued by casual staff following a ruling by the European Court of Justice that workers were entitled to paid annual leave without the requirement for a qualifying period of employment. UK legislation had been amended with effect from 25 October 2001. For administrative convenience it was agreed to adopt a system identified by the employers organisation that a holiday pay allowance of 8.33% of the hourly rate be paid as a supplement to the existing rate for all hours worked rather than payment when holiday was taken. This would ensure that holiday pay was

always correct by linking it to actual hours worked and paid throughout the year. Additional costs would be borne by those services which used casual workers

although it was anticipated that they would be contained within existing salary budgets during the current financial year.

RECOMMEND that -

with effect from 25 October 2001 a holiday pay allowance equivalent to 8.33% of the hourly rate be paid as a supplement to the hourly rate for all hours worked by casual workers.

347. PERSONNEL SERVICE - BEST VALUE SCOPING AND CHALLENGE REPORT

The Committee received the Best Value Scoping and Challenge report for the Personnel Service (attached at Appendix 'B'). Members were asked to consider whether the objectives for the provision of the service continued to meet the Council's aspirations and to satisfy themselves that there had been sufficient rigour in completing the challenge phase of the review.

The challenge workshop had identified a number of suggestions for change and these would be examined during the remaining stages of the review. The compare stage of the process would involve examination of comparative service, quality and financial data both from the Surrey Districts and other similar service providers (public or private) identified as providing a good quality service. Consultation would be undertaken with staff, management and the Trade Union during November/December by means of questionnaires.

Members endorsed the proposals for challenge, with minor amendments, and noted that a Continuous Improvement Plan for the service would be presented to Committee in February 2002 following completion of the review.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the objectives of the Personnel Service be endorsed;**
- ii) the proposals for Challenge set out in Appendix 'B' be further investigated; and**
- iii) the scope of this review and the challenge phase be endorsed.**

348. AUDIT AND INSURANCE SERVICE - BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

(Ref: Minutes of Corporate Management Committee July 2001, page 163, para 136)

The Committee, having endorsed both the scope of the review and the challenge phase for the Audit and Insurance service at its meeting on 5 July 2001, now gave consideration to the completed Service Review and proposed Continuous Improvement Plan. It was noted that the review had followed the Council's adopted format and in so doing addressed the four elements of Challenge, Compare, Consult and Compete. The Committee considered that the proposals contained in the Continuous Improvement Plan, which were based on the findings of the review, fairly reflected the Council's aspirations for the service. In particular Members noted the need to review the Council's approach to quality accreditation both in terms of the chosen accreditation body and the possibility of adopting a corporate ISO registration.

RESOLVED that -

- i) The Service Review attached at Appendix 'C' and Continuous Improvement Plan attached at Appendix 'D' (Annex 5) be approved with particular reference to the following: (Target timescales are detailed in Appendix 'D'.)**

Targets to be implemented at Officer level:**Section**

retain a quality registration for Audit and Insurance in accordance with corporate policy.

Internal Audit

review Internal Audit processes and procedures.

review the potential for combining Internal Audits and Internal Quality Audits.

review the types of management information being collected.

Insurance

clarify the role of the Insurance Officer, and review procedures to ensure they reflect that role.

review claims handling and progress monitoring.

provide improved management information when the new database is fully functional.

Internal Quality Auditing

review service provision after the corporate review of Quality registration.

look at possible ways of addressing Officer concerns that they are being 'over audited'.

Targets with policy implications, requiring a further report to the Council if appropriate:

a) endorse the decision to continue service provision in-house, with any additional Internal audit days required being bought in from an external provider; and

b) review the Council's approach to Quality Registration and report to a future meeting of the Committee

ii) the Borough Treasurer be requested to report to a future meeting of the Committee regarding implementation and monitoring of the Continuous Improvement Plan.

349. **NATIONAL PROPERTY DATABASE**

The Committee gave consideration to establishing a Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) consistent with the Government's proposals for a national property database.

Members noted that much of the information held by local authorities was property based and each department of the Council had at least one address database in use. However there was no standard format for these address lists and they could not be guaranteed to be consistent, comprehensive or up-to-date, nor were there any procedures for notifying changes throughout the Council. All local authorities had therefore been requested to establish and maintain LLPG's which would in turn feed into a National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG).

The creation of a Corporate Property Gazetteer would not only enable the different systems to be integrated with the NLPG but also ensure consistency within the Council, improve access for users and ultimately allow the development of a one stop shop facility. The initiative formed a key element of the Council's Implementing Electronic Government Statement and was a fundamental requirement for the efficient operation of the Document Management System and the electronic provision of Local Land Charges Searches through the National Land Information Service.

The Committee noted that in order to participate in the NLPG initiative the Council would need to register for a licence agreement and resolve address inconsistencies. Members proposed that six address sets (Address Point, the Electoral Register, Revenues and Benefits - including Council Tax - the GIS

addresses, the MVM Panorama Gazetteer and addresses on the Flare system) initially be sent for processing in order to give each property a nationally agreed unique reference number, and a

gazetteer management system purchased in order for GIS staff to maintain the data. It was felt that a basic system should be acquired pending a decision on how and when to extend the gazetteer's use and clarification of sources of funding. The anticipated overall cost of £12,500 would require a supplementary revenue estimate.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the NLPG Licence agreement be entered into and six address datasets be sent to Intelligent Addressing for data matching at a cost of £7,750;**
- ii) a Local Property Gazetteer be created and maintained by the GIS Section;**
- iii) a basic gazetteer management system be purchased in order to hold the data pending decisions on when and how to extend its usability corporately, and clarification of sources of funding; and**
- iv) a supplementary revenue estimate of £12,500 be approved for (i) and (iii) above.**

350. RUNNYMEDE AND SURREY PARTNERSHIP ADVISORY GROUP

The Committee considered proposals that the Runnymede and Surrey Partnership Advisory Group (PAG) should be wound up on the Borough side. The PAG was an advisory body consisting of five Members from both the Borough and County Council, set up in 1996 in order to develop closer co-operation between the two tiers of local government. However, in view of the County Council's proposals to establish an Area Committee for Runnymede with effect from April 2002 (considered below) the Chairman of the Group, Councillor T. Dicks (acting in his capacity as a County Councillor), and the Vice Chairman, Councillor C.J. Norman, had advised that they did not wish any new items of business to be brought forward. The Committee concurred with the view that no further meetings of the Group should be held.

RECOMMEND that -

the Runnymede and Surrey Partnership Advisory Group be wound up on the Borough Council side.

351. SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S PROPOSALS FOR AREA COMMITTEES

Members received details of proposals by Surrey County Council for the creation of Area Committees based upon Borough/District boundaries with effect from April 2002. It was envisaged that the Committees, comprising the local County Councillors, would take on a modest range of functions delegated by the County Council. Discretionary budgets of £10,000 per annum per Councillor (a total of £50,000 in the case of Runnymede) would be allocated for County Members to determine locally. The Borough Council had been invited to nominate five Members to sit on the Committee for consultative purposes with voting rights on highways and transportation matters only.

The Committee raised a range of concerns with regard to the County Council's proposals, including the effectiveness of the Area Committee in the light of its limited responsibilities and the heavy emphasis on engaging, influencing and monitoring. It was considered that the Committee would have only a limited impact upon local service delivery issues and there appeared to be no parallel managerial structure to effectively implement local decisions. Members also expressed concern that the meetings would be held during the morning. This was felt to discourage public attendance and limit the numbers of Councillors who could actively participate in such meetings. Given the termination by the County Council of the Highways Agency arrangements it was considered important not to confuse in the public's mind where the responsibility lay for highways and transportation matters. As Runnymede did not operate executive decision making arrangements its Members would not, in any event, be able to act with delegated authority at meetings of the Committee.

Having regard to all of the issues the Committee concurred with the views of the Local Government Member Working Group that the Council should decline membership of the Area Committee. It was stressed, however, that Members remained keen to maintain effective dialogue with the County Council through topic based discussions, which would include various statutory obligations of the County Council to consult, and in the roll-out of the Runnymede Community Strategy and the working of the Local Strategic Partnership. There might also be occasions when it would be appropriate to participate in the Area Committee meetings on the same basis as other invited interest groups.

As the County Council had requested Runnymede's response to the proposals by 9 November the Chairman agreed that the matter should be treated as a delegated function under paragraph 1.3 of the Council's Constitution.

RESOLVED that -

the Borough Council decline membership of the County Council's proposed Area Committee due to come into operation on 1 April 2002.

352. COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION - UPDATE

(Ref: Minutes of Corporate Management Committee 4 October 2001, page 450, para 291)

The Committee considered recommendations from the Local Government Act 2000 Member Working Group concerning the basic framework for implementation of a Community Strategy, agreed in principle at the meeting on 4 October.

The Committee recognised that knowledge building and planning for consultation was a vital element of the implementation programme. It was essential that those involved were fully aware of the proposals, future implications and the demands on their own resources. In order to assist with this process the Committee agreed that a briefing session should be arranged for all Members during December. The Committee also concurred with the view of the Working Group that the original implementation timetable had been too ambitious. The proposed visioning day would therefore be delayed until the end of January/early February and the original timetable rescheduled with a 4-6 week slippage. Consultants were to be appointed to assist in the process at a cost of up to £10,000 which could be met by a virement from the anticipated underspend on the Best Value provisions.

RESOLVED that -

- i) Officers be authorised to appoint external consultants to co-ordinate the "visioning" arrangements;**
- ii) a £10,000 budget be utilised from the potential underspend of the Best Value provisions to cover costs associated with the consulting element of the implementation process;**
- iii) a briefing for all Council Members be arranged during December; and**
- iv) the revised implementation timetable attached at Appendix 'E' be approved.**

353. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Members noted that vacancies had arisen on two of the outside bodies to which the Council appointed representatives. It was therefore

RESOLVED that -

- i) Councillor Ms D.V. Clarke be appointed to serve on the Governing Body of the Step gates Community School for a four year period; and**

- ii) Mr M. Fuller be appointed to the Egham United Charity as the representative Trustee for Hythe for a four year period.**

354. WRITE-OFFS

The Committee agreed that a variety of debts should be written off as irrecoverable. It was noted that the rent arrears cases would be referred to the Council's debt collection agency. In addition Members requested that the names of the directors of defaulting companies henceforth be published in the Agenda papers.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the non-domestic rate arrears totalling £44,223.81, be written off as irrecoverable; and**
- ii) the rent arrears, totalling £8,847.87, be written off as irrecoverable.**

355. URGENT ACTION - STANDING ORDER 42

Members noted that the following action had been taken since the 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>
Borough Housing and Community Services Manager	Agreement to extend the pilot scheme in which a Day Centre Vehicle assisted the Dial a Ride operation for a further 6 months. The estimated cost of £4,250 was to be met by way of a virement from elsewhere within the Housing and Community Services budgets.	486

356. EXTENSION OF SICK PAY ENTITLEMENT

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the report would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraphs 1 and 7 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee considered whether to extend the sick pay entitlement of an Officer who had sustained an injury during the course of his duties earlier in the year.

RESOLVED that -

- the full sick pay entitlement of the Officer in question be extended for a period not exceeding three months.**

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 10.09 p.m.)