

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL15 December 2005 at 7.30 p.m.The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Mrs F.J. Barden) in the Chair

Members of the
Council present:

Councillors A. Alderson, Mrs F.M. Angell, Mrs F.J. Barden, Mrs P.I. Broadhead, J. Broadhead, M.J. Brown, Ms D.V. Clarke, A.J. Davis, J.B. Dean, J.M. Edwards, J.R. Furey, Mrs C.E. Gant, Mrs E. Gill, Mrs L.M. Gillham, P.A. Greenwood, J.E. Haas, R.K. Habgood, Ms R.E. Haylor, Miss M.N. Heath, Mrs C.Y. Jones, C. Knight, Mrs Y.P. Lay, Prof. A.M. Moore, C.J. Norman, Mrs J. Norman, D.W. Parr, R.J. Ray, B.J. Relph, Mrs M. Roberts, Ms C.M. Simmons, A.P. Tollett, P.B. Tuley, P.J. Waddell and G.B. Woodger.

Members of the
Council absent:

Councillors J.R. Ashmore, Mrs S.E. Jacobs, H.W.V. Meares, R.Pate, C.J. Ruane, N. Thewlis, K.J.T. Walmsley and J.R. Whiteley

434. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 20 October 2005 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

435. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced that her Civic Reception had been a success but expressed disappointment that the Surrey Herald Group of Newspapers had not given press coverage to the awards given to volunteers at the Reception in recognition of their efforts. The Mayor was pleased that two of the award winners were Runnymede employees.

The Mayor gave notice of Mayoral fundraising events planned for February 2006, namely:-

11 February—Elvis and Cliff Tribute Concert at Chertsey Hall.
14 February—Valentine Soirée with operatic interludes at The Picture Gallery, Royal Holloway University.
24 February—Quiz Night at Woodham and New Haw Community Centre with fish and chip supper.

Finally, the Mayor wished all Councillors and Officers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

436. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor J.R. Ashmore, Mrs. S.E. Jacobs, H.W.V. Meares, R. Pate, C.J. Ruane, N. Thewlis, K.J.T. Walmsley and J.R. Whiteley

437. PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS WITH SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

RESOLVED that –

the recommendation of the Corporate Management Committee as set out in paragraph 346, on page 556 (Minutes of 3 November 2005) be approved.

438. SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES - MODIFICATION

RESOLVED that -

the recommendation of the Corporate Management Committee as set out in paragraph 348, on page 558 (Minutes of Corporate Management Committee of 3 November 2005) be approved.

439. ENGLEFIELD GREEN - BYELAWS

RESOLVED that -

the recommendation of the Englefield Green Committee as set out in paragraph 388 on page 602 (Minutes of Englefield Green Committee of 23 November 2005) be approved.

440. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2006/2007

The Council considered a recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee which had met on 1 December 2005.

RESOLVED that -

the Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2006/2007 be approved.

441. CHERTSEY ALLOTMENTS CAPITAL SCHEME

The Council considered a recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee which had met on 1 December 2005.

RESOLVED that -

additional capital programme provision and an additional capital estimate be approved in the sum of £71,100 to cover the extra costs of the Chertsey Allotments Capital Scheme, to be financed from capital receipts.

442. EGHAM LEISURE CENTRE–FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The Council considered a recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee which had met on 1 December 2005.

RESOLVED that –

- i) revised capital programme provision and a capital estimate in the sum of £200,000 in respect of the fitness suite proposal be approved, to be financed from capital receipts and the equipment replacement reserve; and**
- ii) a capital estimate in the sum of £606,000 in respect of the 5-a-side football pitches proposal be approved, to be financed from capital receipts.**

443. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK–CORE STRATEGY RESULTS OF PREFERRED OPTIONS CONSULTATION AND DRAFT SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

The Council considered a recommendation from the Planning Committee which had met on 14 December 2005.

RESOLVED that –

- i) the proposed recommendations for alterations to the Core Strategy made in response to the comments received to the preferred options consultation carried out from 26 September to 7 November 2005 (as set out in the Appendix circulated to all Members with the Planning Committee Agenda and summarised in the preamble to recommendation from the Planning Committee) be approved;**

- ii) **the Director of Technical Services, in consultation with Chairman and Vice-Chairman be authorised to make minor editorial changes to the Core Strategy prior to its submission to Planning Committee in February 2006;**
- iii) **the revised document be approved for the purposes of submission to the Secretary of State in February 2006 following approval by the Planning Committee at a future meeting; and**
- iv) **the amendments and additions to the Local Development Scheme be approved for submission to the Government Office for the South East and the Planning Inspectorate.**

444. NOTICE OF MOTION—PROPOSED INCREASE IN OFF-STREET PAY AND DISPLAY CAR PARKING CHARGES

The following Motion was moved by Councillor A. Alderson and seconded by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Prof. A.M. Moore:-

- i) In view of the adverse public reaction reported to Corporate Management Committee under item 6 of its agenda on 1 December, the proposed increase in off-street pay and display car parking charges approved by Economic Development Committee on 15 September, and due to take effect in January 2006, be suspended for a period of 3 months in order to allow reconsideration of all relevant issues by the Economic Development Committee;
- ii) In particular the Economic Development Committee be asked to fully debate all the issues raised by residents and employers in Runnymede and specifically consider the re-introduction of appropriate hourly charges and evening charges until 8 p.m.;
- iii) Officers be instructed to report to Economic Development Committee on the legal, financial, and practical effects of rescission of 15 September resolution, so that if it is so minded the Committee may recommend rescission to Council under Standing Order 25.14."

The Council received a draft minute of the deliberations of the Corporate Management Committee on 1 December 2005 on this matter.

The Council received a report by the appropriate Officers on the legal, financial and practical effects of a delay as proposed by Councillor Alderson.

Councillor Alderson commented that the timing of his Motion had resulted from the public reaction to the proposed charges. Furthermore, he considered that the proposed increase was not fully justified and was concerned at the likely adverse impact on businesses in Egham town centre and usage of the car parks. Councillor Alderson also considered that the reintroduction of hourly charges in place of the 2 hourly charge could increase income and that the hourly charge needed to be reviewed earlier than September 2006. Councillor Alderson felt that the Economic Development Committee had not fully debated the issue. He also questioned the accuracy of the figure, given in the Officers' report before the meeting, as to the financial consequences of a delay in implementing the new charges.

Other Members in supporting Councillor Alderson's Motion expressed the view that the proposals would act as a disincentive for people to shop in Egham, and, adversely impact on the commercial viability of Egham Town Centre.

Councillor Furey (Chairman of Economic Development Committee) commented that the level of response from the public had not been significant. Councillor Furey considered that in assessing the various options open to it on 15 September 2005, the Economic Development Committee had recognised a need to balance the interests of the Council Tax payers, motorists and local traders. Local economic factors were relevant, as was the fact that the operation of the car parks had resulted in a deficit of £136,000 in 2004/05, which fell upon Council Tax payers. Discretionary fees and charges (including car parking charges) needed to at least reflect the cost of provision and/or comparative tariffs elsewhere. The Economic Development Committee had also taken into account comparative charges in other Surrey districts which showed that Runnymede was at the lower end of

charges. The cost of delaying implementation of the proposed increases would result in an increasing deficit which would be borne by Council Tax payers who would effectively be subsidising car parking. Councillor Furey considered that Economic Development Committee had fully considered all issues and responses from the extensive public consultation exercise.

Councillor Furey further commented that the reintroduction of hourly charges had been considered by the Economic Development Committee and had been rejected on the basis of lack of detailed data on parking patterns. However, as part of the annual review in September 2006, the option of a lower rate of charge for the first hour would be considered. In response to the suggestion to introduce appropriate evening charges until 8 p.m., Councillor Furey confirmed that it would not be financially viable as it would require a minimum of two additional Wardens to patrol the car parks at a cost of approximately £38,000.

The Leader of the Council commented on the timing of Councillor Alderson's Motion and suggested that the more appropriate approach would have been for Councillor Alderson to ask the Review Board to have examined the issue.

The Leader referred to various financial pressures which faced the Council, namely Council Tax capping, the revenue savings target and reductions in Government Grant and commented that the proposed increases in car parking charges compared favourably with other Councils in Surrey and were necessary to reduce the deficit on the operation of car parks.

A named vote was requested in accordance with Standing Order 25.2.

For the Motion: 7 (Councillors Alderson, Mrs. Gill, Mrs. Gillham, Greenwood, Moore, Ray and Relph).

Against the Motion: 27 (Councillors Mrs. Angell, Mrs. Barden, Mrs. Broadhead, J. Broadhead, Brown, Ms Clarke, Davis, Dean, Edwards, Furey, Mrs Gant, Haas, Habgood, Ms Haylor, Miss Heath, Mrs Jones, C. Knight, Mrs Lay, Norman, Mrs J. Norman, Parr, Mrs Roberts, Ms Simmons, Tollett, Tuley, Waddell and Woodger)

(The Motion was declared to be lost).

445. NOTICE OF MOTION-VALLEY GARDENS ENCLOSURE

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Mrs C.Y. Jones and seconded by Councillor G.B. Woodger:

"This Council recognises the need for the Crown Estate to conserve and manage Windsor Great Park for future generations but deplores the over commercialisation in the approach proposed, and in particular urges the Crown Estate to reconsider its proposal to enclose and charge entry to parts of the park that have in the past been free and accessible to all."

Councillor Mrs Jones expressed concern over the impact of the Crown Estates proposal on existing users of the Park which was a much valued recreational area and which had hitherto, been freely enjoyed by many residents of the Borough. Councillor Mrs. Jones considered that access should not be prevented to the Park and hoped constructive dialogue would take place with the Crown Estate on this issue.

Councillor Mrs Gillham commented that the proposal was not driven solely for commercial reasons. Valley Gardens had, in recent times, experienced children cycling, dogs running free and invasion by rabbits. The purpose of the fencing was to protect plants and revenue from charging would be used towards replacement of trees on site. She suggested that the annual charge proposed was not excessive and that the Council should seek more information from the Crown Estate on their proposals.

Two thirds of the Council being present as required by Standing Order 2.4, the Council resolved that Standing Order 15.6(a) be suspended in order to allow the Motion to be determined by Council rather than be referred to the Leisure and Environment Committee, as Members considered that they were in possession of all salient facts.

RESOLVED that –

this Council recognises the need for the Crown Estate to conserve and manage Windsor Great Park for future generations but deplores the over commercialisation in the approach proposed, and in particular urges the Crown Estate to reconsider its proposal to enclose and charge entry to parts of the park that have in the past been free and accessible to all.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.45 p.m.)