

Runnymede Borough Council

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

12 September 2002 at 7.30 p.m.

Members of the Committee present: Councillors R.K. Habgood (Chairman), J.R. Furey (Vice-Chairman), A. Alderson, M.J. Brown, P.A. Greenwood, C. Knight, H.W.V. Meares, P.J. Poole, N. Thewlis and K.J.T. Walmsley

Members of the Committee absent: None

Councillors Ms C.M. Simmons and P.J. Waddell also attended.

270. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Conservative Group had notified the Chief Executive Officer of its wish that Councillors P.C. Elding and J.E. Haas be removed from the membership of the Committee and that Councillors H.W.V. Meares and N. Thewlis be appointed in their place for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting. Thereafter, Councillors Elding and Haas would be re-appointed.

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

271. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 July 2002 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

272. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor K.J.T. Walmsley declared a personal and prejudicial interest under the Runnymede Code of Conduct for Members in respect of the item concerning street trading, insofar as it related to Kingsley Avenue, Englefield Green, having a financial interest in one of the affected properties. Councillor Walmsley therefore withdrew from the room during the discussion of the relevant part of the report.

273. DECRIMINALISED PARKING ENFORCEMENT

(Ref Minutes of Development Review Board, November 2002, page 887, para 413 and Minutes of Executive Committee, 29 November 2000, page 994, para 463).

The Committee gave consideration to a strategy for the implementation of decriminalised parking enforcement (DPE) in the borough.

Members recalled that the Road Traffic Act 1991 provided for the decriminalisation of most non endorsable on-street parking offences in London and permitted the introduction of similar arrangements elsewhere upon application to the Secretary of State. Enforcement would then be the responsibility of local Traffic Authorities which would be able to retain the proceeds from Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) to fund the enforcement and adjudication system. Any funding surplus was to be used for certain prescribed traffic management purposes.

Independent research suggested that DPE achieved enforcement objectives, increased car parking occupancy and revenue, improved traffic flows and made residential parking easier. There were, however, considerable variations in performance between authorities, suggesting the need for a professional, fully researched and committed approach to scheme development and management in order to reduce the risk of unexpected costs. Financial performance was not static and early peaks in the numbers of PCN's issued were unlikely to be maintained as compliance rates increased and parking behaviour changed. The Council had previously approved the introduction of DPE in principle but with reservations about the financial consequences.

Members now noted that Surrey County Council was looking to implement DPE across the County as soon as was reasonably practical in the light of a decision by Surrey Police to cease enforcement of on street parking by 2004. An Officer working group was likely to recommend to the County Council that District/Borough Councils undertake the day to day management and enforcement, either independently or in partnership with neighbouring authorities. The County Council, through its Local Area Committees, would retain responsibility for the wider policy and financial management in order to provide a consistent strategic framework and ensure that DPE remained self financing across Surrey. This could be achieved by utilising a surplus in one part of the County to cover deficits in districts which generated lower income levels. The County Council was likely to wish to approve the expenditure of any surplus in order to ensure consistency with its transport objectives and targets.

The Committee was informed that if individual Districts/Boroughs did not wish to participate, the County Council was likely to introduce DPE by alternative means. The options included direct management by the County Council, cross border arrangements with adjoining authorities or the use of private contractors. It would be operationally desirable to include off-street car parks within the designated special parking areas to encourage a seamless parking enforcement service. Given the financial uncertainties, the County Council was set to limit the arrangements to an initial period of five years.

Members noted that overall set up costs were likely to amount to approximately £82,000 over a two year period, rising to £140,000 if on street charging was introduced. It was estimated that there would be a need for three additional parking attendants, the creation of a new post of Parking Manager and a full time clerical officer (the latter representing an increase of a 0.5 FTE post above the existing arrangements). Care would be taken to ensure that any new section was not so large as to be excessive once improved compliance with parking controls had been achieved. There was a possibility that the integration of the respective on and off street parking enforcement teams might assist in defraying some of the overheads of the existing off street enforcement regime. Similar opportunities could arise in respect of the Council's CCTV network which had the potential to assist enforcement activity in neighbouring Districts as well as Runnymede itself. Decriminalisation also offered an opportunity to extend the role of parking attendants to that of Neighbourhood Wardens with a range of 'Quality of Life' enforcement tasks, including reporting abandoned cars, graffiti and vandalism, litter and anti social behaviour. The appointment of Neighbourhood Wardens would fulfil objectives of the Community Safety Strategy and be likely to attract external match funding, at least for an initial period.

Nevertheless, the Committee recognised that the scheme in Runnymede was unlikely to generate a surplus, the use of which would in any event be limited to statutory purposes for the County Council. PCN's could be set at either £40 or £60 with discounts for early payments. It was estimated that once the levels of parking compliance had settled down following the introduction of the enforcement regime a £40 charge would lead to an annual deficit of £46,000. Members preference was therefore for the higher charge, which was likely to contain losses at around £1,500 p.a. The imposition of on-street parking charges, combined with a very vigorous enforcement regime would be capable of returning a surplus but it was considered that this would be unpopular with the public and inconsistent with efforts to maintain the commercial attractiveness of the town centres. Members were of the view that the balance between generating income to meet the costs of the enforcement regime and public acceptance and support would be best served by seeking to achieve break even only.

Whilst Members expressed regret at the decision of the Police to withdraw from car parking enforcement, it was recognised that there had been some frustration in the community over the Police's inability or unwillingness to devote adequate resources to the task. Decriminalisation was therefore welcomed as an opportunity to set local priorities and address long standing parking issues. Given the fragile financial case for DPE in Runnymede, however, it was considered essential that the concept of cross subsidy across Surrey was formally agreed by the County Council. More work was also required to establish the exact needs for direct and support staff and how existing resources could be fed into this process. Officers would continue to liaise with County Council colleagues to clarify these issues.

**RECOMMEND that –**

- i) the principle of introducing Decriminalised Parking Enforcement in Runnymede as soon as practicable be endorsed, on the basis of a £60 Penalty Charge Notice, with no on-street charging, to achieve financial break-even, to be reviewed after a five year period;**
- ii) Officers liaise with County Council Officers to seek confirmation that the principle of cross subsidy is agreed, and to produce draft detailed and costed proposals, including the potential for the introduction of ‘Neighbourhood Wardens’; and**
- iii) a further progress report on ii) be brought to this Committee by April 2003.**

274. PARKING STRATEGY FOR SURREY – CONSULTATION

The Committee gave consideration to a revised draft of the County Council's Parking Strategy for Surrey. The existing strategy document had been reviewed in the light of Government guidance contained in PPG13 on Transport and PPG3 on Housing. Members noted that the parking strategy derived from national and regional guidance and fed into both the Structure Plan and Local Transport Plan. The objectives of the strategy were to manage travel demand through integrated planning, reduce the need to travel, introduce restraint based parking standards, sustain and enhance the vitality of town centres and effectively manage the total parking supply. Members agreed that the comments set out in Appendix ‘A’, which had previously been endorsed by the Planning Committee, should form the basis of the Council's response to the consultation.

**RESOLVED that –**

**the comments set out in Appendix ‘A’ be forwarded to Surrey County Council as the formal response of this Council to the Draft Review of the Parking Strategy for Surrey.**

275. STREET TRADING – LIST OF CONSENT STREETS

(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee March 2002, page 935, para 639)

The Committee noted that no representations had been received in response to public notice of the Council's intention to remove Crabtree Road, Thorpe, Hamm Moor Lane, Addlestone, Pound Road, Chertsey and Kingsley Avenue, Englefield Green from the list of consent streets (those streets in which street trading was permitted with the consent of the Council). It was therefore recommended that the revised list of the remaining consent streets be adopted and advertised in accordance with the statutory requirements. Street trading would be prohibited on all those streets which did not appear on the list, except for those designated as licence streets.

**RECOMMEND that –**

- i) the trading areas shown in Appendix ‘B’ be designated as Consent Streets for the purposes of Schedule 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, all other streets being designated as prohibited streets, excepting those streets which are designated as licence streets; and**
- ii) the necessary public notices giving effect to the designation of the Consent Streets be published in a newspaper circulating in the area.**

276. BEST VALUE - POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION SECTION  
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN - PROGRESS REPORT

(Ref: Minutes of Planning Committee, 19 September 2001, page 308, para. 254)

The Committee received a progress report on the Continuous Improvement Plan of the Policy and Implementation Section (formerly Forward Planning) with specific reference to Business Partnership activities. It was noted that a number of the target implementation dates contained in the Plan

required amendment while the proposed draft Economic Development Plan would now be subsumed within the context of the Community Strategy to be launched in October 2002. Members also approved a new target to secure the publication of six articles per year in the local press relating to Business Partnership activities and events.

**RESOLVED that -**

- i) progress on meeting the targets in the Continuous Improvement Plan be noted;**
- ii) the implementation dates for action be amended as set out below:**
  - a) the target date for actions dependent on the introduction of the Document Management System be amended to September 2002 to reflect the date for its introduction;**
  - b) the target date for implementation of cycle shelters be amended to September 2002 to reflect the timescale for securing Local Transport Plan funding;**
  - c) the target date for adoption of ten School Travel Plans be amended to December 2002 to reflect the level of response from schools;**
  - d) the targets related to Economic Strategy be amended to reflect the change in emphasis due to the forthcoming Community Strategy and the target date be amended to October 2002 to reflect the date for adoption of the Community Strategy; and**
- iii) the new target in respect of the promotion of Business Partnership Activities in the local media be endorsed.**

277. TERM CONTRACT FOR LAND DRAINAGE WORKS

Members noted that the Council's existing term contract for land drainage maintenance and construction works was due to expire on 30 September 2002. The Committee therefore gave its approval to a shortlist of four firms which were to be invited to tender for the new contract. All four companies were on the Council's Select List of Contractors and had undertaken similar types of work for neighbouring Councils.

**RESOLVED that -**

**E. Tobin and Co Ltd, McNicholas Construction Co. Ltd, P.T. Contractors and S.R. Newman be invited to tender for the Council's term contract for land drainage works.**

278. THE HYTHE CENTRE - PROPOSED DOCTORS SURGERY

(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, June 2002, page 148, para. 72)

The Committee considered recovering part of the capital costs of completing the car park, at the new Hythe Centre in Egham through rental income.

The re-provision of the Centre was now nearing completion with the official opening being scheduled for 3 December 2002. However, Members noted that the Doctors Surgery, which was to be located at the rear of the site, was having difficulty in raising funding to finance the completion of the car park, which was not part of the proposed lease to the surgery. The Committee therefore agreed that the Council would fund the completion of the car park and recover the cost of additional capital expenditure through the rent. The costs, which were not expected to exceed £30,000, could be met from the existing capital estimate provision. Negotiations with the Surgery were continuing and no final terms had yet been agreed. In order to maintain the momentum of the project the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer was authorised to settle the details in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

**RESOLVED that –**

**the capital costs of completing the car park at the Hythe Centre initially be met from the approved scheme budget and the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer be authorised to approve detailed terms for the 'rentalising' of the capital costs with the agreement of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.**

279. PAINESFIELD ALLOTMENT SITE, CHERTSEY

(Ref: Minutes of Housing and Community Services Committee June 2002, page 190, para 101)

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 discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 9 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

Members gave consideration to a request from the Housing and Community Services Committee that part of the Painesfield Allotment Site be sold to Apex Housing Association to allow for the decanting of the Roakes Avenue Estate.

The Council had been seeking a solution to the problems associated with PRC housing on the Roakes Avenue Estate for some time. The original intention, subject to the outcome of a formal tenants ballot, had been to transfer the estate to Apex by means of a Small Scale Voluntary Transfer (SSVT) prior to a phased redevelopment. However, in January 2002 the Leisure and Environment Committee had declared part of the neighbouring Painesfield Allotment site surplus to requirements and approved consequential improvements to the Bemonds and St Ann's Allotments, together with the use of the remainder of the Painesfield site as an extension to the adjacent cemetery.

The availability of the Painesfield Site now provided the opportunity for a quicker, less disruptive and more financially advantageous solution to the Roakes Avenue housing problems. Subject to approval of the final sale price, Members agreed that the surplus land at Painesfield should be disposed of to Apex for an affordable housing development into which the Roakes Avenue tenants could be directly transferred. A draft scheme comprising 30 flats and 28 houses had been proposed by Apex which was likely to match the rehousing needs of the estate. The Roakes Avenue site itself, which amounted to approximately 2.8 acres, could then be disposed of in the open market.

Members noted that this course of action would incur costs of approximately £1.5m in respect of demolition, site clearance (including asbestos removal) and the reacquisition of eight properties sold under Right to Buy legislation. Nevertheless, the net gain to the Council, including the cost of the previously agreed allotment improvements and cemetery extension works, was likely to be approximately £1.1m greater than could be achieved through the alternative option of the sale of Painesfield in the open market place and the disposal of Roakes Avenue to Apex. The differential reflected not only the respective land values but also the necessity under the SSVT route to pay Apex a 'dowry' of approximately £500,000. This 'Negative Tenanted Market Value' was based on a calculation which compared the income from rent against expenditure likely to be necessary on repair and improvement over a 30 year period. The use of Painesfield would also avoid the need for a time consuming and complex formal tenant ballot which offered no certainty of outcome. It did not, however, remove the Council's statutory obligation to consult tenants affected by the proposals and consider any representations received.

**RESOLVED that -**

- i) subject to a further report to the Housing and Community Services Committee on the outcome of any consultations required under S.105 of the Housing Act 1985 or otherwise, and a further report to this Committee approving the final sale price, the Committee agree any request which may be made by the Housing Committee to make part of the Painesfield Allotment site (detailed on the plan at Appendix 'C') available to Apex Housing Group for the purposes of relocating the residents from the Roakes Avenue estate;**

- ii) **the Valuer to the Council be authorised to negotiate the acquisition of the eight privately owned properties on the Roakes Avenue Estate, including any properties required to effect a property swap and report back to the appropriate Committee for authority to proceed;**
- iii) **upon final vacation of the Roakes Avenue estate the land be appropriated to the General Fund and a report be brought back to this Committee on the options for the site; and**
- iv) **the cost of acquiring properties and eventual demolition be met from the proceeds of sale of the Painesfield site and the Corporate Management Committee be requested to approve a capital estimate provision for that purpose in a sum not to exceed £1.5m.**

280. HIGH STREET, EGHAM – ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY

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 discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraphs 7 and 8 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee gave consideration to the purchase of the freehold interest in a property in High Street, Egham.

Members noted that the present owner had acquired the freehold of the property through a land swap with the Council during the redevelopment of 9-12 High Street (now known as Charter Place) in the early 1990's. The freeholders had given an undertaking to develop the site in accordance with the overall scheme for the area but were subsequently unable to raise the necessary finance. The Council had therefore taken a long lease at a peppercorn, developed the site and granted an underlease to the freeholders which included the right to purchase the Council's head lease in September 2003 at the cost of construction. However, the owners were now in arrears with the rent and wished to sell the freehold.

In view of the Council's ownership of the adjoining properties with which the premises shared a car park, the yield from an occupying tenant and prospects for future rental and capital growth, Members felt that the Council should acquire the freehold interest in the property. Although the value of the premises had been assessed at £440,000, the freeholders total debt to the Council, including rent arrears, interest thereon and the present value of both the outstanding capital receipt and the rent foregone in the period to September 2003, was such that the acquisition would result in a net payment of only £51,963, including VAT. However, a capital estimate of £453,000 would be required to reflect the full cost of the purchase, including stamp duty.

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) **the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer be authorised, subject to contract and all necessary consents, to acquire the freehold interest of the property in High Street, Egham in the sum of £440,000; and**
- ii) **the Corporate Management Committee be requested to approve a capital estimate of £453,000 (including Stamp Duty) for such purchase.**

281. CHERTSEY DEPOT - LAND AT - LONG LEASEHOLD DISPOSAL

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 discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 7 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee considered granting the Snow and Rock warehouse and retail outlet a long lease on 585 square metres of the adjoining Chertsey Depot site. Members noted that the land, which had previously been declared surplus to requirements, would alleviate some of the parking difficulties at the store and consequent congestion in Fordwater Road. In order that the Council could retain long term control of the land and ensure that it was only used for car parking, the Committee agreed that a 125 year lease should be granted at a premium. The lessee was to be responsible for the removal of all existing buildings and the decommissioning of underground petrol tanks, together with the removal and repositioning of the boundary wall, drainage and resurfacing works.

**RESOLVED that –**

**subject to contract and all necessary consents the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer be authorised to grant to Snow and Rock a 125 year lease of the land shown hatched on Appendix 'D' at a premium in the sum reported and subject to such other terms and conditions as he sees fit.**

282. LAND ADJOINING 2 RUDGE RISE, ADDLESTONE – RELEASE OF COVENANTS

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 discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 7 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee gave consideration to the release of restrictive covenants affecting land adjacent to a former Council owned property in Rudge Rise, Addlestone. Members noted that the property had originally been sold under the Right to Buy scheme subject to a covenant limiting the use of the property to that of a single dwelling house. A similar covenant had been applied to the subsequent sale of a plot of land adjacent to the property. The Council had, however, now been asked to release the covenants to permit the erection of an additional three bedroom detached house on the site.

Recent case law suggested that Councils may not be able to seek a proportion of the development value as consideration for the release of covenants on Right to Buy sales. In this case, however, the adjacent land had been sold by private treaty and was not included in the Right to Buy transfer. Appropriate terms had therefore provisionally been agreed for the release of the covenants imposed both on the Right to Buy transfer and subsequent sale of additional land, subject to the grant of planning consent.

**RESOLVED that –**

**subject to contract and all necessary consents, the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer be authorised to release the covenants in respect of land at 2 Rudge Rise, Addlestone on the terms reported.**

283. CIVIC OFFICES REPROVISION AND NEW COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION PREMISES – ARCHITECTURAL AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES

(Ref: Minutes of the Economic Development Committee 4 March 2002, page 941, para 638 and 30 July 2002).

By reason of special circumstances, namely the need to progress the appointment of consultants for the Addlestone Community Centre reprovion prior to the next meeting of the Committee, the Chairman was of the opinion that this item should be considered as a matter of urgency.

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 discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 8 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee gave consideration to the appointment of architects and associated professional and consultancy practices to progress the reprovion of the Addlestone Community Association premises. The relocation of the Community Centre to part of the Garfield Road car park formed the first phase in the redevelopment of the Civic Offices site. Constructive discussions with Community

Association representatives were ongoing and a timetable had been agreed to settle provisional terms for the new facility. (A summary of the decisions relating to the project to date, as received by the Committee, is attached at Appendix 'E').

The Committee concurred with the recommendation of the Civic Offices Member Working Group that the practice of Fielden Clegg Bradley, which had conducted the initial work on the scheme, should now be appointed to undertake the detailed architectural design and oversee the project. Fielden Clegg Bradley had discharged their initial cash limited commission satisfactorily and had established a good working relationship with Addlestone Community Association representatives. The practice was prepared to offer a competitive fee rate which included liaison with the Community Association and landscape architects work normally undertaken at additional cost. It was noted that commissioning Fielden Clegg Bradley would also shorten the timescale for the project, thereby lessening the scheme's exposure to building cost inflation.

The Committee also agreed to retain Adams Kara Taylor and Max Fordham and Partners in respect of structural and mechanical and electrical engineering services and Burnley Wilson Fish Quantity Surveyors. Subject to final tender prices and outturn costs, the total expenditure on fees for the new Community Centre project, including those for site and soil surveys, building regulations, CDM and a planning application, was likely to amount to nearly £250,000. If the Civic Offices element of the project was progressed, a full procurement exercise, including the placing of a public advertisement in the European Journal, would be undertaken for equivalent services.

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) subject to the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer concluding satisfactory Heads of Terms with representatives of the Addlestone Community Association, the Architectural Practice of Fielden Clegg Bradley be appointed to undertake full architectural services for the proposed new Community Association premises on part of the Garfield Road site at the fee rate reported;**
- ii) Adams Kara Taylor, Structural Engineers of Camden, London, and Max Fordham and Partners, Camden, be retained for structural engineering, mechanical and electrical services respectively, and the Quantity Surveyor, Burnley Wilson Fish of London WC1, be appointed for quantity surveying services at the fee rates reported; and**
- iii) the Corporate Management Committee be asked to approve an initial capital estimate provision of £250,000 in respect of fees for architectural services, structural, mechanical and electrical engineering services, quantity surveying services, appropriate site and soil surveys, planning, building regulations and CDM.**

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 9.10 p.m.)