

Runnymede Borough Council

SPECIAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

30 July 2002 at 7.34 p.m.

Members of the Committee present: Councillors J.R. Furey (Vice-Chairman), A. Alderson, M.J. Brown, P.A. Greenwood, J.E. Haas, C. Knight, P.J. Poole, P.J. Waddell, K.J.T. Walmsley and G.B. Woodger

Members of the Committee absent: None

Councillors Mrs. P.I. Broadhead, A.J. Davis, J.M. Edwards, Mrs. C.E. Gant, Mrs. L.M. Gillham, A.M. Moore, C.J. Norman, Mrs. J. Norman, D.W. Parr, R. Pate, Mrs. E.E. Price, R.J. Ray, B.J. Relph, Ms. C. Simmons, G.J. Thomas and A.P. Tollett also attended.

(Councillor J.R. Furey in the Chair)

200. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Conservative Group had notified the Chief Executive Officer of its wish that Councillors R.K. Habgood and P.C. Elding be removed from the membership of the Committee and that Councillors G.B. Woodger and P.J. Waddell be appointed in their place for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting. Thereafter, Councillors Habgood and Elding 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.

201. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6 June 2002 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

202. CIVIC OFFICES REPROVISION – ARCHITECTS PRESENTATION

(Ref: Minutes of Executive Committee 5 July 2000, page 207, para 139 & 16 May 2001, page 1730, para 882 & the Economic Development Committee 15 November 2001, page 614, para 377 and 14 March 2002, page 941, para 638)

In March 2002 the Committee had agreed that consultants should be engaged to produce an initial design (with costings) for the possible reprovision and relocation of the Civic Offices and the Addlestone Community Association building. Following proper procedures the Officers had appointed Fielden Clegg Bradley in early June and Mr Bradley (Partner) and a colleague now attended to show Members initial drawings and to explain their proposals.

Mr Bradley explained that his proposals saw the Addlestone Community Association (ACA) relocated to the Garfield Road Car Park, with a new Civic Offices being erected on their present site. The site of the existing Civic Offices would be redeveloped as a speculative office development, possibly involving occupation by Surrey County Council.

The new four-storey Civic Offices would be much more open-plan and less cellular than the current building. There would be an emphasis on improving public access and increasing the interface between the Council and its residents. For example, the ground floor would see an open-plan reception area, with a café (open to the public) and an amenity area. The Council Chamber would be on the first floor, with easy public access from the ground, and would be much more flexible than the current chamber such that it could easily be adapted for seminars, presentations, demonstrations etc. The building would utilise glass, wood and other natural materials to provide an environment subject to

natural controls which would incorporate sophisticated natural cooling with some mechanical enhancement. In Mr Bradley's opinion it would be an exemplary best value building, and a landmark for the area.

In response to questions from Members, Mr Bradley agreed that the reprovision of the children's playground had not been included in the brief but he could imagine it being reprovisioned on the other side of Surrey Towers. A provisional sum had been included in the indicative cost estimate. Provision had been made in the space allocation for Safer Runnymede and the Citizens Advice Bureau. Mr Bradley also explained that open access to the public did not obviate the need for security, and syndicate rooms and informal meeting areas would be provided to allow for private or sensitive discussions. The possible noise generated by the atrium and open plan would be countered by the liberal use of wood and the placing of offices above each other to increase noise absorption. White noise barriers could also be installed. Storage provision was included in the office furniture plans rather than being shown on the floor plans. It was also agreed that shower facilities should be incorporated to encourage staff who preferred to cycle, jog or walk to work given that the car parking provision would be slightly reduced. Delivery access could be from either Station Road or Garfield Road. Finally, Mr Bradley pointed out that the building had a pitched roof, rather than a flat roof. This would prevent the water penetration often associated with flat roofs and in addition the drained water would be collected so that it could be recycled for non-drinking purposes.

The Consultants thanked the Members for their wide-ranging questions which had thrown up a number of beneficial ideas which could be incorporated in a revised brief. The discussion having ended, the Committee then considered the financial and programming aspects 'in camera' after making the appropriate resolution.

203. CIVIC OFFICES REPROVISION – BACKGROUND AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Members were reminded of the reasons behind the Council's decision to reprovide the Civic Offices, together with a full history of the decisions taken on this project since June 2000. It was noted that a decision to pursue the various elements of the scheme would require formal capital estimate provision. The Committee was unanimous in agreeing that the scheme should be taken further, although it was recognised that the agreement of the Addlestone Community Association was crucial to its viability. Discussions with the Association were still on-going.

RESOLVED that –

- i) detailed consideration of the work undertaken by the Consultant Architects Fielden Clegg Bradley be referred to the Civic Offices Members Working Group and their deliberations and recommendations be further considered by the Committee, and in view of the potential resource implications, by the Corporate Management Committee, in due course; and**
- ii) the Chief Executive Officer and Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer be authorised to seek to agree provisional terms with the Addlestone Community Association in relation to the surrender of their existing lease, subject to appropriate reprovision on the Garfield Road site, subject to the design, scheme details and overall costs being further considered by Members.**

204. ORBIT – TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS AROUND LONDON

The views of the Committee were sought on a traffic study entitled "Orbit – Transport Solutions Around London". Unfortunately, owing to the timescale involved, it had not been possible to submit this study to the Planning Committee for comment.

The paper examined the current problems and future development of the M25 and attempted to find solutions (or at least improvements) which were compatible with the Government's objectives for transport. The study proposed a combination of travel reduction methods (ie alternatives to the car) and traffic congestion reduction (mainly through financial controls). Members argued that the consultation period was too short, but were advised that this was an on-going study which would allow opportunity for more enhanced consultation in the future.

RESOLVED that –

the comments set out in Appendix 'A' herewith be forwarded to the Government's consultants as the formal response of the Council to "Orbit – Transport Solutions Around London".

205. REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY FOR THE SOUTH EAST

The South East Regional Assembly (SEERA) had produced a draft Regional Transport Strategy for the South East. The Planning Committee had considered the draft Strategy on 17 July and its comments were put to this Committee for consideration. The Committee generally endorsed the comments of the Planning Committee, but strengthened the submissions regarding Policies T3, T5 and T6 which were reflected in the final submission (see Appendix 'B' herewith).

RESOLVED that –

the comments set out in Appendix 'B' be forwarded to the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) as the formal response of the Council to the Draft Regional Transport Strategy for the South East.

206. DRAFT REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY – 2002

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) sought comments on its revisions to the Regional Economic Strategy. This matter had been considered by the Planning Committee, and their observations on the revisions were submitted to this Committee.

The comments of the Planning Committee were endorsed, subject to paragraph 3.10 referring to the need for "effective *integrated* public transport".

RESOLVED that –

- i) **the comments be forwarded to the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) as the formal response of the Council on revisions to the Regional Economic Strategy; and**
- ii) **the comments of the Council on the Regional Transport Strategy be forwarded to SEEDA for information.**

207. URGENT ACTION – STANDING ORDER 42

Members received details of the following action which had been taken after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and also, in the case of item ii), the Chairman of the Corporate Management Committee, under Standing Order 42:

<u>Officer</u>	<u>Action Taken</u>	<u>Central Index No</u>
i) Borough Technical Services Officer	Authorisation for use of Garfield Road Car Park for a Jubilee party on 3 June 2002.	496
ii) Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer	Authorisation to provide legal/administrative drafting services to Surrey County Council in respect of Traffic Orders needed for the Chertsey Revitalisation Scheme.	499

208. KINGS LANE GARAGES, ENGLEFIELD GREEN – DISPOSAL
(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, June 2002, page 150, para 75).

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 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

In June the Committee had instructed the Officers to consider ways and means of reducing the disproportionate loss of value in land earmarked for social housing. Members were advised that the value of land for affordable housing was assessed in accordance with the Total Cost Indicator (TCI) criteria laid down by the Housing Corporation. Scheme Developments Standards, intended to maintain adequate specifications, were also imposed by the Housing Corporation. It was therefore difficult to reduce building costs through reduced building specifications. Runnymede's difficulty was that the local TCI did not reflect the extraordinarily high land values within the Borough. Officers had already raised this issue, with the support of several Housing Associations, with the Housing Corporation but a short-term solution was not envisaged.

The Committee considered the other options for the site but recognised that it was Council policy to make rear garden/garage sites available for affordable housing. The small units provided at Kings Lane would hopefully be occupied in part by single tenants who were currently occupying family sized Council houses elsewhere, thereby freeing those for families on the waiting list. Members therefore agreed that, from the social viewpoint, the proposed sale and development represented good value.

RESOLVED that –

- i) subject to contract and all necessary consents, the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer be authorised to complete the sale of the Kings Lane site to the Peerless Housing Group in the sum of £387,000; and**
- ii) the Committee expresses its concern that the TCI does not properly reflect the extremely high land values in Runnymede and the costs of brownfield development and Officers be instructed to press the Housing Corporation and the Government for appropriate changes to Runnymede's banding to reflect the high costs of development.**

209. BARKER ROAD GARAGES, CHERTSEY – DISPOSAL
(Ref: Minutes of Executive Committee, 2 August 2000, page 356, para, 202)

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 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

In August 2000 the former Executive Committee had resolved that this semi-derelict area should be cleared and made available for social housing. Thames Valley Housing Association (TVHA) had subsequently been chosen as the preferred developer and had designed a scheme for 15 units. However, two houses in Barker Road would have to be demolished to allow access, thereby giving a net gain of 13 units.

The Committee had regard to the various other options available for the site, but recognising that it was Council policy to release such land for affordable housing were satisfied that the TVHA scheme was good value.

RESOLVED that –

- i) subject to contract and all necessary consents the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer be authorised to dispose of the Barker Road Garage site to Thames Valley Housing Association on the terms reported; and**

- ii) **the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer be authorised to acquire the additional lands for transfer to TVHA provided any associated costs are underwritten by the Housing Association.**

210. BLACKHOUSE FARM, THORPE

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 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

A planning application had been received for the redevelopment of Blackhouse Farm, Thorpe. A Section 106 Agreement would accrue benefit to the Council by reason of a new car park and amenities for Thorpe Village Hall. However, in order to proceed with the scheme the developer required a Right of Way (shown on the Agenda's Exempt Appendix '2') to be extinguished. Local Ward Members were in agreement with the proposal, which would remove dilapidated buildings and improve the environment.

RESOLVED that –

after the Section 106 agreement has been completed, and subject to contract and all necessary consents, the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer be authorised to relinquish the parking rights at Blackhouse Farm for consideration of £75,000 or as agreed with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Committee.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 11.15pm)