

Runnymede Borough Council

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

10 March 2005 at 7.30pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors J.R. Furey (Chairman), J.E. Haas (Vice-Chairman), A. Alderson, M.J. Brown, C. Knight, Mrs Y.P. Lay, R.J. Ray, B.J. Relph, Mrs M. Roberts, and C.J. Ruane

Members of the Committee absent: None

Councillors A.J. Davis, J.M. Edwards, Mrs C.E Gant, R.K. Habgood, R. Pate and N. Thewlis also attended for all or part of the meeting.

587 NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Runnymede Independents Group had notified the Chief Executive Officer of its wish that Councillor Mrs E. Gill be removed from membership of the Committee and that Councillor B.J. Relph be appointed in her place for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting. Thereafter Councillor Mrs Gill 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.

588 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 January 2005 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

589 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J.E. Haas declared a personal and prejudicial interest under the Runnymede Code of Conduct for Members in respect of the item concerning the Bourne and Memorial car parks, Virginia Water as he lived adjacent to the site and was Chairman of the Virginia Park Residents Management Board. Councillor Haas therefore withdrew from the room during the discussion of the matter.

Councillor N. Thewlis declared a personal interest under the Runnymede Code of Conduct for Members in respect of the same item owing to the proximity of his home to the site. As Councillor Thewlis did not consider the interest to be prejudicial he remained in attendance while the matter was discussed although, not being a member of the Committee, did not vote thereon.

590 FERNLANDS OPEN SPACE, CHERTSEY - MARKETING EXERCISE

(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, January 2005, page 605, para 456)

Members received details of the development proposals submitted in respect of surplus open space to the rear of Fernlands Close, Chertsey. The bids would normally have been considered in private, following the exclusion of the press and public. However, in this instance, in view of the public interest in the issue it was considered appropriate to deal with the less commercially sensitive matters, principally the design proposals, in open session.

The disposal of the 2.2 acre site had been approved in principle at the previous meeting of the Committee subject to conditions requiring the purchaser of the land to provide a public footpath through the site, provide and equip a childrens play area to the satisfaction of the Council and preserve mature trees on the site, also to the Council's satisfaction. It had been agreed that the development would be restricted to a single building of no more than two storeys, plus ancillaries, in order to preserve the open aspect of the land.

Members now noted that seven tenders had been received for the site from five companies as a result of the subsequent marketing exercise. Three of the proposals had been discounted because they failed to comply with the Council's requirements for the development. Of the four remaining schemes only one, from Rushmon Homes, closely followed the planning brief and properly respected

the privacy of adjoining properties. The design outline located the proposed new building on the site of the country house that had occupied the land until the mid twentieth century, retaining the same aspect to help prevent neighbouring houses being overlooked. The proposal maintained most of the tree screen and provided footpaths throughout the site. A play area was also provided for, although it was possible that this might need to be re-located within the site boundaries. At 1,170m² the development was significantly smaller than any of the other schemes submitted, all of which would have resulted in the loss of woodland and be intrusive to neighbouring properties.

Some Members continued to express the view that the sale of the land should not proceed until there had been an opportunity for further public consultation. However, the Committee felt that the two rounds of consultation already undertaken had been sufficient to clearly establish the views of residents. While Members were mindful of the representations received at the previous meeting, it was noted that the Council was under a wider duty to optimise the use of its assets for the benefit of the whole community. It was, in any event, felt that the Rushmon scheme satisfactorily addressed the principal concerns of residents by its adherence to the planning brief. The Committee therefore agreed that the offer from Rushmon Homes should be accepted subject to the financial terms, which were due to be reported following the exclusion of the press and public, proving to be acceptable. It was emphasised that the planning approval process would present residents with a further opportunity to comment on the acceptability of the proposed development.

RESOLVED that -

subject to contract and to the financial offer being deemed satisfactory, the offer from Rushmon Homes be accepted in preference to the others received.

- 591 SERVICE PLAN 2004/05 - 3RD QUARTER PERFORMANCE
(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, November 2004, page 410, para 329)

Members received details of progress with the Economic Development Service Plan in the third quarter of 2004/05. The Plan served as a basis for monitoring and review of the Committee's objectives as drawn from a variety of sources and set out details of timescales, potential barriers and additional resource requirements as well as corrective action where it was required to improve performance.

The Committee noted that the first units of the final phases of the Chertsey Revitalisation scheme were now being marketed. Members would be invited to the opening of the marketing suite in due course.

- 592 RUNNYMEDE TRAVEL INITIATIVE - BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, November 2004, page 410, para 330)

The Committee was informed that a proposal to fund an expansion of the Yellow School Bus Service through the introduction of a Business Improvement District (BID) had failed to win the support of the majority of businesses balloted on the scheme.

BIDs were a new mechanism designed to provide additional services or improvements in a specific area through a time limited levy to be added to the non-domestic rate. It had been proposed that a BID be established to support the work of the Runnymede Travel Initiative, which, operating in conjunction with the Runnymede Business Partnership, sought to reduce the number of school and business journeys made by car. One of the key elements of the project was the highly successful, pioneering Yellow School Bus initiative which presently served 500 pupils at four local secondary schools. All non-domestic rate payers in the Borough whose premises had a rateable value of more than £350,000 had therefore been polled on whether they should each be required to contribute £7,500 per annum over a five year period to build on the success of the project and maximise modal shift by expanding the service from six to twelve buses. In total 12 of the 53 rate payers balloted had voted in favour of the scheme and 17 against, with two papers being spoilt. As a number of large companies had supported the scheme, the split in terms of the proportion of the rateable value was close but this, in itself, was insufficient to carry the proposal.

Members expressed their disappointment with the outcome, particularly as the BID had been proposed not to fund a core service, as in other areas, but to assist the business community itself through the reduction of peak hour traffic congestion. Although this point had been clearly made in

dialogue with the companies, it was noted that there had been difficulties in gaining access to the appropriate level of management in many of the businesses approached. Officers were currently reviewing the options left open to the Council, such as voluntary contributions, and would report further to the Committee in due course. It was emphasised, however, that there was no intention to pursue a second ballot.

593

CAR PARKING IN ENGLEFIELD GREEN AND OTTERSHAW

(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, November 2004, page 409, para 328)

Members gave consideration to the charging and control regimes in the free car parks at St. Jude's Road and Victoria Street, Englefield Green and Murray Road, Ottershaw in the light of the findings of a recent public consultation exercise.

The car parks presently had a maximum waiting limit of 17 hours, with no return within 7 hours. This was, however, both difficult to enforce and incompatible with the primary purpose of the car parks, namely to provide short stay facilities for local shoppers. Complaints had been received about the situation in all three car parks. The position was particularly acute in Englefield Green where neighbouring garages used the car parks as holding areas for vehicles awaiting repair or sale and the staff of local businesses parked in the car parks all day while at work. This meant that drivers visiting the local shops and other businesses were often unable to find spaces for shorter term parking. Surveys in February 2004 had confirmed that the car parks were frequently full or nearly full throughout most of the working day. The demand for spaces had increased further since that time as the introduction of decriminalised parking enforcement had led to more rigorous enforcement of on street restrictions which limited waiting to 30 minutes. Vehicles also parked in the Murray Road car park for excessively long periods, although in this case surveys indicated that the car park was rarely full.

Following the Committee's preliminary consideration of the matter in November 2004, a public consultation exercise had been undertaken to better establish the parking needs in both locations. This had confirmed that there was an unmet need for short term shoppers parking in Englefield Green but that some all day parking was required for local business employees. A majority of respondents had indicated that they were prepared to pay to park if this resulted in more spaces becoming available, although 82 letters of representation had been received from local employees requesting cheap or free parking.

Members were therefore of the view that there was a need for greater regulation of the two Englefield Green car parks in order to reduce abuse by the garages and provide a balanced provision for longer stay shoppers and some local employees. It was considered that this could best be achieved by the introduction of a Pay and Display charging regime which would be proportionate in cost to those deriving the most benefit. A free initial 30 minute waiting period to encourage short shopping trips would not be practicable because of revenue and enforcement implications. The Council's standard rate of Pay and Display charges would therefore be applied for a six month trial period between 8.00am and 6.00pm on Mondays to Saturdays to see whether charging achieved a greater turnover of cars. This attempt to manage the position through the charging regime was considered to be preferable to penalising any particular type of user by placing limits on waiting hours. Once charges were introduced the data would, however, be available to better establish patterns of demand and usage. An initial report on the first four weeks of the trial would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee, providing an opportunity for immediate review and adjustment if necessary. The capital costs arising from the introduction of charges, estimated at £13,000, could be met from budgetary underspends. If the experiment was discontinued the new Pay and Display machines could be redeployed elsewhere in the Borough. The trial was revenue neutral since the estimated income from parking charges and penalty charge notices would be offset by increases in maintenance costs and business rates.

In order to accommodate those who required longer term parking, the Committee also agreed that Officers should contact residents and businesses in St Jude's Road and Victoria Street during the trial period to establish whether there would be sufficient demand to set aside, at a later date, up to 20% of the parking spaces for contract parking based on the standard rate of £500 per annum. Meanwhile, parents of children attending local schools would be issued with passes permitting free use of the St Jude's Road car park for 30 minutes at the end of the school day. It was anticipated that this would relieve some of the congestion which occurred around the school entrance when children were collected. Similar arrangements operated elsewhere in the Borough.

The position in respect of the Murray Road car park differed because of the more limited demand in the area. There was a need for short term shoppers parking but visitors to the Brook Memorial Hall and employees of local businesses needed to park for longer periods during the day. A large majority of the survey respondents had indicated that they wanted the free parking to be maintained. Given the general availability of spaces, the Committee therefore concluded that there was no action presently required either in terms of restricted parking hours or the introduction of charges. The position would, however, continue to be monitored.

RESOLVED that -

- i) Pay and Display parking be introduced in St Jude's Road and Victoria Street car parks in Englefield Green for a trial period of six months with effect from 1 May 2005;**
- ii) the position at the Murray Road car park be monitored and further reports brought forward as necessary;**
- iii) during the six month trial period referred to in i), Officers be authorised to seek expressions of interest in the principle of reserving contract parking spaces in the St Jude's Road and Victoria Street car parks, with the possibility that this be introduced at a later date;**
- iv) an initial report on the first four weeks of the trial period be presented to the Committee at its meeting on 9 June 2005; and**
- v) the parking pass system for school parents be adopted in the St Jude's Road car park as described above.**

594 ADDLESTONE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION/CIVIC OFFICES REPROVISION - PROGRESS REPORT

(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, September 2004, page 243, para 181)

The Committee received details of progress with the construction of the new Addlestone Community Centre and the preparations for the reversion of the Civic Offices on the site of the existing Centre.

Members noted that there had been some slippage with the Community Centre construction works, principally due to delays in steelwork delivery, the late striking of scaffolding and the delay of detailed drawings from suppliers. Some six weeks had been lost from the 47 week programme as a result. The contractors, Bluestone Plc, had accelerated work on critical areas such as windows, plastering and ceiling partitions in order to bring the project back closer to the original completion date of 11 April, although Members noted that there was no desire to compromise the build quality. The quality of construction to date appeared to be satisfactory and there had been no significant variations or additional cost notifications. Bluestone's site management and site safety procedures had been praised by independent assessors and the traffic management plan was working well with no problems being reported.

The Committee was informed that preparatory work for the Civic Offices element of the project was progressing well. Following a formal procurement exercise and consideration by the cross party Civic Offices Member Working Group, the team of advisors to the scheme, including lead architects, project managers and quantity surveyors was now largely in place. Detailed meetings, briefings and presentations had taken place with the Member Working Group, the Officer Project Group and the project managers. A client brief was being developed and the Member Working Group had provided the architect with a vision based on the following principles.

- Bold, imaginative, flexible, an asset to the community, a good working environment, facilitating high quality services and effective partnering.
- A Civic Offices which reflected best practice in the workplace, infrastructure and working practices.

- Involving, valuing, developing and rewarding staff in their employment and providing a good, safe working environment.

Members noted that a detailed site survey and the plotting of utilities, plant and underground equipment had now been completed and a full soil survey was soon to be undertaken. Visits had been made to a range of recently completed or nearly completed public and other similar buildings in order to identify best practice and design and procurement approaches. The architectural team was now developing design concepts which would, in the first instance, be considered by the Member Working Group. A draft project plan envisaged work on site commencing by the end of 2005 or early 2006.

Given the corporate scope of the Civic Offices project, which extended beyond property matters to service and organisational issues outside the terms of reference of Economic Development, and the need for timely decision making, the Committee recommended the establishment of a time limited six Member Sub-Committee of Corporate Management Committee in order to scrutinise and make recommendations on various elements associated with the scheme. While the political balance of the Council did not necessarily justify the inclusion of a Labour Group Member, it was felt that the Sub-Committee should be constituted on the basis of four Conservatives, one Runnymede Independent and one Labour Member. The detailed terms of reference would be considered at the first meeting of the Sub-Committee. Responsibility for the key property related issues would, however, be retained by the Economic Development Committee with the Corporate Management Committee exercising its usual financial functions.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the progress on the Addlestone Community Association project and Civic Offices reprovision be noted; and**
- ii) the Corporate Management Committee be asked to consider the creation of a Civic Offices Sub-Committee to scrutinise and make recommendations on various elements associated with the Civic Offices reprovision.**

595 ACTION ADDLESTONE PROJECT AND STATION ROAD IMPROVEMENTS - OUTTURN REPORT
(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, March 2004, page 1419, para. 774)

The Committee received a detailed report addressing the outcome of the Action Addlestone project and gave consideration to the lessons that could be derived from the initiative.

Members congratulated Officers on fulfilling the principal objective of the project, which had been to enhance the viability and vitality of Addlestone town centre for the benefit of residents and businesses. This had been achieved by improving both the appearance of the area and its accessibility, particularly for pedestrians. The success of the initiative could be measured by a customer satisfaction survey which indicated substantial public support, not only for the final outcome, but also for the way in which the scheme had been prepared and undertaken.

A wide variety of measures had been employed to make the town more attractive and safer for pedestrians. These included the widening of the footway (at the expense of part of the carriageway) in Station Road, the introduction of improved crossing facilities, works to the Spittles forecourt, the reduction of vehicle speeds through traffic calming, the installation of more attractive paving and street furniture and tree planting. Pedestrian safety had also been enhanced by the provision of new zebra crossings in Garfield Road and improvements to the traffic signals at the Dukes Court junction. The installation of cycle racks had encouraged another environmentally sustainable form of transport while motorists had benefited from the provision of short term parking bays.

The Committee was also of the view that the new and more energy efficient street lighting and uplighters under trees had made Station Road and Garfield Road brighter and safer at night. This improved visibility for Safer Runnymede's CCTV cameras and was expected to contribute to a reduction in the public's fear of crime. Traffic calming in Garfield Road, Crockford Park Road and Corrie Road had reduced average vehicle speeds from 24mph to 18mph, which, it was hoped, would have a beneficial effect on accident rates. The volume of traffic on those roads had also been reduced, by approximately 30%. This appeared to result from a reduction in through traffic rather

than any fall in the number of shoppers visiting the town. A grants programme intended to improve the appearance of the High Street had been reasonably effective, although it was acknowledged that some untidy properties remained. Surrey County Council had been asked to investigate the potential for improvements to the Tesco crossing point, the one significant area of concern highlighted in the feedback.

Members noted that the overall cost of the project had amounted to approximately £920,000, some £73,000 within the original budget. Officers, in consultation with the Member Working Group, had utilised some of the underspend to provide new street furniture and enhanced lighting at a popular seating area on the corner of Station Road/Garfield Road. This extension to the final phase of the project was expected to be completed by the end of May 2005.

The Committee also noted that the project had highlighted a number of issues which would be relevant to similar schemes in the future, including the importance of public consultation. Although extensive consultation had been undertaken throughout, feedback indicated that some residents had still felt that more should have been done. As public consultation was time consuming and expensive, it was felt that a specific strategy and budget should be prepared at the outset in future. Officers had also found that the initial estimates prepared by utility companies for changes to their equipment – which could influence decisions on whether to proceed with a scheme – were often unreliable and disproportionate. Sufficient time also needed to be built into the scheme programme to allow for the delivery of equipment and materials and connection of electrical equipment. There was disappointment that the County Council had requested what were considered to be excessive amounts of additional traffic survey data, despite the project being designed to address its sustainable transport aims. This had resulted in significant extra cost and several months delay. More positively, the Committee acknowledged the benefit of having a project steering group of local Members to guide the initiative and liaise with the local community.

596 BOURNE AND MEMORIAL CAR PARKS, VIRGINIA WATER
(Ref: Minutes of Executive Committee, 21 February 2001, page 1315, para 673)

The Committee received details of development proposals for the Bourne and Memorial car parks and adjoining Network Rail land holdings in Virginia Water. The site, adjacent to the Virginia Water Railway Station, had been the subject of several approaches from supermarket operators over the years and the Council had previously entered into discussions with Network Rail regarding a joint development, albeit with neither party having the resources to progress the matter. Preparation of a planning brief in 2001 had attracted a large number of objections to any development proposals.

Members noted that the Council had, however, now been approached by a substantial agent and developer with draft proposals for a mixed use scheme of supermarket and residential development together with appropriate levels of parking, new station facilities and interchange with disabled access and improvements to the infrastructure and street scene. Given the significant costs involved in working up the proposals, the agent had been granted exclusive negotiating rights for a period of six months in order to allow them to bring forward a detailed scheme. It was noted that this did not place the Council under any obligation to dispose of the land and it would be necessary for the developer to demonstrate that it could meet the best value requirements of Section 123 of the Local Government Act if the Council was ultimately to enter into sole negotiations. It was believed that this could best be achieved by the developer having sole negotiating rights on behalf of Network Rail or bringing other land into the equation which would enhance the overall scheme.

Members, mindful of the Council's policy commitment to optimise the use of its land holdings, authorised the Director of Administration and Leisure to pursue the proposals with a view to a further report to the Committee in due course. The developers were already working up a detailed scheme in preparation for the submission of a planning application following a public consultation exercise. Before pursuing the matter further, however, Officers intended to notify all previous objectors of the proposals. There remained a number of significant issues to address, not least in respect of the two car parks, which collectively generated approximately £61,000 per annum. The parking provision and management issues were among those which needed to be resolved. It was envisaged that this would either result in the retention of future income or possibly a capital equivalent. There was no indication of the expected level of receipt since this would be subject to planning restraints placed on the development and the associated costs of infrastructure improvement.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised to pursue development proposals for the Bourne and Memorial car parks and adjacent land, Virginia Water; and**
- ii) detailed proposals be brought back to the Committee in due course for consideration.**

597 BISHOPSGATE ROAD, ENGLEFIELD GREEN - REVISED APPLICATION FOR A NEW STREET TRADING CONSENT

The Committee gave consideration to a revised application for a Street Trading Consent in Bishopsgate Road, Englefield Green.

Members noted that a Mr S Pasmore had applied to trade at one of two authorised locations on either side of the Fox and Hounds Public House, selling cold drinks, tea, coffee and sandwiches, the latter to be prepared on site. The trader proposed to operate from 10.00am to 6.30pm on Wednesday to Saturdays inclusive between 4 May and 31 August 2005, suggesting that he would actually finish by 4.30pm on most of the trading days, or earlier if there was insufficient custom. An area of 8ft would be required to trade. This represented a significant reduction in scale from an initial request which had been withdrawn prior to consideration at the previous meeting of the Committee.

Extensive consultation on the revised application had been undertaken with a range of interested parties including relevant service department Officers, Ward Members, the Highway Authority, the Crown Estate, which had extensive land holdings in the vicinity, and Surrey Police. This had highlighted a number of concerns and objections, not least being the view of the Police that the presence of a trader might, by attracting youths to the area, give rise to anti-social behaviour and theft from customer vehicles. It had also been suggested that the presence of the trader would potentially exacerbate traffic congestion and reduce the number of available parking spaces in the area. Other issues raised included the safety of road users and pedestrians on an already busy stretch of road, particularly as customers were liable to queue in or very close to the carriageway. Similar problems would arise if customers remained in the vicinity to consume their food. There was also the potential for increased litter.

There was a view amongst some Members that these were sufficient grounds not to support the application. It was recognised, however, that the trader, in revising the application, had gone some way to addressing the concerns. Restrictions had been placed on the days and hours of trading (which would take place in daylight only), the space required and the range of food on offer. The standard conditions of a street trading consent made provision for the collection and removal of litter by the trader. On balance the Committee, mindful of the Human Rights considerations and the fact that trading had previously taken place at the site with no apparent difficulties, was therefore prepared to grant the consent on the terms requested. The consent could be varied or revoked at any time if necessary and the four month duration would give an opportunity to demonstrate whether the concerns raised had been well founded. The renewal of the consent could be withheld if problems arose in that time.

RESOLVED that -

a Street Trading Consent be granted to Mr S Pasmore to trade in Bishopsgate Road, Englefield Green between the hours of 10.00am to 6.30pm from 4 May 2005 to 31 August 2005, from Wednesdays to Saturdays inclusive.

598 REFERRALS FROM HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

By reason of special circumstances, namely the need to secure authority for disposal of the relevant parcels of land prior to the next meeting of the Economic Development Committee, the Chairman agreed that the following referrals from the Housing and Community Services Committee should be considered as a matter of urgency.

i) Roakes Avenue Estate

At its meeting on 9 March 2005 the Housing and Community Services Committee had declared the land at the Roakes Avenue Estate not previously transferred to the Apex Housing Association to be surplus to requirements. The construction of the Painesfield housing scheme, into which the Roakes Avenue tenants were due to be transferred, was now well advanced and arrangements needed to be made for the marketing and disposal of the Roakes Avenue site if it was to be redeveloped upon the scheduled vacation of the properties in early 2006.

RESOLVED that -

the disposal of the remainder of the land shown outlined in bold on the map at Appendix 'A' be approved and the Borough Valuer be authorised to commence marketing of the site.

ii) Wapshott Road Estate Redevelopment Proposal

At the same meeting the Housing and Community Services Committee had recommended the phased disposal of the Wapshott Road Estate to the Apex Housing Group in order to facilitate the redevelopment of the site. Members noted that the disposal would be subject to the award of planning consent for the development proposals.

RESOLVED that -

in the event that planning consent is given, the phased disposal of the land to Apex Housing Group be approved and the Director of Administration and Leisure and Director of Housing and Community Services be authorised to act accordingly.

iii) Disposal of Property at 379 Stroude Road, Virginia Water

The March meeting of the Housing and Community Services Committee had also recommended the disposal of a vacant three bedroomed detached property at 379 Stroude Road, Virginia Water. The premises required at least £40,000 of major repairs and it was considered that it would be more appropriate to dispose of the property, which had an approximate market value of £400,000, and recycle the receipt for the provision of additional affordable housing. The funds would be most effectively utilised in partnership with a Registered Social Landlord which could draw in Government grants and access borrowing.

RESOLVED that -

the disposal of the property be authorised for a sum of not less than £350,000.

599 LAND ADJACENT TO ENGLEFIELD GREEN CEMETERY, BLAYS LANE - APPROPRIATION
(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, September 2004, page 246, para 185)

At its meeting in September 2004 the Committee had approved the disposal of land adjoining Englefield Green cemetery. Members now agreed that the site, currently held under general powers, should be appropriated to planning purposes (which specifically included development or re-development) in order to afford the Council and its successors in title greater protection in respect of covenants attached to the land. No representations had been received in response to the statutory public notice of the intended appropriation which had been previously authorised by the Director of Administration and Leisure with the agreement of the Chairman under Standing Order 42.

RESOLVED that -

in accordance with Section 122 Local Government Act 1972, the land adjoining Englefield Green Cemetery, Blays Lane shown on the Plan at Appendix 'B' be appropriated to planning purposes within the meaning of the Planning Acts 1990.

600 PROPOSED HYTHE PARK - PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESULTS

(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, September 2004, page 242, para 180)

The Committee received details of the outcome of an extensive public consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the proposed new Park and improvements to four other open spaces in the Hythe area.

Members noted that a series of proposals, emanating from previous rounds of consultation, had been put forward in relation to the Park, the Pooley Green and Charta Road Recreation Grounds, Bishops Way Open Space and land to the rear of the Hythe Centre. A total of 383 people had participated in the exercise over a period of six days in four different venues. More than 4,000 opinions had been expressed on the various proposals and a further 1,100 suggestions made. The results were very encouraging and supportive and had enabled Officers to draw up a schedule of works and improvements which was due to be submitted to the Leisure and Environment Committee for approval. Where possible the objections to individual elements of the scheme had been addressed, although it was not practicable to do so in all cases without compromising the project as a whole.

Significant concern had, however, been expressed in connection with proposals for teen shelters at the Park and Pooley Green Recreation Ground with 62% and 56% respectively rejecting the idea. Security was a major issue and there appeared to be a perception that the provision of youth facilities and the opening up of the Park would lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour. The teen shelters would therefore not be installed at present, although the Police and Safer Runnymede, both of whom had been consulted on the proposals, felt that such a provision on the Pooley Green Recreation Ground might be appropriate in the future. Officers would therefore monitor the situation and could revisit the idea if necessary. The response to the teen shelters contrasted with around 90% support for multi-use games areas for younger children on both sites. Further consultation would be undertaken with mother and toddler groups, youth clubs and schools to establish the type of equipment to be installed in each play area.

Subject to the approval of the Leisure and Environment Committee, the next stage would be to establish detailed costs for the total package of proposals, with individual elements prioritised depending on the available budget. Some £300,000 recycled from the sale of land in Pooley Green Road and the lease of the new Hythe Centre, together with an estimated £100,000 funded by Woodland Environmental, would be supplemented by the capital programme provision for the refurbishment of the Pooley Green Recreation Ground play area and additional monies which the Friends of Hythe Park Group was able to lever in. It was hoped that the Pooley Green Recreation Ground might be self financing because the levelling and perimeter landscaping of the site would possibly give rise to additional funding from Woodland Environmental. Ecological studies would need to be carried out to accompany the planning application for the Park and Officers were in discussions with Surrey Wildlife Trust in order to establish the most cost effective way of undertaking them.

601 URGENT ACTION - STANDING ORDER 42

Members noted details of the following action which had been taken after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee under Standing Order 42.

<u>Officer</u>	<u>Action Taken</u>	<u>Central Index No.</u>
Director of Administration and Leisure	* Agreement to i) make a grant of £25,000 to Egham Swan Sanctuary upon their vacation of Pooley Green Allotments; and ii) extend the date of the Swan Sanctuary's Notice to Quit until 30 October 2005	571
Director of Administration and Leisure	Approval of the siting of temporary surgery facilities on land to the rear of the Hythe Centre, subject to the agreement of detailed terms.	572
Director of Administration and Leisure	Agreement to advertise the intention to appropriate land adjacent to Englefield Green Cemetery, Blays Lane to planning purposes.	573

* in conjunction with the Chairman of the Corporate Management Committee.

602 CIVIC OFFICES MEMBER WORKING GROUP - MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Civic Offices Member Working Group held on 27 January and 17 February 2005, attached at Appendices 'C' and 'D' respectively, were received and noted.

603 ACTION ADDLESTONE MEMBER WORKING GROUP - MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Action Addlestone Member Working Group held on 8 November 2004 and 17 January 2005, attached at Appendices 'E' and 'F' respectively, were received and noted.

604 FERNLANDS OPEN SPACE, CHERTSEY - EVALUATION OF OFFERS

(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, January 2005, page 605, para 456)

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 Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

Having earlier in the meeting given consideration to the design proposals in respect of the Fernlands Open Space, Members now received details of the accompanying financial offers. This enabled the Committee to confirm the disposal of the land to Rushmon Homes as it had submitted the most financially favourable bid in addition to the best development outline.

Officers gave assurances that the conditions previously placed on the development would be secured over the long term in accordance with the wishes of the Committee and the best interests of local residents.

RESOLVED that -

the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised to dispose of the land to Rushmon Homes on the terms reported, subject to planning permission and such other terms and conditions as he sees fit.

605 CIVIC OFFICES REPROVISION - POTENTIAL OCCUPIERS

(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, September 2004, page 243, para 181)

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 received details of negotiations with public sector organisations interested in occupying office space at the new Civic Offices. The phased redevelopment envisaged a footprint of approximately 60,000 square feet which provided the opportunity to enhance the delivery of services to residents through co-location with other public agencies. The grouping of services in this manner, consistent with Government aspirations, was one of the key objectives of the project.

Members were therefore pleased to note that Surrey Police had recently confirmed its desire to lease 10,000 square feet in the new offices. The Police Service, which had agreed a £10,000 contribution to architects fees, had expressed a desire to co-locate with the Safer Runnymede Unit and have a presence in the ground floor reception area. Heads of Terms were currently being settled with a view to concluding a formal agreement. Detailed proposals would be placed before the Committee in due course. Ongoing negotiations were also taking place with Surrey County Council, which was due to dispose of part of its freehold property portfolio in connection with its scheme for a new County Hall. However, the County Council's requirements for office space within the Borough were unlikely to be confirmed for some months and it was therefore not in a position to contractually commit to co-location at this stage. In view of the space requirements of both this Authority and the Police, the first phase of the redevelopment was, in any case, unlikely to be able to satisfy the County Council's Area Office needs. Officers were, nevertheless, continuing to pursue the possibility that the Addlestone Library could be relocated into the ground floor of the new facility with potential consequential enhancements for other services.

The Committee noted that discussions had also taken place in the Member Working Group regarding other potential uses of the new offices. These had led to the Group indicating that it would not favour the provision of a public cafe/refreshment facility or crèche. Space consultants had already identified the needs and views of visitors to the offices whilst a survey was being undertaken amongst staff to gauge their priorities in terms of facilities. No commitments had yet been entered into with regard to any form of co-location and all matters of substance would be reported to Members at the appropriate time.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the current position be noted and the actions taken to date endorsed; and**
- ii) Officers be instructed to bring further reports to subsequent meetings of the Committee.**

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 10.34pm)