

Runnymede Borough Council

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

13 May 2004 at 7.30 p.m.

Members of the Committee present: Councillors J.R. Furey (Chairman), J.E. Haas (Vice-Chairman), A. Alderson, M.J. Brown, A.J. Davis, D.P. Easton, R.J. Ray, B.J. Relph, P.J. Waddell and K.J.T. Walmsley.

Members of the Committee absent: None

Councillors J. Broadhead, Mrs P.I. Broadhead, Mrs L.M. Gillham, C.J. Norman, Mrs E.E. Price and Ms C.M. Simmons also attended.

889. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Conservative Group had notified the Chief Executive Officer of its wish that Councillor Ms C.M. Simmons be removed from membership of the Committee and that Councillor P.J. Waddell be appointed in her place for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting. Thereafter Councillor Ms Simmons 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.

890. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 March 2004 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

891. HIGHWAY SHRUB BED MAINTENANCE

(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, March 2004, page 1442, para 797)

At the request of the Leisure and Environment Committee, Members considered whether the Council should continue to undertake the maintenance of highway shrub beds, which it currently did on behalf of the County Council in order to be able to control the quality and amenity value of the work.

The Committee noted that the expiry of the existing Grounds Maintenance contract in December 2004 presented an opportunity for Runnymede to withdraw from the highway shrub bed work and realise savings of £61,500 per annum. The County Council had confirmed that it would be willing to assume responsibility for the work if requested. If it did so, it would also wish to regain the scheme for the sponsored maintenance of roundabouts, which cost a further £5,000 per annum.

Members recognised that the transfer of the services would represent a significant contribution towards the Council's savings target. Given the lack of funding available to the County Council for the purpose there were, however, concerns that it would be likely to lead to a reduction in service standards. It was anticipated that some shrub beds would be removed and grassed over or paved. The Committee was therefore of the view that the present arrangements should be retained in order to preserve a simple but visible enhancement to the quality of life in the Borough for both residents and visitors.

**RESOLVED that -**

**highway shrub bed maintenance continue to be managed by the Borough Council and retained in the new Grounds Maintenance contract.**

892. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT - FUNDING FOR THE RUNNYMEDE TRAVEL INITIATIVE  
(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, September 2003, page 636, para. 298)

The Committee received a detailed report examining the potential for the development of a Business Improvement District (BID) to assist with the funding of the Runnymede School Travel Initiative.

The Local Government Act 2003 was introducing BIDs as a new means of promoting partnerships between local authorities and businesses in order to provide additional services or improvements in a specific area. Projects were to be funded by a time limited levy to be added to the non domestic rate and retained for local initiatives based either on a specific geographical area or focused on the needs of a particular business sector. The business community, or other relevant sector, identified the project to be supported following a ballot amongst those companies likely to benefit from the scheme, although implementation would be in consultation with the Council. Proposals had to be approved by a majority of those businesses voting, both in simple numerical terms and also by rateable value of the hereditaments. The potential for a BID to support the Runnymede Travel Initiative, and specifically the Yellow Bus element of the project, had originally been identified by the Committee at its meeting in September 2003.

The Travel Initiative operated in conjunction with the Runnymede Business Partnership and sought to reduce the number of school and business journeys made by car. A key feature was the provision of American style Yellow Buses which currently served Magna Carta, Fullbrook and Jubilee High Schools. The scheme had been well received by pupils, parents and schools and had achieved significant modal shift away from the car on the school run. The £228,000 annual cost for a 6 bus service was met from fares, business sponsorship and, increasingly, S.106 developer contributions. Whilst this was likely to be sufficient to sustain existing levels of service, S106 monies could not be relied upon to support the further growth of the scheme. Officers were therefore investigating various alternative sources of funding with a view to securing the long-term future of the initiative. A BID would provide the opportunity to build on the success of the pilot project and maximise modal shift by funding an expansion to 12 buses. The net cost for a 12-bus scheme supported solely by a BID (excluding schools contributions and sponsorship) was estimated at £320,000 pa.

The Committee was therefore of the opinion that preparatory work should be undertaken with a view to establishing a BID in support of the Yellow Bus service. It was felt that the BID should encompass the 100 largest organisations – both public and private sector – in the borough, as measured by the number of employees. This recognised the impact of the employees on the local road network and the benefits the employers would derive if congestion was eased by fewer school related car journeys at peak times. Consideration would need to be given to the application of the levy if it was ultimately approved, but it was expected that there would be a flat rate of £5,000 per organisation or a pro rata contribution to reflect the business rate bill. The Guidance suggested that the first stage of the process, before proceeding to a formal ballot, should be to obtain the support for such a ballot from at least 20% of the ratepayers affected by the proposal. An initial informal approach by the Business Partnership to 50 major companies in order to gauge support for a BID had elicited relatively little response either for or against the proposal. The consultation had, however, been poorly targeted and lacked adequate supporting material. Members were confident that had the exercise been properly resourced, it would have exceeded the recommended threshold. Evidence from the planning process suggested that companies recognised the value of the Travel Initiative and were prepared to contribute accordingly. It was therefore agreed that rather than a two stage process, it would be more pragmatic to move directly to a formal ballot, with guidance material supplied, at the appropriate time.

Members emphasised that the BID proposal would not be solely a Council led initiative. It would be necessary to form a board with representatives from the Business Partnership and other interested parties in order to oversee the scheme, from the development of the initial business plan through to implementation and post project review. It was envisaged that the concept of the BID would, in the first instance, be promoted principally by the Business Partnership with the Council concentrating on the administration of the ballot. A key part of the Business Plan would be an assessment of the risks and uncertainties. These could include factors such as funding shortfalls, the failure of contractors to deliver and the loss of key personnel.

**RESOLVED that –**

**the preparatory work to establish a BID to support the Yellow Bus Service be commenced with the creation of a formal partnership with the Runnymede**

**Business Partnership and other interested parties, with a view to balloting the top 100 organisations based upon the number of employees.**

893. SCHOOL TRANSPORT DRAFT BILL

The Committee gave consideration to a draft School Transport Bill issued by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The draft bill contained proposals for changes in the law to give a limited number of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) the freedom to trial new approaches to school transport tailored to meet local needs.

Members noted that the existing arrangements required LEAs to provide free transport for pupils where it was considered necessary to facilitate attendance at school. Now, however, it was proposed that LEAs running pilot schemes could make whatever travel arrangements they considered appropriate, for which a charge could be levied. While the main purpose would be to enable pupils to attend school, schemes would also be expected to reduce car use on the home to school journey. The Government hoped that there would be efficiencies from close working between health, education, social services and local transport provision. It was envisaged that applications for pilot schemes would have to be submitted by October 2005 with schemes due to commence in September 2006. Funding was to be derived from the existing sources available to local authorities to support school bus provision.

The Council was already committed to reducing the number of car related school journeys, being heavily engaged in the Runnymede Travel Initiative (RTI) which was responsible for the introduction of American style yellow school buses and also sought to encourage pupils to walk or cycle to school. Members therefore endorsed the principles contained in the draft bill. There was, however, concern that the bill, as drafted, enabled schemes only to be promoted by LEAs. This appeared to be recognition of the fact that initiatives would draw upon LEA funds for transport provision. This approach did not allow other authorities the opportunity to introduce pilot schemes and was thus liable to preclude some innovative solutions. The type of scheme offered in Runnymede would only be able to proceed with LEA agreement. The RTI project had, to date, operated without any such formal agreement, but in consultation with, and the partnership of, several local schools. Members therefore felt that strong representations should be made requesting that the Bill be amended to allow other authorities or groupings to operate pilot schemes. Formal representations would be made to Ministers and the Local Government Association and Officers were asked to meet directly within DfES Officials. Details of the yellow bus scheme would be supplied to the Department. In the event of a favourable response, it was agreed that the Council should enter into initial discussions with the DfES with a view to the development of a pilot scheme in Runnymede based upon the yellow bus project.

The Committee was also of the view that pump-priming funds needed to be made available to the pilot authorities in order to develop new arrangements. It was noted that the Local Government Association had already challenged the assumption that implementation of the measures in the Bill would be cost-neutral, particularly in the early stages of a pilot when start up costs would be incurred. Members also expressed the hope that the focus of the proposals could be widened to include the health sector as well as education.

**RESOLVED that -**

- i) the comments set out above be forwarded to the DfES as the formal response of the Council to the draft School Transport Bill;**
- ii) Officers be instructed to seek a meeting with the DfES in order to make representations regarding the amendment of the draft Bill so as to permit the operation of pilot schemes by Councils other than Local Education Authorities;**
- iii) formal representations be made both to Ministers and the Local Government Association regarding the inclusion of non education authorities in any future funding arrangements; and**
- iv) in the event of a favourable response to the representations, initial discussions be undertaken with the DfES to develop a pilot scheme in Runnymede.**

894. QUALITY BUS PARTNERSHIP

(Ref: Minutes of Corporate Management Committee, December 2003, page 114, para 558)

The Committee received details of proposals for the establishment of a Quality Bus Partnership between the County Council, Borough Council, local bus operators and other interested stakeholders. The purpose of the Partnership, which was due to be launched in the summer, would be to encourage joint working to enhance bus service provision, focusing initially on Route 441, which ran along the Englefield Green - Egham - Staines axis. The route served a well defined catchment area and presently offered four buses per hour. The provision of a quality service would not only provide a valuable transport link for residents, employees and students, but also help to promote modal shift from the private car to public transport. This would bring a variety of benefits, including a reduction in traffic congestion and air and noise pollution and the enhancement of trade and tourism. The initiative would also help to alleviate social exclusion in the Englefield Green area. It was possible that the scheme might be extended to other areas of the Borough at a later stage if the pilot proved to be successful.

Members noted that the potential improvements were likely to include area and route based marketing and publicity, low floor easy access buses, raised kerbs to help passengers board and alight, fare and ticketing initiatives, traffic management initiatives such as bus stop clearways and bus priority measures, and electronic information, including journey planning facilities and, possibly, real time passenger information. Funding was expected to be obtained from Surrey Local Transport Plan monies, Section 106 developer contributions secured by the County Council, and the bus operators.

The Committee placed particular emphasis on the need for better integration between bus and rail services. To this end it was felt that Network Rail should be approached with a view to participation in the initiative. Members recognised that the Partnership was still in its formative stages. The intention was that it would rapidly develop in scope and a number of suggestions for enhancement, including the extension of the length of route covered to include Slough, would be pursued further in discussions with the other stakeholders. The Partnership Memorandum still required a number of minor changes in order to clarify the responsibilities of the local authorities. Officers would also press the bus operators to give an undertaking that all buses would stop wherever they were scheduled to do so.

**RESOLVED that -**

**the objectives of the Quality Bus Partnership, set out at Appendix 'A', be endorsed subject to clarification of the responsibilities of the local authorities, and the Council participate in the initiative.**

895. AIRTRACK - FUNDING OF CONSULTANCY WORK

(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, March 2003, page 1137, para 699)

The Committee gave consideration to a request for a further contribution of £3,000 to support the work of the Forum promoting the proposed Airtrack rail link to Heathrow Airport.

Members recalled that the Airtrack initiative was intended to encourage access to Heathrow by rail from the south and west through the establishment of achievable and affordable rail connections, largely based on the existing rail network and including lines through Runnymede. It also offered the possibility of park and ride facilities in the Borough in conjunction with a stopping point. A fast, regular and reliable service would promote the transfer from road travel to rail for both airport employees and airline passengers, thereby easing traffic congestion and enhancing the economic development potential in the area.

The Council, which was a member not only of the Forum but also its Steering Group, had previously approved funding of £10,000 for the Forum to undertake an Outline Business Case (OBC) to consider the technical and financial viability of the Airtrack concept. The OBC had demonstrated that Airtrack performed strongly within each of the criteria adopted by the Strategic Rail Authority and was now to be used to investigate the options for raising private and public capital for the scheme. It would also be used as a basis for lobbying to secure the incorporation of Airtrack into Government policy, to promote the scheme to the Strategic Rail Authority for inclusion in programming of future work and to bring it to the attention of other interested parties. The Forum would continue to work

closely with the South East England Development Agency and the South East England Regional Assembly, both of whom had expressed strong support for the proposals. It was noted that the Forum would now need to undertake research work to encourage the project to be taken forward. This required continued funding from Forum members for lobbying activity, the production of promotional material and administrative overheads.

The Committee was of the opinion that the Airtrack initiative remained a key focus of the Council's policy objective to improve public transport provision in the area. Members therefore concurred with the view of the Planning Committee that the funding request should be met in full in order to maintain the momentum of the project. The contribution could be funded from within existing budgets. Members recognised that the number of stopping points on the proposed route was partly determined by the need to maintain commercially attractive journey times. Nevertheless, the Council would continue to press for at least some services to stop in Egham, in addition to Chertsey. Efforts would also be made to minimise the disruption to local traffic caused by lengthy closures of level crossings.

**RESOLVED that -**

**the Airtrack Forum be advised that this Council will provide £3,000 to support work on the Airtrack project, subject to funding commitments from the other parties.**

896. CROCKFORD PARK ROAD/CORRIE ROAD/GARFIELD ROAD, ADDLESTONE - TRAFFIC CALMING SCHEME

(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, March 2004, page 1419, para 774)

The Committee welcomed the findings of a traffic survey which suggested that the recent introduction of road tables in Garfield Road, Crockford Park Road and Corrie Road had significantly reduced vehicle speeds. Prior to the introduction of the traffic calming measures the area had experienced difficulties with speeding motorists and there had been a number of accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists. However, it had now been established that the proportion of vehicles exceeding the speed limit in Garfield Road had fallen from 40% in March 2000 to just 1% following the completion of the traffic calming scheme and associated works. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed had also reduced from 35mph to 25mph. Vehicle flows, meanwhile, had fallen from an average 24 hour figure of 6,257 to 5,428. Surveys due to be undertaken in Crockford Park Road and Corrie Road were expected to produce similar results. While it was not yet possible to calculate the effect on accident rates, it appeared that the reduction in traffic speeds, together with improved pedestrian crossing facilities and new street lighting, would make a valuable contribution to road safety. It was noted that the County Council would now be able to remove Garfield Road from its anti-speeding poster rota.

897. RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS - RELEASE OF

The Committee gave consideration to the arrangements for the release of restrictive covenants in respect of former Council housing sold under the Right to Buy scheme. The Council had always, as a matter of course, included a covenant restricting the use of Right to Buy properties to that of a single dwelling house. Given the strength of the housing market there were, however, an increasing number of applicants seeking to remove the covenants to enable the construction of an additional property within the garden area of their site. It was decided to authorise Officers to agree and document such releases. The removal of a covenant would only be pursued where planning consent had been obtained and following consultation with the local Ward Members.

As the covenants had originally been imposed to facilitate good estate management, any relaxation would primarily be decided on estate management principles. Any receipts, however, would represent windfall income not envisaged in the capital programme.

**RESOLVED that -**

**the Borough Valuer be authorised to negotiate appropriate terms for the release of restrictive covenants over former Council houses in appropriate cases, and the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, to approve the action and complete the appropriate documentation.**

898. WASPE FARM CAR PARK, EGHAM - DISPOSAL OF LAND  
(Ref: Minutes of Highways Committee, September 1987, page 156, para 422 and Economic Development Committee, January 2004, page 1188, para 649)

The Committee agreed that the overflow section of the Waspe Farm Car Park should be declared surplus to requirements with a view to its disposal for a mixed tenure residential scheme.

Members noted that the land provided 33 parking spaces which were used as overflow provision for the main Waspe Farm Car Park. Surveys suggested that it tended to be used mostly between 11.00am and 4.00pm on weekdays by a maximum of 13 vehicles at any one time. Annual income from parking charges at the site amounted to approximately £5,000. An outline planning application to develop the adjoining land now presented an opportunity to merge the two sites in order to pursue a comprehensive residential development. Officers were currently in preliminary negotiations with the developers, but the intention was to achieve approximately 10-12 affordable housing units to rent. The site would be serviced from Stoneylands Road and the access could be extended to land at the rear of 50 Rusham Road, where the owner was seeking consent to bring an empty property back into use as a house in multiple occupation.

The Committee acknowledged that the loss of the overflow car park would result in an underprovision of up to 20 parking spaces at peak hours if the forthcoming introduction of decriminalised parking enforcement led to the expected increase in demand for off street parking. It was felt, however, that this would be outweighed by the community benefit to be derived from the provision of affordable housing. Members noted that the parking shortfall would be partly offset by the recent conversion of 18 contract bays into short stay places in the Precinct Extension car park.

**RESOLVED that -**

**the overflow section of the Waspe Farm Car Park identified in Appendix 'B' , be declared surplus to requirements with a view to its disposal for a mixed tenure residential scheme.**

899. 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	Authorisation to acquire a property in Harrow Close, Addlestone in respect of the Roakes Avenue redevelopment scheme. The purchase price of £140,000 had been supplemented with an additional £77,000 towards an equivalent replacement property for the occupiers. The additional sum had been secured by way of a legal charge on the replacement premises.	546
Director of Administration and Leisure	Grant of a 15 year lease in respect of retail premises at 15 Station Road North, Egham.	547

900. CIVIC OFFICES REPROVISION - OPTIONS  
(Ref: Minutes of the Executive Committee 5 July 2000, page 207, para. 139 and 16 May 2001, page 1730, para 882 and Economic Development Committee, November 2001, page 614, para 377, March 2002, page 941, para 639, July 2002, page 338, paras 202 and 203, September 2002, page 521, para 283, March 2003, page 113, page 708, November 2003, page 1011, para 482, January 2004, page 1182, para 645 and March 2004, page 1418, para 785 and Corporate Management Committee, October 2002, page 605, para 342(B))

The Committee received and considered a detailed report reappraising the options for the reprovion or refurbishment of the Civic Offices.

Bearing in mind the passage of time since the Council's decision in 2002, it was appropriate to re-examine the available options and their costs in order to confirm that the Council was still pursuing the most appropriate course.

The Civic Offices had been built in the early 1960's with a major extension on the Station Road frontage in 1984. The old wing had outlived its design life, and there was concern that the concrete panel supports might fail, a number of pieces of concrete having already detached from the building. The Council had determined in July 2002 that the shortcomings of the building were such that refurbishment or re-provision was required. In March 2002, the Council had agreed that new premises should be provided by way of a phased redevelopment of the entire Civic Offices site, including the Addlestone Community Association (ACA) premises. The first phase of this was the relocation of the ACA headquarters to the Garfield Road car park. Work on this had recently commenced, and was expected to be complete by March 2005. The Council could still, however, decide to modify its chosen course of action for the remainder of the project.

The Committee reaffirmed that the Council would not be justified in incurring the substantial cost and disruption of works necessary to extend the life of the old wing by five years or more, particularly as this would result in minimal improvement to working patterns or conditions, and could not provide a guarantee of either longevity or protection against further failure of the concrete and its supports.

The Committee considered the following options together with the associated capital and revenue costs.

- Phased redevelopment using ACA site for a new Civic Offices.
- Rebuilding the old wing and refurbishing the 1984 extension, with two different levels of refurbishment considered.
- Purchase of new premises elsewhere in the Borough, and the sale of the existing site.
- Lease of new premises elsewhere in the Borough, and the sale of the existing site.

All the options involved significant capital and/or revenue expenditure. The option of leasing new premises would realise a net capital receipt, but the annual cost of the lease would far exceed the revenue burden of any of the other options, even after taking into account the investment value of the capital.

The updated figures before the Committee showed that phased redevelopment, using the ACA site to provide new Civic Offices, was still the most cost-effective option. The Council could also provide the new building before moving out of the old, whereas either of the rebuilding/refurbishment options would involve substantial disruption to services. Ideally, joint provision with Surrey County Council or another public agency would utilise part of the site of the existing Civic Offices but in any event another suitable user could be found. The land receipt from this would offset the cost of the re-provided Civic Offices. It was also hoped that government funding may be obtained for the renewal of the Safer Runnymede facility.

The Committee therefore reaffirmed this course of action as the favoured option, and agreed that the next step should be to obtain consultancy advice in order to advise on effective working arrangements, the requirements for civic/democratic accommodation, and the relationship of functions within the building to ensure the most effective service to the public. A supplementary revenue estimate of £30,000 would be required for this purpose. Other consultancy advice would be necessary as the project progressed. Officers would report again to the Committee on the appointment of a project manager and other consultants, and as necessary with a review of the capital programme provision.

Although the Council did not lightly accept additional burdens on its financial strategy, the Committee accepted that the circumstances made re-provision necessary. As was now usual, the Council faced an environment of medium-term change and uncertainty in structure, functions and service delivery mechanisms. It would therefore be important to design the new facility to provide maximum flexibility of use and layout, and to facilitate the lease or disposal of surplus space. This would ensure that the Council Tax payer received maximum value for money.

**RESOLVED that -**

- i) the previous policy decisions that the Civic Offices be recognised as needing refurbishment or re-provision (Minute 139 of 2000) and that the way forward be provision of new offices by phased redevelopment of the existing site (Minute 639 of 2002) be re-affirmed;**
- ii) consultants be engaged to advise on optimum working patterns, work-flow, co-location and other matters necessary to inform a project managers brief at an estimated cost of £30,000 and Corporate Management Committee be asked to approve the necessary supplementary revenue estimate; and**
- iii) a further report be made with a view to authorising the appointment of a project manager and other consultants, and reviewing the capital programme provision.**

901. WEATHERALL CLOSE, ADDLESTONE - DRAINAGE EASEMENT

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.

The Committee approved the grant of an easement across housing land in order to facilitate a drainage connection for a proposed development in Weatherall Close, Addlestone. The receipt would be utilised for affordable housing purposes.

**RESOLVED that -**

**the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised to grant an easement to Peak Homes in respect of land in Weatherall Close, Addlestone for the sum reported and subject to such other terms as he sees fit.**

902. 46 STATION ROAD, ADDLESTONE - LEASE

(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, November 2003, page 1009, para 487)

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.

The Committee, having noted the reasons for the departure of the previous occupier, approved terms for the grant of a new 3 year lease in respect of 46 Station Road, Addlestone. The incoming tenant, Easy Mobility Ltd, was a locally based company specialising in the sale, hire and repair of mobility aids.

**RESOLVED that -**

**subject to contract and all necessary consents, the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised to grant a 3 year lease to Easy Mobility Limited on the terms reported and subject to such other terms as he considers fit.**

903. EGHAM HYTHE PROJECT - POOLEY GREEN ALLOTMENTS /EGHAM SWAN SANCTUARY

(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, March 2004, page 1421, para 778)

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 3, 7 and 12 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee gave consideration to the continuing occupation by the Egham Swan Sanctuary of land required for the development of an Egham Hythe Town Park on the site of the Pooley Green

Allotments. Long standing plans for the park were now well advanced and it was likely that the Council would be in a position to start work on site by the early part of 2005. The lease held by the Swan Sanctuary in respect of part of the land had been formally terminated in 1995 in order to facilitate the development. The Sanctuary had, since then, been holding over on the basis of a periodic permission to occupy. There was no current planning permission for its use of the land. The Sanctuary had previously been informed that vacant possession of the site would be required by 31 March 2004, although this had not amounted to formal notice terminating its occupation. In order to bring some certainty to the situation, consideration now needed to be given to the timing of the service of formal notice to leave.

Members noted that the Sanctuary, as part of its continuing efforts to find a new home, had submitted a detailed planning application for a site in Shepperton. This was due to be determined by Spelthorne Borough Council by the end of July. The Sanctuary had not yet agreed to meet with Runnymede Officers to discuss the proposals, preferring to wait until planning consent was in place. Two options were open to the Council if the plans for the park were to be progressed. The first was to serve six months notice as soon as possible. The second was to wait for a meeting with the Sanctuary to establish the position in detail and see if there was any mutually acceptable scope to coordinate the Council's requirement for the land with the departure of the Sanctuary.

The Committee recognised that the relocation of the Sanctuary was a sensitive issue which had, in the past, been misrepresented. It was, however, felt that no purpose would now be served by further delay. The present location was inappropriate and there had, over the years, been complaints from some residents regarding noise, hygiene, and nuisance problems associated with the presence of the Sanctuary. Although the indications were encouraging, there could be no guarantee as to the success of the Shepperton project. The Sanctuary had begun a number of unsuccessful plans to move in the past. Members were therefore of the view that six months notice should be served as soon as practicable. It was felt that this would not only maintain the momentum of the town park project but also help to concentrate the Sanctuary's efforts to achieve a relocation to a more suitable site.

**RESOLVED that -**

**Officers be instructed to serve six months notice upon the Egham Swan Sanctuary to leave Pooley Green allotments as soon as practicable.**

Chairman

(The Meeting ended at 10.20pm)