

Runnymede Borough CouncilLEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE24 January 2002 at 7.30 p.m.

Members of the Committee present: Councillors C.J. Norman (Chairman), Mrs. S.E. Jacobs (Vice-Chairman), Mrs F.J. Barden, E.G. Barrett, B.A. Clarke, A.G. Collins, Mrs. L.M. Gillham, Mrs. C.Y. Jones and Ms. C.M. Simmons.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor D.W. Parr

Co-opted Members of the Committee absent: Mrs. B. Miller and Mr. T. Watson

Councillor P.J. Poole also attended for the duration of the meeting and Councillor J.M. Edwards attended for agenda items 1 to 12.

505. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 November 2001 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

506. REVENUE ESTIMATES 2002/2003

The Committee received and considered the draft Revenue Estimates for 2002/2003 in respect of Leisure Services, Environmental Services and the Safer Runnymede Initiative.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the proposed fees and charges for 2002/2003 as set out in Appendix 'A', be approved to be effective from 1 April 2002 or as appropriate; and**
- ii) the draft Revenue Estimates for 2002/2003 be approved as submitted and the Corporate Management Committee be requested to make provision accordingly.**

507. AIMS AND TARGETS

Members noted the interim progress reports on the Aims and Targets set for 2001/2002 in respect of the Council's Leisure Services, Environmental Services and the Safer Runnymede Initiative.

The Committee also received the proposed Aims and Targets for 2002/2003 which were based on the text of the Leader's Position Statement. Members agreed that these accurately reflected their aspirations for the provision of the above-mentioned services.

With regard to Leisure provision, Members were pleased to note that 30 young people were now attending the Sports Acro Club at Abbeylands Sports Centre. Consequently, staff at the Centre were considering starting up a second class. It was noted that Officers were currently consulting various local groups on the Runnymede Local Cultural Strategy and a report on the draft Strategy would be brought to the Committee in March.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the interim progress reports in respect of the 2001/2002 Aims and Targets be noted; and**

RECOMMEND that -**ii) the proposed Aims and Targets for 2002/2003, attached at Appendix 'B', be adopted.**508. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN - UPDATE ON PROGRESS AGAINST BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2001/2002

(Ref: Minutes of Corporate Management Committee, 6 December 2001 page 671, para. 424)

Members noted the progress against the Best Value Performance Indicators for 2001/2002 relating to services within the remit of this Committee.

509. ALLOTMENT RATIONALISATION - CHERTSEY ALLOTMENT SITES

(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, 20 September 2001, pages 324 – 325, para. 267)

The Committee's approval was sought for a Capital Scheme to rationalise and improve the Council's allotment provision in Chertsey.

Members learned that there were currently three allotment sites in the Chertsey area; Beomonds, Painesfield and St. Ann's, all of which were currently under-utilised. At the same time, additional land needed to be identified for the Chertsey Cemetery which was adjacent to the Painesfield site. Officers had considered various alternatives and their preferred option was to close the Painesfield site and transfer plottolders to improved sites at Beomonds and St. Ann's. Part of the vacant Painesfield site could then be used to extend the Chertsey Cemetery, whilst the remaining land could be passed to the Economic Development Committee to determine its future use. It was anticipated that an alternative future use, such as for social housing, could generate a receipt of over £1 million. This money could be used to finance the creation of a new Beomonds site and improvements to St. Ann's. This receipt would also fund a comprehensive compensation package for Painesfield plottolders and would meet the costs of the Chertsey Cemetery extension.

It was anticipated that the order of cost for these works would be £450,000 which would be divided between the three elements of the Capital Scheme as follows:

	<u>Order of Cost</u>
i) New Beomonds allotment site – design, construction, compensation	£325,000
ii) St. Ann's allotment site - Improvements to fencing etc.	£25,000
iii) Chertsey Cemetery extension - Laying out, paths, boundary treatments, etc.	£100,000
	<hr/>
Total Order of Cost	<u>£450,000</u>

A Steering Group comprising plottolders from the three Chertsey sites had already been set up to bring forward a costed design for the new Beomonds site and the improvements to St. Ann's allotments. The Group would also be discussing a potential self-management scheme for these two sites. The new Beomonds site would be designed to incorporate best practice and would include facilities for the disabled, as well as a CCTV camera linked to the Safer Runnymede Centre. Preliminary survey, design and costing work had already been undertaken for the Scheme, for which a Capital Estimate of £20,000 was required. This sum had been included in the overall project cost.

In the light of current demographic trends in the South East, some Members expressed reluctance to release the Painesfield allotment site at this stage. However, the Committee recognised that the Council was under increasing pressure to identify additional cemetery and housing land in the

Chertsey area. Members, therefore, agreed to support the proposed Capital Scheme, which would meet these demands whilst providing improved allotment facilities for Chertsey plotters.

RESOLVED that -

- i) letting of plots on the Beomonds, Painesfield and St. Ann's allotment sites be suspended and 12 month Notices to Quit be issued as from 31 March 2002 to the plotters on the Painesfield allotment site;**
- ii) an area of the Painesfield allotment site, as shown on the plan at Appendix 'C', be used as an extension of Chertsey Cemetery when plotters are transferred to a new Beomonds site, and the Economic Development Committee be invited to consider the future use of the remaining part of the Painesfield site which is hereby declared as surplus to allotment requirements;**
- iii) the Corporate Management Committee be requested to include a Capital Scheme in a sum not to exceed £450,000 in the Capital Programme to provide for a new Beomonds allotment site, improvements at St. Ann's allotment site and the extension to Chertsey Cemetery, and a further report on the detailed elements of these schemes be prepared;**
- iv) the Capital Scheme be funded from the receipt from the surplus land at the Painesfield site, referred to in ii) above;**
- v) the Corporate Management Committee be requested to release a Capital sum of £20,000 for the necessary preliminary design and costing work, which will eventually form part of the overall project cost;**
- vi) the compensation package for allotment plotters on the Painesfield allotment site, be approved; and**
- vii) Officers undertake further consultations with plotters and the Secretary of State at the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions on the closure of the Painesfield site, the plans for a new Beomonds site and improvements to the St. Ann's site, and Officers progress a self-management scheme with plotters.**

(Councillors E.G. Barrett and B.A. Clarke abstained from voting on the above recommendation).

510. BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN – ALLOTMENTS SERVICE

(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, September 2001, page 324, para. 267)

The Committee, having endorsed both the scope of the review and the challenge phase for the Allotments service at its meeting on 20 September 2001, now gave consideration to the completed Service Review and proposed Continuous Improvement Plan.

Officers had compared the Council's Allotments service with that provided by other Surrey and adjoining local authorities. Most of these authorities managed their sites through leases to local horticultural societies or self-management schemes. Runnymede was one of only two authorities with Council managed allotment sites.

For the consultation exercise, questionnaires had been sent to allotment plotters, Runnymede Resident Panellists and Councillors. A number of issues relating to the level and quality of the Allotments service were identified by plotters and these had been included in the proposed Continuous Improvement Plan.

In view of the small size of the Runnymede Allotments service and the lack of a developed contractor market, there was little scope for the market testing of this function. The Committee, therefore,

concluded that the Council's existing policy of promoting self-management schemes should be continued.

Members agreed that the proposed targets were appropriate to the findings of the Best Value Service Review, and accordingly approved the Best Value Continuous improvement Plan.

RESOLVED that -

- i) **the Service Review and the Continuous Improvement Plan attached at Appendix 'D' be approved with particular reference to the following:**

	<u>Timescale</u>
<u>Targets to be implemented at Officer level:</u>	
a) continually monitor whether there is justification for the continued provision of allotment plots to meet current and future demand in accordance with the requirements of the Small Holdings and Allotment Act 1908;	Continuous
b) investigate and implement cost effective means of advertising and promoting the service to ensure that any latent demand is satisfied;	Commenced and ongoing
c) investigate means of improving the grass cutting, weed control and rubbish removal for allotment sites;	December 2002
d) undertake a satisfaction survey of all allotment plottolders, Runnymede Residents Panellists and Members to determine the quality of service which would match reasonable expectations;	2003/04 and then every second year
e) continue the annual meeting with allotment representatives and undertake an annual allotment condition/letting survey, reporting the results to Committee;	Annually
f) achieve a letting rate of 75% of available allotment plots, an improvement in cultivation levels and a 55% income/expenditure return (ex capital charges);	By Summer 2004
g) install a cost effective computerised allotment booking and recording system;	In place
h) develop a range of meaningful and relevant comparative statistics and explore expenditure comparisons with other local authority managed allotment services to learn from best practice elsewhere;	September 2003
i) review overheads incurred by the service with the objective of reducing expenditure;	September 2002
<u>Targets with financial and/or policy implications, requiring a further report to the Corporate Management Committee:</u>	
j) continue to promote the benefits of self-management for all allotment sites and achieve two further self-management schemes;	April 2003

- k) investigate the leasing or management of allotment sites by a local horticultural society and report back to Committee; April 2003

Targets with policy implications requiring a further report to Council if appropriate:

- l) continue to review the service at regular intervals to match supply with demand and bring forward reports on any surplus allotment landholdings for consideration of alternative uses; Annually
- m) bring forward proposals to improve the quality of site facilities and maintenance on a self-financing basis in conjunction with the rationalisation of allotment holdings and self-management schemes; Annually
- n) investigate options for alternative uses of the Hamm Moor Lane allotment site which is currently unused; and September 2002

- ii) the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer report to a future meeting of the Committee regarding implementation and monitoring of the Continuous Improvement Plan.

511. CHERTSEY MUSEUM EXTENSION SCHEME - PROGRESS REPORT AND TEMPORARY RELOCATION OF MUSEUM SERVICE

(Ref: Minutes of former Executive Committee, April 2001, page 1601, para. 791)

Members received a progress report on the extension and improvement scheme for Chertsey Museum at The Cedars, Windsor Street, which was being funded by the Olive Matthews Trust. The Committee was pleased to learn that planning permission had been granted for the scheme in September 2001 and that Listed Building Consent had been received from the Government Office for the South East in December.

An archaeological investigation of the back garden at The Cedars would be conducted in February/March 2002, as required under the planning consent. Following the appointment of a suitable contractor, it was anticipated that building work would commence on site in June 2002 with the completion of the construction phase by March 2003.

Members noted that the Museum's collections and records would need to be moved to secure storage for the duration of the construction works. The Committee agreed that a temporary office space should also be identified in Central Chertsey to house the essential elements of the Museum Service whilst the building work was taking place. This temporary Museum accommodation would be funded by the Olive Matthews Trust.

RESOLVED that -

Officers be instructed to relocate the essential elements of the Museum Service to temporary premises, yet to be identified, during the construction phase of the scheme for a period to be authorised by the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer and which will probably be April 2002 to April 2003.

512. REFUSE COLLECTION - BEST VALUE INSPECTORS' REPORT

The Committee received a report setting out the results of a Best Value Inspection of the Refuse Collection Service. The household refuse collection service was considered to be of a good standard, with a high customer satisfaction rate of 98%. Runnymede's refuse collection service was also amongst the cheapest 25% provided by Councils in England in 1999/2000.

However, as the Council's recycling rate for 1999/2000 had been 5%, the Best Value Inspectors had judged the overall service to be "fair with a probability of improvement", because of the recycling

performance. The Best Value Inspectors had made a number of recommendations for the future operation of the service. These included the development of recycling activity within 12 months and the provision of a contingency plan for actions dependent on external funding, such as the Council's proposed kerbside paper collection scheme.

It was noted that Runnymede's recycling service had performed well against the Council's policy to pursue cost efficient extensions to recycling schemes. Moreover, at the time of the Best Value Inspection there were no statutory recycling targets in place. Since then the Government had introduced mandatory targets which required the Council to achieve recycling rates of 10% by 2003/04 and 18% by 2005/06. Members noted that, in order to achieve these targets, it would be necessary to implement the Best Value Inspectors' recommendations, and it was agreed that these should be incorporated in the Continuous Improvement Plan for the refuse collection/recycling service.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the contents of the Best Value Inspectors' Report and its recommendations be noted and these be built into the Refuse Collection/Recycling Service's Best Value Continuous Improvement Plan; and**
- ii) Officers prepare reports as appropriate to monitor and review the Best Value Continuous Improvement Plan and to meet other recommendations within the report.**

513. KERBSIDE RECYCLING

(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, June 2001, page 121, para. 97)

Members received a report setting out the options for the introduction of a kerbside recycling scheme in Runnymede and identifying potential sources of external funding for such a scheme.

Members learned that the Government had set each local authority a statutory performance standard for recycling. The targets set for Runnymede would require the Council to increase its recycling rate to 10% in 2003/04 and 18% in 2005/06. The Council's existing recycling 'bring' scheme would not generate the additional tonnages required to meet these targets and, therefore, Officers had investigated the feasibility of introducing a kerbside recycling scheme.

As Members were aware, the Council had already submitted an application for Landfill Tax Credits funding towards a five year kerbside recycling pilot scheme limited to newspapers and magazines. This scheme would enable the Council to progress towards the initial recycling target of 10%. However, it would not meet the more challenging target of 18%, and, therefore, a more extensive segregated recycling system would need to be introduced during the third year of the pilot.

Officers had also identified two other potential kerbside recycling schemes. The first, the MRF scheme, entailed the collection of various mixed materials which were taken to a Materials Reclamation Facility (MRF) where they were sorted for onward recycling. Although this system could achieve a good recycling rate, it was not very cost effective. The second scheme, as operated by Ealing Community Transport (ECT), also provided for the collection of a wide range of mixed materials. However, these materials were sorted on the collection vehicle and taken to a bulking facility for onward recycling. It was noted that the costs of such a scheme for Runnymede could be reduced if the Council were able to provide bulking facilities at the Chertsey Depot.

Officers had identified several potential sources of external funding towards a segregated kerbside recycling scheme. The most promising of these was the Government's new Recycling Fund of £140 million which was to be allocated to innovative schemes, and authorities with low recycling rates.

An additional source of revenue funding could be generated if the Council were to move from a 'back door' collection of refuse in wheeled bins to a curtilage collection. It was estimated that the introduction of a curtilage refuse collection service could create savings of approximately £90,000 a year.

Some Members were of the opinion that the proposed kerbside recycling scheme ought not to be funded by changes to the Council's refuse collection service. They also expressed concern that the move to a curtilage refuse collection scheme could potentially result in staff redundancies. These views were shared by the Runnymede branch of UNISON who had requested that full consultation be conducted before this proposal was taken any further.

Officers informed the Committee that surveys suggested that over 50% of residents already pulled their wheeled bins out to the edge of their property and that Runnymede was one of only two authorities in the Country still operating a 'back door' collection scheme with wheeled bins. Moreover, the Council would continue to provide a 'back door' refuse collection service for infirm and elderly residents. As regards staffing issues, it was noted that there could be job opportunities arising from the kerbside recycling scheme and, therefore, affected DSO operatives could be transferred to recycling duties.

The Committee expressed its support for the introduction of a segregated kerbside recycling scheme which would enable the Council to meet the statutory recycling targets set by Central Government. Members concurred that Officers should pursue all potential sources of external funding in order to finance this scheme. With regard to the introduction of a curtilage collection of refuse, Members agreed that this should be subject to full consultation with the refuse service workforce and trade unions.

RESOLVED that -

- i) Officers explore all sources of funding to finance a segregated curtilage collection scheme and a suitable depot (or similar facilities) for a comprehensive range of recyclables, to include separation, bulking and onward sale for recycling, aimed at achieving the statutory recycling targets set for the Council in 2003/04 and 2005/06 of 10% and 18% respectively;**
- ii) subject to adequate funding being secured and a further report on funding to the Committee, Officers prepare a procurement exercise in accordance with Standing Orders and European Union Procurement rules and invite bids from private contractors and the Runnymede DSO whose competency will be evaluated against agreed criteria;**
- iii) subject to securing funding, the Committee supports the appointment of a temporary recycling officer at grade D/E for a period of 18 months in conjunction with the introduction of curtilage recycling, as recommended to the Corporate Management Committee in the Annual Personnel report (to be considered on 7th February 2002);**
- iv) a further report be prepared on budgetary implications once the outcome of funding bids and the procurement exercise are known;**
- v) Officers pursue with the scouts and other local and voluntary groups opportunities for mutually beneficial ways of increasing recycling rates claimable against statutory recycling targets for Runnymede; and**

RECOMMEND that -

- vi) subject to full consultation with the refuse service workforce and trade unions and the introduction of curtilage recycling, the Council changes to the curtilage collection of refuse in wheeled bins, with a projected saving of £90,000 per year.**

A requisition having been made that the names of those voting in respect of paragraph vi) of the recommendation be recorded, there voted:

In favour of paragraph vi) of the Recommendation: (8) Councillors Mrs F.J. Barden, E.G. Barrett, A.G. Collins, Mrs L.M. Gillham, Mrs S.E. Jacobs, Mrs C.Y. Jones, C.J. Norman and Ms C.M. Simmons.

Against paragraph vi) of the Recommendation: (1) Councillor B.A. Clarke.

514. JOINT WASTE STRATEGY CONSULTATIVE BOARD

The Surrey Local Government Association had agreed to establish a Joint Waste Strategy Consultative Board comprising representatives from the 11 Surrey Districts and the County Council.

Runnymede had been invited to appoint one Councillor representative to the Board and an Officer to serve on the supporting Joint Officer Advisory Group. Members recommended that the Corporate Management Committee make the following appointments;

RECOMMEND TO CORPORATE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE that -

- i) the Council appoint the Chairman of the Leisure and Environment Committee, or in his absence the Vice-Chairman of that Committee, to the Joint Waste Strategy Consultative Board; and**
- ii) the Council's representative on the Joint Officer Advisory Group be either the Chief Officer responsible for waste management or his nominated representative.**

515. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

(Ref: Minutes of former Environmental Services Committee, November 1999, pages 659 - 600, para. 445)

The Committee was asked to consider the future of the public conveniences at Pooley Green and the New Haw Automatic Public Convenience (APC), and to revise the rolling programme of refurbishments accordingly.

Members learned that the Pooley Green conveniences had been subject to increasing levels of vandalism and graffiti. Consequently, these facilities were not greatly used by the general public. In addition, the building was blocking the sight lines of the proposed new Safer Runnymede CCTV camera which was due to be installed to control vandalism in that area. In view of this, the Committee agreed that the Pooley Green conveniences should be demolished in 2002/03 using the Capital Estimate allocated for works to the toilets in the Egham Precinct. In the meantime, graffiti and vandalism would be controlled at the Egham conveniences which would then be refurbished in 2003/04.

With regard to the New Haw APC, the Committee noted that the Disability Discrimination Act required all buildings to be accessible to disabled users by 2004. This date coincided with the end of the lease for the New Haw APC, which could not accommodate wheelchairs. In order to retain a convenience at the site beyond 2003, the Council would need to lease a more modern APC providing wheelchair access. This was the option favoured by the Runnymede Access Liaison Group. However, this was likely to increase the annual lease charge from £15,000 to around £20,000 per annum. The Committee was minded not to replace the New Haw APC and requested that Officers produce a further detailed report on the various options and costs when the New Haw APC neared the end of its current lease.

Finally, it was noted that the new Tesco store in Addlestone had provided conveniences that were open for 24 hours on most days. Whilst these facilities were for customers' use, they were in close proximity to the Council's own public conveniences in Garfield Road. It was agreed that Officers should monitor the use and condition of the W.C's in Garfield Road when the Addlestone Saturday market was in operation and report back to the Committee after monitoring of usage.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the Pooley Green conveniences be demolished in 2002/03 and the Corporate Management Committee be requested to approve a Capital Estimate of £7,000 for this purpose;**
- ii) Officers bring a further report to Committee on options and costs when the Automatic Public Convenience (APC) at the Broadway, New Haw nears the end of its lease;**

- iii) **Officers report back to Committee on the usage and condition of the public conveniences at Garfield Road, Addlestone after the Saturday market has been in operation for a reasonable period; and**
- iv) **the refurbishment of the conveniences at Egham Precinct proceed in 2003/04, and thereafter the rolling programme of refurbishments be reviewed in the light of the Committee's decision on the future of the New Haw APC.**

516. BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN – LICENSING AND REGISTRATIONS SERVICE

(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, September 2001, page 328 - 9, para. 273)

The Committee, having endorsed both the scope of the review and the challenge phase for the Licensing and Registrations service at its meeting on 20 September 2001, now gave consideration to the completed Service Review and proposed Continuous Improvement Plan.

The Council's Licensing and Registrations service had been compared with that provided by the four North West Surrey Benchmarking partners. Runnymede's service was found to be very cost effective, with the lowest gross costs in 2000/01. However, there was scope to reduce the net cost still further through increased licensing income. Officers, therefore, proposed to review the fees and charges for the service on an annual basis.

As regards consultation, Officers had surveyed both Licensees and members of the Runnymede Resident's Panel. There was a high level of satisfaction with the service with 82% of the Licensees classing it as "good". Both Licensees and residents requested more information about the licensing service and this had been addressed in the proposed Continuous Improvement Plan.

Members recalled that Surrey Police had raised concerns at the prospect of outsourcing the Licensing and Registrations function and that Environmental Health contractors had expressed little interest in this work elsewhere. In view of this, the Committee agreed that the service should continue to be provided in-house.

Members concurred that the proposed targets were appropriate to the findings of the Service Review, and accordingly approved the Best Value Continuous improvement Plan.

RESOLVED that –

- i) the Service Review and the Continuous Improvement Plan attached at Appendix 'E' be approved with particular reference to the following:**

<u>Targets to be implemented at Officer/Service Committee level</u>	<u>Timescale</u>
a) Continue to review fees and charges for all licensing and registrations on an annual basis to reflect inflationary increases and aim for recovery of all costs within the medium term;	Staged annual increases
b) Consider whether it is appropriate to have a sliding scale for private hire operator licences to reflect the number of vehicles operated and consider whether the unsocial hours rate is appropriate to discourage drink driving;	January 2003
c) Explore opportunities for partnership with the taxi trade to facilitate the mobility of people in wheelchairs, particularly with reference to short journeys;	January 2003

- d) **Review the decision to move away from taxi testing;** **January 2003**
- e) **Explore the benefits of dealing with all medical consultations through a single doctor's practice;** **January 2003**
- f) **Keep the need for a Door Operators' Registration Scheme under review;** **Annually, or as need arises, bearing in mind any Government proposals.**
- g) **Consider ways in which information about licensing issues can be better disseminated to licensees and the general public, including the introduction of twice yearly meetings between Enforcement Officers and Licensees;** **September 2002**
- Targets with financial implications requiring a further report to the Corporate Management Committee or Council, if appropriate**
- h) **Review the need for an additional enforcement resource;** **Annual Personnel Report January 2003**
- i) **Review the organisation of the Service to determine whether it continues to offer the most economic, efficient and effective means of delivery; and** **As applicable during 2002/2003**
- ii) **the Borough Environmental Services Officer report to a future meeting of the Committee regarding implementation and monitoring of the Continuous Improvement Plan.**

517. **BEST VALUE - PROGRESS REPORT ON CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLANS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

The Committee received and approved progress reports on the implementation of the Continuous Improvement Plans for the following services:

- i) Refuse Collection;
- ii) Food Safety and Hygiene; and
- iii) Occupational/Municipal Health, Safety and Welfare.

518. **URGENT ACTION - STANDING ORDER 42**

The Committee noted that, acting in accordance with Standing Order 42, the following action had been taken by the Officer shown below after consultation with the Chairman;

Officer	Action Taken	Central Index No.
Borough Environmental Services Officer	Introduction of a collection charge of £25 for old fridges and freezers, except for those residents on benefits.	488

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 10.37 p.m.)