

COMMENTS OF REVIEW BOARD OF 9 OCTOBER 2003 ON LEADER'S POSITION STATEMENT

The Board received the draft Leader's Position Statement. The Board agreed with the proposed amendments and additions to the document made by the Corporate Management Committee at its meeting on 2 October, apart from

- i) the suggestion that Strategic Objectives on page 7 should include maintenance of current objectives as well as striving for further improvement, as the Board considered the five Strategic Objectives were appropriate as currently drafted;
- ii) page 15, paragraph 3.1.4.1 – although the item in italics should state that it is the Government's definition of key workers, "fire staff" should be deleted, as it does not form part of the Government's definition; and
- iii) the item to be added regarding Airtrack should state that Council support would be conditional on infrastructure improvements, including changes to the Borough's level crossings.

The Board also made the following additional suggestions on the Statement:-

- i) Page 2 - Delete "Politically" from the last line.
- ii) Page 5, First paragraph – Progress with recycling in the last 12 months should be added.
- iii) Page 5 – Although the graphs showed that Runnymede had the lowest Council Tax and the highest spend per capita, the text should state this as well.
- iv) Page 7 – Aim 1 – second line – delete "to" and substitute with "we".
- v) Page 8 – The print on the graph was not very clear. This might be rectified by removing the shading.
- vi) Page 14, paragraph 3.1.1.3 – Add "working with outside agencies", after the word "by".
- vii) Page 19 – Heading of paragraph 4.4 needed to be changed as the text did not relate to economic prosperity.

The Board also considered some suggested additions from the Director of Finance and put forward the following proposed extra items for consideration by the Leader:-

"HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Key Roles

- (iv) **To provide an efficient, effective and secure service that helps Runnymede residents statutorily entitled to benefits to maintain payment of their rents and/or council tax.**

3.3 Benefits

3.3.1 Achieve Quality Services

3.3.1.1 We will aim to provide effective and secure Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit services that are recipient-focussed, confidential and efficient.

3.3.2 Achieve value for money

3.3.2.1 We will endeavour to process all benefits claims speedily and to ensure that all customers receive their correct benefit entitlement.

3.3.2.2 We will aim to reduce the level of fraud and error.

3.3.2.3 *We will seek to recover overpayments of benefits effectively with due regard to how they arose, the circumstances of the customers affected and the policies of the Council.*

3.3.3 *Improve the Quality of Life*

3.3.3.1 *The benefits service will play an important role in helping people secure their benefit entitlement.*

3.3.4 *Achieve Economic Prosperity*

3.3.4.1 *Through the recipients' access to Benefits we will help people entitled to Benefits to achieve social inclusion by alleviating poverty, preventing homelessness and reducing barriers to work.*

3.3.5 *Continuously Improve*

3.3.5.1 *We will seek to maintain the upper quartile position now achieved in the national performance standards for the administration of Benefits."*