

Runnymede Borough Council

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday 11 November 2004, at 7.30 p.m.

in the Council Chamber

at the Civic Offices, Addlestone



Members of the Committee

Councillors J.R. Furey (Chairman), J.E. Haas (Vice-Chairman), A. Alderson, M.J. Brown, Mrs E. Gill, C Knight, Mrs Y.P. Lay, R.J. Ray, Mrs M. Roberts and C.J. Ruane.

## AGENDA

Notes:

- i) Any report on the Agenda involving confidential information (as defined by section 100A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972) must be discussed in private. Any report involving exempt information (as defined by section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972), whether it appears in Part 1 or Part 2 below, may be discussed in private but only if the Committee so resolves.
- ii) The relevant 'background papers' are listed after each report in Part 1. Enquiries about any of the Agenda reports and background papers should be directed in the first instance to **Mr. G. Marson, Committee Section, Administration and Leisure Department, Civic Offices, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel. Direct Line: 01932 425625). (Email: gary.marson@runnymede.gov.uk).**
- iii) Agendas and Minutes are available on a subscription basis. For details, please ring Mr. B.A. Fleckney on 01932 425620. Agendas and Minutes for all the Council's Committees may also be viewed on [www.runnymede.gov.uk](http://www.runnymede.gov.uk).
- iv) in the unlikely event of an alarm sounding, members of the public should leave the building immediately, either using the staircase leading from the public gallery or following other instructions as appropriate.

## LIST OF MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

### PART I

#### Matters in respect of which reports have been made available for public inspection

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### PART II

#### Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection.

a) Exempt Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)

b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)

1. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

2. MINUTES

To confirm and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 September 2004.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

If Members have an interest in an item please record the interest on the form circulated with this Agenda and hand it to the Legal Representative or Committee Administrator at the start of the meeting. A supply of the form will also be available from the Committee Administrator at meetings.

Members who have previously declared interests which are recorded in the Minutes to be considered at this meeting need not repeat the declaration when attending the meeting. Members need take no further action unless the item in which they have an interest becomes the subject of debate, in which even the Member must leave the room if the interest is personal and prejudicial.

5. SERVICE PLAN 2004/05 - HALF YEARLY PERFORMANCE (DTS)

(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, September 2004, page 241, para. 178)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the half yearly performance (April to September) in respect of the Economic Development Service Plan for 2004/05.**

2. Background Information

2.1 In the Spring of 2003, the Council introduced a revised performance management framework to ensure the better use of information to improve services.

2.2 Each Committee has its own Service Plan which incorporates all of the Performance Indicators, indicators related to the Leader's Position Statement, Best Value Improvement Plans, local indicators and targets arising from the Community Strategy. Departments use this information as the basis of their service planning and improvement.

3. Report

3.1 Performance in the half year from April to September 2004 is set out at Appendix 'A', together with details of timescales, potential barriers and any additional resource requirements as may be identified. Where corrective action is necessary it is noted accordingly.

4. Council Policy

4.1 Service Plans assist the Council to fulfil two of its strategic objectives:

- i) achieve quality services
- ii) achieve continuous improvement.

4.2 "We will further develop the Performance Management Framework, to build in continuous improvement to Service Plans, rationalise targets and further integrate into departmental management." (Leader's Position Statement 2004/05).

**(FOR INFORMATION)**

Background Papers

None.

6. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT - RUNNYMEDE TRAVEL INITIATIVE (DTS)  
(Ref: Minutes of Economic Development Committee, May 2004, page 1576, para. 892)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- i) report on the progress of proposals for a Business Improvement District (BID) to assist with the future funding of the Runnymede (School) Travel Initiative;
- ii) seek authority to proceed with a ballot on the Business Improvement District proposals; and
- iii) confirm that the Council, as a non domestic ratepayer, will vote in favour of the BID proposals.

2. Background Information

2.1 The Local Government Act 2003 introduced 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 are 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, identifies support for a project following a ballot amongst those companies likely to benefit from the scheme, although implementation would be in consultation with the Council. Proposals have 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.

2.2 At the meeting of the Economic Development Committee on 13th May 2004 it was resolved that:

*"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 number of employees."*

2.3 The Committee will recall that the Runnymede Travel Initiative is operated in conjunction with the Runnymede Business Partnership and seeks to reduce the number of school and business journeys made by car. A key feature is the provision of American style Yellow Buses which serve Magna Carta, Fullbrook, Jubilee High and Salesian Schools and carry 500 students. The scheme has been well received by pupils, parents and schools and has achieved a significant modal shift away from the car on the school run. The £228,000 annual cost for a 6 bus service is met from fares, business sponsorship and, increasingly, S.106 developer contributions. Whilst this is likely to be sufficient to sustain existing levels of service, S.106 monies cannot be relied upon to support the further growth of the scheme. The operation of 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 by a BID (excluding schools' contributions and business and other sponsorship) is estimated to be £350,000 pa.

3. Report

3.1 The formal Regulations setting out the procedures to be followed for the establishment of a BID were issued on 17 September 2004. Significant progress has now been made and the BID ballot process will formally commence on 12 November. The Runnymede Business Partnership is formally promoting the BID with core support from several major local companies. The Regulations require the Council to conduct the formal ballot and be responsible for collecting the additional non-domestic rate levy.

- 3.2 The Business Partnership has considered the type of company to include in the ballot and concluded, following a preliminary legal opinion, that it will be appropriate to include all non domestic ratepayers whose premises have a rateable value of over £350,000. This would include about 50 major non domestic ratepayers, including the Borough Council. The Council will be formally invited to vote on the proposal as one of the qualifying organisations.
- 3.3 The original proposal had been for 100 companies to be the subject of the BID ballot. However, as the logistical issues have been clarified by the publication of detailed guidance, it appears appropriate to operate the BID on the basis of those employers that benefit most from significant traffic reduction and whose premises have the highest rateable value.
- 3.4 The BID timescale is as follows:
- |    |   |                          |
|----|---|--------------------------|
| 1. | Qualifying organisations formally advised of BID process                                | 12 November 2004         |
| 2. | Ballot papers issued  | 26 November 2004         |
| 3. | Close of Poll and declaration of result   | 10 January 2005          |
| 4. | Subject to outcome of ballot, additional levy collected annually for 5 years commencing | 1 April 2005             |
| 5. | Introduce additional Yellow Buses   | September 2005 (onwards) |
- 3.5 The draft BID proposal is set out in Appendix 'B'.
4. Council Policy
- 4.1 The Council has supported the Runnymede Business Partnership since its creation in 1998. There are a number of initiatives that have benefited from this public/private partnership. However, by far the most successful and high profile has been the Runnymede (School) Travel Initiative and, in particular, the yellow bus service. Support for the BID, as a participating organisation, not only recognises the role of the Council as a major employer but also underpins the public/private partnership. Officers recommend that the BID be supported.
5. Resource Issues
- 5.1 The BID, if successful, will require the Council to pay an annual non-domestic levy of £7,500 per annum for five years. Revenue provision will need to be made for this.
- 5.2 The BID will have staff resource implications but these will be funded from the total BID budget of approximately £350,000 p.a.
- 5.3 A separate BID account will need to be set up in which all the income and expenditure associated with the BID will be reported to the BID Board. The cost of setting up and operating the BID will be charged to the BID account. The estimates in the Business Plan at Appendix 'C' have been prepared for inclusion in the documentation which will be circulated to all the organisations participating in the ballot.
6. Legal Issues
- 6.1 The views of Counsel have been sought on the operation of the BID. A preliminary legal opinion has been received and the advice incorporated in the BID proposals. Any further issues will be reported verbally to the Committee.
- 6.2 If the result of the ballot supports the BID, the annual levy of £7,500 on each of the ratepayers included in the BID will be subject to the same processes of debt recovery as normal business rate bills.

7. Sustainability Issues

- 7.1 The Runnymede (School) Travel Initiative is designed to reduce the number of car journeys undertaking the school run at peak time. This will help reduce congestion and car pollution, make it easier for those undertaking business activity who travel in or through the Borough, and provide a valuable service ensuring that students have a safe and reliable journey to school. The Leader's Position Statement 2004-05 sets out the Council's vision that, inter alia, says:

"Ensure we play an effective role in enhancing the quality of life for all our residents and visitors and provide an attractive environment for all those who conduct their business in the Borough."

It further adds in paragraph 9.5.2 that:

"We will seek to examine the benefits, in consultation with business partners, of the creation of a BID when legislation permits."

8. Other Policy Issues

- 8.1 The Community Strategy for Runnymede identifies congestion as a major cause for concern in the Borough and the initiative will go some way to provide a solution at peak times.

9. Business Planning and Risk Management

- 9.1 The BID would need to be set within the context of the appended Travel Initiative business plan. This sets out the objectives of the project and the operational and funding issues.
- 9.2 A key part of the BID project or business plan is the need to assess the risk and uncertainty and the problems after a successful vote for a BID. These could include funding shortfall, failure of contractors to deliver, the loss of key personnel or anything that could have a major impact on the work of the BID organisation. These matters are considered in the Business Plan.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 BIDs are being promoted by the Government as a mechanism for encouraging partnerships between local authorities and local businesses to provide additional services or improvements to a specific area.
- 10.2 The Runnymede (School) Travel Initiative, and in particular the Yellow Bus Service, is a successful local venture between this Council and the Runnymede Business Partnership. The scheme has been well received by students, parents and schools and has achieved significant 'modal' shift away from the car on the school run. To build on the success of the pilot project, and to realise a greater modal shift, the RTI provides a practical opportunity for local businesses to become more involved in developing a BID project.

**OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -**

- i) a ballot be held on the Business Improvement District proposals;**
- ii) the Council's vote be cast in favour of the Business Improvement District proposals;**
- iii) the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised to make any necessary amendments to the proposals following receipt of Counsel's further opinion; and**
- iv) the Corporate Management Committee be requested to note the financial implications for future years.**

**(TO RESOLVE)**

## Background Papers

The Business Improvement District (England) Regulations 2004  
The BID levy and Accounting Issues, D. Cattermoul and R. Halinszczak 2004

### 7. CAR PARKING IN ADDLESTONE (DTS) (Ref: Minutes of Review Board, September 2003, page 409, para 252, and Economic Development Committee, September 2003, page 635, para 295)

#### 1. Purpose of Report

##### 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to inform Members of progress in identifying additional car parking spaces in Addlestone.**

#### 2. Background Information

2.1 At its meeting in September 2003, following receipt of a petition organised by a local retailer, this Committee considered the impact of the construction of the replacement Addlestone Community Association building in the Garfield Road Car Park and the implications for car parking and the continuing viability of Addlestone town centre as a whole.

2.2 These deliberations included the consideration of recommendations put forward by the Review Board, which had considered the matter in depth, including hearing representations from several members of the business community.

2.3 This Committee instructed Officers to undertake the following action in order to identify means of creating additional parking spaces in Addlestone:

- a) examine the scope for decked or multi-storey parking at the Civic Offices or elsewhere in Addlestone;
- b) investigate the use of private parking areas by the general public at certain times;
- c) seek to provide more disabled parking bays;
- d) re-examine arrangements for all of the 11 month construction period in Garfield Road car park, including the means by which the builders would be accommodated and ensure that the spaces available in the Civic Offices car park on Saturdays and Sundays would be clearly signposted;
- e) enquire about the Addlestone Post Office Sorting Office's long-term plans for parking and access; and
- f) investigate the possibility of instituting a local area travel plan for businesses and traders in Addlestone, using the Council as a focus.

2.4 This report sets out the work undertaken by Officers to achieve these aims.

#### 3. Report

##### 3.1 Multi-Storey Parking

3.1.1 As part of the new Addlestone Community Centre scheme, a feasibility study was undertaken into the decking of the remaining area of the Garfield Road Car Park. This would have yielded an additional 73 parking spaces at a cost of around £1.5 million, or around £20,000 per space, compared with a standard £6,000 - £8,000. It was therefore considered to be uneconomic and would have been visually intrusive to nearby residents.

3.1.2 A decked or multi-storey car park will, however, be considered as part of the re-provision of the Civic Offices. There will be a number of considerations – the likely demand for spaces, both for staff/visitor use and the public generally; the economics of provision and whether it could be funded from the sale of part of the site; and the impact on adjoining residents.

3.1.3 In terms of privately owned sites, there have been discussions with various developers about the future use of the former Safeway's site in Station Road, Addlestone, some of which have included potential decking of the car park. The sketch proposals demonstrated that this would be visually intrusive from Station Road and adversely impact on adjoining residents.

### 3.2 The Use of Private Parking Areas

3.2.1 The report to the Review Board identified the following premises in Addlestone which had reasonably sized private car parks serving them:

Cosmic electrical store, 244-246 Station Road – 46 spaces

Office building at the corner of Station Road and High Street – 35 spaces

Eileen Tozer Day Centre, Station Road – 15 spaces

Eversleigh House (next to the Day Centre), Station Road – 14 spaces

Service area at the rear of shops, south (Woolworths) side of Station Road – 29 spaces

Health Centre, Station Road – 54 spaces

Service area at the rear of shops, north side of Station Road – 22 spaces

Pandrol, Station Road (next to the Health Centre) – 25 spaces

3.2.2 Following the Committee's instruction, a letter was hand delivered to all these premises. It enquired whether the public were currently allowed to use the car park, and if so, any restrictions on usage. It asked whether public access might be allowed, if not during the day, then in the evenings and at weekends. The letter also asked whether any spare capacity might be utilised by local traders or businesses to occupy. Finally, it enquired whether charges might be levied, and if the firms carried public liability insurance.

3.2.3 No replies at all were received to the letters. Each of the premises was subsequently visited by Officers, but again no responses, either positive or negative, were received.

3.2.4 Negotiations have been continuing over many months to access the former Safeway's Car Park as a public pay and display car park, pending the site's disposal or redevelopment. Planning permission for this was granted in August 2004 as part of the proposal to use the site as a market which was subsequently terminated by the landowner. It is anticipated that arrangements will shortly be concluded to bring the site into use as a public car park, providing some 277 spaces. A height barrier has already been installed in readiness for this.

### 3.3 Disabled Parking Bays

3.3.1 Three bays for disabled drivers have been provided in the reconfigured Garfield Road Car park, and four will be provided when the Community Centre is completed. These will be provided in the most convenient locations for users. Two disabled spaces are also being provided as part of the environmental improvements in Station Road – one on each side of the road. Use of all these spaces will be monitored to ensure that provision remains adequate.

### 3.4 Monitoring of Arrangements for Construction Traffic in Garfield Road; Utilisation and Signposting of Civic Offices Car Park

3.4.1. The main vehicular access into the ACA construction site is through the Garfield Road Car Park and was accepted following examination of a risk assessment. The arrangements have operated successfully and the majority of heavier vehicle movements (in the early part of construction) have now ceased. Occasional difficulties with access and car parking have been managed in liaison with the contractors. Whilst the main car parking area is well used, there are usually several spare places.

3.4.2 The Civic Offices rear staff car park is made available for use by the public free of charge on Saturdays, and signs are in place directing motorists to its location. Usage has, however, been generally very modest.

### 3.5 Addlestone Post Office Sorting Office

3.5.1 Discussions were held to ensure that access remained in place during construction of the Community Centre, and the car parking layout was changed to facilitate this. A personal visit to discuss long-term plans was followed up with a letter, but no formal response has been received.

### 3.6 Local Area Travel Plan

3.6.1 The Council, in liaison with the County Council, has worked with local businesses across the Borough to promote sustainable means of transport. The Runnymede Business Partnership held a specific forum to discuss the issues and the Runnymede Travel Initiative (RTI) has promoted sustainable transport, especially in relation to schools, with the provision of the Yellow Bus Service, cycle shelters and 'walking buses'.

3.6.2 As part of the RTI, discussions have taken place over the past few years to enhance the local rail service. South West Trains now provide 2 trains per hour to Waterloo (compared to an hourly service to Staines) and the stations have been refurbished with joint funding. Improved quality trains will be provided shortly and the on-station CCTV will be linked to Safer Runnymede.

3.6.3 This links with the development control process which requires occupiers of large new commercial developments to provide company transport plans. Funding for the Travel Initiative is also generated through Section 106 Agreements with developers.

3.6.4 The Council also has its own Company Transport Plan, which seeks to encourage staff to use other methods of transport rather than single-person occupancy cars. No specific services, such as dedicated buses, are provided, but rather information, and details of public transport operators are included on the Council's website.

3.6.5 Officers have not yet approached businesses and traders in Addlestone individually as this would involve contact with a wide range of small businesses and considerable staff resources in an attempt to co-ordinate both responses and any action needed. Past experience has shown a reluctance for employers to become involved unless compelled, and this is likely to be even more so with small traders and businesses.

3.6.6 It is suggested that the attitude might be tested by a letter inviting expressions of interest in sustainable means of transport. If there is little response or support, then it is recommended that this not be taken further at this time.

## 4. Conclusions

4.1 As indicated in the report to the Review Board in September 2003, a substantial amount of public parking remains in Addlestone. Tesco's still allow a two-hour stay in their car park which has over 400 spaces and spaces remain unfilled in the remainder of Garfield Road Car Park.

4.2 It is disappointing that negotiations on the use of the Safeway's site have been protracted by the owner, but it is expected that these will be satisfactorily resolved shortly.

4.3 Whilst the Council's staff car park has been available on Saturdays without charge, its public usage has been minimal. Work is progressing on providing the 25 on-street spaces in Station Road, and the completed elements are already being used by shoppers.

4.4 There has inevitably been disruption in the town during the period of construction of both the new Community Centre and the environmental improvements in Station Road. Nevertheless, the completion of these two projects will be a further milestone in the regeneration of Addlestone under the Action Addlestone Initiative.

**OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -**

- i) the provision of decked or multi-storey parking be considered as part of the Civic Offices re-provision;**
- ii) the adequacy of disabled persons parking spaces continue to be monitored; and**
- iii) businesses and traders in Addlestone be canvassed for their views on participating in more sustainable means of transport, but if the response is poor, no further action be taken at this time.**

**(TO RESOLVE)**

Background Papers

Relevant extracts from Engineering files

**8. FREE CAR PARKS - AMENDMENT TO WAITING LIMIT (DTS)**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose changes to the parking restrictions in the car parks at Victoria Street and St. Jude's Road, Englefield Green and Murray Road, Ottershaw.**

**2. Background Information**

- 2.1 The car parks at Victoria Street, Englefield Green and Murray Road, Ottershaw, were originally free before later being made Pay & Display. Free Car Parking, however, was re-introduced in order to encourage drivers to use the car parks instead of parking on street outside the shops, where they caused traffic problems.**
- 2.2 There has never been a charge for parking in St. Jude's Road Car Park, Englefield Green.**

**3. Report**

- 3.1 The Committee's approval is sought to change the existing parking restrictions in the three car parks from the current maximum waiting limit of 17 hours, with no return within 7 hours, to a maximum waiting limit of 2 hours, with no return within 3 hours (between 0800hrs and 1800hrs Monday to Saturday each week).**
- 3.2 These car parks are primarily intended as short-stay shopping car parks for use by local businesses and their customers. The 17 hour maximum limit is not compatible with that purpose. There are vehicle repair and car sales premises in the immediate vicinity of all three of these car parks which use the car parks as holding areas for cars awaiting repair or sale. The staff of local businesses park in the car parks all day whilst at work. Ottershaw Car Park is also used as a place for drivers from outside the area to meet and leave cars all day whilst they continue their journey in one car.**
- 3.3 The existing parking restrictions are difficult to enforce. The current 17 hour limit does not prevent the usage described above. Parking Attendants have to spend an inordinate amount of time on these car parks to prove that vehicles have overstayed in the car park, and not left and returned within the 17 hours.**
- 3.4 Members of the public have complained on occasions that they are unable to find space to park in the car parks due to this long stay parking. Such concerns were also confirmed in a recent parking study covering Englefield Green carried out a few months ago.**
- 3.5 The situation is particularly acute at the St. Jude's Road Car Park, which is virtually monopolised by the garage opposite. Officers have asked the garage proprietors not to use the car parks for their business purposes on several occasions over a period of years but they have not co-operated.**

- 3.6 When Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) is introduced at the beginning of November 2004 drivers are more likely to be penalised for unauthorised on-street parking. The demand for the car parks by shoppers is, therefore, likely to increase.
- 3.7 The parents of children at St. Jude's and St. Cuthbert's Schools also use the respective car parks when delivering and collecting their children. The proposed short-stay restrictions would assist them and free more spaces for school pick-ups, as well as clear the roads from unnecessary vehicle parking around the school entrance (school zig-zag markings will be enforceable by the Council upon the introduction of DPE).
- 3.8 One consequence of this change is that these car parks would no longer be suitable for local workers who require all day parking. The car parks are not of sufficient size to provide reserved bays for permit holders and these persons would therefore have to make alternative provision. However, availability of all day parking would do little to change the existing character of parking, nor make parking available for shoppers and casual visitors.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 There is no direct income from the car parks as parking is free.
- 4.2 The total cost of changing the car park signs and the amendment of the Off Street Parking Places Order would be approximately £300 for the three car parks.
- 4.3 The current total annual income from Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) for the three car parks is approximately £1,000. Following the introduction of DPE and the amendment of the waiting restrictions, it is estimated that this will rise to £3,000.

5. Council Policy

- 5.1 One of this Committee's Principal Objectives in the 2004/05 Leader's Position Statement is to encourage and maintain local and village vitality. The freeing up of short stay parking spaces during the day would help in this regard as well as alleviating congestion on the streets and help to remove school pick up parking from Bagshot Road.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Off Street Car Parking Places Order will need to be amended to reflect the revised conditions. This will necessitate public advertisement of the proposals and the consideration of any objections which may be submitted thereto. The Murray Road Car Park is regulated by the Principal Order despite being in the ownership of Surrey County Council.

**OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -**

**subject to the consideration of any representations, the Off Street Parking Places Order be amended to restrict the maximum waiting limit in the Victoria Street and St Judes Car Parks, Englefield Green and Murray Road Car Park, Ottershaw to two hours parking with no return within three hours between 0800hrs and 1800hrs, Monday to Saturday each week.**

**(TO RESOLVE)**

Background Papers

None.

9. EGHAM FARMERS' MARKET (DAL)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to consider a request from the organiser of Egham Farmers' Market to run a market on Thursdays.**

2. Background Information

2.1 Following an initiative by local Members to encourage a Farmers' Market in Egham Town Centre, Egham Farmers' Market has operated for over three years. It is run by an independent organiser and licensed for street trading by the Council.

2.2 The Farmers' Market operates on the fourth Saturday morning in each month (sometimes the third Saturday in December, depending on the number of Saturdays before Christmas). It adheres strictly to the guidelines of the National Association of Farmers' Markets.

2.3 The Market has remained relatively small, to the disappointment of many who had hoped that it would grow.

2.4 A number of people have suggested to the organiser that a weekday market should be added.

3. Report

3.1 The organiser acknowledges that the current size of the market (usually nine to eleven stalls) is less than originally hoped and has identified a number of reasons:

- the success of the newly located Tesco store;
- some empty premises in the high street;
- the lack of anything substantial in Egham to draw people away from alternative centres such as Windsor or Staines on a Saturday;
- some lack of awareness about the market, despite advertising;
- loss of some of her original stallholders due to illness or personal circumstances.

3.2 Although new producers have taken stalls at the market over the period it has operated, a number have found the level of trade insufficient to justify remaining with it. Egham Chamber of Commerce has expressed the view on a number of occasions that if the market organiser attracted more stalls, custom for the market would grow and people would be drawn into the town centre. The organiser sees the problem as the opposite; there needs to be a basic level of footfall in the town centre to sustain a larger market. It is something of a chicken and egg situation. It is probably correct to surmise that improvement in one area potentially helps the other, but difficult to say which comes first.

3.3 A local Member and others have suggested to the organiser that it could be beneficial to run a weekday market, which it is hoped would bring the following benefits:

- additional custom during the working week when more people are in Egham and could visit the market during breaks in the working day;
- improved awareness of the market and its presence on Saturdays;
- more incentive for producers to attend.

3.4 Market producers themselves would be keen on such an initiative. The organiser has suggested the second Thursday of each month. Officers have consulted, with the following results:

- a) local Members who responded were all in favour of the proposal.

- b) the Egham Residents' Association was in favour of the proposal.
- c) the Highway Authority had no objection subject to agreement on points of detail, to local consultation, and to the appropriate formal measures in due course.
- d) Runnymede Officers support trying the initiative.
- e) Egham Chamber of Commerce believes that the market operator should attract more stallholders and has reservations about an additional day. The Chamber suggested a survey of local businesses. Officers carried out such a survey and the results are in the paragraph following.

3.5 The results of the survey of town centre traders in October 2004 are shown at Appendix 'D'. 37 replies were received from 130 questionnaires.

In summary:

- 92% of the replies favoured introducing a weekday market;
- Nearly all of these considered that it should be in addition to, not a replacement for, the Saturday market;
- There was little evidence of the Saturday Market seriously affecting other traders;
- Opinion was, however, divided over whether a Thursday market would be more successful.

The Appendix also shows various comments made by traders, which are generally supportive, but a few of which criticise the existing market operation.

#### 4. Summary of Views

4.1 Despite the reservations of the Chamber of Commerce and some traders, Officers believe that the experiment should be tried. It is not possible to be certain of the outcome without a trial.

#### 5. Legal Implications

5.1 The proposal would require an amendment to the relevant Traffic Order to exclude access to Egham High Street during market hours on the additional day. The details need agreement with the market operator and the highway authority.

#### 6. Resource Implications

6.1 Associated publicity etc can be organised within existing budgets. It is probable that the County Council will recharge the cost of amending the Traffic Regulation Order and this will also be borne within existing budgets.

#### **OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -**

- i) the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised to issue a new Street Trading Licence for Egham Farmers' Market allowing trading on the second Thursday of each month, subject to satisfactory modification of Traffic Orders, and other arrangements being made to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority and other interested agencies; and**
- ii) a further report be brought towards the end of a year of operation of the Thursday market to decide whether the weekday venture should continue.**

**(TO RESOLVE)**

Background Papers

E-mails regarding proposal to and from Director of Administration and Leisure; DAL's consultation with Egham businesses.

10. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

**OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -**

**where appropriate the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the report under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the report in question would be likely to involve disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in the appropriate paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.**

**(TO RESOLVE)**

**PART II**

**Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for Public Inspection**

a) **Exempt Information**

**Para**

(No reports to be considered under this heading)

b) **Confidential Information**

(No reports to be considered under this heading)