

Runnymede Borough Council

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 3 November 2004 at 7.30 p.m.

in the Council Chamber

at the Civic Offices, Addlestone



Members of the Committee

Councillors P.J. Waddell (Chairman), H.W.V. Meares (Vice-Chairman), J.R. Ashmore, Ms. D.V. Clarke, J.M. Edwards, Mrs. C.E. Gant, Ms. R.E. Haylor, Miss M.N. Heath, Mrs. Y.P. Lay, and R. Pate.

and all other Members for information

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. B.A. Fleckney, Committee Section Manager, Department of Administration and Leisure, Civic Offices, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel. Direct Line: 01932 425620). (Email:bernard.fleckney@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
- 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

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PART II

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a) Exempt Information

APPENDIX TO ITEM 5

b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| TERM | EXPLANATION |
|---------|--|
| ADP | Approved Development Programme. This is the Housing Corporation's annual allocation for capital expenditure on Housing Association/Registered Social Landlord projects. The ADP is distributed to Housing Associations through the allocation of Social Housing Grant. (See HCSHG below). |
| ALMO | Arms Length Management Organisation. This is an organisation established specifically to manage Council stock. The properties remain Council owned and tenants retain their secure tenancies. This can provide opportunities for extra funds to meet the Decent Homes Standard if all government requirements are satisfied. |
| BME | Black and Minority Ethnic Groups. This is a collective name used by various bodies. |
| COMPACT | This is a requirement of Central Government. It entails developing an agreement between the Council and tenants or voluntary organisations about the way in which they will be consulted on the services they receive or deliver. |
| CPA | Comprehensive Performance Assessment. An external process to assess the quality of individual Council's Performance (set out in the Local Government White Paper 2001). It brings together evidence from a range of internal and external sources, in addition to an on site inspection, in order to arrive at an overall category. |
| DFG | Disabled Facilities Grant. This is a grant made available to disabled persons to provide adaptations to their property. Dependent on the type of work, it is a mandatory grant. The amount of grant awarded is subject to a test of resources of the disabled person. |
| DHCS | Director of Housing and Community Services. |
| DIYSO | Do It Yourself Shared Ownership Scheme. This scheme allows applicants with sufficient income to part purchase accommodation in the Borough. As the title suggests, the applicant is able to find their own accommodation for purchase. The scheme is run by Thames Valley Housing Association who purchase up to 50% of the property value. The tenant pays rent to the Housing Association for the share the Association retains. |
| EGAN | Sir John Egan chaired a Local Government Task Force, which produced a report entitled "Rethinking Construction" in 1998. The Task Force recommended that the construction industry should look to a partnering approach in future rather than the adversarial nature of contracts in the past. |
| ESP | Existing Satisfactory Property. This scheme involved working with a Housing Association to purchase low cost housing in the private sector. Originally the scheme involved the repurchase of ex-Right to Buy Council properties. However, the scheme was broadened to include any low cost housing in the Borough. |
| GOSE | The Government Office for the South East. This is the local office of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (formerly the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions) for the South East region of England. Its role includes development of the Regional Housing Strategy. |
| HCSHG | Housing Corporation Social Housing Grant. This is the main public subsidy paid to Housing Associations by Central Government, through the Housing Corporation to finance new homes. It can be used to pay for rented schemes as well as low cost home ownership schemes. (See ADP above). |
| HMO | House in Multiple Occupation. This is a property that under the Housing Act 1985 is defined as being "occupied by persons who do not form a single household". The definition used by Planning Authorities is slightly different in that they do not recognise a house to be an HMO unless there are 6 occupants. |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| HOUSING CORPORATION | This is the National Housing Agency for England. The Housing Corporation is a Government Agency and was created by the Housing Act 1964 to register, fund, promote and supervise the Housing Association (now Registered Social Landlord) movement. |
| HRA | Housing Revenue Account. This is a statutory account that sets out the expenditure and income arising from the provision of social housing by the Local Authority as a landlord. Expenditure in the HRA includes repairs and improvements, and the management of the Council's stock. |
| LASHG | Local Authority Social Housing Grant. These were Social Housing Grant payments which were initiated by a Local Authority but for which the cash was provided by the Housing Corporation. The scheme came to an end on 1 st April 2003. Transitional arrangements are in place but under these arrangements the funds, if approved, are paid direct to the Registered Social Landlord. |
| LDF | Local Development Framework. Government proposed replacement for the Local Plan. |
| LSP | Local Strategic Partnership – Leads on the Community Strategy. |
| ODPM | Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Government Department). |
| PFI | Private Finance Initiative. This can provide an opportunity to raise extra funds for investment in housing stock. A number of issues would need to be addressed/considered. Several Councils are currently acting as pathfinders. |
| PPG3 | Planning Policy Guidance. This is Guidance issued by the Secretary of State detailing National Planning Policy within existing legislation. There are many examples of Guidance and PPG3 is the one that is the most relevant to housing. This sets out the requirements relating to the provision of affordable housing. |
| RARP | Runnymede Accommodation Referral Panel. This group has been established to assess the accommodation requirements of people with mental health, learning disability and physical disabilities. The group considers each individual case and makes a recommendation as to the level of support required. Representatives on the group include the following: Officer from the Borough Council's Housing Department. Officer from the Community Support Team (Social Services). Officer from the Community Mental Health Team (Social Services/Health). Occupational Therapist. |
| RHB | Regional Housing Board. The RHB has been established by the Government to prepare and oversee the Regional Housing Strategy. The Strategy for the region will set out the approach to housing investment and give a clear framework for spending decisions. One RHB exists for the whole of the South East of England. |
| RSL | Registered Social Landlord. This is a Housing Association which is registered with the Housing Corporation. Registration entitles an association to bid for Social Housing Grant but requires that the association does not trade for profit. The association is established for the purpose of the provision, construction, improvement or management of social housing. |
| SAP | Standard Assessment Procedure. This is the Government's procedure for assessing the energy efficiency of a property. |
| SMART | How targets should be set if they are to be effective – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely. |

| | |
|-------|--|
| SNHSG | The Special Needs Housing Strategy Group was established to look at the level of housing needed by people with special needs. This includes those with mental health problems, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, young people leaving care, victims of domestic violence, those with drug and alcohol problems, and older people. The group has representatives from a number of different agencies. The Chairman from each of the Local Special Needs Forums is also represented on the Special Needs Housing Strategy Group. |
| TCI | Total Cost Indicator. This is a system used by the Housing Corporation for assessing the maximum cost for new Registered Social Landlord dwellings. The TCI varies both in relation to the size of the dwelling and the region of the country in which it is to be constructed. |
| TPAS | Tenant Participation Advisory Service. The independent tenant advisers. Their role is to help tenants understand the complexities of the stock options and to audit the Council's statements and figures. |
| TLSG | Tenants' and Leaseholders Services Group. This group was formed in February 1999. The members of the group are Council Tenants and Leaseholders. They meet prior to each Housing and Community Services meeting to consider policy and management issues that impact on Tenants and Leaseholders. |

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 8 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 event the Member must leave the room if the interest is personal and prejudicial.

5. GRANT AID FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to:**

- i) **advise Members of the outcome of a recent meeting with the Voluntary Sector;**
- ii) **make proposals about the consultation process and organisational arrangements for dealing with grants for core revenue funding; and**
- iii) **set out a medium term grant programme that is consistent with the Council's financial strategy.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 At the last meeting of this Committee a recommendation was made that discussions take place with the Runnymede Association of Voluntary Services (RAVS) and other relevant bodies about proposals for the allocation of grant aid, and that a future report be brought back to the next meeting of this Committee.

- 2.2 A meeting with RAVS, and other organisations who receive core grant funding, was held on the evening of 5 October. At the meeting Officers outlined the Council's financial position, current grant aid expenditure and expenditure comparisons that have been made with other Councils. The Chairman of this Committee outlined some potential options for the future and asked for views on different mechanisms for the distribution of grant. The Minutes of the meeting are attached at Appendix A. Some of the main points that were made at the meeting are also outlined in this report.
- 2.3 The Committee last approved the Council's grant criteria at its meeting in May 2004.
- 2.4 Until a review of the departmental and service groupings in March 2002, grants to voluntary organisations had been the responsibility of the Corporate Management Committee and its predecessors. Thereafter this Committee assumed responsibility for the funding of health and social care type organisations, while grants to cultural and sporting organisations came under the auspices of the Leisure and Environment Committee.

3. Current Grand Aid Expenditure

- 3.1 The table below details the level of expenditure for the last 4 years on all revenue grant aid within Housing & Community Services.

| Category | 2001/02 Actual | 2002/03 Actual | 2003/04 Actual | 2004/05 Estimate |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Core Grants | 192,008 | 210,005 | 228,624 | 246,700 |
| Discretionary Rate Reliefs | 15,045 | 15,631 | 21,291 | 20,600 |
| Rent Abatement Grant | 54,915 | 56,137 | 54,540 | 59,200 |
| Other Grants | 7,422 | 9,043 | 17,368 | 19,700 |
| Total Grants | 269,390 | 290,816 | 321,823 | 346,200 |

A full breakdown of the estimate for 2004/05 is available in the Budget Book (pages 78/79). The cost of administration of the grant schemes and, more significantly, of Officer support and guidance for local organisations is also recognised in the Budget Book.

- 3.2 The revenue budget for grants to cultural and sporting organisations in 2004/05 is £35,500 (see pages 94/95 of the budget book).
- 3.3 The Council also makes regular provision in the capital programme of £50,000 for grants to local organisations for capital works.

4. Comparison with Adjoining Authorities

- 4.1 Officers have attempted to compare the Runnymede level of grant expenditure against that of other Boroughs. Attached at confidential Appendix A are the details. The analysis discloses some differences in the way that grant aid expenditure is treated. For instance, some authorities include items within grant aid which Runnymede does not and vice versa. An example would be that Woking includes Community Transport costs in their grant expenditure budget whereas Runnymede does not. Officers have attempted to provide information for authorities who group similar grant aid activities. The results indicate that Runnymede's expenditure, per head of population, is at the high end when compared to other authorities.

5. Community Services Related Grant Expenditure

- 5.1 The most significant element of the Community Services Grant Aid Budget relates to the annual core revenue funding given to voluntary organisations. The expenditure in this area has grown from an amount of £192,008 in 2001/02 to £246,700 in 2004/05, an increase of 28.5% during four years. During the same period the rises for inflation would have equated to about 10%. Clearly there has been significant growth in this budget during this period.

6. Options for Grant Expenditure

- 6.1 At the meeting with the voluntary sector the Chairman explained that the Council has a number of options for future grant expenditure. He suggested that these might include –
- i) cutting funding
 - ii) immediately freezing at the current 2004/05 level of funding
 - iii) freezing the current level of funding from a future year
 - iv) maintaining the current level of funding plus inflation for a further five years
 - v) increasing funding
- 6.2 It is generally recognised that the voluntary sector within Runnymede does a very valuable job and Officers believe that the Council would not wish to significantly cut the level of current funding. Immediately cash freezing funding levels would also cause the sector difficulties as many of the organisations have staffing commitments that rely on future inflation related increases.
- 6.3 Given the Council's medium-term financial strategy it would be inappropriate to increase funding. Having regard to the substantial real term savings required to balance expenditure with income from the Council Tax, it is also inappropriate to commit to maintain the current level of funding (i.e. plus inflation) for five years.
- 6.4 A sustainable way forward would be to establish an overall grant budget for the medium term and to work towards this.
- 6.5 Therefore it is proposed that core revenue grant levels for the current year will be increased for inflation in the 2005/06 and 2006/07 financial years but that from 2007/08 the grant aid budget would be cash limited.
- 6.6 From 2007/08, the voluntary sector will need to meet increases for inflation by redistributing as appropriate funding between the various voluntary organisations. The Chairman has asked RAVS whether they would wish to take responsibility for recommending the level of grant aid for different organisations. RAVS are convening a meeting to consider this proposal further.
- 6.7 Although the budget will be cash limited from 2007/08 it is proposed that any savings that arise in the meantime will be retained in the budget for redistribution. To assist with this it is also proposed that an amount of £1,000 will be transferred from the Partnership Budget and that a review is undertaken of the discretionary NNDR Relief Scheme to see if savings can be identified from that budget for inclusion in the redistribution from 2007/08.
- 6.8 It is important that when decisions are made about grant applications that they are made in the knowledge of the overall budget and the level of grant needed by others. It is also important that an assessment is made of the extent to which the recipients of grant are assisting the Council in meeting its strategic priorities e.g. within the Community Strategy.
- 6.9 This report concentrates on the allocation of Community Services Related Grant Aid. However there are other elements of grant aid in the Council's budgets e.g. Leisure Grant Aid. To enable a strategic and consistent approach to grant aid Members may wish to consider whether or not the responsibility for grant aid should be brought together under one Committee i.e. the Corporate Management Committee and considered in their entirety at one point in the year. This will ensure that the work of, and support given to, the voluntary, charitable and other sectors are consistent with the policy priorities of the Council. Clearly the views of the Leisure Services Committee will be important in assessing whether the Council wishes to take this proposal forward.

7. Outstanding Grant Applications

- 7.1 The Committee have agreed a number of medium term funding arrangements for core revenue funding with local organisations over the past years. These agreements typically

run for 5 years. However, the following organisations either do not have funding agreements or the agreement expires in March 2005. Therefore it is necessary to settle on the level of grant for the future.

Age Concern Runnymede
Citizens' Advice Bureau
Runnymede Mental Health Association

- 7.2 Furthermore, Officers suggest that it is necessary to reconsider the following funding arrangements:

Surrey Law Centre (renewal date April 2005)

RAVS (review date April 2005)

- 7.3 The following paragraphs set out the requirements of these organisations and make proposals for future grant funding.

7.4 Surrey Law Centre

- 7.4.1 The Council's commitment of £2,600 per annum towards the Law Centre comes to an end in April 2005. The Centre is used predominantly by the various Citizens' Advice Bureaux within Surrey who refer to the Advice Centres for help on complex case work. Although the service is currently being used by all of the eleven districts in Surrey it is only paid for by five (including Runnymede).

- 7.4.2 The Manager of the Service has recently contacted Runnymede and has indicated that, in order to continue the service, a total amount of £110,000 is needed from all of the local authorities within Surrey. She has requested that Runnymede make a contribution of £5,000 per annum towards the service. All Surrey districts have also been asked to make such a commitment and it is understood that some have already refused to do so.

- 7.4.3 The local Citizens' Advice Bureau have indicated that, although they have used the service from time to time, they can access other advice channels if the service were to be withdrawn. In the circumstances it is therefore recommended that the funding of the Law Centre ceases from April 2005. The savings of £2,600 will be added to the grant aid budget accordingly.

7.5 Age Concern Runnymede

- 7.5.1 Age Concern received annual grant aid of £90,633 in 2003/04 and £93,125 in 2004/05. Their grant will require renewal for 2005/06 and subsequent years.

- 7.5.2 Discussions have taken place with Officers within Age Concern who have acknowledged the difficulties that the Council faces. They have agreed to accept no growth in their budget but have asked for annual rises for inflation. Age Concern staff are employed under JNC contracts and traditionally the Council have adopted a policy of linking increases in grant to the level of their pay awards. For 2005/06 it is estimated that an increase of 3% will therefore be required, i.e. an additional grant of £2,794.

- 7.5.3 A copy of the Age Concern accounts has been placed in the Members' Room and Officers are satisfied that the pay award related increase that is requested is required. It is proposed that the Council will enter into a 5 year Service Level Agreement with Age Concern that will commit to the agreed current funding arrangements for 2005/06 and 2006/07. However, increases for inflation in 2007/08 onwards will need to be determined following the redistribution of the overall grant aid budget. To enable Age Concern to have some security of funding the Council would give an assurance that, provided it did not face unforeseen financial pressures, it would not reduce their grant below the cash level of grant given in 2006/07.

7.6 Citizens' Advice Bureau

- 7.6.1 At its meeting in July this Committee received a report which indicated that the CAB required an increase in their budget in order to meet specific items of expenditure. It was proposed

that the increase would be over two years with an amount of £5,392 being given in 2005/06 and an additional amount of £3,072 in 2006/07.

7.6.2 It is proposed that the additional amounts requested be met and that a 5 year Service Level Agreement be entered into whereby the Council commits to the increases but, as with Age Concern, requires that any inflationary increases from 2007/08 are met from within the overall grant budget. Again a commitment would be given that provided the Council did not face unforeseen financial pressures it would not reduce cash level of grant below that given for 2006/07.

7.7 Runnymede Association of Voluntary Services (RAVS)

7.7.1 This Committee received a report in March 2004 regarding the funding levels required by RAVS. The Committee decided to award an additional grant of £5,000 and a supplementary estimate was approved accordingly. This brought the total grant for RAVS in 2004/05 to £29,500. The Committee also asked that a further report be brought to this Committee for a further review of funding for the 2005/06 financial year.

7.7.2 Discussions have taken place with RAVS who have indicated that they would be content with the current level of grant in future years provided it was uplifted for inflation. It is proposed that, in line with the other grant applications, inflationary rises be given until 2007/08 from which date any additional rises be met from the redistribution mechanism. The same assurance to be given, as for Age Concern and CAB, regarding maintaining the grant at the 2006/07 levels.

7.8 Runnymede Mental Health Association

7.8.1 The grant allocated to the Runnymede Mental Health Association is made up of a number of different elements.

| Table 2 - Runnymede Mental Health Association Grant Allocation 2004/5 | |
|---|--------|
| Element | Amount |
| | £ |
| Strategic Maintenance Programme | 14,400 |
| Rent Grant Aid | 3,650 |
| General Grant (including building insurance) | 3,050 |
| Total | 21,100 |

7.8.2 The building that the Association occupies is owned by the Council. This determines the level of expenditure of the property related elements of the budget (i.e. the Strategic Maintenance Programme and Rent Grant Aid). The level of general grant aid required is determined annually by this Committee.

7.8.3 The Council have been in contact with the Association who have indicated that they would require an annual increase for inflation grant in future. It is proposed that inflationary increases are applied until 2007/08 from which time the new arrangements outlined above would apply.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The current grant aid programme for voluntary organisations in receipt of core revenue funding is set out in Appendix "B". This programme is consistent with the recent Financial Forecast.

8.2 Appendix "C" shows the proposed programme after taking into account the proposals set out in this report. In particular the Appendix shows:

- the cash limiting of grants from 2007/08,
- the removal of grant support to the Surrey Law Centre from April 2005.
- the additional grant awarded to the CAB in 2005/06 and 2006/07.

- The provision for support of £3,600 generated by the withdrawal of funding from the Surrey Law Centre, and £1,000 transfer from the Partnership Budget.

8.3 It is proposed that from 2007/8 the budget for direct core funding grant aid be set at £249,827. This includes the savings made from other budgets as indicated above.

8.4 The programme can be compared to the provision made in the Financial Forecast as follows:

| Year | Proposed programme | Financial Forecast | Extra funding (Savings) |
|---------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| 2005/06 | 237 | 236 | 1 |
| 2006/07 | 250 | 242 | 8 |
| 2007/08 | 250 | 248 | 2 |
| 2008/09 | 250 | 254 | (4) |
| 2009/10 | 250 | 261 | (11) |

NB: The figures for the Financial Forecast include the £1,000 Partnership budget transfer.

8.5 This table illustrates that there is additional net funding in the next 3 years (mainly because of the extra grant to CAB). There will however be savings from cash limiting the overall provision from 2007/08 onwards. These savings total £11,000 by 2009/10 and this sum can be used to help meet the overall savings target in the Financial Forecast.

9. Legal Implications

9.1 Service Level Agreements currently exist with those organisations that have previously had their grant applications considered. These Agreements give a commitment to funding for 3-5 years but make it clear that if the Council has financial constraints it will need to vary the grant allocated. Six months notice must be given of any variations.

9.2 The Council has also entered into a Compact with the Voluntary Sector and would attract criticism if it were to renege on the contents of the Compact. However the Compact recognises that the Council will be subject to financial constraints in considering grant aid applications.

10. Conclusions

10.1 The Council is clearly faced with a need to make difficult decisions. Funding for revenue grant aid to voluntary organisations must be rigorously examined given that the Council is faced with having to make revenue savings of £1,514,000 from the 2007/08 financial year onwards.

10.2 However, it is recognised that the work of the Voluntary Sector is extremely important to Runnymede and the Council needs to do all that it can to provide the sector with some assurance of funding into the future.

10.3 This report proposes that the current budget for core revenue grant aid should rise in the short term but in the longer term the organisations involved should work together to share resources and to keep expenditure within a defined budget.

10.4 The Voluntary Sector have been asked to consider the extent of their involvement in redistributing funds within an overall budget and a further report will be brought to this Committee once they have had the opportunity of considering this possibility further.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

- i) the programme for core funding for voluntary organisations as set out in Appendix C be approved and the voluntary organisations notified accordingly;**

- ii) **a further report be brought to the Committee when the views of RAVS and others on their involvement in the distribution of core grant are known;**
- iii) **subject to the views of the Leisure and Environment Committee, Members consider whether Grant support to voluntary organisations should be administered centrally by the Corporate Management Committee or continue to be split between Housing and Community Services Committee and Leisure and Environment Committee; and**
- iv) **a review of the scheme for discretionary NNDR relief be undertaken.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None.

6. PARTNERING CONTRACT FOR EXTERNAL DECORATIONS (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the principle to enter into a partnering contract for the external redecoration of Council owned properties in accordance with C1.14 (Appendix 2 section 3.1) of the Standing Orders for Contracts.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 Historically the external painting contracts for the Council owned housing stock have been procured annually using a traditional competitive process in accordance with the Standing Orders for Contracts. The existing programme is based on a five-year cycle.
- 2.2 The CPA Inspection noted that the Council makes a commitment to partnership working as recommended in the Egan Report "Rethinking Construction". However it was also noted that the procurement processes in housing "did not reflect current best practice, such as making quality and price evaluations of tenders using partnerships".
- 2.3 In June 2004 the revision of the Constitution of the Council introduced Appendix 2 of the Standing Orders for Contracts, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 'D'. This provides a framework to be used in the assessment for Partnering Arrangements. Under these new requirements it is necessary for the relevant Committee to approve the principle of any partnering agreement before detailed negotiations can take place and the Officers make any subsequent arrangements.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1 It is proposed to enter into a five-year partnering arrangement for external decoration of the Council's housing stock. The successful contractor will have an option to extend this period for an additional two years depending on performance. The objectives of the Partnering relationship will be:
 - i) Through a quality approach extend the existing paint programme by a minimum of one year.
 - ii) Generate cost savings within the delivery and administration of the process.
 - iii) Create a sustainable environment for the delivery of the service.
 - iv) Achieve best value and best practice by continually measuring and seeking to improve the service throughout the duration of the contract.
 - v) Provide a better service to the end customer.
- 3.2 The procurement process used will be in line with the Authority's Standing Orders for Contracts and the principles outlined in HM Treasury Procurement Guidance Note to ensure the issues of probity are addressed.

- 3.3 As part of this arrangement it is also proposed that the paint supplier, Dulux ICI Trade Paints, will also enter into the partnership as the nominated supply chain partner. As part of the continual improvement process, high quality external paint products will be specified to ensure that the prime objective of extending the painting cycle by a minimum of one year will be delivered.
- 3.4 To address the issue raised within the CPA report the process of the evaluation will be based on a 60/40 split with the larger proportion of the selection being focused on quality rather than cost.
4. Resource Implications
- 4.1 Provision has been made for the present paint programme within the cyclical repairs and maintenance element of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. It is anticipated that the costs of this contract will be consistent with this Plan.
- 4.2 The existing processes of seeking competitive tenders each year and the site quality controls presently used to manage the contracts are very demanding on staff time. Although it is not proposed to change the quality management process for the first year of the new contract, it is expected that this time on site will be significantly reduced after this period. Over the term of the contract it is expected that the contract becomes greatly self-managed through the key performance indicators and quality measures employed within the contract.
- 4.3 If the objective of extending the existing cycle is achieved, the estimated cost saving could be between £120,000 - £150,000 over the six year cycle (equivalent to £20,000 each financial year). These savings will assist in achieving the long-term financial viability of the housing stock including generating resources for improvement works.
5. Risk Assessment
- 5.1 The risk management plan forms part of the supporting documentation attached at Appendix 'E'.
- 5.2 The proposal carries a very low risk when considering the likely business impact of the failure of the Partnering contract. Due to the nature of the work it is unlikely that more than five houses would be affected at any one time and with the present quality of the stock, there would be very little impact on the stock quality from either delaying or missing a paint cycle.
- 5.3 Provisions within the contract will minimise these risks further and the management plan will also look to ensure that the appropriate processes are in place to manage or generate early warning of any potential failure of the contractor's performance.
6. Selection Procedure/Shortlisting
- 6.1 After advertising and prequalification assessment procedure a number of contractors will be selected for interview. It is proposed that the selection within this stage will be based on an assessment of the quality issues. From this initial stage two contractors will be requested to price a schedule of rates and make a final written presentation of how they would deliver the service. These submissions will be collated and assessed by means of a matrix in accordance with the Treasury procurement procedures.
7. Consultation with Residents
- 7.1 As is usual with any proposed change in the way the Housing Service is delivered, consultation with residents via the Tenant & Leaseholder Services Group will be undertaken. In particular, it will be necessary to liaise with leaseholders, as painting costs are recoverable through the service charge, and there are rules as to how this consultation is undertaken when costs exceed certain levels.
- 7.2 Historically, partnering arrangements such as the one proposed created problems as they made it difficult for the Council to comply with S.20 of the Landlord & Tenant Act 1985, which specified how service charges might be recovered. The Commonhold & Leasehold Reform Act 2002 overcomes such difficulties and specifies a consultation procedure which accommodates partnering contracts. These procedures are however quite lengthy and

onerous, and to undertake them would delay the selection process for a suitable contractor, to the point where we might not be able to commence painting as soon as we would like.

- 7.3 The new Act raises recoverable expenditure thresholds to a higher level of £250 per property. As the Council no longer has timber window frames to paint, it is rare for individual costs to exceed this new £250 limit, and it is therefore proposed not to undertake the formal consultation with leaseholders. In the unlikely event that an individual leaseholder's painting bill exceeded £250, the Council would be unable to recover any costs over this limit. Such a loss however would be more than offset by not undertaking lengthy and expensive consultation, and on balance, Officers believe that it is better to save resources and start the new painting contract rather than delay matters.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 The proposal carries very low risk with the potential for some significant benefits and therefore the recommendation to the Committee is to approve the principle of entering into a strategic partnering contract for the future delivery of this service.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

the principle of entering into a partnering contract for the external redecoration of the Council's housing stock be approved.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated

7. COMMUNITY MEALS SERVICE (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to advise Members on the proposed approach to the appointment of contractors to undertake the Community Meals service.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 The Council has provided a Community Meals service in its present format since 1999. The service is a hot food service which is delivered to people who have been assessed as vulnerable. Recipients of the service can choose from a variety of meals for which they pay a charge.
- 2.2 The service is currently undertaken by a contractor (Appetito) who is responsible for the purchase and delivery of the meals and the collection of the charges. The current contract for the service expires in March 2005 and the current contract value is £193,500.
- 2.3 This service was reviewed as part of the recent Best Value Review of Community Services. The Review concluded that a report should be brought back to this Committee outlining the detailed financial and other implications of bringing the contract back in house. The Review also asked that consideration be given to extending the service to include weekend delivery of meals.

3. Report

- 3.1 To avoid any interruption in the provision of the service it is important that all of the contractual and other arrangements are in place for the service by March 2005.
- 3.2 Staff employed by Appetito in the current service will be entitled to protection under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations. If the service is transferred to a new contractor time will be needed to consult with staff on the proposed new arrangements before the contract commences.

- 3.3 If an in house service is to be established then, in addition to settling the staffing issues, it will be necessary to establish new contracts for the provision of vehicles and meals. These arrangements would have to be in place early in 2005 to ensure that there is no interruption to the service for users.
- 3.4 A tendering exercise is currently in progress but unfortunately the results of the exercise will not be known in time to fully evaluate them for this Committee meeting. If this matter is delayed until the next meeting of this Committee in January 2005 then there would be insufficient time to deal with the issues raised in paras 3.2 - 3.3 above.
- 3.5 It is therefore proposed that the results of the tendering exercise be reported to the Corporate Management Committee at its meeting on 2 December. The Corporate Management Committee will be asked to consider the contractual arrangements for the service and to evaluate whether or not the Council is able to accommodate an extension of the service to weekends.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

the results of the tender exercise be referred to Corporate Management Committee for determination of the appropriate action

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated

8. HOUSING & PLANNING IN THE REGIONS (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Government's recently announced proposals for the merger of the Regional Housing Board and the Regional Planning Bodies and the creation of Regional Planning Executives.**

2. Background Information

2.1 In February 2003 the Government formed Regional Housing Bodies to develop Regional Housing Strategies and advise Ministers on the allocation of funding for housing investment. A report was made to this Committee on the 23 July 2003 outlining the details of these arrangements.

2.2 In April 2003 the Government commissioned Kate Barker, a member of the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee, to undertake a review of issues underlying the lack of supply and responsiveness of housing in the United Kingdom. Following research Kate Barker produced a report entitled Review of Housing Supply – Delivering Stability. In the report Kate Barker recommended that the Planning and Housing functions for the region be brought together under the Regional Assembly.

3. Proposals

3.1 The Government have now issued a consultation paper entitled "Housing and Planning in the Regions". A copy of the consultation document has been placed in the Members' Room. In the document it is proposed that the Regional Assemblies will be given responsibility for producing Regional Housing Strategies and making recommendations to Ministers on the broad pattern of housing investment. This will be alongside their new role as the Regional Planning bodies producing the Regional Spatial Strategies.

3.2 It is proposed that the Regional Assemblies will, in consultation with the current RHB members and other key stakeholders, establish arrangements for taking the new arrangements forward in their region.

3.3 The paper also suggests that there might be sub groups within the Assembly leading on the development of the Regional Housing Strategy. The Government would expect to see the

core members of the existing Regional Housing Boards on this sub group. Regional Assemblies will be able to decide how best to engage stakeholders in the process. Government expects to see full consultation with Regional, Sub-regional and Local Authorities on Housing and Planning Strategies, and for this to reflect specific interests e.g. rural, BME groups etc. It suggests that this might be done by utilising the existing Regional Housing Forums.

- 3.4 The exact format of the Regional Housing Strategy and its links to the Regional Spatial Strategy will be a matter for the Regional Assembly but it is proposed that they will share evidence bases and that the two strategies will be aligned to similar timescales.
- 3.5 Once they have been formally approved by Regional Assemblies, updated Regional Housing Strategies and recommendations on allocations will be submitted to Ministers by the Government Offices.
- 3.6 In addition to the above it is proposed that a national advice unit will be established and will be responsible for providing independent technical advice to all the regions, including London.

4. Implications for Runnymede

4.1 It is difficult at this stage to assess the full extent of any implications of the proposed merger. Government have stated that the merits of bringing together both Housing and Planning policy would include the following:

- i) even closer working between those developing RHSs and RSSs, including linking funding for new affordable housing and the means of delivery, leading to greater synergy;
- ii) an inclusive, efficient and transparent process with clear roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders drawing on a common evidence base;
- iii) continuity: building on the achievements already delivered in a short space of time by RHBs and accelerating the pace of collaboration: shared evidence bases, joint consultation events and multi-disciplinary teams are emerging;
- iv) the ability to balance delivery of regional, sub-regional and neighbourhood priorities and targets alongside national ones;
- v) the ability to take risks and innovate at a local level by responding quickly to indicators of low demand;
- vi) greater accountability to regional stakeholders;
- vii) a significant development in the role of regions.

4.2 The arguments against merger could include the following:

- i) there is a risk that the need for additional housing, and in particular additional affordable housing, will lose its emphasis within a wider planning process;
- ii) that time will be needed to establish the new arrangements and this could result in a delay in taking forward the existing Regional Housing Strategy;
- iii) the system introduces further complexity into what is already a very complex Housing Planning process for the region.

4.3 There is very little reference within the consultation document to the role of District Authorities within the planning process. The document makes it clear that Local Authorities will maintain responsibility for delivering affordable housing and improving housing stock and mentions that they will have responsibility for strategy but it is unclear how strategic planning at a local level will influence regional planning.

4.4 With the creation of the Regional Housing Boards and the removal of local funding for housing through the loss of Local Authority Social Housing Grant the Council has been placed in a position where it is less able to influence housing supply in its area. However at the same time it has taken on additional responsibilities within the Homelessness Act 2002 for providing housing to vulnerable people and has greater pressure to provide affordable housing for a much wider group of people in housing need. If Local Authorities are to fulfil these new statutory duties and demands they must have an input to the planning process. The document suggests that Local Authority input might be by way of the existing Regional

Housing Forums but these are not able to adequately represent the variety of housing issues faced by all authorities across the Region.

5. Consultation Response

5.1 The consultation period will last for 12 weeks and responses are required by 30 November 2004. Members are invited to indicate whether or not they wish to make any additional comments to those given above in paragraphs 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4.

5.2 A report will be presented to the Planning Committee on the 10 November 2004 considering the Planning aspects of the Government consultation. The comments of the Housing and Community Services Committee will be reported to the Planning Committee.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

- i) the comments set out in paras. 4.2 - 4.4 be submitted to ODPM; and**
- ii) Members indicate any additional comments that they wish to make in response to the consultation.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated

9. RUNNYMEDE CARE AND REPAIR (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to:**

- i) Advise Members of opportunities to work more closely with neighbouring authorities over the delivery of Home Improvement Agency Services to elderly & disabled people.**
- ii) Seek approval to commission a direct handyman service for one day a week from Woking Borough Council.**

2. Background Information

2.1 Runnymede Care & Repair is a Home Improvement Agency. It is a service provided by the Borough Council which is part funded and commissioned by Surrey County Councils' Supporting People Team. Prior to April 2003 it was part funded by a direct government grant.

2.2 The service was set up in April 2000 and has two members of staff and is managed by the Private Sector Housing Manager. The service provides advice and services that enable elderly and disabled residents, mostly homeowners, to repair, improve or adapt their homes to meet their needs. This enables them to remain at home, return from hospital or otherwise resolves their housing needs.

2.3 Demand for the service has grown significantly year on year. The following table shows the number of enquiries and works carried out through the agency.

| Runnymede Care & Repair Scheme - Demand Statistics | | | | | |
|--|---------|---------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | 2000/01 | 2001/02 | 2002/03 | 2003/04 | 2004/05 * |
| Enquiries handled | 163 | 190 | 209 | 282 | 135 |
| Works carried out | 38 | 71 | 95 | 134 | 54 |
| Value of works undertaken (exc VAT & Fees) | £37,763 | £83,745 | £160,226 | £163,493 | £115,025 |

* at 30 September 2004

- 2.4 Most clients are assisted to apply for grants to cover the cost of works needed. These can be Minor Works Grants, Major Works Grants, Disabled Facilities Grants or loans.
- 2.5 The ODPM appoint a national Co-ordinating body known as Foundations, to oversee and monitor the work of Home Improvement Agencies (HIA's), promote good practice and to advise on ways to extend geographical coverage of HIA services.
3. Joint Working Issues
- 3.1 The ODPM, with Foundations, have undertaken a review of HIA's partly as a result of the changeover of funding responsibility from the ODPM to local Supporting People Teams. They have concluded that, whilst providing valuable services, better value for money could be achieved by small agencies linking up to form larger agencies covering more than one local authority area.
- 3.2 Some discussions have taken place within Surrey and the Supporting People Team and as a result Officers have started initial discussions with Woking & Surrey Heath over options for closer working in the future.
4. Handyman Service
- 4.1 Many HIA's and local authorities employ handy persons directly to undertake small building jobs around the home for elderly residents. In Runnymede, Age Concern runs such a service for four days a week that is often in high demand.
- 4.2 When Runnymede Care & Repair assist residents with completing items of work for which grant is required, the Age Concern handyman can be used as a small contractor. In these cases, the client is assisted to make a grant claim, the grant is paid by the Council and then Age Concern is paid.
- 4.3 Woking Homelink is the name of the Woking Home Improvement Agency. They part fund a directly employed handyman for four days a week. An opportunity has arisen to improve the service to Runnymede Care & Repair clients whereby Woking could extend this service by one day a week and Runnymede could effectively buy into these extra hours at a basic cost of approximately £5,000 per year. This would cover labour plus a fully equipped van and travel costs, and certain overheads.
- 4.4 This would allow Runnymede to use the labour element of the service as 'direct labour'. This would provide a reliable service to elderly and disabled clients for labour only jobs and for other small scale works that otherwise might involve the use of building contractors.
- 4.5 It is proposed that the service would be commissioned from Woking Borough Council through a service level agreement which would set out the service we would expect and the level of supervision, insurance, etc. to be provided by Woking as the employing organisation.
- 4.6 It is proposed that Runnymede would use the service for two types of client. Firstly the service would assist clients who would otherwise have qualified for a Minor Works Grant. Woking would raise a charge for any materials used but the labour element would be free (having been covered by the initial £5,000). The costs of these materials would be borne by the Capital Minor Works Grant budget. Secondly the service could also be used for elderly and disabled clients who would not have qualified for a grant but nonetheless would benefit from having such a service. In these cases the client would be charged directly both a nominal £10 for labour and the cost of materials.
- 4.7 It is felt that this would provide a useful supplementary service to the Runnymede Age Concern Handyman particularly as it could be made available on the one day not covered by their service. It is also likely to represent better value for money by reducing the costs of grant administration, in dealing with contractors and reducing costs to elderly residents.
- 4.8 Only works of a small nature, which assist independent living such as installing grab rails, key safes and smoke alarms would be eligible. Works of a general nature such as minor decorating or non essential repairs could lead to excessive demand and should therefore be considered outside the scope of this scheme at least for the pilot period of 12 months.

- 4.9 Below are two examples of how such a service could have assisted clients of Runnymede Care & Repair.

Example 1.

Mrs S is an elderly frail lady who needed a half step in order to use her back door. This involved arranging for a contractor simply to provide and fix a couple of small paving slabs. This case was given grant assistance in the form of a 'Minor Works Grant'. The materials and labour amounted to £70.00. The administrative costs of arranging this are clearly disproportionate to the value of work undertaken. This could have been readily undertaken by a handyman with only a small charge involved for the cost of materials which could have been paid from the Minor Works Grant budget.

Example 2.

Mrs I was an elderly client seeking help to replace a ball valve. This was not eligible for grant assistance and therefore she was provided with a list of private contractors. One of these contractors did undertake the work but unfortunately a call out charge of approximately £60.00 was made along with the materials. Had a handyman scheme been available then the client would have benefited from the reduced cost of approximately £50.00.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There has, historically, been an inconsistent approach to HIA funding in Surrey and a number of agencies receive annual funding from the Adult & Community Care Division of Surrey County Council in addition to supporting people funding. Until recently, Runnymede has not received such funding just the supporting people funding. A review of the Adults and Community Care funding is underway with a view to achieving a more equal coverage but in the meantime Runnymede have been given a £5,000 contribution from the County Council in 2003/04 and 2004/05.
- 5.2 The cost to commission the Woking Handyman service for one day a week is £5,000 a year. This cost can be met from the contribution of £5,000 received from Surrey's Adult & Community Care Services in the current financial year. This sum has not been included in existing budgets and is therefore available to offset the cost of the Handyman service. It is anticipated that a further £5,000 grant will also be received in 2005/06.
- 5.3 It is proposed that Runnymede enters into a 12 month agreement only at this stage. Ongoing funding of the service can then be reviewed once the funding position is confirmed and the success of the service has been evaluated. It is proposed that the service be commissioned from January 2005 for a full calendar year.
- 5.4 As mentioned above, the Council will also reimburse Woking for the cost of materials involved in carrying out work for 'grant eligible' clients. This can be funded from the minor works budget which is currently £12,000 per year.
- 5.5 Where clients are not 'grant eligible' they are required to pay for the service directly.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

- i) the Council enters into an agreement with Woking Borough Council for the provision of a handyman for one day a week from January 2005 for a 12 month initial period;**
- ii) the charges to clients not eligible for a grant for the use of the service be as set out in the report; and**
- iii) Members note the early discussions with Woking & Surrey Heath over future options for closer joint working of their HIA services.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated

10. HOMELESSNESS FUNDING (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to update Members on grant funding obtained from the ODPM and to advise Members of funding opportunities in the next financial year.**

2. Background Information

2.1 Runnymede has been successful in obtaining one off annual awards of funding from the ODPM Homelessness & Housing Support Directorate in 2002/03, 2003/04 and 2004/05.

2.2 Some funding has been obtained by awards of a fixed allocation based on historical levels of homelessness and additional funding has been awarded through a bidding process. The main objectives of the ODPM programme is to encourage local authorities to develop initiatives which prevent homelessness or improve services to homeless people.

2.3 Previous funding awarded to Runnymede has been used for a number of different initiatives including –

- Establishment of a floating support service for vulnerable council tenants who may be at risk of losing their tenancies. This is now funded through Supporting People Grant.
- Topping up of deposit funding to Runnymede Rentstart, a voluntary group which assists single homeless people to secure privately rented accommodation.
- Establishment of a temporary post within the Housing Needs Team of 'Private Sector Resettlement Officer' to work with families at risk of homelessness to help them secure privately rented accommodation.

2.4 For this current financial year, 2004/05, Officers had to submit proposals for use of the fixed allocation of £15,000. Officers also submitted a bid for additional funding (albeit on a rather speculative basis) as follows:

- i) £15,000 fixed allocation to continue the post of Private Sector Resettlement Officer, (based on 30 hour per week post) for the period April – Dec. 2004.
- ii) £5,000 to extend the Private Sector Resettlement Officer until the end of the financial year (December 2004 – March 2005).
- iii) £8,000 to set up a pilot mediation project linked to the prevention of homelessness.
- iv) £15,000 to set up a pilot Court Desk advice service at Staines County Court. This was a joint, cross Borough proposal involving Hounslow and Spelthorne as Staines County Court also services these Boroughs.

2.5 The Council's total bid was, therefore £43,000 including the set allocation. In January 2004, this Committee was notified that the Council had been awarded £25,000, this being the set allocation of £15,000 plus an additional £10,000. The report confirmed that £20,000 would be used to continue the Private Sector Resettlement post to March 2005 and the remaining £5,000 would be used by Officers to support either of the other two initiatives.

3. Update

3.1 Officers have worked with Relate, Runnymede CAB and others to establish both additional services.

3.2 A sum of approximately £1,000 has been used to set up a pilot mediation service with Relate West Surrey. Under this pilot scheme, the Council's Homelessness Officer and Housing

Advisers are able to refer households for mediation where they have been made homeless, or may be at risk of homelessness, due to relationship problems with family members. Referrals can be fast tracked and at least one initial counselling session is provided free of charge to the client. Such services are considered to be good practice in preventing or delaying homelessness.

- 3.3 Only one referral has been made to the service so far so it is still too early to comment on the success of the scheme.
- 3.4 A Court Desk Housing Advice Service has been set up at the Staines County Court since March 2004. Officers worked closely with Runnymede CAB, Officers from Spelthorne & Hounslow Councils and also with the Runnymede & Spelthorne Community Legal Service Partnership (CLSP). The three Boroughs committed £3,000 each for a 2 year pilot and the CLSP committed £2,000. Runnymede's contribution came from the ODPM funding already received.
- 3.5 However, in May 2004 the ODPM advised that it would, after all, fund the full £15,000 Court Desk funding that had been included in the original bid. It is believed that the cross Borough nature of the proposal persuaded ODPM Officials that it was a worthwhile initiative to support. Rather than return all the original funding secured, the service has been revised to a 3 year pilot with more paid Co-ordinator time than would otherwise have been the case. Approximately half of the original funding commitments are being reimbursed.

4. 2005/06 Funding

- 4.1 The ODPM have recently advised the Council of arrangements for allocating homelessness funding next year. The national grant budget is similar to last year so a similar level of funding at local authority level could be anticipated.
- 4.2 Grant allocations to individual local authorities will be based on past performance in using grant effectively, delivering the outcomes advocated by the ODPM through homelessness strategies and submission of regular performance monitoring reports. This is a somewhat different approach and will allow local authorities to be flexible in how the allocation is spent as long as it is linked to the local homelessness strategy.
- 4.3 All grant allocation 'reviews' should be completed by November and local authorities should be notified of their 2005/06 allocation in December 2004.
- 4.4 It is proposed that this Committee authorises Officers to work with the ODPM to maximise grant funding for 2005/06 and to continue to use any such funding to implement the Council's Homelessness Strategy. The first call on any funding for 2005/06 would be the continuation of the Private Sector Resettlement Officer post.

OFFICERES' RECOMMENDATION that -

- i) The Director of Housing and Community Services be authorised to seek to maximise ODPM homelessness funding for 2005/06 and to utilise any funding to implement the Council's Homelessness Strategy; and**
- ii) any funding received for 2005/06 be used to continue the Private Sector Resettlement Officer post.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated

11. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR – POLICY AND PROCEDURE (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of new requirements to publish statements of Policy and Procedures for dealing with anti-social behaviour and to seek approval for such statements.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 In August 2004 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) published a Code of Guidance for Local Housing Authorities entitled "Anti-Social Behaviour: Policy and Procedure". The Code of Guidance was issued for the purposes of Section 218A (7) of the Housing Act 1996.
- 2.2 Section 218A was inserted by Section 12 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, and requires Local Housing Authorities, Housing Action Trusts and Registered Social Landlords to prepare and publish Policies and Procedures in relation to anti-social behaviour (ASB).
- 2.3 Each Social Landlord must publish a Statement of their Policies and Procedures, and an associated Summary by the 30 December 2004.

3. The Statements

- 3.1 Attached at Appendices 'F' and 'G' are the Statements of Policies and Procedures as required by the Code of Guidance.
- 3.2 Once approved the Statements will be made available on the Council's web site, but it is a requirement of the Code of Practice that they are also available in a printed hard copy form.

4. Tenant Consultation

- 4.1 Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 requires the Council to consult with tenants about matters of housing management, and clearly the creation of these Statements would require consultation to take place. The Statements are therefore to be considered by the Tenant and Leaseholders Service Group at their meeting on 26 October and any comments from the Group will be reported verbally to this Committee.
- 4.2 The Statements have been developed in accordance with the advice from the Code of Guidance, a copy of which has been placed in the Members' Room.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 The printing costs of these Statements have been accommodated within existing budgets.
- 5.2 The resource implications of this new requirement are uncertain. There is concern that the publication of the Statement may increase expectations from tenants, and that this may result in an increased number of complaints regarding anti-social behaviour. This has the capacity to divert staff resources from other areas of service delivery. However it is too early to say what the full impact will be. A further report will be brought to this Committee should it be found that increased complaints of anti-social behaviour are making it difficult to provide other parts of the housing service.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

the Statement of Procedures and the Statement of Policy attached at Appendices 'F' and 'G' be approved and published as required by the ODPM's Code of Guidance.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated

12. BOWES ROAD/WAPSHOTT ROAD REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME (DHCS)
(Ref: Minutes of Housing and Community Services Committee, March 2004 page 1392, para. 763)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the current position in relation to the Redevelopment Proposals.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 The Housing & Community Services Committee has received a number of reports regarding the Council's proposals in respect of the Bowes Road/Wapshott Road Estate, most recently in March 2004.
- 2.2 The Council, working in partnership with the Apex Housing Group, propose to demolish the 2 and 3 storey blocks of flats on the Estate and replace them with a mixed development of both social and private housing. The additional private properties would generate funds which would be used to reprovide the social housing.
- 2.3 An alternative would be to attempt to refurbish the flats, but in the light of the costs involved and the limited life span of these precast concrete dwellings, this Committee concluded that the refurbishment option did not represent value for money and that redevelopment was a better long term solution.

3. Current Position

- 3.1 A formal planning application from the Apex Housing Group has been made. The application is currently being processed, and in addition to the formal planning consultation additional meetings have been held with Ward Members and the Local Residents' Group together with an exhibition at the Hythe Social Centre for all residents.
- 3.2 The close proximity of the flats in Coopers Close to the River Thames has meant that it would be difficult to meet the flood mitigation arrangements recommended by the Environment Agency. This, coupled with the fact that the Council received a petition from Coopers Close residents asking to exclude them from the redevelopment proposals, prompted the Council to omit Coopers Close from the current planning application. Letters have been sent to the residents advising them that this is the current position.
- 3.3 There are still a number of outstanding issues to resolve, including the arrangements for the improvement of those properties not included in the current planning application. However, until it is known whether the proposed scheme will proceed it is not possible to make further plans for these properties.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 As made clear in earlier reports to this Committee, the proposals for the Estate provided for additional homes to be built for sale, with the funds from these subsidising the reprovion of the social housing units. The extent to which the scheme will be self-financing is dependent on the cost of the measures required to meet the requirements of the Environment Agency and others.
- 4.2 The Apex Housing Group are currently undertaking a financial appraisal to establish just how many new properties will need to be built for private sale so as to provide sufficient subsidy to reprovide the social housing units.
- 4.3 Once the planning decision has been made and the outcome of the financial appraisal is known then a further report will be brought to this Committee.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None stated

13. STANDING ORDER 42 – URGENT ACTION (DAL)

Acting in accordance with Standing Order 42 the following action has been undertaken by the Officer shown below after consultation with the Chairman:

| <i>Officer</i> | <i>Action Taken</i> | <u>Central Index No.</u> |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| Director of Housing and Community Services | Adoption of a Local Allocations Policy for Barker Road development. | 553 |

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

Proforma on Head of Corporate Administration Standing Order 42 file

14. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

If Members are minded to consider any of the foregoing reports in private, it is the

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

where appropriate the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of reports under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the reports 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

APPENDIX TO ITEM 5

b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading).