

Runnymede Borough Council

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 13 April 2005 at 7.30 p.m.

in the Council Chamber

at the Civic Offices, Addlestone



Members of the Committee

Councillors G.B. Woodger (Chairman), Mrs. F.M. Angell (Vice-Chairman), J.R. Ashmore, Mrs. F.J. Barden, J. Broadhead, J.B. Dean, J.R. Furey, H.W.V. Meares, Mrs J. Norman, D.W. Parr, R. Pate, B.J. Relph, N. Thewlis, A.P. Tollett, and J.R. Whiteley.

A G E N D A

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, Administration and Leisure Department, Committee Section, 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) **Public speaking on planning applications only is allowed at the Planning Committee. For details and to register to speak please contact Mrs T Eeles, in the Administrative Section of the Technical Services Department. (Tel Direct Line: 01932 425174)**
- v) 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. FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Chairman will read the Fire Precautions which set out the procedures to be followed in the event of fire or other emergency.

2. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

3. MINUTES

To confirm and sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 March 2005 (Appendix 'A') as a correct record.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

5. 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.

6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS (DTS)

A list of planning applications to be determined by the Committee is attached.

If Members have particular queries or interests in certain applications, the application files will be available for inspection and Officers present from 7.00 p.m. prior to the meeting in the ante room of the Council Chamber. This will be an informal opportunity for Members to see further details of applications and representations and to discuss and clarify issues. Copies of all letters of representation will also be placed on the table in the Chamber prior to the meeting and will be available for inspection by Members.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

the said applications be determined as indicated and any permission granted be subject to the conditions authorised.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

A list of background papers is available at the Technical Services Reception.

7. REFERENCE FROM CORPORATE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - SCHEME OF DELEGATION (DAL)

1. The Corporate Management Committee reviewed the Constitution at its meeting on 31 March 2005. As part of that review the Committee recommended that the Planning Committee consider making the following amendments to the Scheme of Delegation insofar as it relates to planning matters:

i) On page 49 of the Constitution, current wording:-

"Determination of Planning Applications with one objection which do not fall in the categories for Committee decision"

The Director of Technical Services can currently determine these applications with agreement of Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Corporate Management Committee suggest that the Scheme of Delegation be amended to allow such applications to be determined by:-

"Director of Technical Services, with the agreement of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, except where one or the other is not available, with the agreement of the Chairman or in his/her absence the Vice-Chairman."

- ii) Corporate Management Committee also suggest the following addition to the Scheme of Delegation on page 49 of the Constitution:-

"The Director of Technical Services be authorised to serve Temporary Stop Notices under the new planning powers".

Members are asked to consider these suggested amendments.

(TO RECOMMEND)

Background Papers

None

8. SOUTH EAST PLAN - CONSULTATION DRAFT (DTS)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Committee on the South East Plan produced by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA).**
- 1.2 **Comments are requested by 15 April 2005. A copy of the Plan has been placed on the Members' Intranet site.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 The Committee will recall that the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA) introduced a new planning framework for establishing policy guidance that, amongst other matters, will be used to guide the determination of planning applications. The old policy framework, referred to as the Development Plan, comprised the Surrey Structure Plan and the Borough Local Plan. These were set within the overall strategic framework of Regional Planning Guidance (RPG9) and other Government policy guidance. The new system comprises the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Local Development Framework (in combination forming the Development Plan) and these are again complemented by other Government policy advice. In the South East the Regional Spatial Strategy (called the South East Plan) has been prepared by the Regional Planning Body (a role undertaken by the South East England Regional Assembly). The Borough Council is responsible for producing the Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 2.2 The South East Plan (SEP) will be the statutory regional framework for development in the region to 2026, setting out the options for scale, priorities and broad locations for change. Although the policies in the Plan cover the whole of the South East, it also proposes a framework of sub-regional strategies, three of which affect Surrey - the London Fringe, Western Corridor & Blackwater Valley and Gatwick sub-regions. Runnymede lies within the London Fringe area.
- 2.3 Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes that influence the nature of places and how they function. Much greater emphasis is placed on the importance of implementation and, in particular, the importance of ensuring a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of investment in a timely and effective manner.
- 2.4 The PCPA emphasises more clearly than under the previous planning system that the policy guidance in the SEP or the LDF should avoid reproducing advice already set out in Government guidance (such as Planning Policy Statements and Statutory Instruments). In a similar vein the LDF will need to avoid replicating policy advice in the SEP.

- 2.5 Whilst the SEP is prepared by SEERA it will ultimately be approved and owned by Government. The Government Office for the South East (GOSE) will undertake a full formal consultation on the Plan following its submission from SEERA at the end of 2005. This will be followed by a Public Examination in Summer 2006 and approval by the Government at the end of 2006/beginning of 2007.
- 2.6 This report aims to highlight the key issues in the Plan and the potential implications for Runnymede. A key element, and probably the one to receive most attention, will be the options for growth in the Region over the next 20 years or so, and how this is represented in terms of housing numbers. The Plan does not propose housing distributions at the District and Borough level at this stage, as this will be subject to a separate process in the late summer. It has recently been agreed by the Assembly that the County and District Councils will be requested to undertake the consultation on the housing figures as a local agent for SEERA.
- 2.7 A set of detailed policy considerations examined as part of technical consultations with other Surrey Authorities are set out in Appendix 'B'.

3. Policy and Technical Considerations

The relationship between the policies, the spatial options and the sub-regional strategies

- 3.1 The overall emphasis of the Plan's strategy is to focus development in the existing urban areas, with a target of 60% of new development taking place on previously developed land. Within this overall strategy, the Plan differentiates spatially between four different policy areas (Policy CC8):
- the Government promoted Growth Areas;
 - Regeneration areas;
 - Areas of economic potential;
 - nine sub-regions.
- Runnymede lies in the London Fringe sub-regional policy area and is an area of economic potential.
- 3.2 Alongside the overall strategy and policy designations, the Plan proposes two different options (spatial options) in terms of the way the South East should develop over the next 20 years or so. The first spatial option is based on a continuation of the strategy set out in current Government guidance, RPG9 (called continuing existing policy), which aims to reduce development pressure in the economic hotspots of the region, like Surrey, and boost economic activity and development in the Growth Areas and Regeneration areas. The second option (called Sharper Focus) promotes growth in all three areas - the hotspots, the Growth Areas and the Regeneration areas.
- 3.3 The Plan also proposes three options in terms of how much new development should be promoted in the region, using housing numbers as a proxy for the scale of development. The options are 25,500 (based on the actual build rate in the Region over the last 5 years), 28,000 (based on RPG9) or 32,000 (based on demographic projections) dwellings per annum for the Region as a whole. The lowest option was inserted by the Assembly when approving the draft Plan for consultation in November 2004. A higher option of 36,000 dwellings per annum, also based on demographic projections, was deleted at the same time. The two spatial options and the four policy designations have been used to distribute the three sets of housing numbers around the sub-regions resulting in six different housing options for each area.

Comment

- 3.4 ***The presentation of the growth options is very technical and may not encourage the public to respond. There does appear to be some contradiction in the policies, for example, the London Fringe is identified in Policy CC8 as an area of economic potential. However, if the 'continuing existing policy' option is applied, Surrey would***

be considered an economic 'hotspot' where development pressures should be constrained.

- 3.5** ***There also appears to be a contradiction between the policies and spatial options in the Plan, and the draft sub-regional strategies. Of particular concern is the treatment of the London Fringe Sub-Region. The advice (and draft strategy) makes it clear that the sub-region should be treated as an area where urban intensification is already beginning to reach an unacceptable level and the Green Belt is most vulnerable. The main policy approach, should therefore be about constraining development; managing the impact of development better in the urban areas; and protecting the Green Belt (as already reflected in Policy CC9 of the Plan), as opposed to promoting further growth.***
- 3.6** ***Much more clarity is therefore required around the relationship between the spatial options and the policies in the Plan and to ensure that there are no contradictions between the two. In doing this, it is vital that SEERA brings the strategy into line with the draft sub-regional strategies to ensure consistency in policy approach.***

The impact of economic growth on development patterns

- 3.7** The Plan assumes that economic growth is likely to continue in areas that have already experienced major employment growth in the last decade, hence the designation of places like Runnymede as 'Areas of economic potential'. As such, employment projections commissioned by SEERA have been used in the models for distributing the housing numbers to the sub-regions.

Comment

- 3.8** ***Whilst it may be accepted that economic growth is a key part of Surrey's and Runnymede's success and ongoing high quality of life, there are some concerns about the Plan. The SEP assumes that a) the areas that have experienced employment growth in the past decade will continue to experience it to the same level and in the same way and b) that by directing housing to the areas of economic potential to help them 'consume their own smoke', these areas will become more sustainable.***
- 3.9** ***The social and physical infrastructure implications associated with growth are not adequately addressed in a strategy. The Plan must also be much more flexible in the way it treats the economy and, in particular, must recognise that economic growth does not simply equate to employment growth and hence, housing growth right across the board. A different response will be needed in different areas.***

Housing

- 3.10** The selected policy approach in the Plan will guide housing development within the London Fringe Area. The scale of this growth will depend on a number of social, economic and environmental factors. This relationship is still being developed, but the potential impact on Runnymede could be significant.

Comment

- 3.11** ***To achieve some of the higher levels of housing growth in Surrey it will be necessary to maintain and even exceed the current high levels of housing development. However, this increased capacity is being currently delivered through higher densities, loss of other land uses and is placing increasing stress on infrastructure in the urban areas. There are clearly genuine concerns about the longer term impact this will have on Surrey's towns if this strategy continues.***
- 3.12** ***The issue of intensification in urban areas cannot be divorced from the social and environmental considerations elsewhere. If quality of life within urban areas declines to the point where pressures to increase the release of Green Belt arise, the consequences for the countryside, much of which is of high intrinsic quality, will inevitably be negative. In addition, the existing social and physical infrastructure***

deficit will be compounded unless adequate resources are directed towards areas with significant growth potential (considered below).

Infrastructure

- 3.13 As noted in paragraph 3.12 the issue of urban intensification requires that all new development is associated with the type of social and physical infrastructure that communities need. The Plan (Policy CC4) recognises the need to support all new development and this was a key issue raised in all the draft sub-regional strategies and has been highlighted as a major area of concern.

Comment

- 3.14 ***The scale of the infrastructure deficit is emphasised by a recent study commissioned by the South East Counties which estimated that up to £30 billion will be needed over the next 20 years to bring infrastructure up to the level that is required and support new development over the timescale of the SEP. It is of serious concern that even if the levels of housing suggested by the consultation draft could be accommodated in Surrey's towns, there would be significant doubt that the infrastructure needed to support this development would in fact be provided and indeed when it was needed.***
- 3.15 ***Further work on this matter has been commissioned by the SE Counties and it is anticipated that this will provide evidence to show that there will not be sufficient money available to support the growth envisaged in the South East at any of the levels proposed. Indeed the Eastern Region has recently concluded the same and effectively put progress on their Regional Spatial Strategy on hold because of this.***
- 3.16 ***Regardless of the figure at the end of the day, all the evidence suggests that the ODPM and others will continue to focus investment in the growth areas already identified, leaving little in the pot for other parts of the region which are nevertheless being asked to accommodate significant levels of growth.***
- 3.17 ***If Policy CC4 is to be effective SEERA must demonstrate that the appropriate level of funding for infrastructure be received for all areas.***

4. Legal Issues

- 4.1 The SEP will form part of the statutory Development Plan for Runnymede as prescribed in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

5. Council Policy

- 5.1 The SEP provides the context for spatial planning in the Borough. It goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes that influence service provision within the Borough. The role of the SEP and the LDF will need to be emphasised more in many aspects of Council activity.

6. Sustainability Issues

- 6.1 The SEP is a fundamental part of the Government's Sustainable Communities Initiative. The Plan will be subject to a thorough Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal to ensure that social, economic and environmental issues are considered. The Council has established the Runnymede State Report that sets the context, inter alia, for monitoring the impact of development and this will form a key part of the appraisal process for the Development Plan.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The SEP will set the context for spatial development in the South East of England for the period to 2026. This timeframe requires the identification of sufficient 'development opportunities' to provide a 20 year period. This will have a significant impact on LDF's which hitherto (in the context of the Local Plan) have only realistically had to consider a 10 year

time span. The implications for spatial planning at the Borough level are therefore considerable and the decisions made now will have significant implications for the next generation of those who live or work in the Borough.

7.2 The timescale for developing the SEP is much shorter than under the previous planning framework and this has given rise to some problems in that the LDF's have to be prepared at the same time as their strategic context (the SEP) is evolving. This has given rise to a number of logistical problems in attempting to develop LDF policy advice (e.g. on housing provision) in the absence of guidance on the scope of development (e.g. on housing numbers).

7.3 ***The 'in tandem' nature of the preparation of the SEP and LDF is giving rise to problems for those non-statutory stakeholders invited to comment on a whole range of policy issues at both the strategic and local level. It is proposed that the Districts assist with the consultation on the housing data during the period September – October 2005. This is the same period that Runnymede will be consulting on the LDF, with a focus on housing issues. The potential for consultation fatigue and confusion cannot be under-estimated.***

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

the comments set out in this report be forwarded to the South East England Regional Assembly as the Council's formal comments on the draft South East Plan.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None

9. APPEAL DECISIONS

The Planning Inspectorate has recently determined the appeals mentioned below. The appeal decisions are available in the Members' Room.

Site/Development	Decision
a) Stillwater, Oak End Way, Woodham – planning appeal regarding two detached residential dwellings (02/1060)	DISMISSED
b) Oak Farm, Thorpe Green, Thorpe – enforcement appeal regarding erection of close boarded fence and concrete posts, erection of brick gate piers, erection of wrought iron gates, construction of a driveway and hardstanding.	DISMISSED, NOTICE UPHELD WITH CORRECTIONS AND VARIATIONS

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

Appeal decisions.

10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS DETERMINED BY DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES (DTS)

A list of planning applications recently determined by the Director of Technical Services under his delegated powers is attached at Appendix 'C'. If Members have any particular matters they wish to raise, prior notice to the Chairman would be of assistance.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None

11. STANDING ORDER 42 – URGENT ACTION

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

<u>Officer</u>	<u>Action Taken</u>	<u>Control Index No</u>
Director of Technical Services	Service of Wasteland Notice regarding land at Brookside Nursery, Egham	577

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

Proforma on Committee Section SO 42 File

12. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following 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 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

(No reports to be considered under this heading).

b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading).