

Runnymede Borough Council

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday 31 March 2005 at 7.30 p.m.

in the Council Chamber at the Civic Offices, Addlestone

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

PART I

10A. URGENT ACTION - STANDING ORDER 42
EGHAM SWAN SANCTUARY - GRANT (DAL)

1. **Purpose of Report**

To propose an increase in the capital grant to assist the removal of Egham Swan Sanctuary.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 Egham Swan Sanctuary has occupied a site at Pooley Green allotments since 1989. Occupation was taken under a ten year lease, which contained the right for either party to bring it to an end at the third and fifth years. The Council exercised the break option after five years so as not to prejudice the developing plans for the review of its landholdings at Pooley Green, which resulted in the proposals for the new Hythe Centre, the Health Centre currently under discussion, and the proposed Hythe Park. The Swan Sanctuary had a series of temporary planning permissions the last of which expired in 1998.
- 2.3 The Swan Sanctuary has in the past recognised the Council's position and has been seeking to move to a better and bigger site since 1992/3.
- 2.4 Although the Council had no landholdings of its own suitable for relocating the Swan Sanctuary, it did succeed in identifying at different times sites at Penton Hook and at Thorpe, both of which were the subject of extensive discussion with the landowners and apparent initial agreement, but in both cases the Swan Sanctuary ultimately was unable to reach agreement with the landowners to its satisfaction. The Swan Sanctuary investigated a number of other possibilities and the Council was also involved with dialogue with various landowners. An apparently serious possibility near to Thorpe Park fell through when the landowner sold the site in 2003. However the Swan Sanctuary eventually succeeded in reaching agreement on a site at Shepperton in 2004. This site will be ready for occupation later this year.
- 2.5 In May 2004, bearing in mind both the progress of the Swan Sanctuary's plans and the Council's own timescales, the Economic Development Committee resolved that six months notice should be served on the Swan Sanctuary to terminate its occupation at Pooley Green. Service was effected in July and the Swan Sanctuary were at that time urged to discuss any difficulties in meeting the projected removal timescale.
- 2.6 The Swan Sanctuary are making good progress with plans for the Shepperton site and it has been agreed that they will leave Pooley Green on or before 31 October 2005. This can be accommodated within the Council's planning for Hythe Park. In addition, with the approval of the Chairman of this Committee under Standing Order 42, a capital grant of £25,000 was approved in December to assist with the substantial costs of removal.
- 2.7 Since its beginning in the founder's back garden, the Swan Sanctuary has achieved a national and international profile and is well respected. The Council has previously expressed strong support for its work.

3. Report

- 3.1 The amount of £25,000 was initially put forward prior to detailed discussion with the Swan Sanctuary as to its adequacy.
- 3.2 Following discussions with the Swan Sanctuary, it is clear that they face major costs in the removal exercise and will also be writing off much of the costs of laying out the present site, estimated at £52,000.
- 3.3 In all the circumstances it is recommended that the grant be increased to £37,500.
- 3.4 This should assist in ensuring a smooth transition for the Swan Sanctuary, which is in both parties' interests. The Sanctuary will complete its move at the latest by 31 October 2005, and will liaise with the Council over actual removal arrangements to ensure that arrangements can be made for the security of the site and allotments.
- 3.5 The grant will be paid on removal.
- 3.6 A joint press release will be issued.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 £24,736 remains in the capital grant budget for the current financial year, and there is a further allocation of £50,000 for 2005/6. It had been proposed that the remainder of the current year's allocation be taken towards the grant. This will leave £12,764 to be taken from next year's budget and therefore a balance of £37,236 for further capital grants to local bodies during 2005/6.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

the capital grant to Egham Swan Sanctuary be increased from £25,000 to £37,500.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

DAL 81.12.74 (exempt)