

Runnymede Borough Council
CORPORATE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 27 July 2004, at 7.30 p.m.

in the Council Chamber

at the Civic Offices, Addlestone



Members of the Committee

Councillors R.K. Habgood (Chairman), N. Thewlis (Vice-Chairman), J.R. Furey, Mrs. L.M. Gillham, P.A. Greenwood, C.J. Norman, Ms. C.M. Simmons, P.B. Tuley, P.J. Waddell and G.B. Woodger

and all other Members for information

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. J. Gurmin, Administration and Leisure Department, Committee Section, Civic Offices, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel. Direct Line: 01932 425624). (Email: john.gurmin@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.

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(No reports to be considered under this heading)

1. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

2. MINUTES

To confirm and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 June 2004 (attached at Appendix 'A') and 29 June 2004, attached at Appendix 'B', (to follow)

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, or refrain from voting, as may be appropriate according to the nature of the interest.

5. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS IN RUNNYMEDE (DTS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **To seek the views of the Committee on a series of data sets that have been published recently which highlight social and economic trends within Runnymede.**

1.2 **These socio-economic indicators have a key influence on Sustainability Development in the Borough and their relationship is examined in the report.**

2. Background Information

Census 2001

2.1 The 2001 census of population was undertaken on 1 April 2001. Data from the census has been released over a period of time, with the final batch anticipated by the end of this year. The information available can be found on the Council's website.

Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004

2.2 The English Indices of Deprivation 2004 was published earlier in the summer. The Indices of Deprivation have previously been published in 1998 (in predecessor study) and 2000. The latest version includes additional domains. They relate to 2001 and are available at a very local level. They have clear links with the census data timeframe.

Sustainable Development

2.3 The Government has emphasised the need to promote sustainable communities. In essence the key message is to consider the social, economic and environmental characteristic of an area, establish a baseline of data in respect of these issues, set out local objectives, identify mechanisms for achieving enhancements to the quality of life and undertake an annual monitoring of the progress towards achieving these objectives.

2.4 Whilst promoting sustainable development is a key part of the new Planning Framework, setting the context for the Local Development Framework (aka Local Plan), it becomes, by association with the latter, an integral part of corporate policy development. The Government wishes to promote strong, vibrant and sustainable communities and to promote community cohesion. The underlying theme of advice is to encourage a better integration of all strategies and plans through Partnership working and effective community involvement.

3. Policy and Technical Matters

Census 2001

- 3.1 The Census is a count of all people and households in the UK and is normally taken every ten years. The only recent exception to this was in 1941 when it was not possible to conduct a census due to the Second World War. It is the most complete source of information about the population available.
- 3.2 It provides essential statistical information, enabling the planning and monitoring of public services including schools, health services, roads and libraries. Information is available from the UK level down to small geographical areas (aka Output Areas). Every effort is made to include everyone, and it is unique because it covers everyone at the same time and asks the same core questions everywhere, making it easy to compare different parts of the country.
- 3.3 Some key messages from the 2001 Census data, when compared with the 1991 Census, are:

Housing

- Total population - 78,033 (5% increase over 1991);
- Total households - 31,656 (10.6% increase over 1991);
- Total one-person households - 9,363 (31% increase over 1991);
- Total dwellings - 32,673 (14.3% increase over 1991);
- Total number of rented dwellings - 3,786 (24% increase over 1991);

Age Structure

- Total population over 64 – 13,603 (6% decrease over 1991);
- Total population under 24 – 24,182 (14% increase since 1991);

Transport

- There are 46,061 cars in Runnymede (24% increase over 1991);
- 45% of households have more than 2 or more cars (40% in 1991), 15% have no car;
- Of the 39,037 economically active people in the Borough, 69% travel to work by car.

Health

- Over 73% of people stated their general health was good, 20% said it was fairly good and over 6% said it was poor.

Further details are set out on the Council website.

Indices of Deprivation

- 3.4 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (IOD2004) is a measure of multiple deprivation experienced by individuals living in a local area (Super Output areas). People may be counted in one or more categories (aka domains). The overall IMD is weighted to convey relative levels of deprivation throughout the whole of England.
- 3.5 The IOD2004 includes consideration of the following domains:
- income;
 - employment;
 - health deprivation and disability;

- education, skills and training;
- barriers to housing and services;
- living environment;
- crime.

A summary of the data that is used to formulate these domains is set out in Appendix 'C'.

- 3.6 There are over 32,482 Local Areas (Super Output Areas) in England and focussed on key settlements. Each Super Output Area (SOA) is ranked according to its score. A rank of 1 means it is the most deprived SOA in England and a rank of 32,482 is the least deprived SOA. To put the IOD in context, Runnymede generally experiences low levels of deprivation relative to the rest of England. It does, however, have small pockets of relative deprivation.
- 3.7 Officers have drawn together the Indices to provide an 'aggregated' assessment for SOAs in Runnymede. The process revealed that certain areas of the Borough achieved relatively poor ranking across a number of domains. Using the Geographical Information System (GIS) it has been possible to visually identify areas where 3 and 4 of the indices fell within the lowest two quartiles (ie 1 to 16,241 with 1 being the most deprived).
- 3.8 The SOA centred on Egham Hythe and Chertsey St Ann's have 4 domain scores with the lowest two quartiles, whilst Englefield Green West, Chertsey Meads, Addlestone North and Bourneside and New Haw have three. The detail is as follows:

SETTLEMENT	DOMAIN AND RANK (LOWEST)
Egham Hythe	Education (10571), Employment (15259), Income (11982), Living Environment (1109)
Chertsey St Ann's	Education (3314), Income (10735), Housing (3299), Living (1596)
Englefield Green West	Education (6737), Income (14245), Housing (10609)
Chertsey Meads	Education (9628), Income (11067), Living (8188)
Addlestone North	Education (9328), Income (13597), Living (3838)
Addlestone Bourneside	Education (14534), Employment (15133), Income (11855)
New Haw	Education (15133), Housing (12197), Living (369)

- 3.9 When assessing the census data and the IOD2004, it is worth noting the following from a relative perspective when compared to the rest of the Borough:
- Housing – Englefield Green, Egham Town and Hythe have the most overcrowded households (see definition);
 - Transport – Egham Town, Egham Hythe and Chertsey South and Row Town have the highest number with no car;
 - Health – Chertsey St Ann's is the ward where the highest number of people felt their general health was poor;
 - Work – Chertsey Meads and Egham Hythe have the highest number of people unemployed (3% compared to the average 2.2% for Runnymede);
 - Education – Chertsey St Ann's (IOD Rank 3314) and Englefield Green West (IOD Rank 6737) have pockets of educational deprivation;
 - Living Environment – Parts of New Haw (IOD Rank 369) have a poor living environment due to the M25, whilst Chertsey St Ann's (IOD Rank 3299) has the next lowest rank.

Comment

- 3.10 ***It is important, when considering the data, not to jump to conclusions about the characteristics of the population in Runnymede. The important point to note is that the comparisons have been based upon the relative position of the population in Runnymede. In general terms the population has well-balanced socio-economic characteristics but certain trends are noted, particularly with regard to relative education, housing, income and living environment attributes.***

Sustainability Audit

- 3.11 The data examined establishes a baseline against which to monitor future trends. As part of the work on the new Local Development Framework (aka the Local Plan) consideration is being given to a range of social, economic and environmental issues (aka Sustainability Indicators). Monitoring the impact of Council policy on these indicators is a formal requirement of the Sustainability Audit of the Local Development Framework. The issues identified in this report form a key component of the social and economic indicators and also represent a formal stage in establishing the baseline of information.
- 3.12 The analysis undertaken of the Census 2001 and IOD2004 highlights issues that the Council may wish to consider as it develops policy guidance. Frequently these issues overlap with the interest of other public sector partners and it will be appropriate to highlight these matters in partnership discussions. It may well be that they are issues that have been similarly identified by partners.
- 3.13 An integral part of a Sustainability Audit of the Borough is to consider socio-economic-environmental objectives that have been identified in National and Regional policy guidance for translation into local targets. The full schedule of Regional Sustainable Objectives is set out in Appendix 'D', but of particular relevance to the matters examined in this report are those that seek to:
- improve access to housing;
 - improve health and well-being;
 - reduce poverty and social exclusion;
 - raise educational achievement;
 - improvement quality of environment;
 - reduce traffic congestion;
 - maintain economic advantage.
- 3.14 The underlying reason for considering the issues identified in the Census, IOD and the sustainable objectives, is to provide a focus for areas of corporate policy development. There will be aspects of the data not considered in this report that will contribute towards the work of the Service Committees, but the key aspect of the matters highlighted in this report is that they represent corporate areas of activity that will require consideration or consultation with other public sector partners.
- 3.15 This report does not attempt to set out a policy directive but highlights issues on which the opportunities for developing policy guidance will be considered. A general endorsement of the Regional Sustainability Objectives set out in Appendix 'D' will provide a framework for future work on the LDF and establish an annual mechanism for monitoring the impact of existing and emerging policy, both corporate and specifically in the LDF. The Sustainability Objectives will, however, need to be refined to reflect local circumstances.
4. Council Policy
- 4.1 Consideration of the issues highlighted in this report will be examined, inter alia, in the context of the Leader's Position Statement and the Community Strategy for Runnymede.

5. Resource Implications

5.1 The development of the policy issues will be examined within the framework of the LDF. Provision was made to accommodate these areas of work in a report to the Planning Committee on 28 June 2004.

6. Conclusions

6.1 The gradual release of Census data, the publication of the IOD 2004 and the work on the LDF have highlighted areas of potential corporate policy development. In many instances these policy issues will need to be considered together with other public sector partners.

6.2 The Government has promoted the concept of sustainable communities, with particular emphasis placed upon the development of local criteria to measure progress in achieving sustainable development.

6.3 A general endorsement of the Regional Sustainable Objectives will enable a framework to be developed at the local level.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

- i) the comments on issues for potential corporate policy development in section 3 of this report be endorsed; and**
- ii) the mechanism for developing a policy approach on sustainable communities be approved.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

Integrated Regional Framework 2004 – (SEERA, GOSE, SEEDA, EA, Department of Health)

6. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY (DF)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is:

- to consider the implications of the National Procurement Strategy on the Council's Procurement Strategy;
- to review the Council's Procurement Strategy;
- to report progress in implementing procurement targets;
- to propose the creation of a new post of Procurement Officer.

2. Background Information

2.1 The Council approved its Procurement Strategy in July 2002. This is reproduced on the Council's website.

2.2 The Audit Commission undertook an audit of procurement as part of the Council's 2002/03 audit. The final report was received in November and its main conclusions were quoted in the Annual Management Letter (reported to Committee in December 2003). The action plan produced from this audit is reproduced at Appendix 'E'.

2.3 The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) published a National Procurement Strategy for Local Government in October 2003. A copy is available in the Members' Room and can be viewed on the ODPM web-site at http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_localgov/documents/downloadable/odpm_localgov_024923.pdf.

3. Report

- 3.1 The National Procurement Strategy for Local Government sets out an ambitious agenda for achieving procurement targets. These are grouped around key themes, which are summarised in Appendix 'F' along with the Council's progress against these targets.
- 3.2 The Procurement Strategy has been reviewed in the light of recent developments, particularly the publication of the National Procurement Strategy, the audit report and the CPA report, which identified inconsistent procurement practices across the organisation.
- 3.3 One criticism that the District Auditor levelled at the Procurement Strategy was that "the strategy describes procurement in Runnymede rather than setting out its strategic role. It has had little impact on the way the Council procures". The strategy has been reviewed in the light of this criticism and some amendments are proposed. The objective has been to make the document clearer, to set out guiding principles that will form the basis of procedure and action, to identify procurement objectives that the Council wishes to achieve in pursuit of its overall policies and the steps that will be taken to achieve them. The amended strategy is reproduced at Appendix 'G'. One of the proposed objectives is the achievement of the national procurement targets and if this is adopted it will become Council policy.
- 3.4 Appendix 'H' lists the targets that form part of the existing Procurement Strategy that were approved in July 2002. An Officer Project Group was formed in order to co-ordinate the approach to procurement across the organisation and to achieve these targets. Progress against each target is described in the Appendix.
- 3.5 The work of the project group has concentrated on the following areas:-
- Creating a corporate contracts register on the intranet.
 - Producing guidance for business on the Council's public web pages.
 - Producing a new guide to Standing Orders for Contracts.
 - Producing guidance on procurement for the intranet.
 - Sharing good practice.
 - Reviewing and redrafting the Procurement Strategy.
- 3.6 By producing a corporate contracts register on the intranet, the aim is to exercise better control and consistency over the letting of contracts and to provide an easy way of sharing contractor information around the organisation. This task was completed this month and the intention is to use the database to produce the information that is required to create a prospectus and tendering programme for suppliers (items (a) and (g) on the target list at Appendix 'H').
- 3.7 Work is currently in hand to improve the appearance and content of the business pages on the Council's web-site. Procurement information will be included, in particular a procurement guide with links to other key sites, an explanation of how the Council procures goods and services and advice on how suppliers can help the Council to pay them promptly.
- 3.8 The Council's internal web pages are also seen as the best vehicle for disseminating guidance to staff. The project group has recently produced a new guide to Contract Standing Orders (reproduced in the Council Constitution) and this will be available on the web-site along with an easy look-up guide. An advantage of using the intranet is that all relevant information and documents can be accessed from a dedicated web page.
- 3.9 Two targets in the July 2002 Procurement Strategy that have not been achieved are the analysis of contractor performance in a comprehensive report (item (b) in Appendix 'H') and the development of the e-agenda (item (h) in Appendix 'H'). The performance of strategic contracts is reported on a case by case basis to Committee and satisfaction surveys are undertaken for the purposes of monitoring contract compliance. However, the Project Group have not yet devised a way of gathering this material into a comprehensive report on contracting activity which would not duplicate what is already reported or provide useful additional information for the Committee. While some progress has been made on e-procurement targets, much remains to be done.

3.10 So, in general, good progress has been made on a range of procurement initiatives. However, the project group are conscious that there are some ambitious targets to be achieved, particularly if the Council is to make significant progress in developing e-procurement as required in the national strategy. It is clear that a comprehensive review of the Council's procurement processes is now required. A key aspect of this review will be to evaluate the future options for procuring goods and services electronically. This could include electronic purchasing and marketplaces. Whatever the outcome of this review, a resource will be required to develop and improve the organisation's procurement processes. This task exceeds the capacity of the present Project Group.

3.11 Officers are therefore of the opinion that an additional resource is required and believe that the tasks to be accomplished could best be achieved by the creation of a new post of Procurement Manager. Officers recognise that this will be an additional financial commitment but believe that this has the potential to produce revenue savings. Indeed, a national study by Deloitte estimates that electronic procurement in an average authority ought to deliver savings of 2.8% of total non-pay expenditure. Even if this estimate were halved, this would suggest potential savings of £100,000. The Officers' recommendation is therefore that in creating this new post, there should be a target of producing savings within two years that will be at least as much as the cost of the post. Since this is seen as a create/save initiative, it is suggested that the cost of the post should be met by a virement from the provision for Position Statement Initiatives.

3.12 The immediate tasks of the Procurement Manager will be to:-

- review the Council's procurement practices and produce a business case for investment in e-procurement solutions;
- review the opportunities for partnership working, in particular participating in e-marketplaces;
- advise on procurement procedures and best practice;
- co-ordinate the implementation of the purchase ordering module of Task Financials.

It is intended that this will lead to the centralisation of some procurement activities under the Procurement Manager rather than the present dispersal of administration around the organisation. A job description and person specification for the proposed post are reproduced at Appendix 'I'. It is proposed to locate this post in the Technical Services Department, subject to a review of these arrangements, after the post has been established for a year.

3.13 Officers are hopeful that there will be opportunities to develop the procurement agenda through working with neighbouring authorities and this could be pursued more vigorously with the creation of the Procurement Manager post. Officers have already been participating in the Surrey Procurement Network along with 9 other authorities, including Surrey County Council. The network meets on a 6 weekly cycle and discusses issues of common interest. This is in its early stages but areas of discussion have so far included how the network can integrate into Centres of Excellence, e-procurement (including what is going on in the market place), training requirements and opportunities for a joint contracts register.

3.14 One of the services available from the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) is a procurement health check which they will undertake at no charge to local authorities. Officers have arranged for the IDeA to carry out a health check at Runnymede on 21 and 22 October. This will provide an independent assessment of the Council's procurement processes and identify potential areas for further improvement compared with best practice. This will involve some interviews with Members.

4. Council Policy

4.1 The Leaders Position Paper states at paragraph 5.1.1 - "We want to ensure that we deliver 21st Century services via the most modern work processes through implementing e-government. We will continue to invest in smart systems that will improve Council processes, help us stop doing repetitive low value tasks and help free people to provide excellent customer services".

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 The creation of a new post of Procurement Manager on Grade MM1 will cost £47,000 at top of scale including direct employer's costs. Assuming that an appointment can be made by the beginning of October, this will cost £23,500 in the current financial year.
- 5.2 There is a provision of £80,000 for Position Statement Initiatives in the 2004/05 Budget (page 226 in the Budget Book). If the cost of the new post is met by a virement from this budget, it will mean that the provision will reduce to £56,500 in 2004/05 and £33,000 in 2005/06. When procurement savings are achieved, the Council can choose to add the amount back to the Position Statement Initiatives budget or to treat them as a contribution to the Council's £1 million savings target.
- 5.3 E-procurement features high on the Government's agenda for modernising services in the public sector. The Council's IEG statement identifies investment in e-procurement in the final phase of its implementation plan, in 2005/06. The Government has recently announced that local authorities will receive grant of £350,000 in 2004/05 and £150,000 in 2005/06 to support IEG initiatives and Officers anticipate that there will be a requirement to spend some of this money on e-procurement.

6. UNISON comments

- 6.1 UNISON is content with the proposals as set out in the report.

7. Summary

- 7.1 Progress has already been made in pursuit of both local and national procurement targets.
- 7.2 The National Procurement Strategy for Local Government sets out demanding targets for the Council to achieve, particularly in developing e-procurement.
- 7.3 The Procurement Strategy has been revised and the draft at Appendix 'G' is submitted for approval.
- 7.4 Achievement of further procurement targets will require additional resources and approval is sought to create a new post of Procurement Manager. The objective will be for the post to secure savings that outweigh the cost of the post.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that

- i) the revised Procurement Strategy at Appendix 'G' be approved; and**
- ii) a new post of Procurement Manager be created on Grade MM1 and the cost be met from a virement from the provision for Position Statement Initiatives of £23,500 in 2004/05 and £47,000 in 2005/06.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated

7. ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME (DTS)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 **To report back to the Committee on the results of the asbestos surveys, and plans for future works.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 In July 2002 the Council, on the recommendation of this Committee, agreed the 5-year strategic maintenance plan. The Committee noted that it would also be necessary for a consultant to report on the level of asbestos each property may contain and remedial

measures required.

- 2.2 The properties to be surveyed for asbestos were all of the corporate non-domestic properties including Day Centres and non-operational properties. A'Court Environmental Consultants was appointed as the most competitive bidder and this survey has now been completed.

3. Report

- 3.1 The asbestos survey has been undertaken in accordance with Health and Safety Executive Guidance Note MDHS 100. The purpose of the survey was to identify the extent and types of asbestos present and the action to be taken to either manage the asbestos in situ or, if in an unstable condition, remove it.
- 3.2 The sixty six operational properties surveyed consist of Day Centres, Public Halls, Civic Offices, Depot, Cemeteries, Public Conveniences, Sports Centre, Museum, Parks and Open Spaces. The forty non-operational properties and allotments were also part of this survey.
- 3.3 The Consultant surveyed and where necessary obtained samples of suspected asbestos, and a schedule of works was generated for each element of each property. This survey was completed and reports received by March 2003.
- 3.4 Thirty seven properties have been identified as having some form of asbestos present. However, all except two properties are in the low to medium risk category. A strategy has been developed to deal with these areas and the information obtained is to be included in the Estateman asset software to warn all concerned that asbestos is present and what action is to be taken. The Council should ensure that a management plan exists to identify by means of signage or colour coding the type and position of asbestos, to protect that which is to remain in situ so far as necessary, to inform all who use or carry out works in the premises of its existence, and to remove asbestos-containing materials which are a high category risk.
- 3.5 Under the relevant Regulations a regular review of the above properties will need to continue. The first such review should be undertaken shortly.

4. Next steps and Rresource Implications

- 4.1 The Consultant's survey has dealt with the identification of asbestos-containing materials and the assessment of risk for each property surveyed. The management plan will be formalised when the data is fully loaded on the new software, but Officers have formulated a provisional view as to the steps necessary on the basis of the Consultant's report and understood best practice.
- 4.2 The cost of the measures, which will need to be undertaken by specialist asbestos contractors, is estimated by Officers at £60,000 and includes the following: -
- i) Estimated cost of signing, making safe, protection and, where necessary, removal of asbestos in operational corporate properties - £45,000.
 - ii) Fees for re-survey of properties, management of contractors and issuing of modified plans - £10,000.
 - iii) Contingency for unknown measures - £5,000.
- 4.3 The above figure does not include any provision for the cost of measures in tenanted non-operational properties. It is very likely that tenants will have legal responsibility for these (see Legal Implications below) or that the cost is recoverable through service charges. Should any unbudgeted expenditure be necessary, further authority will be sought. Officers will devise a management plan for these properties in respect of the Council's own duties, and will liaise with tenants to ensure that they are aware of theirs. Agreement will be sought on the split of responsibility.
- 4.4 Officers hope that the cost of all measures can be accommodated within the budget for the strategic maintenance programme for the current year, bearing in mind that the termination of the contract by the main contractor is likely to result in some slippage to the overall

programme.

- 4.5 Provision will need to be made in future years for the cost of follow up inspections, estimated at £3,000 p.a.
- 4.6 The Consultant appointed to carry out the initial surveys was considerably more financially efficient than the nearest competitor by several thousands of pounds. Their work was satisfactory in all respects and they are now familiar with the properties. Officers propose that they be engaged for the follow up surveys required for the next three years, rather than seek new bids.
5. Policy Implications
- 5.1 Leader's Position Statement, 2003/4, page 7, para 3: " We will implement the Asset Management Strategy to ensure effective asset utilisation and manage acquisitions and disposals to achieve corporate objectives...."
6. Legal Implications
- 6.1 The Council has general obligations under the Health and Safety Act 1974 sections 2 and 3 to ensure the health and safety of employees and to ensure that persons who are not employees are not exposed to risks to health and safety. Under section 4 there are specific obligations to ensure that premises are safe and without risk to health and Regulations expand on these issues.
- 6.2 The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002, which came into force in May 2004, place a duty to manage asbestos upon "dutyholders" in respect of non-domestic premises. The duty involves:
- assessing the properties to determine whether asbestos-containing material is present, and to determine its condition:
- carrying out a risk assessment for each area suspected to contain asbestos;
- preparing and implementing an appropriate risk management plan;
- periodically, (the Health and Safety Executive recommends between six and twelve months), reviewing all assessments, risk assessments, and risk management plans.
- 6.3 Where a property is leased, the leaseholder will be a dutyholder to the extent of their obligation to maintain and repair. Accordingly the Council's commercial tenants will be responsible for some or all of the above duties, although in some cases they may be shared with the Council.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

- i) any works necessary in the current financial year to implement the management plan under the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 be undertaken from within the budget for the strategic maintenance programme;**
- ii) the Consultant who carried out the original survey be appointed to carry out follow up condition surveys for continuity and for reasons of best value; and**
- iii) the need to undertake periodic reviews, and the consequent financial implications in future years, be noted.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None

8. DECRIMINALISED PARKING ENFORCEMENT - STAFFING (DTS)

(To follow)

9. FLOODING IN RUNNYMEDE - ACQUISITION OF HEAVY GOODS VEHICLE (DTS)

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 **To report on the use and cost savings resulting from the acquisition of this vehicle.**

2. Background Information

2.1 A report to the Corporate Management Committee on 5 June 2003, on Flooding in Runnymede, sought approval for capital programme provision and a capital estimate of £58,000 in order to acquire an 18 tonne tipper/grab lorry (HGV) equipped with lifting attachment.

2.2 The decision on the purchase of this vehicle was deferred until the next meeting of the Committee to allow for the preparation of a more detailed justification.

2.3 At its next meeting on 3 July 2003, the Committee considered a further report and approved a capital estimate of £58,000 for the acquisition of an 18 tonne HGV with a heavy lifting attachment and resolved that a further report be submitted in a year's time showing the use and cost savings arising from the vehicle.

3. Report

3.1 Following the Committee's approval Officers carried out a tender process to purchase the chassis for the vehicle and then for the chassis and equipment to be mounted on the chassis. The tendering process, ordering, constructing and delivering the vehicle was a lengthy process and the DSO took delivery of the completed vehicle in early January 2004.

3.2 The base vehicle is an Iveco 18 tonne chassis. The rear bodywork was manufactured and fitted by Boulters and the manufacturer of the lifting equipment was Halfinger.

3.3 The primary purpose of this vehicle is for use in Civil Emergencies. The report to the Committee on 5 June 2003 described the public expectation that the Council should distribute sandbags in the event of flooding. The report also explained the difficulties experienced by Officers in distributing sandbags and the range of other equipment in the emergency stores with the existing vehicles during the flooding in January 2003.

3.4 The use of the HGV in distributing sandbags and other emergency equipment is now an integral part of the Council's Flood Emergency Plan. It is also available for dealing with other civil emergencies such as removing fallen trees and debris as a result of strong winds.

3.5 The report to the Committee on 5 July 2003 explained that there would be several other uses for the vehicle throughout the year.

3.6 The DSO used to use a light pickup truck for Special collections and for removing fly tips. Although the number of items collected is not affected by the acquisition of the HGV this vehicle has improved the efficiency of the service. The HGV's volume and load carrying capacity is five times greater than that of the light vehicle that it replaced resulting in considerably fewer trips to the Transfer Station at Charlton Lane, Shepperton. The use of the lifting attachment for these purposes also reduces the risk of injury to operatives who used to manually lift bulky and heavy items onto vehicles without this facility. From the number of items collected in the first quarter of 2004/05 it is estimated that approximately 1,300 Special collections and flytipped items would be removed in the current financial year.

3.7 A light pickup truck was previously used every autumn for taking fallen leaves to the Transfer Station. The HGV was delivered after the leaf clearance period in 2003 so these advantages will not be realised until the autumn of 2004 but this service will benefit in future from the greater payload capacity of the HGV. This will result in a more efficient and cost effective service.

- 3.8 Paragraph 4.2 contains an assessment of the cost savings resulting from the reduction in journeys to the Transfer Station.
- 3.9 Gypsy incursions at Council sites have become an increasing problem. It is often necessary to block site entrances with improvised barriers. These barriers are often needed at short notice. Although there have been no such incursions since the acquisition of this vehicle, the HGV with lifting equipment would be available to respond quickly.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The report to the Committee on 3 July 2003 stated that the primary purpose of this vehicle would be for use in Civil Emergencies and that the costs of acquiring the vehicle would probably outweigh the potential savings.
- 4.2 The vehicle has been operating for less than a year so full year operating costs are not available. However, the table below shows the estimated future annual costs as a result of using the HGV instead of a light pickup truck.

Estimated annual Capital charges and maintenance and running costs for HGV	£10,000
Estimated saving on annual Capital charges and maintenance and running costs for surrendered light pickup truck	(£5,000)
Reduction in fuel costs as a result of less journeys to Transfer Station	(£800)
Estimated net cost from the use of the HGV instead of a light pickup truck	(£4,200)

- 4.3 It should be noted that the use of the new vehicle has brought about additional operational savings resulting from better working practices and fewer time consuming trips to the Transfer Station. These savings, equivalent to £7,500 in staff time, have allowed the crew to spend more time on operational duties.
- 4.4 The cost of leasing a similar vehicle is approximately £18,000 per year for a 5 year contract, for example. The weekly cost of hiring a similar vehicle is approximately £500 per week or £25,000 per year as it is used throughout the year. As the estimated vehicle life is at least 7 years these methods of acquiring the vehicle would have been more expensive than the capital cost of the purchase.

5. Council Policy

- 5.1 A key target in the Runnymede Community Strategy is – “Improving the quality of life and feeling of reassurance by dealing rapidly with issues as they arise and where possible improving the local environment”. The HGV has improved the DSO's capacity to remove fly tipped materials quickly and to deal with Special collections quickly in order to avoid further potential flytipping. This provides a tidier environment and can help to reduce the public fear of crime.

6. Environmental Implications

- 6.1 The incidence of natural emergencies such as flooding has increased in recent years. Fortunately, there have been no such emergencies during the first few months that the DSO has had this vehicle but it will improve the Council's efficiency in its emergency response and in its duties in helping to restore normality if an emergency occurs.
- 6.2 This vehicle has improved the Council's performance in removing fly tipped material and in responding to the public's requests to dispose of bulky items of waste responsibly via the 'Special Collections' service. It has also improved health and safety for staff in lifting heavy and bulky items.
- 6.3 The vehicle makes fewer journeys to the Transfer Station resulting in the use of less fuel and contributing to less congestion on the roads to and from the Transfer Station.
- 6.4 The vehicle will enhance the speed and efficiency in removing fallen leaves during the autumn. This will benefit cleanliness and road safety.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 As predicted in the report to the Committee on 3 July 2003, the costs of acquiring and running the vehicle outweigh the potential savings. However, efficiency savings have resulted in cost savings compared to the light pickup truck previously used for these services. Thankfully there have been no civil emergencies since acquiring the vehicle but it would enhance the Council's emergency response. The DSO has also made good daily use of the vehicle and it has improved efficiency and the health and safety of staff in other service areas.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None

10. REPLACEMENT OF IT HARDWARE (CEO)

To follow

11. POST OFFICE CLOSURES IN RUNNYMEDE (DTS)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 **To seek the views of the Committee on the proposals by Post Office Ltd. to close certain Post Office facilities in Runnymede.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 Post Office Ltd. is currently restructuring its network of Post Office Branches to provide a sustainable framework for future service provision. The underlying theme is that there are too many Post Office branches for the number of customers and unless action is taken the whole network could be at risk.
- 2.2 Post Office Ltd. is focussing its review on Branches serving urban areas. In some instances it will mean closing Branches, in other areas it will require their relocation. As part of the review interested parties are invited to comment on the restructuring. Within Runnymede it is proposed to close three urban branches. These are located in: Marsh Lane (Addlestone), Bond Street (Englefield Green) and New Haw.
- 2.3 The Council has not been formally invited to comment on these proposals by Post Office Ltd., but Post Watch (the watchdog for Postal Services) has requested the comments of the Council on the proposals for the Borough.

3. Policy and Technical Considerations

Comment

- 3.1 ***Post Office Branches play a vital role in the community. In areas where they are located in local stores they help to serve a dual purpose. They provide the normal services of the Post Office, but they also help to support the viability of local stores. This latter point is very important in that the local stores tend to be located in small parades of shops that serve members of the community who may be unable to easily avail themselves of the service available in the main town centres. The Council has been prepared to recognise this in the past by using its discretionary powers to abate the non-domestic rate.***
- 3.2 ***The view presented by Post Office Ltd. is that the vast majority of the community will be no more than one mile from a Post Office. Whilst a mile may not seem far, there are many sections of the community who may be disadvantaged. This particularly applies to those who are resident in areas poorly served by public transport and do not have access to private transport or have a mobility impairment.***

3.3 ***The impact of the closure of Post Office Branches could therefore in the first instance exclude some sections of local communities from important postal services. However, and perhaps more importantly, it may lead to a closure of a local store whose viability depends upon the additional revenue generated by the Post Office services and associated trade.***

3.4 ***There is another item on this agenda that deals with Social and Economic Trends in the Borough. Amongst the issues raised in the item, in the context of the Indices of Deprivation, is the impact of service deprivation. This has been highlighted as an issue particularly in Englefield Green. The loss of the local Post Office may therefore exacerbate the problems for those trying to access local services.***

4. Concluding Comments

4.1 The proposal by Post Office Ltd. to close three local Post Office Branches, arises from a need to secure a sustainable Post Office network that would enable the overall network to be maintained on a firm financial basis. However, the closure of three Branches in Runnymede will have significant implications for certain sections of the community in the Borough. It is recommended that the comments in Section 3 be forwarded to Post Office Ltd., Post Watch and drawn to the attention of the local M.P.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

- i) the Council raise strong objection to the loss of Post Office Branches in Addlestone, New Haw and Englefield Green; and**
- ii) the comments in Section 3 of this report be forwarded to Post Office Ltd., Post Watch and the local M.P.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None

12. SALE OF CONSTITUTION DOCUMENT (DAL)

The Constitution provides that the Council will fix a price for sale of copies.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

the price for sale of a copy of the Constitution be £10.00, subject to waiver by the Director of Administration and Leisure in cases he deems appropriate.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None

13. REFERENCES FROM HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE - 21 JULY 2004

a) Runnymede CAB Grant Aid

To follow

b) Stock Options Appraisal

To follow

14. REFERENCE FROM REVIEW BOARD - 8 JULY 2004

Benefits Priority Indicator of Performance

To follow

15. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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 paragraphs 7 and 9 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 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

	<u>Para</u>
a) <u>Exempt Information</u>	
16. WRITE-OFFS	7
17. DECRIMINALISED PARKING ENFORCEMENT - UPGRADE TO PARKING CHARGES NOTICE SYSTEM	9
(To follow)	
18. STRATEGIC MAINTENANCE CONTRACTOR	9
(To follow)	
b) <u>Confidential Information</u>	
(No reports to be considered under this heading)	