

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Civic Offices
Station Road
Addlestone
Surrey
KT15 2AH

9 October 2002

Dear Sir/Madam,

I hereby summon you to attend the meeting of the Council to be held on **Thursday 17 October 2002 at 7.30 p.m.** in the Council Chamber at the Civic Offices, Addlestone.

I am, Sir/Madam,
Your obedient servant

T.N. Williams
Chief Executive Officer

A G E N D A

1. MINUTES

To approve and sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 18 July 2002 (page 364).

2. RUNNYMEDE DESIGN AWARDS 2002

The Mayor will present awards for the following schemes:-

Category 1 – Commercial

New Office Development – Bridge Road, Chertsey

Category 2 – Environmental & Community Schemes

New Cycle Path - Egham Hill, Egham

Category 3 – Refurbishment/Conversion

Silverlands – Holloway Hill, Chertsey

Category 4 – Residential

Jesmond House - Thorpe Green, Thorpe

3. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence have been received from Councillor Mrs Jacobs.

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 Clerk at the start of the meeting. A supply of the form will also be available from the Clerk at the meeting.

6. PETITIONS

To receive Petitions under Standing Order 10.

7. QUESTIONS

To answer Questions asked under Standing Order No. 13.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

- i) To consider the following recommendations from the Committees specified. The recommendations are set out in full in the appropriate set of Minutes contained with this summons on the page/paragraph numbers shown:-
- a) Key Worker Housing Strategy
(Housing and Community Services Committee – 22.7.2002)
(page 370 para. 195 – grey pages).
 - b) Surrey Pension Fund
(Corporate Management Committee - 5.9.2002)
(page 447 para. 239 - yellow pages)
 - c) Treasury Management Code of Practice
(Corporate Management Committee - 5.9.2002)
(page 450 para.241 - yellow pages)
 - d) Members Travel Allowances
(Corporate Management Committee - 5.9.2002)
(page 450 para. 243 - yellow pages)
 - e) Decriminalised Parking Enforcement
(Economic Development Committee - 12.9.2002)
(page 515 para. 273 - pink pages)
 - f) Street Trading - List of Consent Streets
(Economic Development Committee - 12.9.2002)
(page 517 para. 275 - pink pages)
 - g) Local Plan Review - Revised Approach
(Planning Committee - 18.9.2002)
(page 537 para. 297 - green pages)
- ii) To consider the following recommendations from Corporate Management Committee held on 3 October 2002. The Minutes for this meeting have not yet been produced and therefore only the specific recommendations are included on the white pages which will be circulated separately in due course for Members' consideration.
- Leaders Position Statement
 - Revenue Forecast and Target Budget
 - Draft Community Strategy
 - Replacement of Financial Information System – Market Evaluation and Selection Process.

- Reference from Economic Development Committee – 7 High Street, Egham
- Reference from Economic Development Committee – Civic Offices Reprovision and New Community Association Premises – Architectural and Associated Services.
- Reference from Economic Development Committee - Painesfield Allotment Site, Chertsey.

Detailed Officers' reports were provided on the relevant Agendas and Members may bring these should they wish to refer to them.

9. CURTILAGE COLLECTION OF REFUSE (BTSO)

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 **To consider the adoption of a curtilage collection of refuse.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 Reports on various waste management issues were reported to the former Executive Committee meeting of 13 December 2000 and to the Leisure and Environment Committee meeting of 21 June 2001.
- 2.2 A more specific report on the introduction of kerbside recycling was presented to the Leisure and Environment Committee meeting of 24 January 2002, and this identified that an additional source of revenue funding for a recycling initiative could be generated if the Council were to move from a 'back door' collection of refuse in wheeled bins to a curtilage collection.
- 2.3 It was estimated that the introduction of a curtilage refuse collection service could create savings of approximately £90,000 per year. It was therefore recommended to Council that, subject to full consultation with the refuse service workforce and trade unions and the introduction of curtilage recycling, such a change should be implemented. (See Minute at Annex 1).
- 2.4 A motion to defer this recommendation to a suitable meeting of the Council was agreed at the Full Council Meeting on 12 March 2002.
- 2.5 The Leisure and Environment Committee on 20 June 2002 resolved that a survey of residents should be carried out to ascertain views on changing the refuse collection from a 'back door' to a curtilage collection. The results of this were reported to the following Leisure and Environment Committee on 19 September 2002.
- 2.6 A survey of 2,000 residents with a wheeled bin, selected at random from the Council's Council Tax Base was carried out in July 2002. There was a total of 1,279 replies (64%), the survey having a 95% confidence rate, and is statistically significant for the Borough. 89.4% of residents responding to the survey were willing to move their own wheeled bin to the edge of their properties, in conjunction with the introduction of a kerbside recycling scheme.
- 2.7 As part of the process, all refuse service employees and UNISON were consulted. No replies were received from individual employees, but UNISON responded to the effect that it would prefer the recycling service to be kept in-house. In the event of a private contractor being awarded the contract, UNISON sought no compulsory redundancies and strongly urged that the Council does all it can to encourage the private contractor to employ those staff being made redundant.
- 2.8 The Leisure and Environment Committee of 19 September 2002 also received a report regarding the bids received for the recycling contract and the recommended contractor. It was resolved that, subject to the clarification of various contractual issues and consideration of any possible implications of the decision being made by Full Council on edge of curtilage collection of wheeled refuse bins, the Borough Technical Services Officer be authorised to approve a seven year contract with the nominated private contractor. It is anticipated that this contract will have been agreed by the date of this meeting.

3. Report

i) Operational Implications

- 3.1 It is clear from the survey undertaken, that there is a substantial majority who do not object to moving to a curtilage refuse collection, linked to the introduction of a kerbside recycling scheme. The latter is expected to commence in January 2003, the slight delay being caused by difficulties in vehicle acquisition and the desire to avoid the Christmas period.
- 3.2 At present, many householders already pull their bins to the edge of the property, and if the new procedure is adopted, then all householders will be asked to move their wheeled bins to the edge of their property nearest to the highway.
- 3.3 Elderly or disabled residents are identified by a green-lidded bin and will continue to benefit from their bins being moved by refuse staff. Those householders that currently enjoy this benefit are being surveyed to ensure that records are up-to-date.
- 3.4 The current refuse rounds will have to be completely reorganised to ensure that workloads are equal, in particular in relation to the distances that bins will have to be moved from curtilage to the refuse vehicles. This is because whilst the public will be expected to pull bins to the edge of their curtilage, refuse staff will still have to move them from there to the refuse vehicle itself, and cumulatively, it is estimated that this work will add approximately an hour a day to each round.
- 3.5 The rearrangement of the rounds and differing work practices will have to be discussed and agreed with the relevant staff.
- 3.6 Given these detailed changes, it is inevitable that in the early stages, many members of the public will forget to move their bins out, leading to missed collections, and complaints. There will be a need to publicise any change to each individual household, and to inform them which day their collection is due, and any changes to collection days following public holidays.
- 3.7 There will also no doubt be some confusion in the public's mind in relation to the operation of the recycling and refuse contracts. Clearly the former will be undertaken by private contractors, whereas the latter is operated in-house. The public perception will not see this differentiation and complaints about any shortcomings in either service performance will be directed at the Council.

ii) Staffing Implications

- 3.8 The financial saving originally suggested to the Leisure and Environment Committee arose from the proposal that if 'back door' collections ceased in favour of curtilage collections, there would be no need for a member of each of the refuse crews to pull bins out in advance of the refuse vehicle.
- 3.9 The refuse service has recently been re-organised to provide six rounds and there would therefore be a saving of six posts, although one refuse loader vacancy currently exists, so in relation to filled establishment, it would equate to five posts. It should be noted that individual members of refuse crews are not specifically allocated to this task, so five specific postholders cannot be identified. The refuse vehicle drivers would however not be affected.
- 3.10 Currently, costs of employing agency staff to cover absences for leave and sickness are substantial. Whilst the critical staff are drivers, the reduction in posts will reduce this agency need. However, given the cost, it is considered logical to retain one of these posts to cover for staff absences, and therefore achieve some savings from agency fees.
- 3.11 Given the existing vacancy and one retained staff member for cover in lieu of agency staff, then in total, the expectation is that four filled posts would be vacated and not filled over the period until, say, 31 March 2004.
- 3.12 It therefore follows that if these posts are to be removed from the establishment, then there are various ways that this can be achieved, each of which has operational, financial and, of course, industrial relations implications. These options are considered below.

Compulsory Redundancy

- 3.13 In terms of compulsory redundancies, if this was undertaken, it could be done on the basis of last five staff employed. Whilst this would have modest financial implications of around £5,000, given the limited length of service of those staff, this makes no judgement at all about their individual qualities and the operational implications of their loss. It is also the least preferable in terms of industrial relations and is not recommended.

Voluntary Redundancy

- 3.14 Voluntary redundancy might be sought, but this would be most likely to appeal to those nearing retirement, and hence with some of the longest periods of service. This option could cost the Authority up to £100,000. This is a very significant cost and is not considered to be an option that could be supported.

Natural Wastage

- 3.15 Although turnover of staff has recently not been particularly high, it is considered that the required savings could be achieved by natural wastage over an eighteen month period. One member of staff will reach statutory retirement age within this period, and discussions with the recycling contractor have already started regarding their recruitment programme and the potential to recruit from existing Council staff.
- 3.16 Retention of staff during the initial restructuring of rounds and changes to the collection arrangements would also give some flexibility in terms of its implementation. Any surplus staff could later be redeployed on duties in street cleansing and other DSO activities, if necessary. Whilst savings could take longer to realise, this option has no cost implications to implement. Lastly, it is the most attractive in terms of industrial relations, especially at a time when staff will be unsettled by the reorganisation of the rounds and their work patterns.
- 3.17 Achieving the savings through natural wastage therefore has a number of advantages and is the recommended option to pursue. If the savings are not achieved by natural wastage by 31 March 2004, then compulsory redundancies would be considered.
- 3.18 UNISON concurs with the Officer recommendation that 'natural wastage' would be the favoured option to accommodate the reduction of 5 refuse loader posts, and urges the Council to accept this option and not to make compulsory redundancies.

iii) Financial Implications

- 3.19 The £90,000 saving originally identified was approximated from the loss of six posts of refuse loaders, who currently earn around £13,000 per annum, together with associated on-costs.
- 3.20 It is anticipated that this order of saving can be made from the salary (including agency staff) budget of the refuse DSO by 1 April 2004. The financial implications of the three options identified are shown below:

OPTION	ADDITIONAL COSTS TO EXISTING BUDGETS	ADDITIONAL SAVINGS TO EXISTING BUDGETS	COMMENTS
Compulsory Redundancy	£5,000	£90,000	No qualitative assessment of staff or operational implications; difficult in industrial relations terms
Voluntary Redundancy	£100,000	£90,000	Would appeal to staff with most service; would be more expensive than initial savings
Natural Wastage	-	£90,000 (Although full savings may not be in place before 1.4.2004)	Savings would not be immediate, but at no cost. Short-term operational advantages; best option in terms of industrial relations

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 Whilst following the recommended route of natural wastage will not provide an immediate saving of the order suggested, it is considered to be the best option in terms of cost, industrial relations, and will provide operational flexibility in the short-term whilst the changed system of refuse collection is being implemented and is settling down.
- 4.2 There is no doubt that the changes will lead to short-term operational difficulties, but it is felt that the lower level of staffing will be able to cope with the reorganised regime.
- 4.3 The Officers' recommendations below could accordingly now form the basis of a resolution should the Council so wish, in place of the Committee's January recommendation.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

- i) five posts of refuse loaders be disestablished upon vacancies occurring in the period until 31 March 2004;**
- ii) should fewer than five posts fall vacant within this period, then further consideration be given to compulsory redundancies; and**
- iii) savings of £90,000 per annum be sought from the refuse DSO to be reflected no later than the 2004/05 budget.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None

10. PRESS AND PUBLIC TO BE EXCLUDED BY RESOLUTION

To move, if appropriate, the exclusion of the press and public for the following item, in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

11. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – EXEMPT

To consider any recommendations which relate to exempt business.