

Runnymede Borough Council  
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 15 January 2003, at 7.30 p.m.

in the Council Chamber

at the Civic Offices, Addlestone



Members of the Committee

Councillors D.P. Easton (Chairman), P.J. Waddell (Vice-Chairman), E.G. Barrett, M.J. Brown, J.M. Edwards, Mrs. C.E. Gant, C. Knight, H.W.V. Meares, A.M. Moore and Mrs. J. Norman.

Non-voting co-opted Member for Tenant Services

Mr. D. Wheeler

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 **Miss M. Bootes, Committee Section, Department of Administration and Leisure, Civic Offices, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel. Direct Line: 01932 425623)**.
- iii) Agendas and Minutes are available on a subscription basis. For details, please ring Mr. B.A. Fleckney on 01932 425620.
- 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.

COMMITTEE SECTION



## **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

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b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)

## NAMING OF CHIEF OFFICERS AND DEPARTMENTS

After prompting by the Local Government Act Member Working Group and as set out in the Annual Personnel Report, Chief Officers and Departments are being renamed to reflect current practice in many authorities. The new titles and abbreviations are used in this Agenda and are set out below for ease of reference:

| Abbreviation | Title                                      | Old title                                      |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| DAL          | Director of Administration and Leisure     | Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer |
| DF           | Director of Finance                        | Borough Treasurer                              |
| DHCS         | Director of Housing and Community Services | Borough Housing and Community Services Manager |
| DTS          | Director of Technical Services             | Borough Technical Services Officer             |

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 13 November 2002.

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. COMMUNITY CARE FORUMS (DHCS)

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 **To consider making a contribution towards the cost of the Runnymede Community Care Forums.**

2. Background Information

2.1 The six Runnymede Community Care Forums were set up by Surrey Social Services several years ago. Individual Forums exist for carers, people with physical disability, sensory and cognitive impairment, people with learning disabilities, children with disabilities, older people and mental health. The original purpose of the Forums was to act as a form of consultation for the development of proposals and plans contained in the Community Care Plan produced annually by Social Services.

2.2 In August 2001 the Department of Health issued a consultation paper which proposed combining the Community Care Plan and the Health Improvement Modernisation Programme to form a single plan. This proposal received a favourable response and as a result Social Services no longer has a legal duty to produce a Community Care Plan. Funding for the administration of the Community Care Forums will, therefore, cease from 1 April 2003.

- 2.3 The Forums are well regarded by many people who work within the Community. They consist of representatives from a range of backgrounds including service users, volunteers and nominees from statutory agencies. They have been heavily involved in the development of key services, such as the Community Transport Service, and have acted as a central point for resolving service issues that cover a number of agencies, e.g. Health, Social Services and the Borough Council. They are also valuable to the Council in the following ways:
- i) They enable two-way communication between the Council and special needs groups on Council policy, local needs and achieving specific objectives, e.g. for the Community Strategy and the Housing Strategy;
  - ii) They are part of the process for prioritising Partnership Funding Bids (finance provided by Health). The Council has successfully obtained funding of £10,000 per annum over three years towards the Dial A Ride service from Partnership Funding. The Council has also submitted an application for ongoing funding for Care Assistants at the Woodham and New Haw and Eileen Tozer Day Centres;
  - iii) They act as a catalyst for developing partnership projects to fulfil unmet needs e.g. the scheme to provide access to swimming facilities out of the Borough for physically disabled people; and
  - iv) No alternative joint system of consultation with special needs groups has been identified.

### 3. Proposed Future Funding of the Community Care Forums

- 3.1 The North Surrey Primary Care Trust has approached Runnymede, Spelthorne and Elmbridge Borough Councils to ask for a contribution of £1,000 each towards the cost of the Forum Administration post and for support in kind (e.g. free venues and refreshments) for three of the Forums, four times a year. It is proposed that other contributions will be as follows:-

#### Forum Administration Post

|                                                |                                         |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Runnymede Borough Council                      | £ 1,000 (subject to Committee approval) |
| Spelthorne Borough Council                     | £ 1,000 (subject to Committee approval) |
| Elmbridge Borough Council                      | £ 1,000 (subject to Committee approval) |
| North Surrey Primary Care Trust                | £ 4,000                                 |
| Adult and Community Services (Social Services) | <u>£ 4,000</u>                          |
| Total                                          | <u>£11,000</u>                          |

The effectiveness and future of the Forums will be reviewed after a six month period.

- 3.2 The Health Authority is under an obligation to establish a consultation mechanism for the Health Improvement Modernisation Programme and it could be argued that it should fully fund the continuation of the Forums. However, if the Forums did not exist then it would be necessary to create other mechanisms for consulting with special needs groups on significant issues, e.g. the Housing Strategy. In view of the benefits derived from the Forums, as outlined at paragraph 2.3 above, it is felt that a small contribution should be made by this Council.
- 3.3 Additional provision of £1,000 has been made in the 2003/2004 Estimates which appear elsewhere on this Agenda.

#### **OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -**

**a contribution of £1,000 be made towards the administration costs for the Community Care Forums in the year 2003/2004, subject to the funding referred to in paragraph 3.1 above being obtained from other sources and a six month review of the effectiveness of the arrangement.**

**(TO RESOLVE)**

#### Background Papers

None stated

6. RUNNYMEDE CARE AND REPAIR - SUPPORTING PEOPLE CONTRACT (DHCS)  
(Ref: Minutes of Housing and Community Services Committee, November 2002, page 735,  
para. 408)

1. **Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the transitional arrangements for the transfer of funding for Runnymede Care and Repair from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to Supporting People.**
- 1.2 **This report also seeks authority to enter into a contract with the Supporting People Commissioning Body for the Runnymede Care and Repair Service.**

2. **Background Information**

- 2.1 Runnymede's Home Improvement Agency was established in April 2000 and is funded by the ODPM on a three year contract basis. This funding amounts to £28,900 per year which is match funded by the Council. The Agency also brings in fee income of approximately £15,000 per annum.
- 2.2 Supporting People, the new funding regime for housing and support services, begins on 1 April 2003. Home Improvement Agencies were originally included within the scope of services to move over to the new regime from April 2003. It was later decided that funding arrangements for the Home Improvement Agency sector should be delayed and to continue with existing funding streams for a further year.
- 2.3 However, the ODPM has recently advised that the third year of the contract funding for the Runnymede Home Improvement Agency will be paid through the Supporting People budget.

3. **Report**

- 3.1 In order to receive the third year of the ODPM funding, it will be necessary to enter into a contract with the Surrey Commissioning Body, as for the Council's Sheltered Housing Support Services and Community Alarms.
- 3.2 The contract will be a standard form document drawn up by the ODPM and will include a pricing schedule setting out the annual funding from the ODPM/Commissioning Body of £28,900 and local authority match funding.
- 3.3 The ODPM has stated that the contracts must be for one year only, (1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004). The ODPM has also confirmed that the Supporting People Team will undertake service reviews of all Home Improvement Agencies during 2003/2004.
- 3.4 Members will be aware that the ODPM is also undertaking a review of the structure of the Home Improvement Agency sector and will be looking at ways not only to reduce the number of agencies but also increase the geographical coverage. A response from this Committee to the ODPM Consultation Paper "Home Improvement Agencies - Development and Reform" was agreed on 13 November 2002 and has been sent, along with a separate response from the Runnymede Care and Repair Agency.
- 3.5 The future funding and commissioning arrangements for the Runnymede Care and Repair Service from April 2004 are, therefore, still being considered. Officers intend to work closely with the Supporting People Team and with the co-ordinating body for Home Improvement Agencies Foundations, to ensure funding is secured and maintained at existing or increased levels. A further report will be brought to this Committee in due course.

**OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -**

**the Council enter into a twelve month contract with the Surrey Supporting People Commissioning Body for the provision of the Runnymede Care and Repair Service at existing funding levels.**

**(TO RESOLVE)**

## Background Papers

Relevant papers on Head of Housing Needs and Strategy's Care and Repair files

### 7. REVENUE ESTIMATES FOR 2003/2004 (DF)

Members are asked to consider the draft Revenue Estimates for 2003/2004. The report of the Director of Finance is enclosed as Appendix 'A'. This Appendix has been printed separately and is circulated with this Agenda. The Estimates are separated into the main service areas for which the Committee is responsible:-

- i) Housing Revenue Account (Annex '1', pages 1 - 34);
- ii) General Fund Housing Services (Annex '2', pages 35 - 56); and
- iii) Community Services (Annex '3', pages 57 - 83).

The Officers' recommendation covers all the above service areas.

#### **OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -**

- i) the draft Revenue Estimates for 2003/2004 be approved as submitted and the Corporate Management Committee be requested to make provision accordingly; and**
- ii) the proposed increases in rents and charges for 2003/2004, as set out in Appendix 'A', be approved to be effective either from the first rent week of April 2003 or 1 April 2003 as appropriate.**

#### **(TO RESOLVE)**

## Background Papers

Letter from ODPM dated 17 December 2002 (HRA Subsidy Determinations 2003/04).

### 8. HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME SUBMISSION/ SINGLE CAPITAL POT ALLOCATION 2003/2004 (DHCS)

(Ref: Minutes of Housing and Community Services Committee, July 2002, page 368, para. 194).

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the outcome of the Government's assessment of the Council's Housing Strategy and Business Plan.**

#### **2. Background Information**

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the Housing Strategy Statement and Business Plan were revised during the Spring to take account of the Government's requirements and to include new information. The revised Strategy and Business Plan were approved by a special meeting of the Housing and Community Services Committee on 22 July 2002 and subsequently were submitted to the Government.

#### **3. Report**

- 3.1 The Government has assessed the Council's performance as "Above Average". This assessment is set according to how well the Authority's Housing Strategy and Business Plan met the "fit for purpose" criteria issued by the Government in March. This is an improvement on last year's assessment and Runnymede and Guildford Borough Councils are now the highest banded authorities in Surrey. A list showing the performance ratings for all Surrey Local Authorities is attached at Appendix 'B'.

- 3.2 Attached at Appendix 'C' is a copy of the detailed feedback received from the Government on the Housing Strategy and Business Plan. A number of points are made, each of which will have to be taken into account when the Housing Strategy and Business Plan are reviewed in 2003.
- 3.3 The Council has also received a "Good" assessment in respect of its Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan. Details of these assessments will be reported to the Economic Development Committee on 16 January 2003.
4. Financial Implications
- 4.1 The assessment of the Council's performance on the Housing Strategy, Business Plan, Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plans are taken into account when determining the amount of funds to be allocated as part of the Single Capital Pot. The Council has been informed that the total Single Capital Pot Basic Credit Approval Allocation to be awarded for 2003/2004 is £888,000.
- 4.2 Basic Credit Approval provides the Council with greater power to spend on capital projects including Local Authority Social Housing Grant. The net effect of the assessment will, therefore, mean that the Council has an additional £888,000 of Local Authority Social Housing Grant to use on schemes within Runnymede.
5. Other Implications
- 5.1 The Above Average assessment for Housing Services, and the two star rating recently obtained from the Housing Inspectorate, are important achievements and will place the Council in a strong position when assessments are conducted under the new Comprehensive Performance Assessment arrangements.

**(FOR INFORMATION)**

Background Papers

Relevant papers on Director of Housing and Community Services' Housing Strategy files.

9. AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME - PROGRESS REPORT (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **To update Members on progress with the Affordable Housing Programme.**

2. Background Information

2.1 Members will be aware that a target to provide an additional 750 affordable housing units over five years has been set.

3. Progress on Affordable Housing Programme

3.1 Attached at Appendix 'D' are the details of the Affordable Housing Units that have been produced to date and details of the schemes that are in the pipeline. Progress on each scheme is shown in the Appendix.

4. Bids Made to the Housing Corporation

4.1 At the last meeting of this Committee Members were made aware that bids were being made to the Housing Corporation in respect of a number of schemes. Eight bids for capital funding to provide and improve housing in Runnymede were made by Registered Social Landlords.

4.2 Officers have met with representatives from the Housing Corporation to discuss the bids that were made. The outcome will not be known until late Spring of next year. However, initial indications seem to suggest that few, if any, of the bids will be successful. The Council will, therefore, have to continue to fund the majority of the schemes within the Affordable Housing Programme from Local Authority Social Housing Grant.

- 4.3 During the visit to the Housing Corporation Offices, Officers took the opportunity of emphasising again the difficulties with the Total Cost Indicator (TCI) bandings for Runnymede. The Housing Corporation has promised to consider whether or not any improvement on the TCI bandings can be made.

**(FOR INFORMATION)**

Background Papers

Relevant papers on Director of Housing and Community Services' Housing Corporation files.

10. REVISIONS TO GRANT AID CRITERIA (DAL)

1. **Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to recommend the adoption of a revised criteria for the award of grant aid to voluntary and community groups.**
- 1.2 **The criteria is being submitted for the approval of both the Leisure and Environment, and the Housing and Community Services Committees in view of their respective responsibilities for grants to the voluntary sector.**

2. **Background Information**

- 2.1 The Council made provision in the current financial year for the award of £380,000 in grant aid to local voluntary and community groups, together with individuals involved in sporting, artistic, charitable and educational activities. This figure includes support made available in the form of occasional grants, annual core revenue funding, bottle bank donations, rent grant aid and discretionary rate relief.
- 2.2 The core of the present grant aid criteria dates from 1995, with a number of minor changes having been incorporated in subsequent years. Given the passage of time, it now seems appropriate to comprehensively update the document in order to take account of changing policy priorities, funding needs and working practices.

3. **Report**

- 3.1 The revised draft criteria, attached at Appendix 'E', has been designed to form a single set of corporate guidelines which can be used to assess applications for most forms of funding against approved Council strategies and targets. These have principally been drawn from the Community Strategy and Cultural Strategy and concentrate on those objectives which might most appropriately be undertaken by community groups.
- 3.2 This approach has two significant advantages. Firstly, it sharpens the focus of the Council's financial support so that grant aid can be directed towards the achievement of specific policy objectives rather than being used simply as a fund for distribution to worthy causes. Secondly, the adoption of a common core criteria should enable the Council to be more consistent and transparent in the way in which it allocates funding.
- 3.3 The revised criteria also attempts to reflect the Council's broader policy framework arising from recent legislative changes and its emerging community leadership role, together with the trend towards partnership working. It is, therefore, proposed to extend the scope of grant aid into areas such as social inclusion and health awareness that have not traditionally been seen as part of the Council's core functions. The criteria emphasises, however, that the Runnymede grants programme is intended to complement and not replace existing sources of public funding. Assistance will not be given to services and projects which are customarily the responsibility of other statutory agencies. It is intended that support be restricted to initiatives which are beyond the normal scope of the principal funding agency and meet the Council's policy priorities.
- 3.4 Members' attention is also specifically drawn to the following proposed changes in direction or emphasis.
- i) Greater priority has been given to projects for the disabled.

- ii) Clarification of the criteria for ongoing core revenue funding.
  - iii) The exclusion of students not permanently resident in the Borough from eligibility for sports grant aid.
  - iv) The removal of the junior club membership category of sports persons grant aid, which provided for grants of up to £85. The Runnymede Sports Council had expressed concern that the category was too wide to be meaningful and could potentially lead to an unsustainable number of applications.
  - v) The exclusion from eligibility for sportspersons grant aid of applicants with aspirations to professional status in the short term.
  - vi) The formalisation of the procedures for town centre Christmas decorations funding.
  - vii) The separation of most arts grants from other leisure type revenue funding so that they can be dealt with through the Arts Development budget administered in conjunction with the Arts Development Steering Group.
  - viii) The incorporation, at the request of the Association for the Improvement of Runnymede (AIR), of a requirement that all applicants for environmental improvements initially approach AIR for financial assistance rather than the Council.
- 3.5 In addition, Officers propose that the present budgets for occasional capital grants (£25,000 for community halls improvements, a £25,000 general provision and £3,000 to Scouts and Guides) be merged into one combined budget of £53,000 in order to provide additional flexibility when dealing with applications relating to building improvements. While this would effectively remove the sum ring-fenced for Scouts and Guides groups it will provide the respective movements with access to additional money from the enhanced general provision should an appropriate scheme present itself.
- 3.6 The previously approved discretionary rate relief guidelines are referred to in the criteria for completeness. No changes are proposed at the present time. The opportunity has also been taken to incorporate within the criteria a guide to other potential sources of funding for voluntary organisations.

#### 4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 The proposed revisions to the grant aid criteria do not require any increase in budgetary provision, although it is hoped that they will assist voluntary organisations to more easily access the funds presently available to them.

#### **OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -**

**the grant aid criteria set out in Appendix 'E' be adopted with effect from 1 April 2003.**

#### **(TO RECOMMEND)**

#### Background Papers

Various internal memoranda between the period February to December 2002 (on DAL's file 69.25.17(99)).

#### 11. STANDING ORDER NO. 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:

| <u>Officer</u>                             | <u>Action Taken</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <u>Central Index No.</u> |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Director of Housing and Community Services | Drafting of the Section 106 Agreement for the St. Ann's Heath School site, Virginia Water, so that it allows for the higher level of 110% of the Total Cost Indicator (TCI) level to be used in the event that 40% of affordable housing is delivered. (If a lower percentage is delivered then it is proposed that the cost (including oncosts) should fall within 100% of TCI) | 510                      |

**(FOR INFORMATION)**

Background Papers

Proforma on Head of Corporate Administration's Standing Order 42 file

12. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

If the Committee is minded to consider any of the foregoing reports in private session, 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 paragraph 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)  | <u>Exempt Information</u>                                   | <u>Para.</u> |
| 13. | HOME START RUNNYMEDE - APPLICATION FOR CORE REVENUE FUNDING | 5            |

b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)