

Runnymede Borough Council
LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 18 March 2004 at 7.30 p.m.

in the Council Chamber
at the Civic Offices, Addlestone



Members of the Committee

Councillors C.J. Norman (Chairman), Mrs. C.Y. Jones (Vice-Chairman), Mrs P.I. Broadhead, A.J. Davis, Mrs C. E. Gant, Miss M.N. Heath, Mrs. S.E. Jacobs, A.M. Moore, R.J. Ray, and B.J. Relph.

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 C. Pinnock, Committee Section, Department of Administration and Leisure, Civic Offices, Station Road, Addlestone. (Tel. 01932 425627) email address:clare.pinnock@runnymede.gov.uk.**
- 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.

LIST OF MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

PART I

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PART II

Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection

- a) Exempt Information
(No reports to be considered under this heading)
- b) Confidential Information
(No reports to be considered under this heading)

1. 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 22 January 2004.

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. SERVICE PLAN 2003/04 - PROGRESS REPORT (DAL)

(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, September 2003, page 676, para. 337)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to update Members on progress with the Leisure and Environment Service Plan 2003/04 for the period October 2003 – January 2004, and to seek approval of the interpretation of the aims resulting from any new targets for 2004/05 which have arisen from the new Leader's Position Statement.**

2. Background Information

2.1 At its meeting in September 2003 this Committee reviewed progress on the first quarter of the Leisure and Environment Service Plan which serves as a basis for the monitoring and review of the Committee's objectives.

3. Report

3.1 Members will recall that in order to provide a more coherent reporting and monitoring process, both at political and management levels, Officers have woven the various objectives and targets together into a single document for each Committee. The format has been modified from the "Aims and Targets" approach, which Members will recall flowed from the Leader's Position Statement, to include more detail of timescales, potential barriers and additional resource requirements. The source of each target is, however, clearly identified so as to preserve the place of the original documentation.

3.2 The updated Service Plan attached at Appendix 'A' draws together objectives from the following sources:

- i) The Leader's Position Statement - this is the key political policy statement of the Council. The 2003/04 statement was adopted as Council policy in October 2002.
- ii) The Best Value Performance Plan - the Council is required to adopt a Best Value Performance Plan annually. The plan must contain its service objectives, various details of its compliance with its Best Value duties, and proposed action to meet performance targets. The current version of the plan was due for adoption earlier this month and, amongst other material, draws on the Leader's Position Statement.
- iii) Best Value Continuous Improvement Plans - each service will have carried out one or more Best Value Reviews and proposals for service improvement will have been incorporated into Improvement Plans approved by Committee. These are included in the Service Plan save for targets previously reported as complete.

- iv) Best Value Performance Indicators - a range of Performance Indicators are prescribed by the Secretary of State for the measurement of local authority performance in various areas. The indicators prescribe what is measured; the target performance is set in some cases nationally and in other cases is left to local discretion.
 - v) Other plans and strategies - the above paragraphs list the major source material relevant for this Committee, but there may be a need to refer to other documents such as the Community and Cultural Strategies. Where relevant these will be mentioned.
- 3.3 The document draws together the objectives and targets from all these sources. They are grouped in themes rather than by document for ease of assimilation.
- 3.4 Current performance is highlighted throughout the Service Plan and, where corrective action is required additional text or updated information has been added, it is noted accordingly in bold.
- 3.5 Also included in the Service Plan are a number of draft targets which have been drawn from the new Leader's Position Statement 2004/05. These have been added to the Service Plan so that performance can be monitored and reported during the next year.
- 3.6 The Committee is asked to note that it has not been possible to update the Leisure Services section of the Service Plan beyond adding the draft targets to be approved by this Committee flowing from the Leader's Position Statement 2004/05. In addition, Officers did not consider it necessary to make any alterations to the Safer Runnymede section of the Service Plan.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

the interpretation of the aims resulting from the 2004/05 Leader's Position Statement be approved for inclusion in the Service Plan.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated.

6. PROGRESS TOWARDS THE SAVINGS TARGET (DF)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to outline the progress made towards the Council's savings target.**

2. Background Information

2.1 The Council approved the Financial Forecast for the following five years in October 2003. The Forecast is the key financial planning tool of the Council. It set out a medium term financial strategy based on savings of £1 million a year being achieved by 2004/05 together with stepped increases in Council Tax. The Forecast also sets out the financial impact of anticipated changes in budgetary provision at service level.

2.2 Savings of £650,000 were identified in the approved Forecast. The Forecast also included further expenditure of £125,000 for new initiatives and these were added to the savings target. Therefore, at the time that the Financial Forecast was approved a total of £475,000 of savings still needed to be identified.

3. Report

Progress towards the savings target

3.1 The Forecast was updated as part the 2004/05 Budget exercise and this was reported to the Corporate Management Committee on 5 February. Taking into account changes

made (new services and further cost savings) since the Forecast was approved in October 2003, a revised savings target for 2005/06 and subsequent years were set. The current total savings that still need to be identified currently stands at £518,000.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background papers

None.

7. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT (DAL)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the need to re-let the Grounds Maintenance Contract and to highlight the opportunity to adjust the content of the contract.**

2. Background Information

2.1 The Grounds Maintenance Contract provides for grass cutting, shrub bed maintenance, leaf clearing, hedge cutting and some weed control in parks, open spaces, cemeteries, closed churchyards, housing areas and Highway shrub beds.

2.2 The contract is let and managed by the Parks Section of Leisure Services, and the costs are charged to the relevant service budgets.

2.3 The current contract was let to John O'Conner (Grounds Maintenance) Ltd in January 1998 for an initial term of five years. In 2002 an option to extend the term for a further two years to December 2004 was implemented. The current contract value is approximately £200,000.

2.4 Other works of a similar nature, such as the provision and maintenance of hanging baskets and floral troughs, tree works, grounds maintenance of allotment sites, and large-scale weed control are currently procured through other contracts and arrangements.

2.5 The performance of the existing contractor has generally been good and it has only been necessary to issue one default notice with penalties during the term of the contract.

2.6 The existing specification provides a good standard of grounds maintenance across the Borough. The specified standard varies from site to site and there is an opportunity to rationalise this in the new contract. The frequency of grass cutting, for example, varies depending on each site's use, its profile, and the requirements of the relevant service department. For example, the grass at Runnymede Pleasure Grounds, a high profile and popular park, is cut more frequently than that at informal open spaces. Parks with grass sports pitches, such as Victory Park and Ottershaw Memorial Field, are also cut more frequently. Areas such as Chertsey Meads and parts of Homewood Park are cut very infrequently, once or twice a year, to allow the establishment of wildflower meadows. Most Housing areas are cut 30 times a season, at the request of that department.

3. Report

3.1 The content and specification of the new contract is currently being considered. As part of the preparations a number of grounds maintenance contractors have been consulted informally. The feedback suggests that:

- contractors are attracted to contracts that offer sufficient work of a broadly similar nature. i.e. all the work being suitable for a team of staff with particular skill sets.
- specialist work such as tree surgery and large-scale weed control is likely to be subcontracted by most, unless there is a sufficient quantity of this work to justify them employing and equipping specialist staff.
- generally contractors prefer contract terms of five years or more. This allows them sufficient time to write off the initial costs of equipping the contract and allows them to offer staff greater security of employment.

- 3.2 This is an opportune time to review the content of the contract and consider whether other works might be included and other possible changes.

Other works being considered

- 3.3 The existing contract for floral hanging baskets and troughs was let to John O'Conner (Grounds Maintenance) Ltd in April 2002 and runs until the end of March 2005. There is an option to extend the term by one year. The value of the contract is approximately £31,500. The floral displays are well received by the public and generate many compliments. The inclusion of this work within a much larger Grounds Maintenance Contract should attract preferable rates and Officers are proposing to combine the two contracts, with the new contractor taking over responsibility for the floral displays after the end of March 2005.
- 3.4 It is also proposed that the grounds maintenance at allotment sites be included in the new contract.
- 3.5 Enquiries have also been made of Parks Managers at neighbouring authorities, to ascertain the position regarding grounds maintenance arrangements in those boroughs and to establish whether there are any opportunities to look at joint grounds maintenance contracts or similar arrangements with them. All but one are committed to existing arrangements and unable to consider this. However, Elmbridge Borough Council is due to re-let its contract in April 2005 and as there is some similarity in the scope of works there may be an opportunity to explore this further if Members so wish.

Programme

- 3.6 The programme for re-letting the contract will be:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
• March 2004	Committee report informing Members of need to re-let contract.
• March to May 2004	Formulating contract specification and format.
• April 2004	Advert for expressions of interest in European Community publication to allow 37 days for a response.
• May 2004	Report to Committee for selection of Tenderers and contract specification and format.
• May – August 2004	Preparation of Tender Documents
• August 2004	Tender Documents sent out to selected contractors.
• October 2004	Awarding of contract.
• October/ November 2004	Pre-contract meetings with successful contractor.
• January 2005	Commencement of new contract.

4. Council Policy

- 4.1 Council policy is that all grounds maintenance work is procured corporately through the Parks and Amenities section of Leisure Services.
- 4.2 The Commissioning and Procurement Strategy requires that where the value of a contract is likely to exceed £200,000 or the term is for three years or more the procedures for strategic procurement apply. These include the formation of a multi-disciplinary project group to ensure that corporate outcomes are achieved and the preparation of a feasibility report for Committee focusing on;
- a specification of the service required, based on service outputs.
 - research/understanding of the appropriate market.

- consultation with customers/users.
- discussion with staff and potential providers.

4.3 Standing Orders for Contracts require that, where the estimated value of a contract is more than £100,000, the Authority shall select at least four contractors to be invited to tender. A further report will therefore need to be bought to this Committee in May 2004 to allow Members to make this selection.

4.4 The Council's Environmental Policy Statement includes a purchasing policy:

“to favour purchase of environmentally friendly products and use of services with a minimal environmental impact, so long as requirements of value for money and quality are met, and encourage suppliers to pursue responsible environmental practices.”

4.5 This policy will be reflected in the contract wherever possible.

5. Resource implications

5.1 Bearing in mind the Council's savings targets, Officers have been exploring what, if any, savings can be achieved this season from the existing grounds maintenance contract and in future years through the new contract.

5.2 The Parks Manager has been investigating whether savings might be achieved by reducing the standard of maintenance in some areas, specifically reviewing the frequency of grass cutting. The grass on sports pitches needs to be maintained at the appropriate length for the particular sport, however in open spaces where there are no formal facilities it would be feasible to reduce the number of cuts from the current 12 cuts per season (March to September) to perhaps 8 or even 6 cuts. This would clearly have an impact on-site, with the grass growing longer between cuts and the grass clippings, which are left on site, being longer and more problematic. Cutting grass less frequently however, requires additional effort on the part of the contractor as the grass will be longer prior to cutting. This can mean that two or three passes are required to achieve an acceptable standard of cut where one would normally suffice, and this is reflected in the existing contract rates. Calculations based on these rates (set in 1998 and increased by inflation each subsequent year) show that minimal savings would be achieved.

5.3 To cut 180,000 square metres of grass at existing contract rates is;

- 12 cuts = £8,630
- 8 cuts = £8,590

5.4 Without having tested the market it is difficult to predict whether lowering the standards of grounds maintenance in the new contract would achieve any significant savings in the future. The informal view of one contractor is that rates across the industry have increased gradually as the approach to procurement has moved away from Compulsory Competitive Tendering to one of Best Value.

5.5 To establish whether any savings are achievable the Officers recommendation is that the Tender Documents include two Bills of Quantity for pricing by contractors. One Bill would specify the existing number of cuts and therefore maintain the current standards of maintenance. The second would specify a reduced number of cuts, reflecting a lower standard of maintenance, at certain sites as set out below;

<u>Site</u>	<u>Existing number of cuts</u>	<u>Proposed number of cuts</u>
Bishopsway Open Space, Egham Hythe	12	8
Roundway Open Space, Egham Hythe	12	8
Pooley Green Recreation Ground	12	8
Warwick Avenue Open Space, Egham Hythe	12	8

Coopers Hill Open Space, Englefield Green (part only)	12	8
Edgell Close Open Space, Virginia Water (part only)	12	8
Walton Leigh Open Space, Row Town	12	8
Hamm Moor Open Space, Addlestone	12	8
Gogmore Farm Park, Chertsey	12	8
Truss's Island, Chertsey Lane	12	8
Frank Muir Memorial Field, Thorpe	12	8
Thorpe Lea Open Space	12	8
Murray House Open Space, Ottershaw	12	8
Moated Farm Open Space, New Haw	12	8
The Knoll Open Space, Chertsey	12	8
Malus Drive Open Space, Row Town	12	8
Caseldon Close Open Space, Addlestone	12	8
Ledger Drive Open Space, Addlestone	12	8
Sandy Road Open Space, Addlestone	12	8
Coxes Lock Open Space, Addlestone	12	8
Kingthorpe Gardens, Addlestone	12	8
St Ann's Hill, Chertsey	12	8
Staines Lane Open Space, Chertsey	12	8
Ferlands Open Space, Chertsey	12	8
Woodham Lodge Open Space, Woodham	16	8
Manorcrofts Open Space, Egham	14	12
Thorpe Green	16	12
The Boathouse, Addlestone	12	8
Abbey House Grounds, Chertsey	16	12

- 5.6 Members are asked to consider the proposal that should this revised specification achieve significant savings it be adopted as the specification for the new contract, bearing in mind the likely impact to standards of maintenance.
- 5.7 In April 2002 Highways responsibilities were transferred back to the County Council. However, this Council retained responsibility for the maintenance of Highway shrub beds. The cost of this is expected to be approximately £42,000 in this financial year, the budget being £55,000. This is an area where this Council could achieve significant savings if responsibility were to be transferred back to County. This would however be a matter for the Economic Development Committee.

6. Legal implications

6.1 This is a service to which the Public Services Contracts Regulations 1993 apply.

6.2 Expressions of interest in performing the service are required to be invited from suitably qualified contractors by notice in the Official Journal. A minimum of 37 days is prescribed for replies. This may be extended but in practice is generally sufficient time. The number of contractors to be invited to tender may be prescribed in the range of 5 to 20, but must be sufficient to allow for genuine competition. In practice, a range of 5 to 8 is sufficient for this purpose and is not such as to be administratively overwhelming when considering tender responses.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

- i) the Grounds Maintenance Contract be notified in the Official Journal and a range of 5 – 8 be specified as the range within which the number of contractors intended to be invited to tender be fixed; and**
- ii) a further report be brought to this Committee in May 2004 for approval of the Specification and list of contractors to be invited to tender together with updates on discussions with Elmbridge Borough Council and Surrey County Council as appropriate.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

Ground Maintenance Contract.

Relevant sections of Leisure Services files

8. RIVERSDELL CLOSE FENCING - REPORT OF THE REVIEW BOARD SCRUTINY HEARING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2004 (DAL)

(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, November 2003, page 1053, para. 505)

Members of the Committee are asked to bring their copy of the Council's March 2004 Minute Book which contains the Minutes and associated Appendices of the Review Board meeting.

Members of the Committee will be aware of the reference of this matter to the Review Board by the Council at its December 2003 meeting. The Review Board met on 11 February 2004 to review this Committee's decision taken at the 20 November 2003 meeting regarding the Riversdell Close fence.

In this instance, under Standing Order 25.11 (c), the Review Board reports to Council via this Committee. This Committee may comment on the Review Board's report but may not amend it. The Committee is invited to offer such comment on the report of the Review Board as it sees fit.

Members will also be aware of the receipt of a petition containing over 400 signatures, submitted by Councillor Greenwood to the December 2003 Council Meeting, in the following terms :-

"We the undersigned are very concerned about the proposed restrictions in the access and egress from Gogmore Farm Park via Riversdell Close, Chertsey. We feel the proposals are a serious disadvantage to vulnerable members of the community who have not been consulted on these changes. Many of the disabled users of the park and older members find alternative footpaths extremely difficult to negotiate. Children will be forced to use areas that do not have clear vision from park to roadway and roadway to park causing distress and concerns about hidden dangers. Therefore, we urge the council to re-examine the decision to close this access of the park and refer the matter to the Review Board Committee enabling greater consultation and representations with all sections of the community."

The above petition was referred to this Committee in accordance with Standing Order 19.5. The petition requested reference of the matter to the Review Board which has, of course, already been done, but the Committee may wish to take the petition specifically into account in any comment it makes.

THE COMMITTEE IS ASKED -

to make such comment as it sees fit on the report of the Review Board.

(TO RECOMMEND)

Background Papers

None.

9. EGHAM SPORTS CENTRE - TRADING ACCOUNT (DF)
(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, January 2004, page 1210, para. 672)

At the last meeting of the Leisure and Environment Committee, Members requested that they be kept informed of the progress of Egham Sports Centre's trading position.

Members will recall that following the appointment of a new General Manager, a review of the staffing structure was imminent. The new arrangements have now been implemented to match current expectations.

Appendix 'B' shows the current trading account for the period April 2003 to the end of January 2004 along with the associated usage figures.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background papers

None.

10. CABRERA TRUST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - MINUTES (DAL)

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 January 2004 are attached at Appendix 'C'.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None.

11. RUNNYMEDE ARTS DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP - MINUTES (DAL)

The Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Group held on 3 February 2004 are attached at Appendix 'D'.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None.

12. ABBEY FIT JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - MINUTES (DAL)

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 February 2004 are attached at Appendix 'E'.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None.

13. ADDLESTONE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – CAPITAL GRANT AID (DAL)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **This report presents for consideration an application from the Addlestone Community Association for Capital Grant Aid of £10,000.**

2. Background Information

2.1 The Addlestone Community Association was formed in 1949 in order to provide recreational and leisure facilities for the residents of Addlestone and District. The Association has managed the Community Centre located next to the Civic Offices in Station Road since 1968. Membership currently stands at a little over 1,000, the vast majority of whom are residents of the borough. More than twenty local organisations are affiliated to the Association and the Centre provides a venue for a wide variety of community activities.

2.2 The Association receives annual core revenue funding from the Council in support of its routine running costs. This amounts to £2,870 in the current financial year, a figure due to rise with inflation to £2,950 in 2004/05. The Association received a capital grant of £50,000 from the Council in 1991 to assist with the extension of the Community Centre. A sum of £32,150 was awarded in 1999/2000 to meet 50% of the cost of re-roofing the premises. If the normal grant aid conditions had been applied this would have precluded the Association from receiving further occasional grants of more than £1,000 for a period of ten years. It was, however, agreed at the time that this would not prejudice further grant assistance in the event of proposals for the refurbishment or redevelopment of the Community Centre.

2.3 As Members will be aware, work is due to commence shortly on the construction of a new Community Centre on part of the Garfield Road Car Park (subject to clarification of outstanding cost elements). The Centre, which is to be leased to the Association, forms the first phase in the redevelopment of the Civic Offices site as a whole.

3. Report

3.1 The Association has now applied for grant support of £10,000 in order to assist with the purchase of chairs for use at the new Community Centre. It is estimated that the total cost of the furniture will amount to £12,680, with the balance being supplied from the Association's own resources. The Association has separately approached the Council for a loan of £50,000 to assist with the cost of extra facilities of its choosing at the new Centre. However, this would essentially be at no revenue cost to the Council. Members are asked to determine the grant application on its own merits in the context of the approved criteria and without regard for financial and service issues relating to the property transaction.

3.2 The application appears to be consistent with the criteria. Organisations which manage a Council hall or asset are entitled to funding on the same terms as groups which provide equivalent facilities independently. Given the large number of user groups anticipated at the Centre, the community benefit arising from grant support for this purpose is likely to be considerable. The normal match funding principle is satisfied by the Community Association's contribution to the project as a whole in the form of the additional facilities which it is financing. Officers therefore recommend that the request be met in full.

4. Resource Implications

4.1 Total budgetary provision of £50,000 has been made for capital grants to voluntary organisations in 2003/04. The committed expenditure to date amounts to £23,227, and there is a request by the Addlestone Royal British Legion Club for a further £4,500 elsewhere on this Agenda. There is, therefore, adequate provision to award a grant of £10,000 to the Addlestone Community Association.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

a capital grant of £10,000 be awarded to the Addlestone Community Association in respect of the purchase of chairs for the new Community Centre, subject to the usual conditions set out in the approved grant aid criteria.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

Application form and letter from Addlestone Community Association dated 27 October 2003, Internal Memoranda and e-mails between 9 to 29 December 2003 (on DAL's file 69.25.17(94)).

14. GRANT FUNDING TO SOCIAL CLUBS (DAL)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **This report presents for consideration an application from the Addlestone Royal British Legion Club for capital grant aid of £4,500 to assist with roofing works and seeks an interpretation of the policy to be applied in respect of grant funding to social club type premises generally.**

2. Background Information

2.1 The Royal British Legion is a registered charity established in 1921 to protect the welfare, interests and memory of ex service people, their families and dependants. The Legion is one of the UK's largest membership organisations with over 550,000 members nationwide.

2.2 It is common for British Legion Branches to set up social clubs, as a number of their social activities (e.g. the sale of alcohol) could not be carried on by a charity. This application is from the Addlestone Royal British Legion Club not the charity.

2.3 The Addlestone Royal British Legion Club occupies premises at 94 Church Road. The club has approximately 270 members, almost all of whom are Runnymede residents, and is entirely self funded. Membership is open to men and women over the age of 18 regardless of whether or not they have served in the Armed Forces. The Club has two principal purposes; supporting the remembrance and charitable activities of the Royal British Legion (a proportion of the membership fees are remitted to the parent body for the purpose) and the provision of social facilities for members centred on a licensed bar and games area. The Club premises has no dual community use as the venue is not made available to external hirers.

3. Report

3.1 The roof of the Club's Church Road premises is leaking and in urgent need of repair. Remedial works will cost £9,000, including a £500 contingency provision. This is beyond the Club's means. The Club has therefore applied for grant aid of £4,500 in respect of 50% of the expenditure. The balance will be met from the Club's own resources.

3.2 Grant applications from social clubs tend to arise only infrequently. Until this year none had been submitted since 2000 when a request from the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes was refused due to the organisation's single sex membership policy. Two applications have, however, now been submitted in recent months (the second is being dealt with by Officers under delegated powers because it fails to meet several aspects of the criteria).

3.3 The grant criteria (relevant extracts of which are attached at Appendix 'F') states that the Council will make grant aid available

"to support recreational, sporting, welfare, advisory, educational, cultural and environmental projects of community benefit which are consistent with its priorities and objectives but undertaken more effectively by independent, voluntary or charitable groups. Priority will be given to those initiatives which meet the needs of people with disabilities, the vulnerable or disadvantaged, young people and older persons".

3.4 The British Legion and other social clubs are recreational facilities of a type and offer a degree of community benefit. Its activities are not *inconsistent* with the Council's priorities and objectives. The question under the criteria is whether the project is "consistent with the Council's policies and objectives."

- 3.5 Members will recall that the Council declined to identify detailed criteria on this topic when revisions were made last year. Members preferred a broader and more general statement of the type of schemes which the Council might be prepared to support, as set out in para. 3.3 above.
- 3.6 It can be argued that provided a social club's objectives do not contravene Council policy in any way, such as in unjustified discrimination, it meets the broad grant aid criteria by the very fact of being an independent fund of recreational or cultural facility of benefit to a proportion of the community. The criteria make it clear that the degree of community benefit is one of the factors to be taken into account in determining the amount of grant.
- 3.7 It could, however, be argued that the provision of bar and games facilities, albeit on a non profit making basis, does not directly support the Council's policies in the same manner as more active leisure pursuits or welfare based community projects. Assistance is routinely given to sports clubs with bar and social amenities but these are ancillary to the primary function of the clubs.
- 3.8 Clearly, the higher levels of grant will continue to be given to those initiatives that meet the needs of the priority groups identified in para. 3.3. Members are, however, asked for guidance on the desirability of social clubs being able to access the residual grant funds on the same terms as - and effectively in competition with - other community groups.
- 3.9 If the answer is negative, some further reworking of the criteria may be desirable as it could become difficult to distinguish between other organisations whose objectives are not inconsistent with Council policy.
- 3.10 If the Committee is satisfied that such facilities are eligible for financial assistance, Officers recommend a grant of £2,250 be awarded to the Addlestone Royal British Legion Club, representing 25% of the cost of the roofing works. This reduced sum takes account of the relatively limited benefit the project offers to the wider community in comparison with other recreational, welfare or charitable schemes. Any such award should be subject to an inspection of the premises by Building Services Officers in order to verify the condition of the roof.
- 3.11 If the application is within the grant criteria, the Club is entitled to a grant and the Council will fix the amount. If it is not within the criteria, and the Council was still anxious to offer some assistance, it would be possible to offer a loan. This would be significantly more consuming of Officer time and would need proper legal documentation. It has nevertheless sometimes been done in exceptional circumstances.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 Total budgetary provision of £50,000 has been made for capital grants to voluntary organisations in 2003/04. The Committee expenditure to date amounts to £23,227 and there is a request by the Addlestone Community Association for a further £10,000 elsewhere on this Agenda. There is, therefore, adequate provision to award a grant of up to £4,500 to the Addlestone Royal British Legion Club.

THE COMMITTEE IS ASKED to:-

- i) determine whether non-sporting social clubs without any explicit linkage between their objectives and the general factors mentioned in the grant aid criteria are eligible for grant aid; and**
- ii) in the light of the decision relating to (i), determine the application by the Addlestone Royal British Legion Club for capital grant aid of £4,500 in respect of roof repair works at its Church Road premises.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

Application form and internal memoranda on DAL's file 69.25.17 (174).

15. EGHAM HYTHE PROJECT - PROGRESS REPORT (DAL)
(Ref. Minutes of Economic Development Committee, November 2003, page 1001, para. 472)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the current position regarding developments at Egham Hythe and to seek approval for a parcel of land behind the Hythe Centre to be declared surplus to requirements in order to facilitate the development of a new health centre.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 Following earlier discussions at both Member and Officer level about the future of the ageing Hythe Social Centre and the surrounding land, an Officer project team was established in 1998 with the remit to review landholdings in Egham Hythe, to consider the re-provision of the Social Centre and the construction of a new Town Park, and to identify potential social housing opportunities and youth provision. The matter was referred to in the Leader's Position Statement for 1999/2000.
- 2.2 After extensive local consultation and planning, a scheme including a new public hall and park was approved. The original scheme costs were estimated at £2m and a budget of £1.5m was approved with the remainder to be funded from other development opportunities in the area. However, local residents were firmly opposed to additional development with the exception of the surgery, and housing development adjoining 97 Pooley Green Road. It was envisaged that the receipts from these two developments would be utilised in making up the budget shortfall.
- 2.3 In June 2002 the Economic Development Committee agreed in principle to the development of a Doctors' surgery to the rear of the new Hythe Centre and to the disposal of land adjoining 97 Pooley Green Road for a small affordable housing scheme.
- 2.4 The new Hythe Centre, which was completed within budget, was opened in December 2002.

3. Report

3.1 Health Centre

- 3.1.1 Following discussions with the North Surrey Primary Care Trust, the original proposals for the relocation for the Thorpe Road surgery have been expanded and the current proposal is to develop a health centre of approximately 17,000 sq.ft. (1,600 sq.m.).
- 3.1.2 The development is to be privately financed by Community Healthcare Investments Limited and it is hoped that the proposals will be sufficiently advanced for scheme drawings to be displayed at the meeting. Negotiations are currently under way between the funders and the Primary Care Trust regarding the content of the Health Centre, and subject to agreement it is envisaged that it will contain 2 surgeries, a dental practice, pharmacy and an area social services team.
- 3.1.3 For the health centre development to be progressed, it is necessary to utilise a parcel of land, as shown at Appendix 'G'. Therefore, the Committee is asked to approve that this area of land be declared surplus to requirements in order to facilitate the development of the new health centre.

3.2 Town Park

- 3.2.1 A "Friends of Hythe Park" Group has now been established and a Committee was elected at a meeting on 11 February. Draft Heads of Terms for an Agreement between the Council and the Friends of Hythe Park are due to be considered by the Economic Development Committee on 11 March 2004.
- 3.2.2 The Friends are now moving forward and consulting with local youth groups and working with Officers to assist in a design for the proposed park. They will also pursue funding opportunities and, in particular, a grant application to AIR.

- 3.2.3 The local tree warden has already been successful in obtaining a grant of £1,000 for the purchase of trees which will initially be planted on the Pooley Green Allotment site, with the involvement of local schools, pending the final design of the park.
- 3.2.4 A further source of potential funding has been identified by the Parks Manager who has been in discussion with Woodland Environmental. This is a Company which specialises in self-funded green space regeneration. The Company provides a complete design and build service from design through feasibility, consultation, planning and construction which is all funded from inert soil recovery. They have completed substantial regeneration schemes for Ealing, Slough, Hillingdon and Kingston Councils amongst others. The scheme works by recycling unwanted inert soil from development sites and utilising this in the landscaping solutions for a green space regeneration. Funding arises from the substantial payments made to Woodland Environmental by the developers to remove the inert soil.
- 3.2.5 Whilst Woodland Environmental are keen to work with the Council on this scheme and have already carried out some basic ecological and underground services surveys at their own risk, this project is somewhat smaller than most of their schemes and it is therefore unlikely that it can be 100% self funding. There is, nevertheless, the potential for substantial savings in total scheme costs.
- 3.2.6 The Friends of Hythe Park are keen to meet with and progress the design of the Park in partnership with Woodland Environmental. They would therefore support the Council in awarding the design and build contract to Woodland Environmental, subject to the necessary checks being made. Whilst this will be a substantial contract, Officers are of the opinion that the potential benefits to be obtained from utilising Woodland Environmental warrant a departure from Standing Orders, authority for which has been sought from the Economic Development Committee.
- 3.2.7 As the site lies within the flood plain, there will be a need to keep importation of landscaping material to a minimum, as raising of ground levels would be resisted by the Environment Agency. It will depend on the scale of the operation as to whether planning permission is required for this in its own right. If it is, then as an engineering operation involving the disposal of waste, the County Council will be the determining planning authority.

3.3 Swan Sanctuary

- 3.3.1 As is already known, the development of the Town Park will be dependent upon the removal of the Swan Sanctuary. The Swan Sanctuary's formal agreement in respect of the site ended in 1994 and their planning permission expired in 1998. The Sanctuary has sought a new site for some years. Members may recall that the Economic Development Committee, at its meeting in June 2002, instructed the Director of Administration and Leisure to notify the Swan Sanctuary that vacant possession of the site would be required no later than 31 March 2004.
- 3.3.2 The current position is that a potential replacement site has been identified outside the Borough and negotiations are continuing subject to planning considerations. However, Members may recall similar positions being reached in the past. There is currently no identifiable timescale for the removal of the Swan Sanctuary and whilst they were informed of the requirement for vacant possession as instructed in 2002, no formal Notice to Quit has yet been served. Officers and Members hope to have met with the Swan Sanctuary to discuss the position prior to the Economic Development Committee meeting.
- 3.3.3 The Friends Group have expressed some concern that the matter seems no closer to a resolution now than it was several years ago and do not want the momentum for the construction of the park to be lost.
- 3.3.4 Consultation, finalising the design and obtaining planning consent for the park is likely to take another twelve months which gives a little leeway in dealing with the Swan Sanctuary. It is, however, important that a solution to this problem can be found at the earliest opportunity.

4. Technical Implications

- 4.1 The proposed Health Centre is in the floodplain and is therefore contrary to Local Plan policies. Despite the community benefits, it is likely to attract objections from the Environment Agency. The applicant will seek to overcome these objections by raising the

building and the provision of a dry escape route.

- 4.2 As the proposals also result in the loss of a part of the open space there may also be objections from Sport England. Policy and Implementation Officers in the Planning Division have, however, carried out an open space audit which shows considerable areas of open space within the Ward (plan to be displayed at the meeting) and it is hoped that this, together with the proposals for the park, will be sufficient to overcome any such objections.
- 4.3 The proposed development adjoining 97 Pooley Green Road is also within the flood plain and a recent planning application was deferred by the Planning Committee pending further discussions to meet the requirements for a dry escape route.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

the land shown on Appendix 'G' be declared surplus to requirements in order to facilitate the development of a health centre.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

Relevant papers on Property Services File 81.15.133. (some exempt)

16. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

If the Committee is minded to consider any of the foregoing items 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 appropriate paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

(TO RESOLVE)

PART II

Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection

a) Exempt Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading).

b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading).