



RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

REVIEW BOARD

Thursday, 10 April 2003, at 7.30 p.m.

**in the Council Chamber,
at the Civic Offices, Addlestone**

A G E N D A

Members of the Review Board

Councillors P.J. Poole (Chairman), A. Alderson, Mrs. C.E. Gant, D.W. Parr, B.J. Relph, N. Thewlis, P.B. Tuley, K.J.T. Walmsley and 1 vacancy

and all other Members for information

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 Review Board 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 & Leisure Department, Committee Section, Civic Offices, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel. Direct Line: 01932 425624). (E-mail: 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.
- 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
(No reports to be considered under this heading)
- b) Confidential Information
(No reports to be considered under this heading)

1. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO REVIEW BOARD MEMBERSHIP

2. MINUTES

To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Review Board held on 11 February 2003.

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.

Members may wish to note Paragraph 11 of the Code of Conduct which reads as follows:-

Overview and Scrutiny

"11.(1) For the purposes of this Part, a Member must if he is involved in the consideration of a matter at a meeting of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Review Board) of the authority or a sub-committee of such a committee, regard himself as having a personal and prejudicial interest if that consideration relates to a decision made, or action taken, by another of the authority's -

- (a) committees or sub-committees; or
 - (b) joint committees or joint sub-committees,
- of which he may also be a Member.

(2) But sub-paragraph (1) above shall not apply if that Member attends that meeting for the purpose of answering questions or otherwise giving evidence relating to that decision or action."

5. ANNUAL REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FUNCTION (DAL)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **To report annually on the workings of the Overview and Scrutiny function as required under the Council's Constitution.**

2. Background Information and Report

2.1 Sub Paragraph 6.03 (d) of the Council's Constitution states:-

" (d) Annual Report Overview and Scrutiny Committees must report annually to full Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate."

2.2 The Board agreed at its last meeting in February 2003, that Officers should submit a brief draft Annual Report for consideration at this meeting.

2.3 The draft Annual Report set out in Appendix 'A' accordingly describes the workings of this Council's Overview and Scrutiny function from 1 April 2002 to 1 April 2003. The Board is also invited to make any recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods that it wishes to include in the Report.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

the draft Annual Report at Appendix 'A', be submitted to Full Council, subject to any amendments and additions which the Board wishes to make.

(TO RECOMMEND)

Background Papers

None

6. ENFORCEMENT OF PLANNING CONTROL - PROGRESS REPORT (DTS/DAL)

Attached at Appendix 'B' is the progress report on enforcement of Planning Control as at 31 March 2003.

A report to the Planning Committee of Wednesday 19 March 2003, on the subject of Land to the Rear of Blossom Farm, Rosemary Lane, Thorpe, is at Appendix 'C'. This case study illustrates the kinds of issues that Officers must weigh carefully in assessing whether to recommend planning enforcement action.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None.

7. RAIL TRANSPORT IN THE BOROUGH OF RUNNYMEDE (DAL)

1. Purpose of Report

To consider whether to mount a new project on the above topic.

2. Background Information and Report

2.1 The Chairman has proposed that the Board reviews railway stations in the Borough as a gateway to the Borough, and the impressions that visitors, commuters and local travellers receive upon their arrival or departure.

2.2 A briefing note provided by the Chairman is attached at Appendix 'D'.

2.3 The current work programme of the Board includes a range of topics and this particular item is new. Reports currently outstanding are:

IT Support (subject to confirmation of areas for review);
Community Strategy;
Best Value process and Comprehensive Performance Assessment issues;
External appointments.

2.4 The review proposed would require a range of survey work and co-operation from outside bodies, in particular South West Trains who are responsible for the stations, and the Highway Authority, Surrey County Council.

2.5 South West Trains are happy to assist with responses to written questions.

2.6 The Local Transportation Manager of Surrey County Council has indicated his office's willingness to cooperate.

2.7 The current South West Trains franchise expires in February 2004. Key principles have been agreed for a further agreement to February 2007. Although heads of terms for a twenty year agreement had been settled in 2001, the long term future is not yet firm and nor are the possible consequent investment decisions. Members may wish to bear this in mind in deciding when to mount any review.

3. Resource Implications
- 3.1 The Board has a budget for its review and other purposes of £10,000 in the 2003/04 Municipal Year.
- 3.2 The budget would purchase a number of days of consultancy or other expert advice on particular topics. There is no reason why it cannot be used on surveys, although one survey, depending on whether it was undertaken internally or externally and on the method, and the scope, could account for most of the budget.
- 3.3 Significant staff time would be taken in mounting the review proposed, and the Chairman and Board may wish to prioritise all currently outstanding work of the Board including this proposal.

THE REVIEW BOARD IS ASKED -

whether it wishes to undertake a review of the kind proposed and whether it wishes to express a view on the degree of priority and depth required for the outstanding elements of the work programme.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None

8. RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARTNER ORGANISATIONS AND JOINT WORKING WITH NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITIES (DAL)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **To invite the Board's views on partnership and joint working.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 One of the items identified by the former Services Review Board at its meeting on 11 July 2002 as a topic which might be reviewed by the Board during the course of the year, was the management of relationships with partner organisations.
- 2.2 This report outlines a recent review of partnership arrangements, as well as the joint working initiatives that are currently being explored.

3. Report

- 3.1 Partnerships and joint working have been the subject of reports considered by the Corporate Management Committee on 6 March 2003. Copies of the Agenda reports to that meeting on "Partnership Arrangements - District Audit Review" and "Joint Working With Neighbouring Authorities" are at Appendices 'E' and 'F' respectively.
- 3.2 The Corporate Management Committee considered the findings of the District Audit study (report at Appendix 'E') into the increasingly significant issue of the Council's local partnership arrangements. For the purposes of this exercise, partnerships had been defined as:

"an arrangement for providing, commissioning or managing a service, project (including capital construction or regeneration projects) or function which includes the Council and at least one external organisation, where decision making and funding are shared."

- 3.3 That Committee noted that the study had concluded that the Council had a strong and successful approach to partnership and enjoyed good working relationships with partners across all sectors. Partner organisations considered the Council as being very strong in its support for, and its ability to understand, other organisations' priorities.

- 3.4 As was normal in such studies, a number of additional measures that could strengthen the Council's position still further had been identified. These included suggestions that there should be greater formal "tie in" between the priorities and policies of the Council with those organisations where partnerships existed or were proposed, and that guidance should be offered to staff and, by implication, Members involved in such partnership working. It was agreed that Officers would examine the eight individual recommendations in detail and bring any policy or procedural matters back to Committee for scrutiny and, if necessary, approval. It was emphasised, however, that some of the Council's partnerships were modest in scale and a differential approach, proportionate to financial, service and risk factors would need to be adopted.
- 3.5 Concerning levels of joint working amongst neighbouring authorities (report at Appendix 'F') the Corporate Management Committee noted a range of pressures driving a reappraisal of the way in which authorities delivered services and the traditional focus on solutions within Borough/District boundaries. Central Government resources were being directed away from shire areas and, after many years of retrenchment, there were limited opportunities for further savings. Joint working therefore presented an opportunity to protect services while pegging or reducing unit costs. It also offered the potential to enhance service resilience at a time when recruitment and retention difficulties had led to problems in maintaining service quality and continuity. Smaller authorities often employed no more than a handful of staff in certain specialist disciplines, leaving the service vulnerable to any form of staff absence.
- 3.6 Additional impetus was provided by both the Best Value regime, which required Councils to demonstrate the competitiveness of their services, and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment criteria, with its emphasis on the need to demonstrate joint and partnership working. There was also increasing pressure on local authorities to formalise procurement and competition strategies which would include partnering options.
- 3.7 Discussions had already taken place at a senior level amongst the North West Surrey Authorities (Runnymede, Spelthorne, Elmbridge, Woking and Surrey Heath) on the opportunities for joint working. The partnership options included:
- lead authority concept
 - Consortia/partnering contracts
 - Joint Management Committee
 - Formal partnership (including limited liability partnership)
 - not for profit company - with equity stakes (including, perhaps, voluntary and private sector)
 - equity participation in limited liability company (again, perhaps, including voluntary and private sector)
- 3.8 There remained major issues concerning accountability, "badging" of services, the willingness to share responsibility and decision making and, on the staff side, career paths and status. The Committee therefore agreed that joint working should initially be developed gradually to establish confidence amongst the participating authorities. Opportunities would, in the first instance, be pursued in four service areas, namely Community Transport, waste/recycling, taxi licensing and, subject to the examination in detail as part of a Best Value review, business rates. The extent of the staffing implications was uncertain at this stage but appropriate consultation would take place with the staff side as proposals were developed.
- 3.9 The Committee emphasised that there needed to be a clear political and managerial will to pursue joint working if it was to be successful, even in the initial phases identified. A sound business case around operational considerations, efficiency gains and/or service enhancement or future resilience would be required. There would also be significant preparation to put in place revised arrangements so the effort needed to be proportionate to the potential service/financial rewards. Some discussion needed to take place as to what the next steps would be and whether there was genuine "buy in" from the participating authorities. Agreement was thus given in principle to pursue opportunities for joint working,

concentrating in the first instance on those areas identified above, with Officers to report further on the options for pursuing detailed proposals.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

the Board comment upon partnership and joint working in the light of recent reports to and discussions at the Corporate Management Committee.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None

9. ANY ITEMS SUBJECT TO CALL-IN

None have been notified at the date of compilation of this Agenda.

10. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

where appropriate, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the 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 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

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(No reports to be considered under this heading)

b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)