



RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

REVIEW BOARD

Wednesday, 11 December 2002, 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), G.J. Thomas (Vice-Chairman), A. Alderson, Mrs. C.E. Gant, D.W. Parr, B.J. Relph, N. Thewlis, P.B. Tuley and K.J.T. Walmsley.

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, Borough Secretary's and Leisure Services Department, Committee Section, Civic Offices, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel. Direct Line: 01932 425624).**
- 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 10 October 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.

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. EXTINGUISHMENT OF HIGHWAYS AGENCY (BTSO)

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 **To examine the costs and savings associated with the loss of the Highways Agency and the experiences of service delivery.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 In March 2001, the County Council determined to terminate the Highways Agency agreements across the County, and the required twelve months notice was given, the County Council taking back full responsibility for all highways matters from 1 April 2002.
- 2.2 A detailed report was presented to the former Executive Committee at its meeting on 16 May 2001, where it was resolved that no formal role be sought in formal joint arrangements for the highways function after 31 March 2002.
- 2.3 It was also resolved that certain discretionary spending on highways related matters that the Borough had previously supported, should cease. This related to special events; road safety and traffic management; that part of town centre maintenance that is the function of the Highway Authority; feasibility studies; improvement works for disabled persons and roadside tree maintenance.
- 2.4 It was also agreed that spending on town centre amenity maintenance, provision and maintenance of highway shrubs and flowerbeds, Runnymede in Bloom, and Smart Borough initiatives, should continue.

2.5 The Borough retains responsibility for street cleansing and litter picking, street furniture and bus shelters, street name signs and off-street car parking. The County Council is responsible for all highways maintenance and improvements, speed limits, traffic signals and signage, trees and shrubs affecting the highway, winter maintenance and street lighting, although the Borough Direct Services Organisation (DSO) has the contract for the latter two matters, under direction from the County Council.

3. Staffing Implications

3.1 The Executive Committee also resolved the Borough would be unable to accommodate the area highways staff after 1 April 2002. This was both to reflect the change in responsibility so that the public would recognise that the Borough Council was no longer involved in highways maintenance and improvements, and a reflection of the shortage of space within the Civic Offices.

3.2 On 1 April 2002, twelve staff whose work had predominantly been highways related, transferred to the County Council under TUPE arrangements. The local area office is based at The Runnymede Centre, Chertsey Road, Addlestone. A number of those staff have subsequently moved to other posts within the County Council.

3.3 The Borough Council resolved to retain a residual group of three engineering staff, who were recruited prior to the transfer. Unfortunately, since then, two of these staff have accepted positions with the County Council and this has been very dislocating for the team's workload.

3.4 The Borough also determined, that with the advent of a 'super-tender' by the County Council to deliver highways maintenance, there was little future for the Highways DSO, consisting of thirteen staff, and this was also wound up with effect from 1 April 2002.

3.5 The Council DSO has retained a small residual force of men and they are being fully employed on a wide range of tasks. It is hoped that a further resource dedicated to graffiti removal can be provided to augment this team.

3.6 The DSO still undertakes Winter maintenance on Runnymede and Spelthorne's roads on behalf of the County Council, the contract terminating at the end of this Winter. Runnymede also still has the street lighting contract and although this ends next year, there may be an option to continue this until 2004.

4. Local Transportation Service

4.1 The County Council has devolved responsibility for highways maintenance and minor improvements to area offices based in each district, under Local Transportation Managers, and responsible to Local Area Committees comprised of local County Members, with District representation, where requested.

4.2 Liaison at Officer level has been good, with weekly meetings established to discuss items of mutual interest. The proposed bid for next year's Local Transport Plan funding has been discussed, and largely relates to schemes planned by engineering staff whilst employed at Runnymede.

4.3 As indicated above, Runnymede Members are not involved in the Local Area Committee, but that Committee has addressed Borough-led schemes in its role as highway authority. This includes environmental improvements in Guildford Street, Chertsey, and to Station Road in Addlestone. The consent of the Highway Authority is required for schemes such as these which include works on the highway.

4.4 The need for Borough schemes to not only gain authority through its own Committee process but also through a monthly area Committee has added to delays in implementation. Further consultation which the County has insisted on, together with certain design criteria which have been imposed, have also restricted progress.

4.5 Runnymede has been undertaking much work on the Travel Initiative, promoted by the Runnymede Business Partnership. The up-dated position was reported to the Economic Development Committee at its last meeting on 14 November, and includes the Yellow School Bus Project, provision of cycle shelters, and promotion of "walking buses".

- 4.6 Runnymede has been employing a part-time schools liaison officer, paid for by County Local Transportation Plan funding, to help schools devise, adopt and implement school travel plans, aimed at reducing car journeys.
- 4.7 However, the Local Transportation Manager has obtained funding for a Safe Routes to Schools Officer to undertake these tasks and it is expected that an officer will be in post early in the New Year. This will mean that funding for the Borough post will cease.
- 4.8 Whilst it is fully appreciated that this is a County Council function, the retention of the Borough resource would have provided continuity in contact with schools, rather than the inevitable hiatus that will be caused by the personnel changes.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 Apart from the staff who transferred to the County Council and the Highways DSO, other staff savings were identified in the 2001/02 Personnel Report. Savings totalling 47 hours per week staff time in the Administration Section of the Technical Services Department were identified and posts disestablished. This totalled an annual saving of £24,800.
- 5.2 At the same time, spare capacity in the Technical Services Word Processing section was taken up by processing planning appeals, which freed up a 0.5 Full Time Equivalent post in the Borough Secretary's Department, which was deleted, saving £8,000 per annum.
- 5.3 There were 'one-off' redundancy costs of £191,332 borne by the Borough Council in respect of both DSO and engineering staff.
- 5.4 In terms of the loss of the Highways DSO, there were financial losses incurred over recent years, but in previous years, surpluses had been recorded. There is likely to be a further (and final) loss of around £30,000 in the current financial year, being the residual finalising of accounts.
- 5.5 A table showing savings relating to the loss of the Highways Agency is shown below:

Anticipated savings from the transfer of the Surrey County Council Agency Function

<i>Budget Savings from 01/02 to 02/03</i>	£	
Highways Agency Management and Works	225,500	As per Budget Book
Signs and Aids to Movement	22,600	As per Budget Book
Street Lighting	18,100	As per Budget Book
Borough Highways Functions:		
Direct Savings	47,100	Net Saving from Ceased Services Reduction in Town Centre Maintenance
Indirect Savings	40,100	
Total Anticipated Savings	353,400	
Additional Costs of SCC Liaison ¹	- 36,700	As per Budget Book
Net Saving in 02/03	316,700	
Further Savings from 02/03 to 03/04		
Highways Agency Management and Works ²	47,900	Estimated Reduction
Increase in SCC Liaison ³	- 9,700	Estimated Increase
Total ongoing Net Savings	354,900	

Notes:

1. This is an amount put in the present budget to reflect Borough Officer time liaising on various highways matters with the County Council. It includes Borough schemes such as Guildford Street, Chertsey and Action Addlestone, Local Transportation Plan bids and schemes; travel initiative schemes, Decriminalised Parking, etc.

2. This sum reflected the costs of finalising accounts and arrangements in association with the winding up of the Highways Agency.
3. This is a reflection that more Borough Officer time than anticipated is being spent in liaising with the County Council on highways issues.
6. Local Transportation Service Performance
- 6.1 Over the last nine months since the Highways Agency has been terminated, the Local Transportation Service has completed the following works in relation to maintenance and improvements:

Maintenance Schemes

Major

Chertsey Road, Addlestone (Green Lane – Dudley Close)
 New Haw Road, Addlestone (Woodham Lane – Crockford Bridge)
 Windsor Street, Chertsey (Guildford Street – West of Heriot Road)
 Pooley Green Road, Hythe (Rowan Avenue – Thorpe Lea Road)
 Row Town (Woodham Park Road – Ongar Hill)
 High Street, Egham (Church Road – Egham By Pass)

Surface Dressing

Hare Hill, Row Town (Spinney Hill – Ongar Hill)
 Lyne Crossing Road (Bridge Lane – Hardwick Lane)
 Lyne Lane (Green Road – Lyne Crossing Road)
 Wellington Avenue, Virginia Water (Trumps Green Road – Christchurch Road)
 Staines Road (Norlands Lane – Thorpe Park)
 Thorpe Road (Chilsey Green Road)

Carriageway Works

Fairlawns, Woodham
 Jennings Close, New Haw
 Wingfield Close, Woodham
 Colonels Lane, Chertsey

Footway Works

Armstrong Road, Englefield Green
 Albert Road, Englefield Green
 Victoria Street, Englefield Green
 Church Road, Egham
 St John's Court, Englefield Green
 Crabtree Road, Thorpe
 Woodham Lane, Woodham

Improvement Schemes

Egham Hill Cycleway
 Guildford Road (Christchurch to Borough boundary) Cycleway
 Woodham Lane (Woodham Park Road – Faris Lane) Safe Routes to Schools Scheme

- 6.2 Further works planned for the current financial year are as follows:

Church Road/Station Road/Brighton Road/High Street, Addlestone	Introduction of pedestrian phase to traffic signals
Chertsey Road, Addlestone	Provision of tucan crossing
Old Weybridge, Weybridge Road, Addlestone	Provide protection to weak parapet walks

- 6.3 Schemes planned for the next three financial years are set out in the table at Appendix 'A'. However, the Area Office has a considerable number of vacancies in the design section and feasibility and design works will be affected by this.
- 6.4 In terms of overall performance, the Area Office is in the process of sending a questionnaire to all County and Borough Members to seek their views on this matter. The results of this are not yet available.
- 6.5 In the first year, the Local Area Office has been implementing maintenance and improvement works for which feasibility and design were largely undertaken whilst those staff were employed at Runnymede. It is clear that with their staff shortages they will be unable to pursue a large programme of such work in the immediate future, although consultancy may help this resource. The amount of work physically being undertaken on site over the next two or three years is therefore likely to reduce.
- 6.6 The advent of the new super-tender may involve both highway inspection and design staff transferring to the chosen contractor and this will be dislocating for workload. The work which will be most attractive to the contractor will be the larger maintenance and improvement schemes which are easier to resource. This may mean that smaller works are sub-contracted (and indeed it appears that this is the route that is being pursued) and this may lead to difficulties of quality-control, supervision and liability.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 In terms of the financial position, it is clear that there is a very considerable, on-going saving to the Borough Council, which represented the substantial amounts that had previously been invested to supplement income received from the County for this County Council function. It remains to be seen whether the financial predictions made by the County Council Best Value Review which led to the decision to terminate the Agencies are realised.
- 7.2 It is difficult to be able to judge the performance so far of the Local Transportation Service. The work already undertaken is being (largely) completed by former Runnymede staff, and those schemes were (largely) designed whilst they were employed at Runnymede. Much of the maintenance is being undertaken by a local contractor.
- 7.3 The difficulty of retaining and recruiting design engineers will hamper future progress on schemes. Many of the former Runnymede staff have already gone to other posts and locations in the County.
- 7.4 In particular, the new super-tender contractor for maintenance will be in position by the end of next April, and their performance needs to be carefully monitored. There are concerns that the nearest depot is likely to be in Bagshot and this will delay response times around the County. It is also likely that much work will be sub-contracted, and this has major concerns regarding managerial control, responsibility and quality, as experienced in the rail industry.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None stated.

6. ENFORCEMENT OF PLANNING CONTROL - PROGRESS REPORT (BTSO/BSLSO)

Attached at Appendix 'B' is the progress report on enforcement of Planning Control as at 25 November 2002.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None stated

7. PROPOSED FORMATION OF IT SCRUTINY PANEL (BSLSO)

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the creation of an IT Scrutiny Panel at the request of Board Members.

2. Background Information

2.1 When a single Review Board was constituted in July this year, Members recognised that it might be desirable to form sub-groups for detailed scrutiny of particular issues. These sub-groups or panels would report back to the main Review Board.

2.2 At the last meeting of the Board, Members proposed the creation of a Panel to look at various matters regarding IT.

3. Report

3.1 It is understood that the proposed Panel will meet informally and have an advisory role only. Accordingly it will not be subject to the political balance requirements set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. However Officers understand that it is the wish of Members that a political balance be reflected.

3.2 The Chairman has suggested that such Panels be constituted of five Members, and that the IT one at least should be made up from members available during the day in order that they may more easily speak to staff on the matters under review. Because the Panel is not a sub-Committee of the Review Board, it is not essential that it be constituted only with Review Board Members.

3.3 An informal IT Member Working Group already exists, chaired by Councillor R Habgood, and comprising five other Members (Councillors Meares, Mrs Price, Thewlis, Thomas and Tollett) with knowledge of IT matters. Its work is predominantly concerned with investigating the case for new systems, improvements, or upgrades, and with the Council's overall Information Technology and Communications Strategy. It reports, where appropriate, to the Corporate Management Committee. It may be difficult to avoid duplicating the work of this Working Group, particularly as it could potentially examine any aspect of the Council's ITC support.

3.4 These factors have led to the caution in the Officers' recommendation below.

4. Resource Implications

4.1 As has been reported previously, the number of main Committee meetings has seen an increase from the situation in 1999 (prior to the introduction of new structures), as a result of the introduction of the Review Board and its predecessors, and the consolidation of the more frequent meeting cycles of the Planning Committee and the Corporate Management Committee. Resources in the Committee Section have recently been reduced in pursuance of the Council's three year savings target. Other service areas may do likewise.

4.2 More specifically, IT and related staffing resources are fully stretched and lengthy investigative work will have to be carried out at the expense of other priorities.

4.3 The result of 4.1 and 4.2 is that additional resources would be necessary to sustain substantial support for extra investigative work. In addition, pre-planning of the timetable would assist in organising resources.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

i) subject to agreement in the discussions referred to in (ii) below, a five Member IT Scrutiny Panel be constituted, comprising four Conservative and one Runnymede Independent Member [or three Conservative, one Runnymede Independent, and one Labour Member] to be nominated by the Leaders of their respective groups;

ii) the Terms of Reference of the Panel be settled by the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer following discussion between the Chairman of the Review Board, and the Chairman of the informal IT Member Working Group as to

- (a) **the avoidance of overlap;**
- (b) **whether there is the need for both groups;**
- (c) **the desired outcome of the Review Board process.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None.

8. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ISSUES (CEO)

At its meeting on 5 December 2002 the Corporate Management Committee will be considering reports on the latest Implementing Electronic Government Statement, on Matching IT Support to Changing Requirements and on Systems Resilience. Copies of these reports are at Appendices 'C', 'D' and 'E' and Exempt Appendix '1' respectively. The comments of the Corporate Management Committee on these reports will be reported to this meeting. Any comments which this Board wishes to make on these matters will be further considered by the Corporate Management Committee and/or Council as appropriate.

(FOR CONSIDERATION)

Background Papers

None

9. CAPITAL PROJECTS (BT)

A list of capital projects whose value exceeds £100,000 is attached at Appendix 'F'. This is taken from the Revenue forecast which was considered by the Board at its last meeting. Members of the Board may wish to consider if there are any items on which they would wish to receive a further report.

(FOR CONSIDERATION)

Background Papers

None

10. BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW PROGRAMME (BSLSO)

The Best Value Service Review Programme for 1999 to 2004 is set out at Appendix 'G' and appears at Page 9 in the Best Value Performance Plan circulated to all Members.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None

11. ANY ITEMS SUBJECT TO CALL-IN

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

12. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

If the Review Board is minded to consider the foregoing reports in private session, it is the

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 the 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.

a) Exempt Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)

b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)