



# RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CORPORATE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

3 JANUARY 2008

### APPENDICES

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Runnymede Borough Council

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

29 November 2007 at 7.30 p.m.

Members of the  
Committee present: Councillors J.R. Furey (Chairman), A.J. Davis (Vice-Chairman), A. Alderson,  
Mrs R.M. Denby, J.M. Edwards, Mrs. L.M. Gillham, C.J. Norman,  
Ms C.M. Simmons, P.J. Waddell and G.B. Woodger.

Members of the  
Committee absent: None

Councillor D.R. Hamilton also attended.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 November 2007 were signed as a correct record.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs. L.M. Gillham declared a personal interest in the item – Reference From Other Committees – Leisure and Environment Committee – 15 November 2007 – Frank Muir Memorial Field Facilities for Young People, as she had been engaged in seeking grant funding.

REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - 15 NOVEMBER 2007

Frank Muir Memorial Field Facilities For Young People

At its meeting on 15 November 2007, the Leisure and Environment Committee had resolved that approval be sought from the Corporate Management Committee for a capital estimate for the provision of a skate park at a cost of £49,000 at the Frank Muir Memorial Field in Thorpe. The Friends of Frank Muir Memorial Field and the Thorpe Ward Residents' Association were promoting and managing this scheme with the support of Leisure Services and had selected a design to be supplied by Urban Ramps, following a public consultation exercise.

Funding was being sought from the Landfill Communities Fund, via AIR, the Surrey Youth Opportunities Fund and the Youth Capital Fund. A landfill Community Fund grant would require a 10% third party contribution. County Councillor Mrs Lay had offered £2,000 from her Member allocation and the remainder would come from the Parks revenue budget, from which future maintenance costs could be met.

It was unlikely that planning permission would be required for this scheme, but advice had been sought from Planning Officers and if necessary an application would be made. Concerns had been raised by the Environmental Protection Section relating to the potential for increased noise levels in the vicinity resulting from the skate park, and the possible disturbance of local residents. Officers in Leisure Section did not consider that any noise would result in additional disturbance, but the Leisure and Environment Committee had noted that these issues would have to be resolved satisfactorily, before the project could go ahead.

The Leisure and Environment Committee agreed that the scheme should be implemented, subject to all capital costs being funded from external sources, and to the issues raised by Environmental Protection being resolved. That Committee had also agreed to seek approval for a capital estimate.

**RESOLVED that -**

**a capital estimate in the sum of £49,000 be approved for the provision of a skate park at the Frank Muir Memorial Field in Thorpe, subject to all capital costs being funded from external sources, and to the issues raised by Environmental Protection being resolved.**

SERVICE PLAN 2007/08 – HALF YEARLY PERFORMANCE

The Committee noted performance to date on the Service Plan which incorporated all of the Committee's performance indicators. Best Value targets had been set by the Government and the current regime of Best Value service reviews and Continuous Improvement Plans were being phased out by them. Performance indicators were being reduced from approximately 1,200 to about 200. A Local Area Agreement was also being introduced which would have targets and indicators. The Council had achieved the highest possible score in the Audit Commission's use of resources assessment, and was one of only five district Councils rated at that level in 2006, and one of only seven district Councils achieving that level of performance in 2007. Suitable call forwarding arrangements or voicemail were activated for telephone calls in the event of Officers being out of the office. The Committee was advised that the average number of Officer working days lost because of sickness had reduced by about one day over the last six months and was pleased to note this improvement. In the early part of 2008, Officers would revise the Service Plan to reflect the streamlined performance indicators. Officers would also include in the Plan targets arising from the Local Area Agreement, which it was anticipated would come into operation during the new financial year.

BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2007/08 -SECOND QUARTER PROGRESS

The Committee considered progress against Best Value Performance Indicators for the period July to September 2007.

The general picture was positive and there had been some good performance in a number of areas. The average length of stay in hostel accommodation of households that were unintentionally homeless and in priority need, (BV 183 b), had reduced to 16 weeks compared to 28 weeks for the second quarter of 2006/07. On BV212, the average time taken to re-let local authority housing, there had been an improvement of 5 days compared to the second quarter of 2006/07, and performance was two days ahead of target. On BV178a, the average processing time taken for decisions on all new Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims continued to improve, and at 19.3 days exceeded the target of 30 days.

On BV109b, the percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks (87%), had improved by over 5% compared to the second quarter of 2006/07, and had exceeded the target by 20%. It was noted that changes had been made to the Local Development Scheme to reflect recent Government requirements. (BV 200 a and b). Performance on numbers of planning decisions allowed on appeal was on target (BV204). Regarding BV218a, the target percentage of new reports of abandoned vehicles investigated within 24 hours of notification had been exceeded by over 10%, and had also improved since the second quarter of 2006/07.

On BV2b, performance in relation to the Race Equality Scheme had been assessed as substantially higher, once the Audit Commission guidance had been clarified. On BV8, on payment of invoices, an improvement of about 5% was needed to achieve best practice, but it was envisaged that performance would improve because of the introduction of new systems. Runnymede was achieving its target percentage of employees from ethnic minority communities (BV17a).

On BV82, measures of percentage and tonnage of waste sent for recycling and on BV84a, on the amount of household waste collected per head of the population, a short term appointment of a monitoring officer had been approved, to assist in driving up performance on these indicators. End of year outturn would be the main performance measure. An extra vehicle was likely to be needed to pick up receptacles at "bring" sites and methods of financing were currently being explored.

PRIORITY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE 2007/08 - SECOND QUARTER PROGRESS

The Committee considered the second quarter progress for 2007/08 in the priority indicators of service delivery performance and noted comparisons with past performance.

The Council was required to ensure that all of its homes met the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. The number which did not reach the standard had reduced to 161 in 2006/07. Amongst those remaining homes that failed the standard were the units at Wapshott Road and there were 59 of those. It was noted that demolition work on the estate had started in July 2007, and phase one should be completed by next year. Residents living in phase two would then transfer to the newly built homes, leaving no non-decent homes occupied on the estate by the end of 2008.

It was agreed that if it was still possible, detail about facilities for tetrapak cartons should be included in material being distributed to residents about Christmas refuse collections.

**RESOLVED that -**

**it be recorded that the Committee is content with progress and where appropriate, the proposed corrective action.**

RUNNYMEDE TOWN TWINNING ASSOCIATION - CORE REVENUE FUNDING

(Ref: Minutes of Housing & Community Services Committee – January 2003, page 934, para. 543)

The Committee considered an application from the Runnymede Town Twinning Association for the renewal of on-going core revenue funding.

The Council made annual core revenue funding available to a number of local voluntary organisations because they were considered worthy of support as a matter of policy in view of their community or public service role. The Runnymede Town Twinning Association sought to foster cultural, social, educational, community, commercial and official links with the Borough's twin towns in France, Germany and the United States. The Association promoted understanding between the respective communities through initiatives such as visits, exchanges and jointly sponsored events.

The Association currently had 43 members, 35 of which were residents of the Borough. The Association presently received £1,400 from the Council in the form of core revenue funding. The present level of grant aid had been fixed for a 5-year period, with the benefit of inflationary increases, by the Housing and Community Services Committee in 2003. This arrangement expired at the end of the current financial year and the Association had now requested that its grant support be renewed for a further 5-year period in the sum of £1,400, with the benefit of inflationary increases each year in accordance with the Retail Price Index. While Officers had delegated authority to determine grant applications of up to £10,000, the matter was being reported to the Committee in view of the long-term nature of the commitment sought by the Association. Applicants for annual core revenue funding were currently expected to be able to demonstrate that they fulfilled a community or public service role sufficient to justify on-going revenue support. Any funding award would therefore be contingent upon the Association submitting a clear set of objectives and priorities for the 5-year period, with a particular emphasis on the way in which it intended to promote exchanges between young people.

The Committee agreed that a grant was merited subject to the Council's policy of cash limiting the grant, i.e. making no increase for inflation year on year.

**RESOLVED that -**

**subject to submission of a statement of its objectives and priorities over the next five years to the satisfaction of the Director of Administration and Leisure, the Runnymede Town Twinning Association be awarded a grant of £1,400 in 2008/09 and further grants for the same amount annually, for the period up to and including 2012/13.**

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2008/2009

The Committee considered the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year May 2008 – May 2009. For ease of reference, a diary schedule of the Committee dates was also submitted. A

training day for Councillors elected in May 2008 would be arranged after the Elections taking place that month. The Committee agreed the Calendar, subject to the meeting of the Englefield Green Committee scheduled for 5 November 2008 being rescheduled to take place on 4 November 2008.

**RECOMMEND that -**

**the Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2008/2009 be approved, as attached at Appendix 'A' and as set out in diary form at Appendix 'B', subject to the meeting of the Englefield Green Committee scheduled for 5 November 2008, being rescheduled to take place on 4 November 2008.**

FINANCIAL MONITORING STATEMENT

The Committee noted the latest financial projections for the 2007/08 financial year for corporate and business services.

COMMUNICATIONS MEMBER WORKING GROUP - MINUTES

The Minutes of the Communications Member Working Group Meeting held on 14 November 2007 were noted. The Committee considered a series of possible designs for a new Council logo which had been produced by various companies. The design brief had been specified narrowly by the Working Group, as Members felt a radical departure from the main constituents of the existing logo was neither desirable or justifiable from the point of view of cost.

This matter had been raised because of the need to revisit the current style of lettering and corporate stationery alongside the Council's move to the new offices early in the New Year. The logo would also need to be appropriate for transfer to buildings and vehicles, as well as use in paper form. It was confirmed that introducing the new logo would not entail significant expenditure. The Working Group contained Members who had experience of commissioning logos, and it had been agreed by that Group that the Council's full name and crest were essential elements of the logo. The Committee also noted that different typefaces conveyed different messages to the reader.

As there was no consensus amongst Members of the Committee as to which logo to adopt, the Committee agreed to delegate the decision to the Communications Officer, in accordance with resolution ii) below, with a view to a final decision being taken early in the New Year.

The Chairman thanked the Chairman and Members of the Working Group and the Communications Officer for the work which they had done on the logo.

**RESOLVED that -**

**i) the Minutes of the Communications Member Working Group held on 14 November 2007 be noted; and**

**ii) a decision on which new Council logo to adopt be delegated to the Communications Officer in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Management Committee, Councillor Mrs E. Gill, and the Chairman of the Communications Working Group, following consultation with Members of the Council via the political groups.**

REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

(a) HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE - 14 NOVEMBER 2007

(i) Comprehensive Housing Market Assessment

The Committee considered a reference from the Housing and Community Services Committee, seeking approval to adjust the timing of provisions in the Revenue Forecast, to allow housing surveys to be commissioned together.

At its meeting on 14 November 2007, the Housing and Community Services Committee noted the Government's requirements for the assessment by local authorities of housing conditions in their areas and a proposal for research to establish the information needed to develop the Local Development Framework and other strategic documents.

Since 2003 the Council had been required to compile a Housing Strategy for the Borough. This Strategy was based on an assessment of the current housing conditions in the area, together with the level of need for affordable housing. In the past this assessment had entailed commissioning a Housing Needs Survey and a Stock Condition Survey. These surveys were still required but, additionally, the Council now had to undertake an assessment of wider housing supply issues and to publish a Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy supported by information on local stock condition.

Runnymede had last commissioned a Private Sector Stock Condition Survey in 2003. Changes had taken place to the stock over the last four years and the Committee agreed that consideration should now be given to undertaking a further study as well as reviewing the Strategy. The last survey had taken place prior to the introduction of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System and an assessment of the stock against this standard was now prudent, in order to respond to Government returns and to plan future strategies and funding for the private stock.

The last Housing Needs Survey had been undertaken in June 2005 and was not due for review until 2010. However, it needed to be brought up to date for the new version of the Local Development Framework which was being developed.

Rather than producing separate Housing Needs and Stock Condition Surveys, there were clear economies of scale as well as several other advantages in undertaking a comprehensive joint assessment to include all three aspects of the research i.e. the new Housing Market Assessment, the Housing Needs Survey and a Stock Condition Survey.

However, in order to satisfy Government guidance, the Housing Market Assessment would have to be undertaken across a larger area than Runnymede. Several other Boroughs in Surrey had commissioned consultants to undertake this work and were already at an advanced stage of their assessments. However, if Runnymede were to use one of the consultants used by these other authorities then, subject to agreement of the other authorities, it should be possible to use the research obtained from these other assessments in order to consider the broader market assessment within this Borough. The Housing and Community Services Committee had therefore agreed that one comprehensive assessment should be undertaken, and that the consultants who had tendered for this work in the other Surrey Boroughs should be asked to submit proposals for the work within Runnymede. The final appointment of consultants would depend on the robustness of the proposed approach and the cost of the work.

A provision had been made within the Revenue Forecast for a Stock Condition Survey 2008/09 and for a Housing Needs Survey in 2009/10. No provision had been made for a Housing Market Assessment. The Committee noted the estimated total cost of undertaking each of these surveys individually. It was certainly possible that one comprehensive assessment to include all three aspects of the research could be undertaken within the current overall financial forecast provision. The work would take place in 2008 and it would therefore be necessary to reprofile the provisions made in the Revenue Forecast accordingly. These research documents would play an important part in the formulation of future Council policy.

**RESOLVED that -**

**the benefits of commissioning housing surveys together be noted, and the timing of provisions in the Revenue Forecast be adjusted accordingly.**

(b) LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - 15 NOVEMBER 2007i) Chertsey Museum – Store Refurbishment

At its meeting on 15 November 2007, the Leisure and Environment Committee resolved that approval be sought for a capital estimate of up to a maximum amount as reported, for a scheme to upgrade the storage facilities at Chertsey Museum. The estimated costs of the scheme were noted by the Corporate Management Committee. This refurbishment included redecoration of the room and the installation of new racking to be provided by a company identified in the report. This would enable objects held by the Museum to be stored more effectively and securely. The only unknown cost would be any works required to be carried out resulting from the weight of the new storage racking. A structural engineer would be consulted to provide advice and guidance on any impact this may have on the overall cost of the scheme. This cost would be taken from within the contingency budget.

**RESOLVED that -**

**a capital estimate for a sum no greater than the maximum figure as reported, be approved.**

ii) Chertsey and Thorpe Village Halls – Purchase of Chairs

At its meeting on 15 November 2007, the Leisure and Environment Committee had resolved that approval be sought from the Corporate Management Committee for a capital estimate to purchase new chairs for Chertsey and Thorpe Village Halls. A suitable company to undertake the work had been identified by the Leisure and Environment Committee. There was provision in the Capital Programme for this scheme, approved as part of the Financial Forecast by the Corporate Management Committee on 1 November. The new chairs would enable the halls to provide better facilities for events.

The Leisure and Environment Committee had asked Officers to give consideration to making a bid for external funding for the project. If such a bid were to be successful, it might mean that some or all of the capital resources set aside within the Capital Programme might not be required.

In approving the capital estimate, the Corporate Management Committee agreed that Officers should look at the possibility of offering the old chairs to RAVS or other community groups and should also examine whether it was possible to improve the awareness and ease of setting up racked seating in Chertsey Hall.

**RESOLVED that -**

**a capital estimate, in the sum reported, be approved for the purchase of the chairs from the company identified in the report.**

RELOCATION OF THE CITIZEN'S ADVICE BUREAU OFFICES

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee considered arrangements for the relocation of the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to the existing library premises in Church Road, Addlestone.

The CAB currently occupied circa 600 sq ft of offices in the front portion of the existing Council Offices. A number of attempts had been made over the years to relocate the CAB who had always preferred a location away from the Civic Offices, as many of their clients had referrals which related to the activities of the Council and physical separation was therefore desirable. In view of this, with the reprovision of the existing Civic Offices on the adjacent former Addlestone Community Association site, moving the existing library premises in Church Road, Addlestone to the new offices and the CAB to the Church Road location had been identified as a desirable outcome. Dialogue had continued with the CAB, who had been kept apprised of the negotiations with Surrey County Council with regard to their relocation to the new Civic Offices from the existing Library premises, which was the subject of a separate report on the Agenda.

The Committee noted the area of the current library building which it was proposed to offer the CAB. This would leave space at the existing library site either for the Council's own needs (e.g. for off site storage for the new offices), or for another voluntary organisation or organisations. Negotiations were taking place with compatible voluntary or charitable organisations that might be able to occupy the remaining clearly defined space.

The Committee agreed that it would be appropriate to offer the CAB a lease for the Church Road location for the period reported, at a peppercorn rental, with the CAB assuming full repairing and insuring liability for the premises. Dependent upon the usage/occupancy of the remaining space, the Council would either offer a lease to the CAB for the whole premises, (subject to an obligation to sub-let the balance of the space) or prepare separate lease agreements to each of the occupiers. The CAB had sufficient resources to assist in the various adaptations which might be required. The Council was not proposing to meet any costs associated with those adaptations, but would be able to make available screens and furniture from the existing offices at nil cost.

There were no additional financial implications for the Council in concluding the lease terms. This course of action also avoided the potential additional costs which could have arisen in securing new premises, should the Library not have become available. Providing a long term and cost effective solution to the needs of the CAB, whilst also enhancing the space available to them, had been a long term aim of the Council. The peppercorn rent was consistent with the Council's policy of assisting voluntary and charitable organisations.

It was noted that the CAB was able to provide a service to all borough residents, including those in the north of the borough, because most of its advice was given on the telephone and, in exceptional circumstances, visits to homes could be arranged.

**RESOLVED that -**

- i) the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised to conclude lease terms for the period reported at a peppercorn rent, including such other terms as considered reasonable, to the Citizens Advice Bureau for their occupancy of that area of the existing library premises in Church Road, Addlestone, as reported, and conclude terms accordingly; and**
- ii) Officers report back further on the utilisation of the remaining space at the library premises.**

RELOCATION OF ADDLESTONE LIBRARY, CHURCH ROAD, ADDLESTONE

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee considered the terms provisionally negotiated with Surrey County Council (SCC) for the relocation of library provision to the new Civic Offices, which were currently under construction.

In order to further improve the services offered to the public by providing a wider range of services under one roof in the new Civic Offices, terms for co-location by Surrey Police had previously been agreed, and there was also a wish to relocate the present Library premises in Church Road, (which Surrey County Council had occupied following the Local Government reorganisation in 1974), to the new Civic Offices. Negotiations had proved to be protracted and uncertain, and had required extensive dialogue at senior political and managerial level within both organisations. The Committee commended the work of the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive Officer in achieving the desired outcome. The provisional terms had been recommended in principle by Surrey County Council's Executive on 17 July 2007 and had been approved by Surrey County Council on 16 October 2007.

The Committee noted the area of the new Civic Offices which it was proposed would be occupied by SCC's Library Service. The Committee agreed that the terms as set out in the report were appropriate. The Committee was pleased to note that amongst the terms was the upgrading of the Library Service to a "Category B" facility, with enhanced book stock and additional opening hours.

The Committee noted the approximate total of the annual rental from 2011/12 and the capitalised value of the rental. A fair and reasonable proportion of the various building running costs would be levied by way of a service charge. Whilst no provision had been made for the contribution to the County Council's fit out costs at this stage in the Civic Offices project, it was hoped to contain this expenditure within the overall scheme costs. Should this not be possible, then additional capital estimate provision would be required.

The initial terms offered to SCC were less than for comparable office space in the town centre location. However, there were considered to be social and service related benefits from co-location. In addition, securing vacant possession of the existing Church Road Library premises enabled the Borough Council to relocate the Citizens' Advice Bureau facility from the existing Civic Offices and to offer them long term occupancy of part of the present Library.

Now that the arrangements for including the Library in the new Civic Offices had been agreed, the Committee asked that the issue of security in the new offices be considered at the Civic Offices Reprovision Sub-Committee meeting on 4 December 2007.

**RESOLVED that -**

- i) the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised to conclude a lease with Surrey County Council for their Library Service for the space in the new Civic Offices as reported and on the terms outlined in the report; and**
- ii) the provisional method of financing be noted.**

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PROVISION

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee considered arrangements for Occupational Health provision from April 2008.

The Council had utilised the services of an external medical advisor for a considerable period of time, and, for the past 12 years, the Occupational Health Unit at St. Peter's Hospital.

The service provided included pre-employment health screening of all new staff, specialist checks for drivers and food handlers, ad hoc referrals for repeated short term or extended long term sickness absences including advice on reducing future absences or phased rehabilitation, assessments for ill health retirements, vaccination programmes and confidential staff counselling.

From 2000, the Local Government Pension Regulations had required that Local Authority Occupational Health Advisors held a formal approved qualification in Occupational Health (Diploma

in Occupational Health or equivalent). This requirement further reduced an already limited supply of suitable medical practitioners who were willing and available to undertake this type of work.

The current contract with St. Peter's Hospital expired on 31 March 2008. The three year contract for the provision of all Occupational Health services represented good value for money for a high quality service when compared with costs being charged elsewhere. St. Peter's Hospital had indicated that the current level of charges to Runnymede could not be sustained and had quoted a substantial increase for the period from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2011. Alternative suitable providers of Occupational Health services in the local area were few in number. However, interest had been expressed by two other potential providers. Quotes had been obtained from them and the sums involved and the service which they would be able to provide were noted by the Committee. Both of these quotes were for amounts in excess of that advised by St. Peter's Hospital. The Committee therefore agreed that the contract for Occupational Health services for the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2011 be awarded to the Occupational Health Unit at Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Trust.

Occupational Health had become an increasingly important service in recent years in supporting absence management procedures and providing the necessary level of expertise in dealing with health and safety issues and matters concerning the Pension Scheme. Unfortunately, none of the quotations fell within anticipated budgetary provision for 2008/09.

**RESOLVED that -**

**the contract for Occupational Health services for the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2011 be awarded to the Occupational Health Unit at Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Trust, at the cost reported, and that appropriate budgetary provision be made.**

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 9.50 p.m.)

**Formula Grant Distribution 2008-09 to 2010-11  
Statement by the Minister for Local Government, John Healey MP,  
6 December 2007.**

1. With permission, Mr Speaker, I wish to make a statement about local government finance in England. For the first time ever, this is a three year settlement.
2. I am today able to confirm for each authority for each of the next 3 years, not just allocations of formula grant, but also allocations of the new Working Neighbourhoods Fund and 60 other specific grants, from 8 Government Departments.
3. In total, Government revenue funding for local authority services will be in the years 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11: £70.4 billion; £73.5 billion; and £76.7 billion. These are increases of 4.0%, 4.4% and 4.3%, respectively.
4. This continues the sustained real terms increases for local government under this Government. By the end of the CSR period, local government will have received a real terms grant increase of 45% since 1997-98.
5. Formula grant - which includes Revenue Support Grant, redistributed business rates and Police grant - will total in each year: £27.5 billion, £28.2 billion, and £29 billion; increases of 3.6%, 2.8% and 2.6% respectively.
6. Every authority will receive a formula grant increase in every year. 7. In addition, we expect of local government the same 3% annual efficiency improvements as the rest of the public sector. Delivering this would mean councils have an extra £4.9 billion to spend over three years on improving services or cutting council tax pressures.

**Certainty, Flexibility, Equity and Stability**

8. We have worked closely with local government over the past two years, in assessing cost pressures and the scope for efficiencies. This settlement takes account in particular of the pressures on adult social care budgets, and on waste.
9. Local government wanted certainty, flexibility, equity and stability in funding. All of which this settlement delivers. 10. On **certainty**, we are providing a three year settlement, not just for the core grant but for 60 other central government grants and for regeneration funds.
11. On **flexibility**, we have pooled 37 of the 60 specific grants – and the new regeneration fund – into the new area based grant, worth £4.7 billion by

2010-11, three quarters of which was previously ring-fenced. We are also transferring £900 million a year from other specific grants into formula grant.

12. Local government also wanted less bureaucracy from central government. So we have radically streamlined the new performance framework, with a single set of 198 national indicators, down from around 1,200.

### Equity

13. On **equity**, we consulted local government over the summer on making the method of grant distribution fairer. My conclusions are set out in the further consultation paper we are publishing today. But let me highlight these points.
14. Following a major review, we were able to introduce a new and improved formula in each of the three areas of social care in 2006.
15. For the last two years, we have been damping two of these formulae. I now propose to end the additional damping and fully implement the social services formulae.
16. The overall system of grant floors will ensure that this unwinds quite gradually, over this and the next spending review periods.
17. I also propose to make the system fairer to authorities with a relatively low council tax base. These authorities will have much more difficulty than others in coping with spending pressures. I therefore propose to increase by 2% the proportion of the blocks for relative needs and relative resource within the available total.
18. Having made significant progress with regeneration in many of the most disadvantaged areas of the country, the new £1.5 billion Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) replaces NRF and builds in the DWP's Deprived Areas fund to create a single fund at the local level.
19. As we set out in the Sub National Review, we are concentrating this funding on tackling worklessness in the most deprived areas. 66 Local Authorities will receive WNF funding for 3 years, and the 21 authorities that currently receive NRF but do not qualify for the new fund will get two years of transitional funding.

### Stability

20. On stability we consulted on aspects of the Area Cost Adjustment. I propose some changes to reflect more recent evidence in the weights given to labour and business rates costs.

21. However I have decided not to implement any changes in the geography of the ACA. The consultation proposals only covered a very few areas, and the financial turbulence involved did not seem justified by the relatively minor refinements that would result.
22. I therefore intend to take advantage of the next three years to conduct a full review of the ACA, which will begin after the House has debated and approved this settlement.
23. I also propose no change to the expenditure base of the formula for Fire and Rescue. I have concluded that the last few years have been an untypical period for the service, making spending patterns an uncertain base for a formula. Again, I propose to conduct a thorough review of the formula. This will also begin in the New Year.
24. Grant floors damping is the main way in which we ensure stability of funding for councils over time. We will continue the system of floors, which ensure that every authority receives a formula grant increase in every year of the CSR period.
25. In setting floor levels, I have struck a balance between providing an increase for all authorities and allowing formula changes to come through.
26. In each of the three years, the floors will be:
  - For fire and rescue authorities, and for shire district councils, 1.0%, 0.5% and 0.5%;
  - for authorities with responsibilities for education and social services, 2.0%, 1.75% and 1.5%; and
  - for police authorities, the floors will be 2.5% in each year.

#### Population

27. To deliver this three year settlement, we need to use the best and latest data available on a consistent basis across all authorities, at the time we calculate the three years' figures. For population, these are the population projections produced by ONS in September which take advantage of improvements in the way migrants are counted. The majority of councils in our consultation wanted us to use these figures.
28. In recent years the UK has seen significant demographic changes, not least in the patterns of people's mobility. These changes create new measurement challenges.
29. We are determined to build on recent improvements, whilst recognising that there is no single, simple or swift solution to the challenges. I can

announce today that the National Statistician will now bring together central and local government to work on ways to improve population survey data and make greater use of administrative data.

### Council tax

30. 10 successive years of above-inflation grant increases from this Government – confirmed through the new spending period - and tough capping action, have helped bring down council tax increases. Keeping council tax under control remains a priority for the Government. We expect the average council tax increase in England to be substantially below 5%. We will not hesitate to use our capping powers as necessary to protect council tax payers from excessive increases.
31. So this is a tight settlement but it is fair and it is affordable. It delivers the certainty, flexibility, equity and stability that local government wanted. We know councils are capable of innovating, managing change and improving efficiency without a disproportionate impact on council tax payers. The challenge and onus is now on councils to demonstrate the leadership to do just this.
32. I commend this statement to the House.

## PERSONNEL SERVICES MEMBER WORKING GROUP

8.30 a.m. Monday 5th November 2007, Members Room, Civic Offices

In attendance: Councillors Cherith Simmons, Peter Waddell, Judith Norman and Linda Gillham  
Chief Executive Officer, Tim Williams, Personnel Manager, David Thomas

1. Apologies for Absence

None

2. Notes from Meeting 21 August

These were agreed as correct.

3. Competencies and Performance Pay

Members noted that refresher training on target setting for all managers had been held in September and October in preparation for the 2007 appraisal programme.

Identification and recruitment of 50 representative managers and their staff was currently taking place in readiness for training of pilot staff and managers in order that the pilot could commence in March 2008. Recruitment of sufficient volunteers was slow at present and Members suggested a number of ideas for increasing staff awareness and involvement. These included a fuller explanation of the nature of the revised scheme including a Powerpoint presentation on the intranet. A frequently asked questions section could also be helpful.

4. Sickness Absence

Members noted the approval of the Corporate Management Committee to the following recommendations of the previous meeting of the Working Group:

- a) staff with family commitments to be fully supported and to be allowed to take additional flexileave or be granted annual leave at short notice in order to deal with issues such as the illness of a family member; and
- b) in order to identify trends or underlying themes, the reasons for sickness absence be recorded; and
- c) unless inappropriate, staff incurring three or more instances of sickness absence in a six month period be routinely referred to the Occupational Health Advisor; and
- d) return to work discussions for periods of absence exceeding five days be undertaken by Divisional Heads of Department; and
- e) staff be advised of the above and reminded of the confidential counselling service.

Members were advised that Staff would be advised of these arrangements in the November Personnel Bulletin.

The Personnel Manager informed Members that ongoing useful discussions on further developments based on best practice were taking place with Unison and the Safety Advisor and recommendations would be brought forward for Members consideration in due course

Members asked that they be kept informed of developments and, in particular, would like to be receive information on future long and short term sickness patterns analysed by Department, grade, age, gender and working hours.

## 5. Succession Planning

Members continued discussion on this matter and considered further data and organisation charts.

Members identified that a number of senior key posts could fall vacant within the next three year period and expressed concern that this loss of such knowledge and skill together with potential recruitment difficulties in some areas could present problems for the Authority.

Members recognised the limitations of medium to long term succession planning but nevertheless felt that the Authority's past successes needed to be safeguarded and that proper and timely consideration should be given to identify suitable options for senior key posts before they became vacant. This would require a longer period of notice of retirements than existed currently and Members wished to see the conditions for the award of the final year salary enhancement for long serving staff being subject to the member of staff giving 12 months notice of their intention to retire. Such a requirement would not only result in a tangible benefit to the authority in succession planning but would also provide additional safeguarding of this benefit by further justifying the payment of the award.

Posts at CEO and Director level in the public sector were becoming increasingly difficult to fill due to the shortage of suitable candidates who were prepared to undertake the demands of these posts.

Members felt that the recent introduction of the flexible retirement policy could assist in facilitating a smooth transition into retirement and also provide the opportunity for a planned handover of responsibilities to the successor.

Undoubtedly, should a new CEO be appointed in due course, fresh views on future staffing structures would emerge. In the meantime, it was important that there was a political will to ensure that the authority recruited the best and that terms and conditions were appropriate in order to achieve that aim. Staffing structures would be revisited following publication of legislation and the new Local Area Agreement.

It was also important that management training in the authority be further promoted in order that current staff were given every opportunity to grow into management posts.

Members wished that the following specific recommendations be made to the Corporate Management Committee, that:

- i) management training be further promoted in the authority; and
- ii) the conditions for the award of the final year salary enhancement for long serving staff be subject to the member of staff giving 12 months notice of their intention to retire; and
- iii) staffing structures be revisited following publication of legislation and the new Local Area Agreement.

## 6. New Civic Offices

The CEO advised Members of the various initiatives that had been introduced in order to inform and engage staff concerning arrangements for the new offices. These included staff presentations and newsletters as well as a comprehensive section on the intranet with FAQs. Inevitably, staff attitudes ranged between anxiety and eager anticipation.

It was agreed that the Chief Executive Officer would prepare a paper for the next meeting identifying any ongoing staff concerns.

7. Terms of Reference of the Working Group

Members noted that at the meeting of the Corporate Management Committee in May 2007, the following terms of reference for this Member Working Group had been agreed as: 'To oversee the development and implementation of a simple and transparent pay and grading structure'. The composition of the Working Group would be four Members, comprising three Conservatives and one Runnymede Independent and the programme of meetings would be ad hoc. The Chairmen of the Working Group would be appointed at their first meetings in the Municipal Year.'

In view of the current work programme of this Working Group, Members wished to take the opportunity of reviewing the terms of reference for the Group.

Members wished to recommend to the Corporate Management Committee that

The terms of reference for the Personnel Services Member Working Group be 'To oversee the development of such Personnel policies that meet the needs of the authority'

8. Maternity Leave

Members expressed concern that comments had been received from members of the public that they were frustrated by the limited availability of some case officers who worked on a part time basis and that queries were having to await their next return to the office.

Members were advised that this situation was predominantly due to staff returning from maternity leave on a part time basis. Clearly, this situation was not peculiar to Runnymede and, whilst recognising the frustrations sometimes caused, this practice enabled experienced, qualified and able staff to be retained. However, Directors would be asked to look into opportunities to provide better cover when part time case officers are not working.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The Personnel Manager was asked to seek availability of Members for the second week in January.

Runnymede Borough CouncilCIVIC OFFICES REPROVISION SUB-COMMITTEE4 December 2007 at 7.30 p.m.

Members of the Sub-Committee present: Councillors J.R. Furey (Chairman), P.J. Waddell (Vice-Chairman), Mrs R.M. Denby, J.M. Edwards, C.J. Norman and B.J. Relph.

Members of the Sub-Committee absent: None

Councillors Mrs P.I. Broadhead, D.W. Parr and Ms C.M. Simmons also attended.

NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Group mentioned below had notified the Chief Executive Officer of their wish that the change listed be made to the membership of the Corporate Management Committee and this Sub-Committee. The change was for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting and thereafter the Councillor removed would be re-appointed both to the Corporate Management Committee and to the Sub-Committee.

Group Requesting Change	Remove from Membership	Appoint Instead
Runnymede Independents	Councillor A. Alderson	Councillor B.J. Relph

The Chief Executive Officer had given effect to these wishes in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 21 August 2007 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

PROJECT CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS REPORT

The Sub-Committee was informed of progress on the construction of the new Civic Offices.

The works would hopefully be complete w/c 17 December 2007, slightly later than originally envisaged, with a minimal list of outstanding works. The key elements of delay had been the cladding installation, delivery of glass and paving, and the installation of the plaster boarding. This had hindered the progress of following trades. However the overall quality of works on site was high.

With regard to design of the Offices, BREEAM – the external assessor had identified that "excellent" was possible. The Architects were pulling together the requisite information for final review. A number of queries were with the BRE for clarification, and Officers would report further once a response had been received.

The building contract and bond were in place with Willmott Dixon and Sub-Contractor warranties had been received and were being checked by the Solicitors. Warranties in favour of the Police would be prepared upon the execution of their lease agreement.

A positive relationship had been maintained between Willmott Dixon's site team and the Design Team.

The fit out of Safer Runnymede had been awarded to Intech, and Willmott Dixon had granted Intech early access to commence their works on site.

The second phase works, the construction of 'The Avenue', had been omitted from Willmott Dixon's contract and would be completed via a separately internally let contract.

PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMISSIONING NEW BUILDING

The Committee considered the commissioning arrangements for the new building.

The physical move of individual employees' material, work files, etc., was provisionally planned to take place from 1 February to 4 February and would include commercial removal contractors. A limited service would be maintained on Friday (1 February) and Monday (4 February) from the existing Civic Offices. The new building was planned for opening to the public on Tuesday, 5 February.

The typical risks in successfully achieving the commissioning of the new building were outlined and noted. The contractual terms (including liquidated and ascertained damages), supervisory arrangements, proposed programme of testing and re-testing and overall timetable were designed to minimise the risk of failing to successfully occupy the building and opening it to the public on time.

Surrey Police and Surrey Library Service would, subject to completing their respective leases, occupy their parts of the building over a similar period. Safer Runnymede would be substantially complete, save for some external camera linkages.

An occupancy manual was being drafted for circulation to all staff and Members, and appropriate training would be given. Information would also be given to visitors and users of the civic rooms. Full levels of service would be achieved after an appropriate assimilation period.

All the financial requirements for the commissioning would be met from elements of the approved Capital Project and staffing costs associated with the weekend working (2 February and 3 February) would be met from within existing revenue provisions.

**RESOLVED that -**

- i) the provisional commissioning proposals for the new building be endorsed; and**
- ii) the commissioning date of 5 February 2008 be approved.**

RESULTS OF FRONT OF HOUSE PILOT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE

The Sub-Committee received a detailed Evaluation Report from the five month Front of House (FoH) Pilot, an executive summary of which is attached at Appendix 'A', and considered the permanent FOH arrangements in the new offices.

The pilot had provided a valuable opportunity to test the new customer services concept prior to the office relocation. The front desk visitor handling services were operating satisfactorily and staff had demonstrated high levels of enthusiasm, adaptability and commitment in sometimes difficult circumstances. Performance was inevitably occasionally uneven and there were challenges still to be overcome, but over a period of less than 5 months the service had provided a viable front counter solution to the challenges of the new offices and Member aspirations. Standards of service to the public and client departments had been maintained and some, albeit largely unquantifiable, back office efficiencies had been achieved. Further investment in staffing resources and, ultimately, IT infrastructure would be required over the next two years in order to build further on this platform and develop the call handling role if the full benefits of the project were to be realised.

The Sub-Committee considered that the pilot had been a valuable exercise with some positive results. Various detailed points were raised by Members on the Report and these were addressed by Officers. Members endorsed many of the recommendations in the Report and these are set out in the resolution below. Members wished to be involved in the review of the scope of the service referred to in 1-11 of the Executive Summary.

The Sub-Committee considered two principal policy options for the future structure and staffing of the front of house facility. In considering the future arrangements, the Sub-Committee had regard to the financial constraints under which the Council was forced to operate at the current time. The two options were:-

- (i) Limit the service to something similar to the existing "Pilot" arrangements, providing some modest, incremental improvement in the range and depth of enquiries handled and tasks performed (primarily as a result of a growth in experience of the staff concerned, structured training and potential for staff stability).

This option included a Manager post restricted to Scale 10 (salary plus employer costs totalling £37,000 p.a. at scale maximum). This post would be for an initial period of 12 months and be subject to review to determine future provision.

The provision for "back filling" of staff assisting with the front of house services (principally via the "virtual switchboard" arrangements) would be capped to £19,300 p.a., and a £12,000 contribution to the manager post would be taken from the flexibility provision managed by the Chief Executive Officer. The overall increase in annual cost above the pre-pilot provision would therefore be contained at circa £60,000 for the first year and the implications for future years would be assessed during this period.

- (ii) The permanent enhancement of the main team to 9 FTE and no "virtual operator" resource (option 4). This option would involve substantial additional investment over the pre-pilot provision of £155,000 annually, plus a one-off consultancy resource of £25,000.

The Sub-Committee considered that the current financial situation did not lend itself to the optimum solution proposed in (ii) above and for the time being, option (i) represented the most credible way forward, whilst providing enhancement to the public. Members recognised that the service would fall short of their aspirations for a general resource handling a wide range of enquiries at first point of contact that they had consistently articulated for this area of service and which could be provided by option (ii).

The Sub-Committee also supported extended opening hours on a Tuesday evening and Saturday for a trial nine month period at a cost of £9,000, which would be consistent with the proposed extended opening hours being planned for the library. Members required periodic reports on the operation of this trial. A report would come to a future meeting regarding the resourcing of a Janitorial/Security post to cover the enhanced opening hours and early evening period following discussions with the Police.

The total additional resourcing requirement for the chosen option including the extended opening hours would be £69,000 and would be addressed as part of the Budget in February.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the function be located within the Department of Administration and Leisure in view of its corporate brief for many services.

In noting the views of UNISON on the proposals Members were satisfied that demand for extension of hours could only be assessed by the proposed nine month pilot.

In view of the need to firm up arrangements for the new building and to advise staff involved of their position, the Officers proposed to implement the recommendations of the Sub-Committee, subject to agreement by the Chairman of Corporate Management Committee, under Standing Order 42.

Finally, the Sub-Committee congratulated Mr Gary Marson, the pilot Front of House Manager, on the successful operation of the pilot and the comprehensiveness of the Evaluation Report.

**RECOMMEND that -**

- (i) **the principle of a co-located cross-departmental front desk service on the current pilot model, be carried forward into the new offices;**
- (ii) **the spare front desk in the new Front of House configuration be utilised as a general resource available for ad hoc use by all staff meeting visitors in the Front of House;**

- (iii) **subject to available managerial resource, all existing Front of House functions and processes be reviewed to ensure that they best fit the new arrangements, and the criteria for front desk services set out in the Evaluation Report be applied;**
- (iv) **front desk service arrangements be formalised over time through the establishment of SLAs with client departments;**
- (v) **the revised main team staffing structure described above (the modification of the lower cost option, no.1) be approved;**
- (vi) **the Front of House function be managed within the Department of Administration & Leisure;**
- (vii) **the temporary appointments of current front desk staff be confirmed on a permanent basis;**
- (viii) **the extended front desk opening hours be introduced for a nine month trial period following occupation of the new offices;**
- (ix) **the Front of House team be rebranded as 'Customer Services'; and**
- (x) **further evaluation as to the effectiveness of these proposals be undertaken, opportunities continue to be taken to broaden and deepen the Front of House service where a business case and potential efficiencies can be identified and a report on progress, including resource implications, be made to Committee not later than September 2008.**

#### STONE KNIGHTS, FURNITURE, FITTINGS AND EQUIPMENT

The Sub-Committee gave consideration to i) the relocation position for the Stone Knights currently located at the entrance of the Civic Suite; ii) the type and style of lettering to be used on the new sustainable European Ash Mayoral history board; and iii) the remaining furniture, equipment and services required for the move to the new offices.

Two options for relocation of the knights were considered, namely a location within the new Civic Offices, or at 'The Avenue'.

Location within the offices was not suitable because of the potential for damage to various services located below finished floor level within the front of house space as well as damage to the finishes to the new building.

The optimum position was a location on 'The Avenue'. This would have the most pleasing impact and safest location. The knights would be located on high plinths within the landscaped areas and would also separate the staff parking from visitor parking. No parking spaces would be lost. The relocation of the statues was potentially complex and might cost approximately £900.

The Sub-Committee supported the proposal for the Runnymede board of Mayors to be adapted to match the ash finish being supplied by Benchmark. Members preferred the 'Plotter Cut, matt and vinyl in black' lettering. Because of lack of suitable space, the old Chertsey & Egham Mayoral boards would be placed in safe storage at Chertsey Museum.

With regard to the seating to be procured for the Council Chamber, Committee Room and Members' Room, Members had previously chosen the cantilevered leather finished chair. However, the Sub-Committee was informed that the company who manufactured that particular chair had recently gone into liquidation and Members were asked to make a new choice from a range of chairs displayed at the meeting. The Sub-Committee authorised the procurement of the Fray Design Cantilevered metal frame chair (Model IP201WP) in the sum of £48,348.

The procurement and installation of the Servery area was estimated to cost in the region of £32,000, which it was hoped to reduce as part of the tender process. Dialogue continued with the existing caterer to settle their occupancy.

The cost of the office move was estimated to be in the region of £30,000.

Members had previously approved a budget of £514,358 for fixtures, fittings and equipment plus £50,000 for an audio visual system from which £426,290 had already been committed. The following outstanding items still had to be procured:

	£
Shredders	3,250
Business Centre Fit Out	20,000
Coat Stands, Whiteboards, White Goods, etc.	9,108
Move Stone Knights	900
Servery	32,000
Office move	<u>30,000</u>
	<u>£95,258</u>

The funding of these items of furniture, equipment and services could be contained within existing civic offices budgets.

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) the knights be relocated on 'The Avenue';**
- ii) the type and style of lettering to be used on the new Mayoral board be 'Plotter Cut, matt and vinyl in black';**
- iii) the Fray Design (Model IP201WP) chair be procured for use in the Council Chamber, Committee Room and Members' Room; and**
- iv) the expenditure of up to £95,258 for the relocation of the Knights, installation of servery, office move and miscellaneous items be approved.**

**NAMING OF NEW BUILDING AND SERVICE ROAD**

The Sub-Committee considered the naming of the new building and service road.

The Sub-Committee noted the variety of names applied to Council buildings throughout the country. The new building was unique in that it would include the neighbourhood and associated Policing teams that had previously occupied the former Divisional Police Headquarters in Garfield Road, and a modern library facility. It was designed to be welcoming, flexible and with civic rooms available for community use. "Runnymede" was a very strong brand, with both national and international recognition from the Runnymede Meadow and Magna Carta, and had been used in the title of a variety of local organisations. Taking this into account Members were keen that the chosen name reflected the mixed use and also the historical significance of the Borough and considered that 'Runnymede Civic Centre' was an appropriate name.

With regard to naming the proposed service road (known currently as 'The Avenue') which would be created between the new offices and the proposed residential scheme (on the existing civic Offices site), the Sub-Committee considered it sensible to defer final consideration until a developer for the residential scheme had been settled contractually and the form of the development finalised. It was therefore intended to have discussions with the residential developer in the New Year, regarding the marketing and naming of the scheme and individual apartment blocks, and a further report would be made to the Sub-Committee.

**RESOLVED that –**

- (i) the name of the new building be 'Runnymede Civic Centre'; and**

- (ii) a report on the naming of the service road be made to a future meeting following discussion with the residential developer.

#### URGENT ACTION – STANDING ORDER 42

The Committee noted that the following action had been taken after consultation with the Chairman of this Sub-Committee under Standing Order 42.

<u>Officer</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Central Index No.</u>
Director of Technical Services	Waiving of Contract Standing Orders for the commissioning of additional wooden items, without tendering, from the company carrying out the installation of wood panelling and desks in the new Chamber in order to ensure a stylistic and colour match by utilising timber from the same batch.	649

#### CIVIC OFFICES REPROVISION - FINANCIAL SUMMARY

By resolution of the Sub-Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Sub-Committee received the latest financial projections for the reprovizion of the Civic Offices.

The anticipated expenditure on the project remained within budget and had been revised downwards since the last report to take account of client variations.

Members noted that the cost of equipping the new Safer Runnymede operation had still to be finalised and would be the subject of a report to the Corporate Management Committee on 3 January 2008.

#### PROPERTY ISSUES – CIVIC OFFICES

By resolution of the Sub-Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee noted the current position on property issues related to the new Civic Offices.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 10.18pm)