

Runnymede Borough Council

COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday 17 July 2008 at 7.30pm

in the Council Chamber

at the Civic Centre, Addlestone

SUPPLEMENTARY SUMMONS

ITEM 9 (ii)

9 (ii) a) ADDLESTONE CEMETERY EXTENSION - CAPITAL ESTIMATE

At its meeting on 19 June 2008, the Leisure and Environment Committee had approved a scheme to provide an extension to Addlestone Cemetery on land at Simplemarsh Farm, subject to approval of a capital estimate in the sum of £200,000 to complete the project.

Addlestone Cemetery was nearing capacity. In 2005 the Council had acquired land at Simplemarsh Farm, pursuant to the requirements of a development related Section 106 agreement. This land was close to the existing Cemetery, albeit on the other side of Green Lane, and had been identified as suitable for an extension to Addlestone Cemetery. The Section 106 agreement required the land to be used for open recreational purposes, including use as a cemetery. The design of the extension provided 12 burial sections within the cemetery, sufficient grave spaces to satisfy demand at the current rate for approximately 100 years, a car park accommodating 14 cars including 3 disabled bays, walkways, a shelter for mourners and a turning space for hearses. The Corporate Management Committee asked about toilet facilities and it was noted that there was no provision for a toilet in the Cemetery extension design at present, as there was one nearby, and in view of the expense of maintenance of such a facility.

The General Fund Capital Programme 2007/08 to 2011/12 included provision of £200,000 for an extension to Addlestone Cemetery. Ongoing maintenance of the new cemetery was expected to cost £8,000 a year, to be funded from savings made elsewhere in the existing cemeteries revenue budget. Income from the Council's four cemeteries in the 2007/08 financial year was £167,000 and £52,000 of this was from Addlestone Cemetery. Income from the new extension was expected to be lower in the first year or so, as the public became accustomed to the use of this area as a cemetery.

The Corporate Management Committee agreed to recommend approval of the scheme and noted that the use of land at Simplemarsh Farm for cemetery purposes would require Planning Permission and that an application would be submitted, subject to the scheme's approval.

RECOMMEND that –

a capital estimate be approved for this scheme in the sum of £200,000.

b) ANNUAL MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION STATEMENT 2007/08 AND 2008/09

The Committee considered statements regarding a minimum revenue provision in 2007/08 and 2008/09.

When a Council funded capital expenditure by long-term borrowing, the costs were charged to the Council Tax payer in future years, reflecting the long-term use of the assets. There were two elements to this cost – the interest on borrowing was charged in the year in which it was payable, and the principal (or capital) element was charged as a “minimum revenue provision” (MRP). Until recently, the amount of MRP to be charged had been determined by regulation, although the Council was allowed to make an additional voluntary charge to the

revenue account. Since the Council was debt free, these arrangements had been largely of academic interest because it had not been necessary to make any charge in the revenue accounts as there was no debt to repay.

The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2008, which came into force on 31 March 2008, replaced the detailed statutory rules for calculating the MRP with a requirement for local authorities to determine for the current financial year an amount of MRP which they considered to be prudent. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had issued guidance on what constituted prudent provision and that required the Council to approve a statement on making a MRP even though it was debt free. The Committee therefore recommended the adoption of the statements set out in the Recommendation below.

The Council would be asked to approve the policy for calculating a prudent MRP for 2009/10 in February 2009 when the budget was being considered.

RECOMMEND that -

the statements below be adopted by the Council:-

2007/08 financial year

As the Council was debt-free on 31 March 2007, there was no requirement to make any MRP during the 2007/08 financial year, and none was made.

2008/09 financial year

As the Council was debt-free on 31 March 2008, there is no requirement to make any MRP during the 2008/09 financial year, and it is proposed that none shall be made.

c) ANNUAL REPORT OF REVIEW BOARD

The Board considered a draft Annual Report for the Municipal Year 2007/08 in accordance with Sub-paragraph 6.03 (d) of the Council's Constitution which stated that Overview and Scrutiny Committees must report annually to a full Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

In connection with Delays At Level Crossings, at section 4 of the draft Annual Report, it was suggested that Airtrack might be asked to undertake resource investment for improved signalling which might remove the waiting delays which were being experienced at various level crossings throughout the borough. It was noted that it might not be realistic to expect Airtrack to put right years of under investment in railways (such as provision of bridges and tunnels) and it was understood that Network Rail (NR) would be the only organisation that could undertake these improvements. However, NR did not have the resources to carry out such work. It was also possible that the Airtrack scheme might make delays worse, as although the signalling would be updated there may be more trains passing through. The Board noted that it was anticipated that there would be further consultations on the Airtrack scheme later in the year.

At the request of the Board, Runnymede Officers had asked the County Council on two separate occasions if they could introduce a radio link between signals at the Station Road/Church Road junction in Egham in order alleviate delays and relieve congestion, by effectively introducing an "intelligent" system of traffic lights. On both occasions, County Officers had advised that the scheme cost would be in the region of £15,000 and that they did not consider that it would deliver any real benefit. The Board could not accept this conclusion of County Officers, and it was suggested that if Members wished to take this further they should contact the County Officers or Members directly, or put a question to the Surrey County Council Local Committee for Runnymede.

In terms of the Board's future work programme, it was noted that if Members had items which they wished to discuss they should contact the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Officers. It was also understood that the powers of scrutiny Committees were going to be extended in the late autumn. A item which had been identified for the Board's next meeting was a review of

car parking provision at St Peter's Hospital. It was noted that St Peter's Hospital had not produced a Master Plan which was desirable for all large sites in the borough, and that they had also not provided a comprehensive plan of their proposed parking provision. The Board would review these issues at its next meeting, subject to confirmation that senior Trust staff were prepared to attend and participate in the review.

The Review Board's report for 2007/08 is attached.

RECOMMEND that –

- i) the report be received; and**
- ii) it be noted that item 6 in the Report has been satisfactorily concluded and that the other items in the Report remain ongoing.**