

Housing and Community Services Committee

Wednesday 11 June 2008 7.30pm

**Council Chamber
Runnymede Civic Centre, Addlestone**

Members of the Committee

Councillors P J Waddell (Chairman), H A Butterfield and Mrs R M Denby (Vice Chairmen)
J R Ashmore, C J Chapman, R J Edis, P A Francis, R N Jones, Mrs M Roberts and J J Wilson

AGENDA

Notes:

- i) Any report on the Agenda involving confidential information (as defined by section 100A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972) must be discussed in private. Any report involving exempt information (as defined by section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972), whether it appears in Part 1 or Part 2 below, may be discussed in private but only if the Committee so resolves.
- ii) The relevant 'background papers' are listed after each report in Part 1. Enquiries about any of the Agenda reports and background papers should be directed in the first instance to **Mr M L White, Committee Administration, Department of Administration and Leisure, Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel: Direct Line: 01932 425620). (Email: malcolm.white@runnymede.gov.uk).**
- iii) Agendas and Minutes are available on a subscription basis. For details, please ring Mr B A Fleckney on 01932 425620. Agendas and Minutes for all the Council's Committees may also be viewed on www.runnymede.gov.uk.
- 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.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

TERM	EXPLANATION
ACC	Surrey Adults and Community Care Services formerly known as Social Services.
ALMO	Arms Length Management Organisation. This is an organisation established specifically to manage Council stock. The properties remain Council owned and tenants retain their secure tenancies. This can provide opportunities for extra funds to meet the Decent Homes Standard if all Government requirements are satisfied.
BFI	Benefit Fraud Inspectorate. The BFI is part of the DWP. Its duty is to inspect local authorities responsible for administering Housing and Council Tax benefit. The responsibility for this function will pass to the Audit Commission from April 2008.
BHM	'Balancing Housing Markets'. This assessment looks at the whole housing market, considering the extent to which supply and demand are "balanced" across tenure and property size.
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic Groups. This is a collective name used by various bodies.
BNAM	'Basic Needs Assessment Model'. This is the main method for calculating affordable housing requirements suggested in Government guidance – <i>"Local Housing Needs Assessment: A guide to Good Practice"</i> .
COMPACT	This is a requirement of Central Government. It entails developing an agreement between the Council and tenants or voluntary organisations about the way in which they will be consulted on the services they receive or deliver.
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment. An external process to assess the quality of individual Council's Performance (set out in the Local Government White Paper 2001). It brings together evidence from a range of internal and external sources, in addition to an on site inspection, in order to arrive at an overall category.
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government. Government department responsible for Local Government and housing functions. See the DCLG website at www.communities.gov.uk .
DFG	Disabled Facilities Grant. This is a grant made available to disabled persons to provide adaptations to their property. Dependent on the type of work, it is a mandatory grant. The amount of grant awarded is subject to a test of resources of the disabled person.
DHCS	Director of Housing and Community Services.
DIYSO	Do It Yourself Shared Ownership Scheme. This scheme allows applicants with sufficient income to part purchase accommodation in the Borough. As the title suggests, the applicant is able to find their own accommodation for purchase. The scheme is run by Thames Valley Housing Association who purchase up to 50% of the property value. The tenant pays rent to the Housing Association for the share the Association retains.
DWP	Department of Work and Pensions (Government Department)
ESP	Existing Satisfactory Property. This scheme involved working with a Housing Association to purchase low cost housing in the private sector. Originally the scheme involved the repurchase of ex-Right to Buy Council properties. However, the scheme was broadened to include any low cost housing in the Borough.
GOSE	The Government Office for the South East. This is the local office of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (formerly the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions) for the South East region of England. Its role includes development of the Regional Housing Strategy.
HCSHG	Housing Corporation Social Housing Grant. This is the main public subsidy paid to

	Housing Associations by Central Government, through the Housing Corporation to finance new homes. It can be used to pay for rented schemes as well as low cost home ownership schemes. (See ADP above).
HMO	House in Multiple Occupation. In general terms this is a property that is let to three or more tenants. However, for an exact definition reference must be made to the Housing Act 2004.
HOUSING CORPORATION and HCA	This is the National Housing Agency for England. The Housing Corporation is a Government Agency and was created by the Housing Act 1964 to register, fund, promote and supervise the Housing Association (now Registered Social Landlord) movement. The Corporation will merge with English Partnerships at the end of 2008 to become the Housing and Communities Agency.
HRA	Housing Revenue Account. This is a statutory account that sets out the expenditure and income arising from the provision of social housing by the Local Authority as a landlord. Expenditure in the HRA includes repairs and improvements, and management expenses. Income is mainly from rents. HRA subsidy is a significant item in the HRA.
LDF	Local Development Framework. Government replacement for the Local Plan.
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership – Leads on the Community Strategy.
NROSH	The National Register of Social Housing (NROSH) is a system for collecting social housing data on individual properties directly from local authorities and housing associations. NROSH is a branch of the DCLG.
PFI	Private Finance Initiative. A long-term contractual private/public partnership under which the private sector takes on the risks associated with the delivery of public services in exchange for payments tied to agreed standards of performance. This can provide an opportunity to raise extra funds for investment in housing stock. Several Councils are currently acting as pathfinders.
PPG3	Planning Policy Guidance. This is Guidance issued by the Secretary of State detailing National Planning Policy within existing legislation. There are many examples of Guidance and PPG3 is the one that is the most relevant to housing. This sets out the requirements relating to the provision of affordable housing.
RARP	Runnymede Accommodation Referral Panel. This group has been established to assess the accommodation requirements of people with mental health, learning disability and physical disabilities. The group considers each individual case and makes a recommendation as to the level of support required. Representatives on the group include the following: Officer from the Borough Council's Housing Department. Officer from the Community Support Team (Social Services). Officer from the Community Mental Health Team (Social Services/Health). Occupational Therapist.
RCRA	Runnymede Council Residents Association, formerly the Tenants' and Leaseholders Services Group. This group was formed in February 1999. The members of the group are Council Tenants and Leaseholders. They meet prior to each Housing and Community Services meeting to consider policy and management issues that impact on Tenants and Leaseholders.
RHB	Regional Housing Board. The RHB has been established by the Government to prepare and oversee the Regional Housing Strategy. The Strategy for the region will set out the approach to housing investment and give a clear framework for spending decisions. One RHB exists for the whole of the South East of England.
RSL	Registered Social Landlord. This is a Housing Association which is registered with the Housing Corporation. Registration entitles an association to bid for Social Housing Grant

	but requires that the association does not trade for profit. The association is established for the purpose of the provision, construction, improvement or management of social housing.
RTB	Right to Buy. The regulations that allow Council tenants to purchase the freehold or leasehold of their home.
SAFE	The Security Against Fraud and Error (SAFE) scheme encourages local authorities to implement and run anti-fraud measures, including national data matching exercises.
SAP	Standard Assessment Procedure. This is the Government's procedure for assessing the energy efficiency of a property.
SMART	How targets should be set if they are to be effective – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely.
SNHSG	The Special Needs Housing Strategy Group was established to look at the level of housing needed by people with special needs. This includes those with mental health problems, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, young people leaving care, victims of domestic violence, those with drug and alcohol problems, and older people. The group has representatives from a number of different agencies. The Chairman from each of the Local Special Needs Forums is also represented on the Special Needs Housing Strategy Group.
TCI	Total Cost Indicator. This was a system used by the Housing Corporation for assessing the maximum cost for new Registered Social Landlord dwellings.
TPAS	Tenant Participation Advisory Service. The independent tenant advisers. Their role is to help tenants understand the complexities of the stock options and to audit the Council's statements and figures.
VF	The Verification Frameworks (VF) provides best practice guidance from the DWP for the secure and accurate administration of Housing and Council Tax Benefit.

1. FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Chairman will read the Fire Precautions which set out the procedures to be followed in the event of fire or other emergency.

2. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

3. MINUTES

To confirm and sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 March 2008. These Minutes were included in the April Council Summons/Minutes Book.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

5. 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.

6. REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to make the Committee aware of the content of the recently published Regional Housing Strategy for 2008 – 2011.**

2. Background Information

2.1 In July 2005, the South East Regional Housing Board published a Regional Housing Strategy for 2006 onwards. This set out the priorities for housing investment in the South East and the detailed investment plans for 2006 to 2008.

2.2 The South East Regional Housing Board undertook a further review in 2007 and this Committee was invited in March 2007 to submit comments to the Board. A copy of the response made is attached at Appendix 'A'.

3. Report

3.1 Having taken into account the feedback from the review the South East Regional Housing Board have now compiled a new Housing Strategy for the South East Region. Local Authorities will be expected to have regard to the Strategy in preparing their own plans for housing.

3.2 The Strategy is a short document and therefore the full version has been attached at Appendix 'B'.

3.3 It is encouraging to see that many of the issues raised by this Committee have been reflected in the new Strategy and that the priorities also mirror many of the priorities in the Council's own Housing Strategy.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None stated

7. A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR HOUSING IN AN AGEING SOCIETY (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee about the content of the Government publication “Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods – A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society”.**

2. Background Information

2.1 In February 2008 the Government published “Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods”. A copy of the document has been placed in the Members' Room and the Executive Summary is attached at Appendix 'C'.

2.2 The document starts with an analysis of the projected growth in households of over 65 and estimates that by 2026 there will be 2.4 million more older households in England than today. In particular it projects that:

- The 75+ age group is growing faster than any other.
- An older population which is increasingly diverse, with more older men and more older people from black and minority ethnic groups, each with their own needs and aspirations.
- Over a million people predicted to suffer from dementia by 2025.
- Double the number of older disabled people in England from 2.3 million in 2002 to 4.6 million by 2041.

- Increasing affluence amongst older people – likely to increase polarisation by wealth.
- 2.3 The Strategy aims to deal with the implications of these changes and sets the following principles:
- (i) To plan at all levels – local, regional and national – for homes and communities so that people can live out their lives, as long as possible, independently, safely and happily with their families and friends around them.
 - (ii) To ensure that there is the right range of choices of "specialist" housing available for those who need more support, homes at the heart of the community that look and feel like a home.
 - (iii) To ensure that the positive and right choices can be made at the right time and in a planned way, rather than as a result of a crisis.
 - (iv) To ensure that housing is seen as central to health and well being and that services are planned and integrated to reflect that.
- 2.4 The report signals a number of actions that the Government proposes to implement. Below are some of the main proposals:
- (i) To develop a new rapid repairs and adaptations service, expanding existing handy persons schemes across the country. This will take place from 2009 onwards and funding will be identified for this. To ensure that new resources are fairly allocated to places and people in greatest need it is proposed that the new funding, which will be available from 2009 – 2011 will be delivered through local and regional development bidding processes.
 - (ii) Foundations, the national co-ordinating body for home improvement agencies, will be commissioned to undertake a home improvement agency project which will aim to develop a service which will offer more and better housing options for people in the private sector living in sub-standard housing.
 - (iii) There will be further investment in the Warm Front grant programme from 2008 – 2011 in order to reduce the number of people in fuel poverty.
 - (iv) There will be amendments to the disabled facilities grant (DFG) arrangements that will raise the maximum grant limit to £30,000, improve the means testing arrangements, include garden areas in eligible improvements, relax the ring fencing that currently exists for DFG and allow local authorities to levy property charges if they feel them appropriate. It is also proposed that from 2010 onwards the payments currently received from Government by local authorities for DFG will be paid as part of the single capital pot that is linked to the Local Area Agreement.
 - (v) It is proposed to take steps to increase the supply of inclusive and adapted housing in all sectors. This is to be achieved by ensuring that all public sector funded housing is built to Lifetime Home Standards from 2011 onwards. Lifetime Home Standards are a simple set of home features that make housing more functional for everyone including families, disabled people and other people.

The Government have an aspiration that by 2013 all new homes will be built to Lifetime Home Standards. They intend to progress this by firstly clarifying the standards themselves but then ultimately consideration will be given to considering the need for regulation within Part M of the Building Regulations.
 - (vi) The Government wish to create Lifetime Neighbourhoods ie a community which is designed to be welcoming, accessible and inviting for everyone, regardless of age, or health, or disability. Initially, these principles will be used on new developments such as the Olympic village and Eco Towns.

- (vii) The Government feel that local authorities have a key role as strategic place shapers and it is expected that local sustainable community strategies and local development frameworks will consider the needs of older people and plan for provision.
- (viii) The Government also intend to boost preventative housing services that allow people to remain independent. They also intend to introduce common assessment frame-works and the use of personal/individual budgets for clients.
- (ix) There is a wish to increase the range and quantity of specialist housing provision for older people. Current provision includes extra care sheltered housing, traditional sheltered housing and retirement housing but the level of care in each differs considerably. The challenge is to obtain the supply of a range of good quality specialised housing, to expand choice, and to meet projected future demand. There is also a need to make better use of existing sheltered housing stock. The CLG and the Department of Health will therefore undertake strategic work with the Housing Corporation (soon to be the Housing and Communities Agency) and the Office for Tenants and Social Landlords, to consider what options there are for supporting re-modelling where appropriate. This could mean that funding will be available for re-modelling existing sheltered housing schemes.
- (x) It is proposed that the Government will work with voluntary and community sector to provide a national housing information advice service. It is intended that this will strengthen local housing advice arrangements and make specific provision for advice for older people on a range of housing options.

3. Funding

- 3.1 The Government have previously announced funding of £8 billion to increase homes and choice in the Housing Green Paper, *Homes for the Future*, and this will help to deliver growth in accommodation for older households. In addition, new funding of £35 million up to 2011 will support the development of housing information and advice for older people, and increase the current handyperson services and Home Improvement Agencies. There will be a 31 per cent increase in the Disabled Facilities Grant by 2011, taking the annual budget to £146 million in 2008-09 and up to £166 million in 2010-11. The strategy also draws on existing funding streams, including the Regional Housing Pot, the Supporting People programme, and the DEFRA Warm Front Scheme.
- 3.2 It is not yet clear how the additional funding will be distributed by the Government.

4. Impact on Runnymede

- 4.1 This report has a number of implications for strategic planning and service delivery within the Borough:
 - (i) Additional funding to tackle fuel poverty and to finance the DFG programme will be welcome however the benefits of the additional funds maybe offset by the extension of the mandatory grant provisions. The implication of the proposed inclusion of DFG subsidy into the LAA framework are unclear at this stage.
 - (ii) With the help of Surrey County Council Runnymede currently operate a Handyman scheme in partnership with Woking Borough Council. However the funding of this is not secure in the longer term and therefore the opportunity to bid for further funding will be welcome.
 - (iii) The inclusion of Lifetime Home Standards within all new public sector funded housing will make properties more sustainable in the longer term but could add to the cost of providing new housing.
 - (iv) The Council are currently undertaking a Housing Market and Housing Needs Assessment which will include research into the housing needs of older people. The results of this research will be factored into the Local Development Framework and revisions of the Housing Strategy.

- (v) The use of personal budgets for care services may have implications for some of the services that are currently funded by the County Council e.g. care assistant services within Day Centres.
 - (vi) Proposals to fund the re-modelling of existing sheltered schemes maybe of assistance to the Council in its longer terms plans for Bemonds in Chertsey.
 - (vii) The proposals to introduce a wider and more comprehensive housing advice service for older people may have implications for the Council's own housing advice/options services.
- 4.2 At the current time it is difficult to anticipate the precise impact of all of the above, however, Officers will bring forward reports to this Committee as the full details emerge.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None stated

8. NEW LOW-COST HOME OWNERSHIP PRODUCTS (DHCS)

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the new Low-Cost Home Ownership schemes announced by the Housing Corporation.**

2. Background Information

2.1 At the last meeting this Committee considered a report that set out the current low cost home ownership products that were available. The report mentioned that the Housing Corporation were holding a competition amongst Registered Social Landlords who had been invited to submit details for a new, more affordable, home ownership product.

2.2 The Housing Corporation have now announced the new schemes and the details of each scheme are set out below.

3. My Choice Homebuy See Appendix 'F'.

3.1 Thames Valley Housing Association will receive grant to provide at least 65 units for Surrey during 2008/09. 60% of the funding (43 units) will be aimed at key workers who fall into the Government's definition of key worker i.e. teachers, health workers, police, Social Workers, Probation officers, Fire officers and some local authority planners. The remaining 40% of the funds will be used for other applicants who do not fall into the Government definition of a key worker.

3.2 The scheme allows an applicant to purchase between 50% and 70% of the equity in the property and they receive a loan from TVHA for the unsold equity. Although there is no rent to pay on the unsold element there is a charge for the loan of 1.5% per annum. This charge increases to 3.5% in year 6 and to 5.5% in year 11.

3.3 Unlike previous Homebuy schemes the applicant will be able to obtain a mortgage from any lender.

3.4 Comparisons of the affordability of this scheme against existing shared ownership are given in Appendix 'D'.

4. Ownhome See Appendix 'E'.

4.1 This scheme is aimed at the same range of applicants as My Choice Homebuy i.e. predominantly key workers but also other working households.

- 4.2 A second scheme has been approved for Surrey which will be operated by another RSL i.e. Places for People. This RSL has again been given funding to enable people in Surrey to purchase a home.
- 4.3 This scheme offers properties at 60% - 80% equity and the RSL provides an interest free loan for the remaining 40% - 20% of equity that is not purchased.
- 4.4 Unlike the My Choice Homebuy scheme the Own Home scheme requires applicants to use a specific single mortgage lender. Places for People are working with the Co-op Bank and applicants must obtain a mortgage from the Co-op.
- 4.5 Unlike My Choice Homebuy the Own Home scheme does not require an additional charge on the unsold equity and there is no rent to pay.
- 4.6 Officers have not as yet had the opportunity to meet with Places for People to find out more information about the scheme however on the information currently available it seems that it would be more affordable than the My Choice scheme. Details of the cost of this scheme for a 2 bedroom unit are indicated in Appendix 'D'.
- 5. Affordability of Schemes
- 5.1 The tables at Appendix 'D' set out the difference in affordability between new build shared ownership and the two new schemes. It can be seen from this that the schemes are slightly more affordable than new build shared ownership.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None stated

9. SERVICE PLAN (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to advise on the outturn performance for the Service Plan for 2007/08.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 In the Spring of 2003 the Council introduced a revised Performance Management framework to ensure the best use of information to improve services.
- 2.2 Service Plans have been developed for each Committee and these incorporate all of the Government's Best Value Performance Indicators, targets within the Council's Strategic Plan, the Housing Strategy, the Homelessness Strategy, the Private Sector Renewal Strategy and individual targets established in Best Value Reviews.
- 2.3 The Service Plans are used by managers to set appraisal targets for staff and for service planning improvement.
- 2.4 The Housing and Community Services Committee receives a half-yearly update on the progress of the Service Plan and an outturn report once a year. This report sets out the progress for the Plan adopted in June 2007.

3. Report

3.1 The performance on last year's targets is contained in Appendix 'G'. A great deal has been achieved including extremely good performance on rent collection. The graph at Appendix 'H' demonstrates this.

4. Future Plans

- 4.1 The Government have amended the Performance Indicators that have been set for Local Authorities and this has meant that many of the Best Value Performance Indicators that previously existed for Housing and Community Services are no longer required by the Government. There are 23 Indicators on which District Authorities are now required to provide information to the Government of which 4 fall under the jurisdiction of this Committee. The specific Performance Indicators are as follows:

NIP1 155 - Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
NIP1 156 - Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation
NIP1 158 - The percentage of non-decent council homes
NIP1 160 - Local authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services

- 4.2 The Surrey Local Area Agreement will also include a specific target to increase affordable housing provision and the District Authorities will need to contribute to the delivery of this target, and report on performance.
- 4.3 It is now necessary to establish a new Service Plan that takes account of the Government Indicators and the LAA targets as well as other local priorities. It is proposed that Officers work with the Chairman and Vice Chairmen to establish a new draft service plan and that this be brought to this Committee in September.

5. Council Policy

- 5.1 Service Plans assist the Council in achieving two of its strategic objectives:

- i) achieving quality services, and
- ii) achieving continuous improvement.

- 5.2 They establish a clear direction for the Council and identify particular priorities for the year ahead.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 Members of the Committee are asked to examine the performance as set out within the Appendix and to note the current position.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

- i) the outturn of the Service Plan for 2007/08 be noted; and**
- ii) Officers be authorised to draft a Plan for the forthcoming year in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated

10. WAPSHOTT ROAD (DHCS)

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of progress with the redevelopment of the Wapshott/Bowes Road Estate and to seek authority to revise the Lettings Plan for the estate.**

2. Background Information

2.1 Reports relating to the redevelopment of the Wapshott/Bowes Road estate have been considered by this Committee throughout the duration of the project.

2.2 The initial survey of residents seeking their views regarding the future of the estate was undertaken in June 1999. In the ensuing nine years two residents groups have been formed, an Independent Tenants' Adviser appointed, consultants taken on board, an RSL partner selected, a Public Inquiry held and residents decanted : all before construction could start in the late spring of 2007.

3. The Report

3.1 Throughout the construction period, Officers have been attending regular liaison meetings with A2, (the RSL), Inspace, (the contractor) and representatives of the local residents' group. These meetings have ensured that all stakeholders have been kept up to date with progress, and have helped to keep the project on track.

3.2 At the most recent liaison meeting, Inspace confirmed that Phase 1 is still scheduled to be handed over during the summer, with the first properties, the flats being constructed on site M in Cornwall Way, due to be completed by the end of July. The two remaining sites will be completed in August and September respectively.

3.3 All residents who indicated they did not wish to transfer to the new properties have now either been offered new homes or have already moved. The remaining 32 households have selected flats or houses within the three sites under construction, have made their choices in respect of colour schemes, and are eagerly awaiting the move to their new homes.

3.4 It is anticipated that by the end of September, all the non-decent properties will have been vacated. They will then be demolished as part of Phase 2, which is currently scheduled for completion in February 2010.

3.5 The bulk of the properties in Phase 2 will be for sale; the surpluses from which will contribute to the cost of providing the affordable units in Phase 1. There will however be a number of affordable units in Phase 2, and Officers are anxious that the letting of these properties, together with the remaining units in Phase 1 are allocated in a way that creates a sustainable community, and ensures that the concerns of the Environment Agency, about the number of people in the flood plain, are taken in to account as best as possible.

3.6 The new social housing units have, in the first instance, been offered to existing Council tenants required to vacate their homes for the development. Any new social housing units not taken up by existing tenants will be allocated to other applicants from the housing register, but having regard to the desirability of establishing a balanced community.

3.7 Tenants have been offered units on a "like for like" basis, ie a similar size unit to the one they currently occupy. Any households that required larger units, having grown in size since originally being housed, have been offered larger units and smaller households have had the option to downsize if they wished to.

3.8 The Council's allocation scheme recognises that on new housing estates there is often a need to ensure there is a mixed and balanced community, which can sometimes be difficult to achieve using an allocations policy based almost entirely on housing need.

The use of local allocations policies for specific new developments comprising of 10 or more properties is therefore endorsed in Section 9.5 of the policy.

- 3.9 The new development will include a range of family accommodation and for the reasons set out above it is important to ensure that child densities on the scheme are not of a high level. Although the decanting of existing tenants has resulted in a degree of underoccupation, Officers feel that if allocations are made strictly in line with the property size eligibility within the Council's allocation scheme, this would result in an unacceptably high child density on the estate. It is therefore proposed that initial lettings on this scheme would be as follows:

Two bedroom flat/house	-	household or couple with one child
Three bedroom house	-	household or couple with two children

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 The proposal is in line with Section 9.5 of the Council's allocation scheme which allows for the provision of a local lettings scheme for developments of 10 units or more.
- 4.2 The Government have published a Code of Guidance for the Allocation of Accommodation and the Council is expected to have regard to this when forming policy. Paragraph 5.26 of the code specifically relates to local lettings policies and encourages the use of these, especially in relation to child densities on estates.

5. Equality

- 5.1 An equality impact assessment has been carried out and the report is attached at Appendix 'I'.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The proposals to replace the flats at Wapshott Road are progressing well and the scheme is currently to timetable. A decision is required regarding the selection of applicants from the Register for those properties that will not be taken up by tenants from the estate and a local lettings plan, that keeps child densities on an estate in the flood plain to a reasonable level, is proposed.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

- i) the Committee notes progress with the redevelopment, and**
- ii) approval is given to the local lettings plan and size eligibility at 3.9 for the initial lettings on the Estate.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated

11. REFERENCE FROM REVIEW BOARD

POST OFFICE CLOSURES – DISCRETIONARY TRANSPORT FOR THE ELDERLY (DAL)

At its meeting on 16 April 2008, in the course of discussing an item on Post Office closures in the borough, the Board noted the Council's provision of discretionary transport for the elderly.

The Board noted that the Council already provided community transport buses to transport elderly people to the various day centres in the borough and there was also a specific run to the local Post Office for residents travelling from Englefield Green to the Egham centre. The Dial-A-Ride service would also take Dial – a Ride Members to and from Post Offices across the Borough by appointment. There was no intention to reduce these services. The Board asked whether there was capacity to increase the number of passengers on these services and the Board agreed to suggest that this should be looked at by this Committee if it became an issue,

while noting that usage varied. The Board agreed that this Committee should be commended for this provision of discretionary transport, and should be requested to continue to do so.

REVIEW BOARD'S RECOMMENDATION that –

this Committee continues to provide discretionary transport for the elderly in the Borough.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None

12. COMMUNITY TRANSPORT (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to request approval for a capital estimate of £100,000 for the purchase of two replacement vehicles for the Day Centre Transport Service.**

2. Background Information

2.1 The Council currently provides two community transport services i.e. the Day Centre Transport Service and a Dial-A-Ride service.

2.2 In September 2005 this Committee received a report on the future provision for both of these services. As a result of the report, and the full appraisal of alternative options that it contained, the services were transferred from Woking Community Transport and have been run "in-house" since 2006. This has resulted in efficiencies and savings of around £63,000 a year for community transport services.

2.3 The need for vehicle replacements was considered during the appraisal of the options for the service and it was acknowledged that replacements to the fleet would be required.

2.4 The following replacement programme for vehicles used for day centre transport was approved in the report to this Committee in September 2005:

Proposed year of replacement	Vehicle being replaced	Capital programme provision
		£
2007/08	Ford P335HKN originally purchased Nov 96 for Woodham & New Haw Day Centre.	50,000
2008/09	Ford P315TGN originally purchased Feb 97 for Manor Farm Day Centre	50,000
	Total	100,000

2.5 The report also proposed that a full review of the fleet and current work load would be carried out in 2009 to determine establishing the future usage, state of the fleet and opportunities to use surplus capacity for contract work.

2.6 The service has undergone further changes since the 2005 report with the scheduling operation also being brought in-house at the start of 2008. Whilst things are still very much settling down the long term aims of streamlining and then extending the services still very much remain.

3. The Report

- 3.1 Provision is made in the capital programme for the replacement of Day Centre Transport vehicles. However, they are only replaced when it is felt necessary to do so. The low mileage of the day centre transport vehicles means that these last longer than an average minibus, however they do suffer as a consequence of the "stop start" nature of the operation. There have been no new vehicles on this service since 2001 and 2 of the vehicles now require replacement.
- 3.2 The full review of the current transport fleet will be undertaken later this year rather than in 2009. However in the meantime 2 new vehicles are needed for the Day Centre fleet to replace those that are now over 11 years old. The recognised life span for an operational minibus is a maximum of 10 years and we are now starting to experience a range of mechanical issues with these two vehicles, ranging from brake problems, passenger lift faults, oil leaks and door lock replacements. The cost of repairs to these two vehicles alone was over £3,000 during 2008/09. One of the vehicles to be replaced will need work on a corrosion problem, estimated at least £4,000, later this year.
- 3.3 In addition Officers are receiving increasing amounts of feedback from the passengers that the journeys are becoming less and less comfortable, with seat padding and poor suspension to blame.

4. Council Policy

- 4.1 The following extract from the Council's Strategic Plan is relevant to this particular item:

"The Council will aim, within the bounds of affordability, to continue to provide Community Services for the benefit of the elderly and vulnerable residents of the Borough."

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 The capital programme has provisions of £50,000 in 2007/08 and 2008/09 financial years. It is now necessary to approve a capital estimate to release these provisions.
- 5.2 The revenue budget has been set on the assumption that the existing vehicles will be replaced.

6. Procurement

- 6.1 The Council's Purchasing Officer has been involved in discussions with manufacturers and after consideration recommends using the Kent consortium (Kent County Council Commercial Services).

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The transfer of the transport service to the in-house team has been very successful. However, if current service levels are to be maintained, there is a need to replace two vehicles.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

the Corporate Management Committee be requested to recommend a capital estimate of £100,000 for the purchase of two replacement day centre transport vehicles.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated

13. CONCESSIONARY BUS PASSES (DHCS)

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to:**

- i) **update Members on progress made in implementing The Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007 (CBTA 2007).**
- ii) **To seek approval for the use of Novacraft's InNovator software package to replace the current in-house database.**

2. **Background Information**

- 2.1 The Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007 came in to effect on 1 April this year. This Council has agreed to grant free bus travel from 9.00am for the over 60s and those eligible in the national concessionary fare scheme.
- 2.2 The Council is providing an enhanced scheme that will commence 30 minutes before the 9.30am start stated in the concessionary bus fare scheme offered by the Government. This concession has been agreed to allow Runnymede residents to benefit from local conditions that were in place prior to 1 April.

3. **Administrative Arrangements**

- 3.1 The Best Value Review of Concessionary fares recommended that responsibility for the Bus Pass service be transferred to the Community Services Division of the Department of Housing and Community Services, from December 2008, subject to staffing resources being identified for the purpose.
- 3.2 Following the initial administrative phase, where work was largely undertaken by temporary part time staff, a more formal structure was introduced. This structure comprised of 2 members of staff on temporary contracts until the end of the calendar year, job sharing a 37 hour post. These staff transferred to the Community Services Division in February 2008 and the bus pass team now sit within the Home Support section along with the Community Alarm and Meals services.
- 3.3 Administratively the time leading up to the implementation of the scheme, and the subsequent weeks, was a challenge. The company responsible for the production and distribution of the passes moved the bulk issue date back a couple of times, uncertainty surrounded the scheme times, and some passes were sent out with incorrect details. These distribution issues resulted in some dissatisfied customers however, considering that in excess of 10,000 passes were distributed the number of complaints were a small proportion of the whole.
- 3.4 This has been a significant piece of work for all of the Boroughs in Surrey. The number of passes issued by other boroughs as at end April was:

Elmbridge	13,000
Epsom & Ewell	10,500
Guildford	16,000
Mole Valley	11,000
Reigate and Banstead	13,500
Runnymede	10,000
Spelthorne	10,000
Surrey Heath	7,000

Tandridge	8,500
Waverley	16,500
Woking	9,000

4. Ongoing Issue of Passes

- 4.1 In November 2007 this Committee authorised the Director of Administration and Leisure to contract with Novacroft to supply the bulk issue of passes and ad hoc passes. They were asked to continue producing passes on behalf of RBC until 31 March 2009.
- 4.2 There continues to be a steady number of new applicants for bus passes (currently an average of 50 per week). These are people who have only recently learnt about the scheme or who have just become eligible. An integral part of the bus pass production process is providing Novacroft with the details of all these new applicants.
- 4.3 A number of local authorities have resorted to sending the hard copy forms of new applicants to Novacroft in Northampton for them to input the details on to their database prior to card production. Not only have these authorities incurred additional costs they have also suffered the greatest number of problems and complaints over the initial phases of distribution.
- 4.4 Runnymede has utilised an in-house database system for its data and bus pass data is e-mailed to Novacroft who then import it into their own card management system, InNovator. This is linked to the Council's IDM DMS and although this has proved beneficial and has been well supported to date it does not comply with the Council's IT strategy as it is a stand alone system. It is also reliant upon one specific individual in the IT section and there are likely to be difficulties in the future if this staff member is absent.
- 4.5 Once the data is sent to Novacroft there is also no means of monitoring its progress through production. This results in unsatisfactory customer service when enquiries are made regarding expected delivery times.

5. Ongoing Card Management System

- 5.1 There is clearly a need to establish a more sustainable card management system. Officers have examined Novacroft's InNovator package and have been impressed with their findings.
- 5.2 InNovator is a web based system that would allow the bus pass team to enter new records, including pass holders' photos, onto a database that is immediately accessible by Novacroft.
- 5.3 This would immediately free up IT support for the old database, reduce the workload for the bus pass staff, comply with RBC's IT strategy, allow customer enquiries to be answered efficiently and accurately and also allow management control of Novacroft's whole process.
- 5.4 It is proposed that the system would be used for a year initially and then continued if satisfactory.

6. Resource Implications

- 6.1 The use of InNovator is covered by the Department of Transport framework agreement meaning that the prices are fixed and index linked. The costs are highlighted below:

InNovator® Ultra	£ Charge
InNovator® set up charge	1,200 One off charge

Annual managed service fee. For each record, per year 0.33	3,300
plus	
Training (per day)	800 + exp

6.2 The total cost of using InNovator in the first year is estimated to be £5,500 and £3,500 in future years. In time, there should be sufficient administrative savings to match this cost.

6.3 There are sufficient funds in the Concessionary Fares budget for the use of the InNovator software in 2008/09.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was provided with the report to Corporate Management Committee on 28 June 2007. The use of the InNovator system will not affect the results of this assessment.

8. Conclusions

8.1 Over 10,000 bus passes have been issued by Novacraft on behalf of RBC. Considering this volume and the lateness at which the timings for the service were changed, complaints have been minimal.

8.2 Data recording and transfer is currently via a system that has limited support. Investigation has taken place in to replacing the in-house data base with Novacraft's own system InNovator. By adopting this system RBC will be more compliant with its IT strategy and allow Officers more control over the bus pass administrative process.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

the InNovator system be used for one year and then evaluated along with all administrative resources used in the bus pass process.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated

14. HRA BUSINESS PLAN (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to advise Members on the progress that has been made in drafting the new HRA Business Plan.**

2. Background Information

2.1 The Government expects each stock owning Local Authority to compile a 30 year Business Plan for their housing stock. This was a particular requirement of the Government drive towards the Decent Homes target.

2.2 Runnymede Borough Council produced its first HRA Business Plan in 2001. This has been updated on a number of subsequent occasions to take account of changes. The last full review of the Plan was undertaken during the Stock Options Appraisal in 2003 and it is now appropriate for a further review to take place.

2.3 The Business Plan is a statement of the strategy for managing and maintaining the Council housing stock. In particular, it assesses progress towards meeting the Decent Homes target within available resources. The Business Plan needs to be updated to take account of achievements so far, updated resources, and any other changes of circumstances that impact on our ability to manage and maintain our stock.

3. Report

- 3.1 An assessment of the requirements for repair and maintenance of the stock over the next 30 years has been completed. The cost of the work now has to be factored into the 30-year financial model used in the Business Plan along with other information such as predicted rent income, subsidy requirements, right to buy sales, staffing costs etc. This is a time consuming and complex process that requires input from the finance department.
- 3.2 It was hoped that a revised HRA Business Plan could be brought to this Committee in June. However, the move from the old Civic Offices together with a range of other significant work (eg closure of accounts) has meant that this could not be achieved. However, some progress has been made and it is proposed that the revised HRA Business Plan will be presented to this Committee in September.
- 3.3 New targets will need to be set in the Business Plan for the stock management challenges the Council faces (e.g. reception centres), and for service improvements. Consultation with tenants on these targets will form part of the exercise.
- 3.4 It is also proposed that a Member Event will be held on 23 June 2008 at which Mr Blowers, the Head of Tenant Services will outline the general format of the HRA Business Plan. It is hoped this will give Members sufficient background information to allow them to assess the newly drafted HRA Business Plan in September.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None stated

15. RUNNYMEDE ACCESS LIAISON GROUP - APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE (DHCS)

The Committee is asked to appoint one Member of the Housing and Community Services Committee to serve on the Runnymede Access Liaison Group in the Municipal Year 2008/2009.

The Runnymede Access Liaison Group (originally known as the Runnymede Disability Liaison Group) was established by the Council in 1991 to consider the access needs of disabled people in Runnymede. In 2000, the Constitution of the Group was revised to expand the membership of the Group to include representatives with both learning and mental health difficulties.

The Group meets between four and five times a year at the Civic Centre. Members are also invited to attend Access Audits of premises and the Annual Achievement Awards.

Two Runnymede Councillors are appointed to the Liaison Group, one from the Housing and Community Services Committee and one from the Leisure and Environment Committee.

The retiring Members are former Councillor Ms D V Clarke (Housing and Community Services) and Councillor Mrs E Gill (Leisure and Environment).

THE COMMITTEE IS ASKED -

to nominate one Member of the Housing and Community Services Committee to serve on the Runnymede Access Liaison Group in the Municipal Year 2008/2009.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None

16. URGENT ACTION - STANDING ORDER 42

The following action has been taken after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee under Standing Order 42.

<u>Officer</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Central Index No</u>
Director of Housing and Community Services	Approval of the appointment of Fordham Research Limited for the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment	657
Director of Housing and Community Services	Approval of Terms and Conditions of the Runnymede Concessionary Fares Scheme 2008/09	660
Director of Housing and Community Services	Agreement for (i) the approach to be taken to the Regional Housing Board bid for Private Sector Housing initiatives and (ii) to approve the use of funds within the Housing capital programme for match funding to deliver the energy efficiency measures within the bid.	661
Director of Housing and Community Services	Approval of amendments to Runnymede's Terms and Conditions of the Surrey Concessionary Fares Scheme 2008/09.	662

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

Proformas 657, 660, 661, and 662 on DAL SO.42 file.

17. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following reports under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the reports in question would be likely to involve disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in appropriate paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

(TO RESOLVE)

PART II

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

		<u>Para</u>
a)	<u>Exempt Information</u>	
18.	QUEEN ELIZABETH HOUSE AND ST JUDE'S COTTAGE	3
19.	HOUSING SUPPORT OFFICER POST	1,2,3
20	SELECTION OF CONTRACTORS	3

b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)