

Housing and Community Services Committee

Wednesday 10 September 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.

LIST OF MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

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PART II

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

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b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)

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.
Borough Housing and Community Services Manager	'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 11 June 2008. These Minutes were included in the July 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. HRA BUSINESS PLAN 2008 – 2013 (DHCS)

1. **Purpose of Report**
- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the HRA Business Plan 2008 - 2013.**
2. **Background Information**
- 2.1 Government policies encourage stock owning local authorities to produce a Business Plan for their Housing Revenue Account activities. The HRA Business Plan produced in 2003 had to be sent to the Government Office of the South East for sign off. Whilst this is no longer the case the Council is still expected to maintain a comprehensive Business Plan.
- 2.2 The purpose of the HRA Business Plan is to provide a tool for long term management of the Housing service. It covers four key areas:
 - i) The current position and future trends;
 - ii) Priorities for action;
 - iii) The evaluation of options;
 - iv) A plan of action.
- 2.3 A Business Plan for the housing stock was submitted to GOSE in 2003 and was subsequently assessed as being fit for purpose. Officers have continued to update stock information and the Plan was further updated and independently reviewed in 2005 as part of the Stock Options Appraisal process. However, a full review of the Plan has not taken place since then.
3. **Report**
- 3.1 Attached at Appendix 'A' is a revised HRA Business Plan (for Members of the Committee only).
- 3.2 The core information within the Business Plan is the information on the current condition of the housing stock. This dictates the maintenance and improvements plan for the next 30 years. This information then feeds into the financial model (also over a 30 year timescale), and tests the financial viability of the Plan.
- 3.3 The Plan demonstrates that the Decent Homes Standard can be achieved prior to the Government's 2010 deadline. It also shows that the current schemes proposed for kitchen and bathroom replacements, upgrades to Surrey Towers and other items of significant work can be achieved within the period of the Plan.
- 3.4 The Plan does however indicate some potential difficulties in year 10 (2016) when a shortfall arises as a result of costs relating to a second round of work to replace items such as windows, roofs and central heating systems.
- 3.5 The resources section of the Plan summarises the results of the 30 year financial model. The key factor in determining the financial viability is the adequacy of Government allowances received through the HRA subsidy system. The financial model assumes that these allowances are consistent with current Government announcements on HRA subsidy. However, the allowance in the HRA subsidy system for planned repairs and improvements (the 'Major Repairs Allowance') is not sufficient to meet these costs over the lifetime of the Plan, and this is the main reason for the shortfall in resources from 2016. This is a problem that is common to most of the remaining stock holding authorities. The potential shortfall is significant, but still only represents a relatively small proportion of the amount of negative subsidy currently paid from the HRA to the Government.
- 3.6 In December 2007, the Housing Minister announced that CLG and the Treasury would be undertaking a review of Housing Revenue Account subsidy. This review is currently

taking place and will not be finalised until the Spring of 2009. The principles of the review are set out on page 28 of the Business Plan and it is possible that the proposals from the review will lead to changes in negative subsidy and impact on the Runnymede HRA Business Plan.

- 3.7 The Committee is therefore asked to comment on the contents of the current Plan and to approve its adoption for the time being. A further report will be made to this Committee once the implications of any changes introduced by the Government are known.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 The Council is encouraged by the Government to consult with tenants on the contents of its HRA Business Plan. The Runnymede Council Residents' Association has therefore been provided with a copy of the Plan and given the opportunity to comment. Details of their comments will be reported verbally at the meeting.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.1 The Housing Services provided as a consequence of the Business Plan conform to the Commission for Racial Equalities Code of Practice in rented housing, as well as the good practice standards on tackling harassment. Equality impact assessments are also prepared and are incorporated into all Committee Agenda Reports whenever policy or procedural changes are proposed for HRA related services. The assessments aim to identify how such changes might impact on specific minority groups and will seek to propose solutions to any issues identified.
- 5.2 Impact assessments have been undertaken for existing housing services including housing needs (lettings, allocations, homelessness), tenancy management and housing maintenance/estate management services.

6. Resource Implications

- 6.1 The detailed resource implications of the Plan are set out in Section 11 pages 26 – 31 of the Plan.

7. Council Policy

- 7.1 The Council has set an objective within its Strategic Plan to ensure that social housing is fit and of an acceptable standard and that good quality services are provided to tenants.
- 7.2 The Council has also identified the following targets amongst those that it feels are the 10 priority areas for Runnymede:
- i) Progress towards achieving the Decent Homes Standard;
 - ii) Proportion of rent collected;
 - iii) Average Standard Assessment Procedure ratings for energy efficiency;
 - iv) Tenant satisfaction.

- 7.3 Details of performance against each of these activities is set out within the HRA Business Plan.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 The Government encourage local authorities to compile a 30 year Business Plan for their Housing Revenue Account activities. A comprehensive review of the Council's HRA Business Plan has been undertaken and a revised Plan produced. This indicates that the Council can achieve the Government's Decent Homes Standard, and a number of other significant improvements to the stock. However, it does identify that from year 10 of the Plan there may be some resource issues to address.

- 8.2 The Government have indicated their intention to review the HRA subsidy system. If significant changes are made then this is likely to have an impact on the current Plan. It is therefore proposed that the Plan set out in Appendix 'A' be adopted for the time being and that the situation be reviewed once the Government's proposals for any amendments to the HRA subsidy system are known.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that:-

- i) the Committee approves the HRA Business Plan as set out in Appendix 'A'; and**
- ii) a further report is made to the Committee once the Government's intentions in relation to the HRA subsidy system are known.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

DHCS file for HRA Business Plan.

7. AFFORDABLE HOUSING (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee on the progress that is being made on the affordable housing target.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 In December 2006 the Council adopted a new Housing Strategy. The principal target within the Strategy was to deliver 500 affordable housing units from December 2006 to December 2011.

- 2.2 There are a number of reasons for ensuring a continuous supply of new affordable housing. These are as follows:

- i) The provision of affordable housing is now a National Performance Indicator and performance is likely to be assessed during Comprehensive Area Assessments of the Council;
- ii) Affordable housing targets have been set in the Surrey Local Area Agreement and, again, these will be scrutinised by Government;
- iii) The supply of affordable housing is important if the numbers of homeless families in temporary accommodation are to be controlled;
- iv) There is a growing public expectation that councils will enable the provision of higher levels of affordable housing;
- v) Provision of affordable housing is important if people who work in Runnymede are to be retained in the area.

In view of the importance of this particular target, performance is regularly reported to this Committee.

3. Report

- 3.1 The provision of affordable housing is a complicated process which is not within the Council's full control. It is also a process that is easily affected by market factors and there have been a number of recent, significant, changes in the housing market that may impact on affordable housing provision in Runnymede.

- 3.2 For many years the Council has actively pursued the provision of schemes on its own land, examples include the new schemes now in place at Barrsbrook Farm, Painsfield, Barker Road and Kings Lane. However, opportunities to provide on Council owned land are diminishing and a growing proportion of new affordable housing units will need to come from private land. Amendments to planning policy have been made to allow for this and 40% affordable housing provision is now required on sites of 15 units or more. However, the current difficulties in the housing market are leading to a slow-down in new starts on private sites and there is a real possibility that this will impact on the achievement of the Council's affordable housing target.
- 3.3 Despite the difficulties, progress is being made on a range of schemes and since the target was established in December 2006, a total of 38 units have been provided in Runnymede. 158 units are also currently under construction and will be completed within the next 18 months.
- 3.4 The spreadsheet at Exempt Appendix 'A' sets out the number of schemes that may be delivered during 2006 - 2011. At the current time, and, assuming that projections for units is achieved on all of the sites with a 1-3 ranking prior to 2011 it is estimated that 461 units may be delivered. This is lower than the current target of 500 units but this does not include new purchases made under Open Market Homebuy. It also assumes that a number of significant schemes such as the Brunel site, Englefield Green, and the Safeways site, Addlestone, are not forthcoming in the period. This may not be the case.
- 3.5 Amongst the schemes that are likely to provide new affordable housing units during the target period is Franklands Drive. This scheme will ultimately provide 350 units of affordable housing, although not all of these will be provided by 2011. A breakdown of the type of units to be provided within the full scheme is as follows –

Franklands Drive Unit Mix	
Type	No. of units
1 bed 2 person flat	50
2 bed 3 person flat	122
2 bed 3/4 person house	112
3 bed 5 person house	56
4 bed 6 person house	10
Total	350

- 3.6 Regular discussions are now taking place with the two Housing Associations (Paragon and Accent Peerless) involved in delivering the units at Franklands Drive and it is anticipated that a detailed planning application for the site will be submitted by September 2008. It is intended that work will commence as soon as possible after full planning consent is obtained and that at least 114 units will be handed over prior to the affordable housing target date of 2011. The scheme requires a significant amount of social housing grant in order to succeed and Officers can confirm that during the last month the Housing Corporation have agreed to provide a further £2,058,000 of grant to enable the first phase of this scheme to go ahead.
- 3.7 As part of the preparation for the detailed planning application for Franklands Drive a local lettings plan has been drafted. This is an important part of the planning process for a large affordable housing scheme such as this as it will help to ensure that a balanced community is achieved. The Committee is therefore asked to comment upon the proposed plan in Appendix 'B' and authorise the Director of Housing and Community Services, in consultation with the Chairman of Housing and Community Services Committee to authorise the final plan.
- 3.8 Progress is also being made on the schemes at Roakes Avenue, Pretoria Road, Bridge Wharf, Chertsey and Sandhills, Virginia Water. For the last two sites (Sandhills/Bridge Wharf) 9 units have already been handed over and completion of several of the other units for these schemes is imminent.
- 3.9 The spreadsheet at Exempt Appendix 'A' has been designed to show schemes as either "new" i.e. where housing is being provided on sites where housing was not previously

provided or "replacement" i.e. where some existing units have been demolished to provide new units. The replacement schemes will provide housing that is of a significantly superior standard to that it replaces. Also, in schemes such as Roakes Avenue and Wapshott Road the new housing to be provided replaces flats with houses. However Government statistics require the Council to distinguish between the two. If performance is measured on new schemes alone then 239 units are currently capable of being delivered during the period 2006 – 2011.

- 3.10 There are also a number of new schemes that have planning consent and the potential for further affordable housing provision beyond 2011. These include the second phase of Pretoria Road (10 units), and further phases at Franklands Drive (236 units).
4. The National Performance Indicator for Affordable Housing and the Surrey Local Area Agreement
 - 4.1 The Government have introduced 23 Indicators on which Authorities are now required to provide information. There is a specific Performance Indicator (155) that requires the Council to report on the number of affordable homes that are delivered.
 - 4.2 The new Surrey Local Area Agreement also includes a specific target to increase the affordable housing provision across the County. District Authorities need to contribute to the delivery of this target which, Surreywide, requires 2,375 units to be produced. This target is based on gross provision and will include schemes that replace existing housing.
 - 4.3 Attached at Exempt Appendix 'B' are the estimates of Affordable Housing provision for the LAA for each of the Districts in Surrey. These were compiled much earlier in the year and, given the current difficulties in the housing market, some of the projections for later years of the programme may not come to fruition. However 194 units have been provided in Surrey for the first quarter of 2007/08.
5. Equality Impact Assessment
 - 5.1 The proposed local lettings plan for Franklands Drive must be supported by an equality impact assessment. An assessment will be undertaken and published.
6. Council Policy
 - 6.1 The provision of additional affordable housing is a Government, Regional and local priority. It is also a priority within the Council's Strategic Plan, Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy.
7. Resource Implications
 - 7.1 There are a number of schemes within the current programme that are without grant. Officers will continue to support Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to obtain grant from the Housing Corporation for these schemes and will inform the Committee where this is not possible.
8. Conclusions
 - 8.1 Although a range of different schemes are being progressed the downturn in the property market may mean that the Council's target to deliver 500 units over five years will be compromised. However Officers are working hard with RSLs and developers to progress those schemes that are already identified and it is currently estimated that 461 units could be made available during the life of the current programme.
 - 8.2 Progress is being made on the Franklands Drive scheme and a draft lettings plan has been drawn up for consideration.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that:

the Committee comments upon the local lettings plan for Franklands Drive, set out in Appendix 'B', and authorises the Director of Housing and Community Services in consultation with the Chairman of the Housing and Community Services Committee to approve the final plan.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

DHCS file for affordable housing schemes and Franklands Drive.

8. SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY CONSULTATION ON GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITE PROVISION IN THE SOUTH EAST (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- i) advise the Committee of the current distribution options for Gypsy and Traveller site provision within the South East; and
- ii) approve a response to the South East of England Regional Assembly's (SEERA) consultation exercise on their review of site provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 The Housing Act 2004 made it a statutory requirement for local authorities to undertake an assessment of the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers. Initially, the work was confined to research on the needs of gypsies and travellers, but, it was subsequently extended to include analysis of the needs of travelling showpeople.
- 2.2 Local Authorities are also required to ensure that provision for the accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers and showpeople is made within the Local Development Framework and must produce a Development Plan Document covering proposed arrangements to meet site requirements.
- 2.3 To establish the level of provision required the Council jointly commissioned a Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment (the GTAA). The assessment was undertaken by Dr Home from the Anglia Ruskin University. The study was funded by the four Boroughs of Runnymede, Spelthorne, Elmbridge and Woking and the final report, which was published in April 2007, estimated the future pitch requirements of each Borough.
- 2.4 The Government requires the South East Regional Assembly (SEERA) to review the needs assessments (the GTAA) that has been undertaken by the local authorities and the arrangements for provision across the whole of the south east. SEERA are also required to determine total pitch requirements at a regional level and then to allocate these between local planning authorities.
- 2.5 SEERA informed local authorities in December 2006 that, in addition to providing copies of the GTAA, they required authorities to provide advice on the required level of pitch provision for permanent and transit caravan sites and for Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople. This advice had to be submitted to SEERA by October 2007.
- 2.6 Arrangements were made to establish a Gypsy and Travellers Steering Group to formulate the advice for SEERA. Officers and Members from each of the four Boroughs and the County were included on the Steering Group, as were gypsy and showpeople representatives.

- 2.7 A copy of the final Advice that was submitted to SEERA in 2007 is available in the Members' Room. At this time the pitch requirement for gypsies and travellers (excluding show people) for the North Surrey area was estimated at 87 pitches.
- 2.8 It was not possible to reach a consensus with the Showmen's Guild over the number of pitches required for showpeople for North Surrey prior to the submission of the advice to SEERA, however, at this time the Guild were asking for between 24 and 32 pitches, although not all in the North Surrey area.
- 2.9 SEERA required that the advice submitted should contain at least two options for pitch distribution. The first option (A) was to assume pitch need would be met in the Borough where it arose. The second option (B) was to take into account 'planning principles' to reflect existing opportunities and constraints. Five basic principles were identified by SEERA to assist in the consideration of 'Option B'. The five principles were:
- Sustainability
 - Equity and Choice
 - Social Inclusion
 - Environmental Protection, and
 - Flexibility of provision.
- 2.10 The pitch distribution that was included for the October 2007 advice to SEERA is set out at Appendix 'C'. This has however been subsequently amended as set out below.
- 2.11 Following submission of the Advice to SEERA it became clear from comparisons made between individual Boroughs/Counties that there had been differences in the approach taken to the treatment of the information contained within the GTAA. The majority of Authorities had accepted their GTAA advice however some authorities had questioned the assumptions and made adjustments to their pitch requirements. There were a range of adjustments made and SEERA subsequently gave all Districts an opportunity to revise their GTAA results in the light of the new information.
- 2.12 One factor that other Authorities had included in their assessments that had not been included by Dr Home in the North Surrey study was an adjustment to the pitch requirement to take account of vacancies arising within the existing stock of sites. A meeting of the North Surrey Steering Group was held and it was subsequently agreed that adjustments should be made to the North Surrey advice to reflect the fact that these vacancies would help those identified as being in need.
- 2.13 The adjustments made for vacancies has led to a new estimate of pitch need from North Surrey of 44 pitches for gypsies and travellers and 22 for travelling showpeople. The distribution that results for the amended figure is as follows:

Option A

District	Pitch Number for Gypsies and Travellers	Pitch Number for travelling showpeople
Elmbridge	9	2
Runnymede	18	13
Woking	10	0
Spelthorne	7	7
Total	44	22

Option B

District	Pitch Number for Gypsies and Travellers	Pitch Number for travelling showpeople
Elmbridge	13	Option B was not sought for travelling showpeople
Runnymede	11	
Woking	11	
Spelthorne	9	
Total	44	

2.14 As indicated above SEERA originally asked the Districts to provide two options for pitch distribution of pitch numbers (A and B). However, at the March 2008 meeting of the SEERA plenary a report was received that argued for a wider range of distribution options for the following reasons -

- The pitch requirement at County level for options A and B were identical and did not offer an alternative option. To meet procedural requirements for the review SEERA must offer reasonable alternatives for consultation.
- DCLG guidance actively promotes the widening of responsibility for pitch provision and the A and B options did not address this. With these options Surrey and Kent, who currently have 52% of the region's pitches, would provide 48% of the requirement.

2.15 A further two pitch distribution options have therefore been proposed by SEERA i.e. options C and D:

Option C allows for 50% of the pitch need that is generated within the region to be redistributed across all Districts on the basis of available land (free of major environmental constraints) and population forecasts for 2016.

Option D is very similar to Option B but proposes that the redistribution is for 25% of the pitch need.

2.16 The resulting distribution for Surrey of the above options for gypsies and travellers (not showpeople) is as follows:

County grouping and Authority	Option A Need as arises	Option B Local sustainability	Option C 50% reallocated	Option D 25% reallocated
Elmbridge	9	13	11	12
Epsom & Ewell	7	6	7	7
Guildford	32	33	19	26
Mole Valley	7	6	6	6
Reigate & Banstead	4	8	8	8
Runnymede	18	11	8	9
Spelthorne	7	9	7	8
Surrey Heath	20	19	13	16
Tandridge	10	8	7	7
Waverley	39	39	23	31
Woking	10	11	9	10
Surrey	163	163	118	140

2.17 The pitch provision for showpeople is given in the table below. Although there was no option B distribution for travelling showpeople an option B is proposed for 42 families that have no geographic link with a particular borough. The resulting distribution for travelling showpeople is:

County grouping and	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
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Authority	Need as arises	With 42 families	50% reallocated	25% reallocated
Elmbridge	2	1	2	2
Epsom & Ewell	1	0	2	1
Guildford	15	1	9	12
Mole Valley	0	0	1	1
Reigate & Banstead	4	1	3	4
Runnymede	13	0	7	10
Spelthorne	7	0	4	6
Surrey Heath	10	0	6	8
Tandridge	4	0	3	4
Waverley	2	0	2	2
Woking	0	0	1	1
Surrey	58	3	40	51

2.18 Distribution proposals have not been formulated for transit site provision. SEERA has proposed that Regional policy should encourage a wide-ranging approach to meeting transit requirements and not just formal site provision, including tolerated stopping places and a proportionate approach to enforcement.

3. Report

3.1 Having received the advice from each of the Districts and formulated the options SEERA is now required to consult on the options before determining the final level of pitch provision to be made in each area. The consultation process will be conducted over a period of 12 weeks from 1 September to 21 November and will take a range of forms. It will include;

- Opinion polling
- 3-4 stakeholder workshops
- Direct work with gypsies and travellers
- 1:1 sessions on GTAA/Advice issues where appropriate

3.2 A copy of the consultation document is appended as Appendix 'D' (i). It invites responses on two main issues:

- The proposed number of new spaces for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people in the South East.
- Four options for dividing how many pitches go into each council area.

3.3 The Council is invited to respond to the consultation and a draft reply (Appendix 'D' (ii)) will be circulated to Members on 8 September. Members' views are sought on the proposed content of the response.

3.4 It should be noted that this matter is to be considered by both the Housing and Planning Committees, and therefore, changes will be needed to take account of the views of both. In view of this it is recommended that the Director of Housing and Community Services in consultation with the Chairmen of Planning and Housing and Community Services Committees be authorised to approve the final response.

4. New Site Provision

- 4.1 The Government is urging local authorities not to wait for the outcome of the Regional Assessment of pitch requirements. It has made it clear in a report¹ that "all local planning authorities where there is a demonstrable need for site provision – including those in regions where a Regional Spatial Strategy has not yet allocated pitch numbers to each local planning authority – should give serious consideration to proceeding with a development plan document now."
- 4.2 Furthermore, a letter was received from Iain Wright MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, on the 28 July in which he was urging local authorities to move into a new phase of delivering an increased number of pitches in order to reduce the amount of unauthorised camping which takes place.
- 4.3 Officers are currently developing The Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) which will include a strategic policy on Gypsies, Travellers and travelling populations. A draft consultation version of the Core Strategy is anticipated early in 2009 with final adoption in late 2010. A Housing & Commercial Sites DPD which will include the specific provision and allocation of sites for Gypsies, Travellers and travelling populations is programmed to start later this year. The anticipated adoption date for this DPD is October 2011. In the interim it is proposed to explore different options for provision including the following:
- i) Extension of existing authorised sites;
 - ii) Authorisation of existing illegal encampments;
 - iii) Provision within new areas.
5. Council Policy
- 5.1 The Council's current strategic plans do not cover the issues identified within this report but future plans will make appropriate references to these needs.
6. Resource Implications
- 6.1 The Runnymede share of the cost of the consultants fees for the travellers and showman survey was £27,000 (paid in 2007). There has been a considerable amount of Officer time devoted to this process. Government grant of £8,475 was received in 2007 towards the cost of the needs assessment process.
- 6.2 Additional pitch provision may well generate a need for new resources and will need to be considered in detail once the location of proposed sites has been determined. The South East has £18 million of Government funding for 2008-2011 to help councils and housing associations provide new spaces and upgrade existing sites.
7. Equality
- 7.1 Gypsies and Travellers are classified as an ethnic minority group under the Race Discrimination Legislation.
- 7.2 The views of Gypsies and Travellers were taken into account during the GTAA process and Gypsy and Traveller representatives were also included on the Steering Group that provided the advice to SEERA. SEERA are arranging for Traveller Groups to be consulted as part of the current exercise and arrangements will also be made for them to be consulted in relation to the Runnymede DPD.

¹ The Road Ahead: Final Report on the Independent Task Group on Site Provision and Enforcement for Gypsies and Travellers, published in December 2007

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 The Council is being asked to comment on the proposed number of pitches for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people in the South East. It is also being asked to comment upon four options for the distribution of Gypsy and Traveller pitches. A draft response will be circulated prior to the meeting and Members are invited to propose any amendments or additions to this.
- 8.2 The Council is also being urged to identify opportunities for specific site provision and therefore arrangements are being made for a Development Plan Document to be compiled.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that:-

- i) Members note the content of the consultation documents and the proposed response and suggest amendments/additions; and**
- ii) the Director of Housing and Community Services in consultation with the Chairmen of the Housing and Community Services Committee and the Planning Committee be authorised to approve the final response to SEERA.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

DHCS files for GTAA and gypsy and traveller site advice

9. FINANCIAL MONITORING STATEMENT (DF)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 **To inform the Committee of the latest financial projections for the 2008/09 financial year for Housing Services and Community Services.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 The Financial Monitoring Statement was introduced to all Committees in September 2006 to inform Members of the current financial position of the services under the remit of each Committee. This Committee receives two statements, one for Housing services and the other for Community services.
- 2.2 Each statement reflects an updated position based upon the 2008/09 original estimates approved by this Committee in January. The Financial Forecast previously approved by Council on 1 November 2007 has now been updated to reflect changes made during the updating of the Council's Revenue estimates.

3. Financial Monitoring Statements

- 3.1 The two statements at Appendices 'E' & 'F' are split into three distinct parts:
- Projected budget and forecast
 - Savings still to be delivered
 - Current year key budget indicators
- 3.2 The projected budget and forecast sections show the anticipated variations in the current year's budget. These variations are categorised as approved changes and other potential changes. Implications for the following three years are included for completeness so that the full-year effect of any changes can be seen.
- 3.3 The achievement of the revenue reductions programme approved by the Council is one of the Council's key performance indicators. Savings targets not yet achieved are

reported in the second section of each statement. These savings are all incorporated into the projected budget and forecast figures in section one.

- 3.4 The final section sets out the key budget indicators for the significant areas of this Committee's budget. This indicates the actual income received set against the amount expected (the budget) for the period covered by each statement.
4. Savings Targets
- 4.1 At its meeting on 26 June 2008, the Corporate Management Committee resolved that a report be prepared for all service Committees requesting them to consider savings proposals for those areas of required savings within their budget which they had not yet achieved. This would include looking at possible alternative methods of achieving savings.
- 4.2 A statement of the progress towards the achievement of the £2.6 million revenue reductions is at Appendix 'G'. This shows that from the planned savings of £2,623,000 the Council had achieved £2,072,000 by the end of 2007/08. Some of the savings were not programmed to be fully achieved until 2008/09 and when these are taken into account the final savings total is expected to be £2,415,000 (shown in the last column of the statement).
- 4.3 Planned savings of £87,000 were identified for the housing services and £182,000 for community services giving a total of £279,000 to be achieved. The total planned savings figure for community services has been exceeded by £10,000. The housing total is £10,000 below that projected and the reasons for this are explained below.
- 4.4 It should also be noted that the statement only documents the progress on the savings initiatives in the original target list drawn up in March and September 2005. It does not include other subsequent saving initiatives. These include the savings achieved by bringing back inhouse the transport services. In the first year of service (2006/07) this initiative delivered savings totalling £52,000 i.e. £21,000 for dial a ride and £31,000 for community transport.
- 4.5 As indicated above it was not possible to achieve one of the more significant proposed housing savings. The element that remains undelivered relates to additional fee income from increases in fees for the Care and Repair service, provided for vulnerable older people and the disabled. It was thought that the Council might be able to increase the current fee rates for this service to obtain an additional £10,000 in income. However, when benchmarking with other Surrey Districts was undertaken it became clear that the Council's current rates were already amongst the highest in Surrey. Officers also became concerned about the impact of raising fees on grant take up, particularly as in the last year there had been a down turn in the number of successful grants.
- 4.6 Overall the performance on savings reductions has been very good with the total savings target of £279,000 for this Committee having been achieved, plus additional subsequent savings.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None stated

10. 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. This appointment was considered at the June meeting when it was agreed to defer this matter until now.

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.

Former Councillor Ms D V Clarke represented Housing and Community Services and Councillor Mrs E Gill was appointed in June to represent 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

11. 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.

a)	<u>Exempt Information</u>	<u>Para</u>
12.	QUEEN ELIZABETH HOUSE AND ST JUDE'S COTTAGE	3
13.	77 WOODHAM LANE, NEW HAW	2, 3, 6
14.	CARE ASSISTANT POST AT THE ORCHARD DAY CENTRE	1, 2, 3
b)	<u>Confidential Information</u>	

(No reports to be considered under this heading)