



15 April 2009

Dear Councillor

I hereby summon you to attend the meeting of the Council to be held on **Thursday 23 April 2009 at 7.30 pm** in the Council Chamber at the Civic Centre, Addlestone.

I am, Sir/Madam,  
Your obedient servant

P Sims  
Interim Chief Executive Officer

## **A G E N D A**

1. FIRE PRECAUTIONS

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

2. MINUTES

To approve and sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 10 March 2009 (page 802).

3. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 Clerk at the start of the meeting. A supply of the form will also be available from the Clerk at the meeting.

6. SPEAKING OR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 12

7. PETITIONS

To receive Petitions under Standing Order No 10.

8. QUESTIONS

To answer questions asked under Standing Order No 13.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

To consider the following recommendations from the Corporate Management Committee held on 2 April 2009. The Minutes of this meeting have not yet been finalised and therefore only the specific recommendations are set out below for Members' consideration.

**Corporate Management Committee – 2 April 2009**

a) **Civic Offices Reprovision – Financial Summary – Safer Runnymede Equipment Budget Costs**

The Committee received a recommendation from the Civic Offices Reprovision Sub-Committee which at its meeting on 18 March 2009, had considered a financial summary of the new Civic Offices project and had been pleased to note that the total expenditure for the new Civic Offices was forecast to be within the approved budget. As part of this summary, the Sub-Committee had considered the costs of the project which were associated with Safer Runnymede. The costs of fitting out the Safer Runnymede control room and installing fibre-optic cabling into the control room had been included within the construction costs of the Civic Offices Reprovision main scheme. The remaining costs of equipping the control room had been met from a separate capital budget which had been estimated to total £553,000 (including a supplementary capital estimate of £86,800 and a virement of £6,200). In addition, as had always been anticipated, contributions had been received from the Runnymede Crime and Disorder Partnership (£10,000) and from the Safer Surrey Community Fund (£29,800). The Sub-Committee noted the full position on the Safer Runnymede equipment capital budget.

The total expenditure on the Safer Runnymede equipment budget was expected to be £613,478, which was £60,478 more than the approved capital budget of £553,000. The Sub-Committee had agreed to recommend that this be accommodated by a virement from the underspent budget for the new Civic Offices. £39,800 would be financed from the relevant contributions that had been received and the balance of £20,678 could be financed from capital receipts. The Corporate Management Committee concurred with this course of action.

**RECOMMEND that –**

**a virement of £60,500 from the new Civic Offices budget to the Safer Runnymede equipment budget to cover the additional cost of Safer Runnymede equipment be approved, to be financed from contributions received of £39,800 and capital receipts of £20,700.**

b) **Equality Policy and Action Plan**  
**(Ref: Minutes of Corporate Management Committee, 31 January 2008, page 714, para. 512).**

The Committee considered a revised Equality Policy for the Council (at Appendix 'A' attached and including Appendices '1' and '2' of Appendix 'A') and noted progress in respect of the Council's existing Equality Policy and Action Plan (shown in Appendix '3' of Appendix 'A' attached). The Equality Policy had been updated to ensure compliance with Level 3 of the Equality Standard and to revise the schedule for service reviews. Appendix '2' of the policy which listed local groups that were in regular contact with various sections of the authority or could be contacted by service managers for input into developing services or equality impact assessments would be updated. It was also agreed that the Action Plan at Appendix '3' should be amended to include age equality as one of the Council's functions and policies which needed to be reviewed. (However, this is in fact the outturn on the old Policy before age equality was a requirement).

The Council's Equality Policy incorporated the statutory requirements to promote equality as defined by the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended in 2005) and the Equality Act 2006. The equality duties also required public authorities to screen all functions, policies and practice for likely impact on equality. Where

these were considered to have a different impact on different groups of people, Equality Impact Assessments (EIA), had to be conducted in order to assess that impact on minority groups. The Council had to monitor recruitment, training, promotion, disciplinary hearings and grievances in relation to different groups of staff and report on whether minority groups were fairly represented at each stage, to monitor service provision to ensure that all elements of the community were able to access services equally and, where this was not the case, to take action to find out why and improve access whenever possible, to train staff and Members adequately in equalities, to consult relevant community groups to establish the likely outcome of the changes to service provision and to allow for challenge of the impact assessments, to publish the results of impact assessments and consultation annually and to review the policy and function list on a three-yearly basis.

The Equality Standard brought together the requirements of various pieces of legislation which were noted by the Committee. The Council had received external accreditation to Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government in June 2006. Level 2 acknowledged that the Council had an equality scheme and had begun to engage in impact assessment and consultation. The standard contained five levels of achievement. The Council had made a commitment to achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard by March 2009. The external document assessment had been completed and the peer challenge (which would have Member involvement) was the next stage. The cost of the peer challenge would be approximately £3,000 which could be met from existing budgets. Level 3 of the standard placed a greater weight on the development of a participation and consultation strategy (which had been incorporated in the policy) and ensured that equalities targets and objectives were reflected in service plans. The Committee agreed that Level 3 was worth pursuing so that the Council could demonstrate its commitment to equalities in its provision of services to avoid allegations of discrimination, to assist in meeting the requirements of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment targets, and so that a positive outcome would result from the resources which had been expended to reach this stage. The equalities standard was being changed in April 2009 and would be reduced to three levels. The current standard was valid until the end of September 2009. As a Level 3 authority, the Council would be classed in Level 2 of the new standard.

The Council monitored statistics relating to gender, disability and ethnicity in terms of staff recruitment, training, grievance, discipline and promotion. These were reported in the Annual Pay and Workforce Plan and a summary was being posted on the internet. The Council was required to collect and analyse statistics to give a picture of the numbers of people from different backgrounds using its services, but this was not yet achieved consistently across the authority. The data was essential for undertaking meaningful impact assessments, but required resources for analysis. Officers hoped to develop a survey that could be sent to all service users corporately and, once analysed, individual departments could then build on that data when conducting service-specific surveys. The Council monitored ethnicity in relation to people requesting housing allocations and those on the housing waiting list as was required by the statutory code of practice for housing. Ethnicity data had also been collected on a 3- yearly basis under the former Best Value regime in relation to the Benefits, Development Control and Housing services. The Council had a racial incident reporting form available for Officers. Harassment and hate crime were categories on the anti-social behaviour form, which was available on the internet. Any such instances were passed to the police, who had a separate unit dealing with hate crime. Annual figures were also reported in the Council's performance indicators. Membership of the Council's residents' panel was being reviewed as a number of original panel members no longer wished to participate. As the panel did not reflect the current demographic profile of the Borough, positive action would be taken to encourage residents from black and minority ethnic (BME) populations and those with a disability to participate. This might assist in identifying improvements in perceptions of service provision by different ethnic groups or people with disabilities.

Twenty six Council functions had been the subject of Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) since 2006. These had been reviewed by the Council's Equality Working Group and were published on the Council's website. Departmental targets, developed from the requirements of the legislation, the Equality Standard and the EIA's completed to date, had been incorporated into new departmental Equality Action Plans. Progress against these Equality Action Plans would be reported along with the service plans that were reviewed at service committees.

There were also some corporate targets which were repeated in each departmental action plan and reflected the employment and data collection requirements of equality legislation, including improved data collection and monitoring, identifying the best forum for consulting minority groups where there appeared to be gaps in the take-up of Council services, ensuring that decisions about changes to policy or new policy were made with reference to a completed Equality Impact Assessment, and identifying the extent to which the Council's workforce reflected the demographic profile of the Borough.

The Council was committed to equality training at every level of the organisation and the Equality Standard emphasised the importance of political and managerial leadership in ensuring that equality issues were taken into consideration. All staff were receiving equality awareness training and there was a plan to implement additional training for those staff involved in implementing departmental action plans. Two training sessions for Members had been held on 17 March, also attended by Officers involved in policy development. The Equality Policy and Action Plan was given to every member of staff during staff training and was being passed on as new staff were recruited. It was also available on the internet, along with guidelines for undertaking impact assessments and services for translation and interpretation that were available locally. The policy had been reviewed with each departmental management team and Directors received regular updates about progress. Section heads were invited to workshops to undertake Equality Impact Assessments in line with the timetable set out in the policy.

Membership of the Council's Equality Working Group had been extended to members from the local Disability Board, religious groups, black and minority ethnic groups, Surrey County Council, St Peters Hospital, the PCT and Royal Holloway University. This enabled objective challenge to the impact assessments presented by services. The Council had taken out a subscription to Woking Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS) so that people who did not understand written or spoken English had access to translation services.

The implementation of the impact assessment process continued to require section heads' time to review existing policies and practice and gain information about whether their delivery had an adverse effect on any minority group. In the longer term, the process of equality impact assessment should be integrated into the normal process of policy development and reported on under the equality section of the standard Committee report format. However, the initial review of policies was time-intensive, as it required a new way of working and often additional research. The Council's equality impact assessment tool had been slightly refined as the Council's external accreditation report for Level 2 noted that more needed to be done to identify adverse impact.

UNISON considered the revised Equality Policy to be balanced and achievable, provided that sufficient resources were given to the process, and commitment to the policy was demonstrated at all levels of the authority. The Committee appreciated UNISON'S positive comments and their contribution through participation in the Equality Working Group.

**RECOMMEND that –**

- i) the amended Equality Policy set out at Appendix 'A' be approved, subject to Appendix '2' of the policy being updated;**
- ii) progress against the action plan at Appendix '3' be noted; and**
- iii) Appendix '3' be amended to include age equality as one of the Council's functions and policies which need to be reviewed.**

10. PRESS AND PUBLIC TO BE EXCLUDED BY RESOLUTION

To move, if appropriate, the exclusion of the press and public for the following item, in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

11. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS - EXEMPT

To consider any recommendations which relate to exempt business.