

# Housing and Community Services Committee

Wednesday 14 January 2009 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, Administration and Leisure Department, Runnymede Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel: Direct Line: 01932 425623). (Email: [malcolm.white@runnymede.gov.uk](mailto: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](http://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**

### **PART I**

#### **Matters in respect of which reports have been made available for public inspection**

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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.**

- a) Exempt Information
13. "RENTSTART" 16
- b) Confidential Information
- (No reports to be considered under this heading)

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 benefit on Housing and Council Tax. 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> .
CLG	Communities and Local Government. Government department responsible for local government and housing functions. See the CLG website at <a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk">www.communities.gov.uk</a> .
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.
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.
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.
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.

HOMES AND COMMUNITIES AGENCY (HCA)	This is the National Housing Agency for England. It is a Government Agency and has replaced the Housing Corporation.
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.
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 entitled to bid for Social Housing Grant. The RSL is established for the purpose of the provision, construction, improvement or management of social housing and is a not for profit organisation.
RTB	Right to Buy. The regulations that allow Council tenants to purchase the freehold or leasehold of their home.

SAP	Standard Assessment Procedure. This is the Government's procedure for assessing the energy efficiency of a property.
SHG	Social Housing Grant. This is the main public subsidy paid to Registered Social Landlords by Central Government, through the Homes and Communities Agency to finance new homes. It can be used to pay for rented schemes as well as low cost home ownership schemes.
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.
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.

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 20 November 2008. These Minutes were included in the December 2008 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. REVENUE ESTIMATES FOR 2009/10 (DF)

Members are asked to consider the draft Revenue Estimates for 2009/10.

A budget is the expression in financial terms of the Council's policies over the next year and is a statement of intention against which achievement can be compared. The main objectives of budgeting are:

- Satisfaction of statutory requirements
- Determining the amount which needs to be raised from Council Tax or rents
- Assisting in the planning and policy making process

- Policy implementation and control
- A means of measurement, and
- Strategic planning

The report is attached as Appendix 'A'. This Appendix is circulated separately with the Agenda to Members of the Committee and appropriate Officers only. The Estimates are separated into the following sections:

- i) Housing Revenue Account (Annex '1', pages 1 - 36);
- ii) General Fund Housing Services (Annex '2', pages 37 - 62);
- iii) Community Services (Annex '3', pages 63 - 93); and
- iv) Current and proposed fees and charges (Annex 4, pages 94 - 99).
- v) Assumptions used in setting the budgets for 2009/10 (pages 100 - 103)

The Officers' Recommendation covers all the above service areas.

**OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -**

- i) the Probable Outturn for 2008/09 and draft Revenue Estimates for 2009/10 be approved as submitted and the Corporate Management Committee be requested to make provision accordingly; and**
- ii) the proposed increases in rents and charges for 2009/10, as set out in Annex '4' to the Estimates, be approved to be effective either from the first rent week of April 2009 or 1 April 2009 as appropriate.**

**(TO RESOLVE)**

Background Papers

1. Draft Housing Revenue Account (Item 8) and Draft Housing Revenue Account Subsidy Determinations 2009-2010: (DCLG) dated 28 October 2008.
  2. Housing Revenue Account (Item 8) and Housing Revenue Account Determinations 2009-2010 (DCLG) dated 18 December 2008.
  3. Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Circular HB/CTB S4/2008, dated September 2008.
7. PRIVATE SECTOR STOCK CONDITION SURVEY AND STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT (DHCS)
1. Purpose of Report
    - 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the findings of the recently conducted research on private sector stock condition, housing needs and the housing market.**
  2. Background Information
    - 2.1 Under the Local Government Act 2003, the Council is required to compile a Housing Strategy and this must be based on an assessment of current housing conditions in the Borough and the level of need for housing. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order of 2002 also requires Local Authorities to publish a Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy which should be based upon, and supported by, information on local stock condition.

- 2.2 The Government also expect local authorities to undertake a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) as part of its preparation and formulation of the Local Development Framework. The SHMA process is defined by Government practice and guidance and is designed to capture and address the whole housing market. It has a much wider aim than the previous Housing Needs Surveys that were undertaken but does draw upon housing needs information.
- 2.3 At the meeting of this Committee in November 2007 it was agreed that the Council should commission a comprehensive housing research project that covered the Government's requirements for Private Sector Stock Condition Surveys, Housing Market Assessment and Housing Needs. Subsequently, tenders were received for the project and Fordham Research were commissioned to undertake the work.
3. Report
- 3.1 Fordham Research have now produced their final reports. There are four separate documents:
1. Private Sector Stock Condition Report - The report assesses the current condition of private housing in Runnymede against legislative/Government standards.
  2. Strategic Housing Market Assessment - This report comprises three elements:
    - a) Compact Report - This report gives an overview of all the findings.
    - b) Supporting Report - This report gives a detailed analysis of findings for specific topics eg migration and the housing market.
    - c) Analysis of Household Survey Data - This report is similar to the Housing Needs Survey reports produced in the past and shows the level of demand in Runnymede for different types of housing.
4. Private Sector Stock Condition
- 4.1 A copy of the full Private Sector Stock Condition Survey report has been placed in the Members' Room and is available separately if Members so require. The Executive Summary of the report is attached at Appendix 'B' together with Chapter 13 from the main report which outlines the conclusions and policy implications.
- 4.2 The Council is required to take action to deal with unsatisfactory housing conditions where these are such that they fail set standards. The current principle standards are the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (introduced by legislation in 2006), the Decent Homes Standard and standards for houses in multiple occupation (HMO). Although the assessment against the Decent Homes Standard has largely been focussed on social housing stock, the Government does expect local authorities to take steps to reduce the numbers of properties failing the standard in the private sector.
- 4.3 The most significant findings on stock condition within the report are as follows:
- i) It is estimated that around 21.3% (6,000) Private Sector dwellings have a Category 1 hazard as assessed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HH&SRS). A category 1 hazard is the highest level of risk to the health and safety of occupants. The 21.3% frequency is slightly below the estimated average figure for England. The most common category 1 hazard was risk from excessive cold followed by the risk of falls on stairs.
  - ii) It is also estimated that 33.6% of dwellings in the Private Sector fail the Decent Homes Standard. This figure is slightly below the national estimate of 37.5% of homes.
  - iii) Virtually all HMO buildings within Runnymede have basic amenities but there are a number of dwellings where facilities are shared and in a number of properties

further improvements are required to fire detection systems (within 3.5% of HMOs).

- iv) The average SAP rating for the Private Sector in Runnymede is 52 and higher than national figures (which average 47).
  - v) Overall the private rented sector and mobile homes recorded the worst stock condition results.
- 4.4 Generally the survey has indicated that Runnymede shows better dwelling conditions than those found nationally. However, there is still a significant level of works/repairs required to bring the poorer private sector stock up to the necessary standards.
- 4.5 The Survey findings will be used to prepare the Private Sector Renewal Strategy and the Private Sector Grants Policy. The information should also be considered in the context of the Council's Energy Efficiency Policies.
- 4.6 The Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) 2002 gave the Council the power to customise its financial assistance for private sector homeowners and allows the Council to consider a range of measures. In forming any grant policy, the Council will have to have regard to the following:
- i) The need to reduce the number of Category 1 hazards under the HH&RHS Standards.
  - ii) To increase the number of households living in Decent Homes, particularly vulnerable households.
  - iii) The need to reduce energy consumption and domestic carbon dioxide emissions under the 1995 Home Energy Conservation Act.
  - iv) The licensing requirements for HMOs as defined under the Housing Act 2004.
- 4.7 Officers will now concentrate on analysing the results and compiling both a Private Sector Renewal Strategy and Grants Policy that reflects the above requirements.
5. Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- 5.1 Copies of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment reports have been placed in the Members' Room and are available separately from Officers on request. Attached at Appendix 'C' is the Executive Summary from the Compact report and the household survey and Chapter 8 of the Compact Report which outlines the issues for future policy debate.
- 5.2 The main findings of the SHMA are as follows:
- i) Population growth and average house prices in Runnymede exceed the national average.
  - ii) There are very significant differences in the weekly cost of market housing and social housing and between the cost of renting privately and buying at the bottom of the market.
  - iii) There is a net inflow of households into Runnymede and births within Runnymede exceed deaths leading to an overall growth in population.
  - iv) The need for additional affordable housing is acute and on the revised Housing Survey information it is estimated that 541 new affordable homes are required per annum. This is marginally higher than the previous Housing Needs Survey findings.
  - v) Analysis was undertaken of the supply of overall housing and an assessment made of what was needed to achieve a greater balance of tenures. The conclusion was that there is a need for a mix of 60% market and 40% affordable housing.

- vi) The report concludes that there is scope for more intermediate housing (40%) to be supplied as affordable housing. However the report makes it clear that the intermediate housing would need to be available at specific weekly costs if it is to be affordable to those in need.
- vii) For new supply it is estimated that about a third of market housing should be semi detached and 22% flats/ maisonettes.
- viii) Almost 60% of new market housing should be 2 bed and almost a quarter 3 bed: the requirement for 1 and 4 bedroom accommodation in the private market is small.

5.3 The analysis of the report on household survey data (previously referred to as the Housing Needs Survey) indicated the following:

- i) 1,490 households in the Borough are currently living in unsuitable housing – the main reason being overcrowding, followed by health and/or mobility problems. However, the level of overcrowding recorded in Runnymede (at 1.7%) is lower than the national average (2.5%) and the regional average (2%).
- ii) Of the 1,490 households in unsuitable accommodation an estimated 586 could not afford suitable solutions in the private housing market without some form of subsidy.
- iii) It is estimated that on an annual basis there will be 237 newly forming households requiring affordable housing and a further 430 existing households are likely to fall in need of affordable housing.
- iv) It is estimated that annually there will be 178 affordable housing vacancies generated.
- v) Assuming that backlog of need is to be met over 5 years the gross annual requirement for additional affordable housing units is 541 units per year.
- vi) The data suggests that of the total additional affordable housing to be provided in Runnymede, 2% could be higher or lower equity intermediate housing products and 22% intermediate rented housing. The majority (76%) would therefore need to be social rented housing. This is in contrast to the findings in the SHMA which suggest that to achieve a range and balance of tenures within Runnymede 40% of all new housing should be intermediate housing. The Council will need to decide, as part of its overall Housing Strategy and affordable housing policies for the LDF, the extent of intermediate housing that is required.

## 6. Viability Assessment

- 6.1 In addition to undertaking a Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Government guidance (Planning Policy Statement 3 – PPS3) requires Local Authorities to undertake a viability assessment before establishing thresholds for the affordable housing policy within the LDF. This requirement was not clear when the SHMA was originally commissioned but has been reinforced by a recent public inquiry decision.
- 6.2 PPS3 states that the Council's target for affordable housing provision should reflect an assessment of "the likely economic viability of land for housing within the area." The viability assessment involves looking at the cost of providing housing within the Borough, assessing the potential sales income and then determining whether the level of affordable housing provision on sites is reasonable, given local housing factors.
- 6.3 The Council's current policy is that developments that comprise of 15 units or more, or on land of 0.5 hectare or more, should, wherever possible, provide 40% of the units as affordable housing. This target was set having regard to the level of demand for affordable housing within the Borough. However, Government guidance (PPS3) states that such a target should be underpinned by information that substantiates the policy and demonstrates its viability.

- 6.4 As Fordham Research were already commissioned to undertake the Strategic Housing Market Assessment it seemed appropriate that they should also undertake the viability analysis. This Assessment has now been commissioned but the results are not yet available. A separate report will therefore be provided once the research is complete.
7. Financial Implications
- 7.1 It was originally anticipated that by bringing three different elements of work together as one large research project a saving on the estimated cost of £100,000 could be made. A budget estimate of £80,000 was therefore set. However not all of the saving has been achieved and the final cost will be £90,120.
- 7.2 There is a further requirement for £10,200 for the viability analysis. This has been met from existing budgets (i.e. the housing redevelopment resource and planning consultancy).
8. Equality Impact Assessment
- 8.1 Both the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey and the SHMA have included an assessment of the requirements of BME groups. The findings contained in both reports will be taken into account when forming policy and undertaking equality impact assessments.
9. Conclusions
- 9.1 In line with Government requirements the Council has now completed the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey and Strategic Housing Market Assessment. These documents have provided valuable information for the Council to use in formulating future strategies and policies for housing within the Borough. The information will also be very important in the formulation of the Local Development Framework, revisions to the Housing Strategy and the allocation of resources within the Housing Capital Programme.

**(FOR INFORMATION)**

Background Papers

DHCS's file for Strategic Housing Market Assessment/Housing Needs Survey Report for Housing and Communities Services Committee November 2007.

8. AFFORDABLE HOUSING TARGET (DHCS)
1. **Purpose of Report**
- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee on the progress that has been made towards meeting 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 over a 5 year period i.e from December 2006 to December 2011.
3. Report
- 3.1 Attached at Appendix 'D' is a table that sets out the current affordable housing schemes that Officers are working with RSLs and developers to achieve. Since the target was set 130 units have been completed. Of these 62 were replacement units (i.e. they replaced existing affordable housing) and 68 were new units.
- 3.2 There are also currently 143 units under construction, and likely to be completed within the next 12 months. Of these 82 are replacement units and 61 new units.

- 3.3 When the existing affordable housing target was set it was anticipated that schemes such as those proposed for Franklands Drive, Safeways site, and the Civic Offices site Addlestone would have commenced. Unfortunately, due to market conditions and other factors this is not the case.
- 3.4 There are however some opportunities that are presenting themselves as a result of the downturn in the housing market. Officers have recently been approached by the Housing and Communities Agency (formerly the Housing Corporation) with proposals to extend the affordable housing provision at both Pretoria Road and Roakes Avenue by providing 63 Homebuy direct units (23 at Pretoria Road and 40 at Roakes Avenue). This will lead to an increase in affordable housing provision and help to offset the slow progress on other sites.
- 3.5 Officers are also making some tentative enquiries about the possibility of the Council making direct provision of affordable housing by establishing a Housing Company. However, there are complex and significant financial implications to such a move and a detailed examination of the issues will need to take place before any firm proposals can be contemplated.
4. Potential Impact of Viability Study on delivery of Affordable Housing
- 4.1. Over recent years the opportunities to make provision on the Council's own land have diminished and the cost of purchasing property in the open market has become expensive. The core mechanism for provision in recent times has therefore been through the use of Planning Policy to deliver units on private sites. The Council's current policy is to deliver 40% of units as affordable housing on private sites of 15 units or more or on sites larger than 0.5 of a hectare.
- 4.2 Section 6 of item 7 on this agenda outlines the work that is being undertaken to test the viability of the current planning policy. The findings from this study have the potential to impact significantly on the delivery of the affordable housing target. The study will determine the level of provision that it is reasonable for developers to make in the current market. If they conclude that provision at 40% is no longer financially viable then this could seriously affect affordable housing delivery. The results of the study are expected in early 2009 and a further report will be made to this Committee once the outcome is known.
5. Financial Issues
- 5.1 The Housing and Communities Agency have recently confirmed that they have approved a further £234,000 funding for the Freemantles scheme in Chertsey. This is welcomed and will ensure that all of the units on this site are delivered as social rented units.
- 5.2 As indicated at 3.4 above a grant application has also been submitted and accepted by the Homes and Communities Agency for the two sites at Pretoria Road and Roakes Avenue and will provide intermediate affordable housing in place of open market private sites.
- 5.3 Thames Valley Housing Association have also submitted a bid to the Agency for £700,000 towards the shared ownership units at St Ann's School site (now called Cascades) at Virginia Water. This has also been approved and should help to make these units more affordable to a wider range of applicants.

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 Sustainable Communities Strategy, the Housing Strategy and the Homelessness Strategy.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Progress on existing affordable housing schemes is good with 130 units now having been delivered against the affordable housing total.

7.2 The downturn in the market is causing both problems and opportunities. Schemes that it was hoped would come forward within the 5 year target period are being delayed, but unsold units are also coming forward from the private sector. However longer term delivery is still of concern and performance may be severely affected by the outcome of the viability study.

**(FOR INFORMATION)**

Background Papers

DHCS's project files for specific schemes.

9. OLDER PEOPLE'S INTEGRATED STRATEGY (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the revised Older People's Integrated Strategy for Runnymede.**

2. Background Information

2.1 The Audit Commission recommended in their document *Older People: Building a Strategic Approach*, published in 2004, that Local Authorities should work collectively with older people and other agencies on the production of an Older Persons' Strategy. It stated that "*developing a broad strategic approach to older people, or to an ageing population, can bring many benefits, both to older people themselves and for authorities and agencies. It can add focus and coherence as well as acting as a vehicle for making connections across services and organisations and for delivering services in new ways, by making better use of resources.*"

2.2 The Government also published a document entitled 'Excluded Older People' which stressed that joined up services are important to prevent older people from being isolated.

2.3 In response to the above, the Council produced a draft strategy in 2005. This was used as the basis for further consultation with the various agencies and older people themselves.

3. Report

3.1 The original draft strategy has now been reviewed and attached at Appendix 'E' is a revised draft strategy.

3.2 The document uses the information obtained by the County Council on trends in older people's requirements and adds to this the current position within Runnymede in relation to the various needs. Gaps in provision are also identified together with action points for the future.

3.3 The Council already provides a significant range of services for older people and its ability to provide more is extremely limited. However, there are benefits and improvements that can come from working more closely together with other agencies and these will be pursued.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 A number of the targets within the strategy can be implemented within existing budgets.
- 4.2 Many of the objectives in the strategy fall to other agencies and will require partnership work to deliver improvements.
- 4.3 Where proposals require additional resources, a further report will be brought to this Committee.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.1 The report considers minority groups who might have specific needs and high-lights that further research will be required to ascertain the extent of any specific measures that are needed.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 Older people represent a significant proportion of the population within Runnymede and it is important that the Council ensures that the services that are provided are integrated and planned. The attached Strategy sets out the needs of older people and matches these against current provision. It also identifies gaps in service and action points to meet them.

**OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –**

**the Committee approve the Older People's Integrated Strategy.**

**(TO RESOLVE)**

Background Papers

None

10. CHOICE BASED LETTINGS SCHEME - PROGRESS REPORT (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 **The purpose of the report is to advise Members of the progress made in respect of the implementation of the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Scheme.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 In September 2006 the Committee approved the establishment of a sub-regional partnership between Runnymede, Spelthorne and Elmbridge Councils, together with the Elmbridge Housing Trust and (the then) A2 Housing Group. The purpose of this partnership was the establishment of a Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Scheme to operate within the three boroughs.
- 2.2 Officers from the five partnership organisations formed a working group, and successfully applied for a £100,000 set-up grant from Department of Communities and Local Government, and over the past two years have been working towards the establishment and implementation of a joint scheme.
- 2.3 A project co-ordinator was appointed and a common banding and lettings policy was agreed. Runnymede Council had already adopted a banding system prior to the establishment of the partnership, and early last year amended its system to reflect the agreed common banding arrangements. This placed Runnymede ahead of its partner organisations, which at the time had yet to move from their existing points systems.
- 2.4 The last report on CBL was considered by this Committee in March 2008, when the Director of Housing and Community Services, in consultation with the Chairman, was

authorised to approve the formal partnership agreement between the five partner organisations and the formal award of the contract to the CBL Provider.

3. Report

- 3.1 Since March 2008 the focus has been on the move towards the Common Lettings Policy and Banding system and the appointment of the CBL provider.
- 3.2 As mentioned at 2.3 above, Runnymede had previously moved from a points based allocations system to a banding system, and so the transition to the common system was a relatively straightforward process which was achieved earlier in the year.
- 3.3 The latter part of 2008 saw the Partnership shortlist potential CBL Providers, and following an initial assessment of submissions, a series of interviews and site visits to see CBL schemes in operation, a preferred provider has been selected and the Officer Working group will now make a recommendation to the CBL Steering Group made up of Officers and Members from the five partners. A meeting of the Steering Group is scheduled for the 7 January 2009, and Officers will report the outcome verbally at the Committee meeting.

4. Financial Considerations

- 4.1 It is pleasing to report that the cost of maintaining the software required for a CBL scheme is within the Council's £10,000 budget. The set-up and first year costs can also be met by the balance from the CLG Grant and the sums provided by the Partnership, and year on year costs should be contained within the budget that each of the Partners have allocated to the scheme.

5. Legal Considerations

- 5.1 There is no legal requirement to establish a CBL scheme, however, there is an expectation from CLG that local authorities will implement schemes by 2010. The requirements of legislation; that local authorities house applicants from their registers and that priority be given to certain groups of applicants, are not compromised by the implementation of CBL.

6. Equalities

- 6.1 In principle, the introduction of a CBL scheme should not materially alter the outcome of the lettings process. Applicants in the higher bands will continue to be allocated homes ahead of those in lower bands, and CBL itself will neither increase nor decrease the supply of empty homes.
- 6.2 It does have to be recognised however that certain vulnerable groups, applicants who have literacy difficulties and also those for whom English is not their first language, may experience problems. Within the Partnership, Officers from Runnymede have been tasked with developing a policy/procedure in respect of such groups, and a common Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) will need to be developed.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 A number of significant steps have now been taken towards the establishment of a sub regional CBL scheme. The Partnership Agreement between the partners has been completed and the procurement process agreed and implemented. The selection of the CBL software provider is imminent and the Committee will be advised of the successful company.

**(FOR INFORMATION)**

Background Papers

None stated

11. 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	Authorisation for Officers to approve a contract with the County Council for the delivery of supported Housing Services (Sheltered Housing and Careline)	674

**(FOR INFORMATION)**

Background Papers

SO42 proforma no. 674 on Committee Section SO42 file.

12. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

If the Committee is minded to consider any of the foregoing reports in private it is the

**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) Exempt Information Para
13. "RENTSTART" 3
- b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)

