

Leisure and Environment Committee

Thursday 19 March 2009 7.30pm

**Council Chamber
Runnymede Civic Centre, Addlestone**

Members of the Committee

Councillors C J Norman (Chairman), M J Brown and Miss M N Heath (Vice-Chairmen), C J Chapman, A J Davis, Mrs M T Harnden, M T Kusneraitis, A M Moore, J W C Perschke and L C Pouyanne.

AGENDA

Notes:

- 1) 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.
- 2) 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 **Miss C Pinnock, Administration and Leisure Department, Committee Section, Runnymede Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel. Direct Line: 01932 425627). (Email: clare.pinnock@runnymede.gov.uk)**.
- 3) 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.
- 4) 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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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 22 January 2009, which were included in the March 2009 Minute Book previously circulated.

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. FINANCIAL MONITORING STATEMENT (DF)

(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, November 2008, Page 448, para 310)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the latest financial projections for the 2008/09 financial year for leisure and environmental 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.

2.2 Each statement reflects an updated position based upon the 2008/09 probable budgets and 2009/10 estimates approved by this Committee in January. The projection in the Financial Forecast approved by Council in December 2008 has been updated accordingly.

3. Report

3.1 The statement at Appendix 'A' is split into two parts:

- Leisure services
- Environmental services

Each statement is 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 any 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.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None stated.

7. CARELINE – VOICE RECORDER REPLACEMENT (DTS)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the replacement of the voice recorder which forms part of the Careline Call Answering System, at a cost of £11,500.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 The Safer Runnymede Control Centre has since 1997 received calls from the Careline clients in Runnymede and has performed this task in accordance with national standards. One of these is a requirement that all calls should be recorded.
- 2.2 All other parts of the 'Careline' system were replaced as part of the re-provision of the control centre.

3. Report

- 3.1 The existing voice recorder is now over ten years old. Parts are no longer produced and it is only being kept operational using parts taken from condemned machines by the supplier of the complete system, Jontek Ltd.
- 3.2 Provision for replacement was to be made as part of the new control room but at that time consideration was being given to a recording system for all Council calls. This was finally ruled out because of cost so it is now essential that replacement is considered as a matter of urgency.
- 3.3 The voice recorder is still an essential requirement for accreditation of the system which is vital to be able to take on additional business and generate increased income.
- 3.4 The recorder is capable of immediate replay which operators find useful when they have taken a call which is possibly faint and unclear as to the nature of the problem. Immediate replay enables them to ensure the correct, often emergency, action is taken.
- 3.5 The recorder must be purchased from the supplier of the other components of the Careline system which includes all the linking cabling. The current recorder is covered under the annual maintenance budget and the new machine would simply be a replacement.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 That calls are recorded is publicised to clients of the service and there is also a warning on the Council's web site. In the event of any enquiry the recordings would be

admissible in evidence and can help speedily form a judgement where, if any, fault may lie. All staff are aware of the recording and see it as protection for themselves.

5. Resource implications
- 5.1 The new system will cost £11,500 to purchase and install. There is currently no provision in the Capital Programme for this expenditure and the Committee will need to seek approval for a capital estimate accordingly.
- 5.2 The capital programme includes a sum of £55,100 in 2008/09 to provide for upgrades to systems and new initiatives. This budget is able to support this provision and could be used for the purchase if approved by Corporate Management Committee.
- 5.3 On-going annual maintenance costs will be approximately £2,000, which is £900 more than the current charge. This additional expenditure will be met from the additional income expected to be attained as a result of the upgrade to the system. Should this additional income not be forthcoming, the costs will be met from elsewhere in the Safer Runnymede budget.
- 5.4 Upgrading the system will allow additional income to be generated from third parties as a result of accreditation being achieved. It is anticipated that an additional £17,000 a year could be generated in this area.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

- i) **Corporate Management Committee be asked to approve a capital estimate for the purchase of a voice recording machine at a sum not exceeding £11,500;**
- ii) **this expenditure be met from the upgrade and new initiatives budget held in the Capital Programme;**
- iii) **the revenue consequences be noted; and**
- iv) **Standing Order C2 relating to the seeking of estimates be waived and Jontek Ltd supply the equipment, which shall be covered by their existing maintenance agreement within the existing contract, for the reasons given in paragraph 3.5.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated.

8. HEATHERVALE RECREATION GROUND – YOUTH SHELTER (DAL)
(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, June 2007, page 66, para 95)
 1. Purpose of Report
 - 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to update Members on the youth shelter trial at Heathervale Recreation Ground and to seek approval for its retention.**
 2. Background Information
 - 2.1 In June 2007 this Committee considered a proposal to install a youth shelter at Heathervale Recreation Ground, in New Haw, and an associated proposal to leave the pedestrian gates to the park open so that young people could access the shelter after normal park closing times. The report also described a public consultation exercise which had revealed a high level of concern amongst local residents for these proposals.
 - 2.2 Members noted the intention to apply for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) funding to pay for the shelter.

2.3 The Committee resolved that a youth shelter be installed and the pedestrian gates be left open for a trial period of six months and afterwards the findings would be considered.

3. Report

3.1 In June 2007 an application for CDRP funding was made through the Runnymede Community Safety Partnership and a grant of £6,000 was approved in November 2007. This covered the cost of the shelter and its installation.

3.2 In December 2007, Officers put together a selection of costed youth shelter options, from various suppliers. These were assessed and shortlisted with value for money and community safety in mind. In the early part of 2008 the shortlisted options were passed to youth groups and youth workers in the New Haw area and local young people were given the opportunity to indicate which of the shortlisted shelters they preferred.

3.3 In February 2008 a second funding application was made, this time to the Surrey County Council Local Committee for Runnymede for funding for a tarmac base for the shelter. A grant of £1,173 was approved later the same month.

3.4 The shelter preferred by the majority of local young people who expressed an opinion was ordered in early March. It then had to be fabricated and was delivered and installed in June 2008.

3.5 Once the shelter was installed the pedestrian gates to the recreation ground were left unlocked at the end of each day. The vehicle gates to the car park continued to be locked as usual.

3.6 The on-site parks staff were asked to monitor any changes in the amount of litter, graffiti and other vandalism following the installation of the shelter. Although there continued to be incidents of this sort in the recreation ground the staff report no discernable change in frequency or severity.

3.7 Safer Runnymede have studied reported crime and anti-social behaviour in the recreation ground and the local area before and after the installation of the shelter and their report is attached at Appendix 'B'.

3.8 The shelter is popular and well used. Young people have requested lighting so that they can use it safely during winter evenings. This request has been considered by the Joint Action Group and they recommend that low level lighting be installed and monitored for six months, in the same way that the shelter was, before a final decision is taken on whether lighting should become permanent. It is envisaged that a single lamp column, close to the shelter will be sufficient, but this requires further investigation.

3.9 Officers recommend that the lighting be installed in the late summer, so that the six month trial covers the winter period. It is also recommended that a timer switch be fitted so that the lighting can be switched off at a predetermined hour if necessary.

3.10 Residents will be informed of the outcome of the trial and the Council's decision.

4. Council Policy

4.1 These proposals address one of the aims of the Strategic Plan in respect of opportunities for young people which is to work with other agencies to identify areas of need and consult with young people to find out what they want and need in the way of facilities.

5. Resource implications

5.1 Providing lighting is expected to cost approximately £2,000 and external sources of funding will be considered. However, if these are not successful parks revenue budgets can be used.

- 5.2 The shelter has needed very little maintenance to date; the cost has been negligible and is adequately covered by existing parks revenue budgets.
6. Planning and Technical Considerations
- 6.1 The provision of street lighting by the Council is deemed to be 'permitted development' and as such does not require planning permission.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

- i) the youth Shelter at Heathervale Recreation Ground be retained on a permanent basis; and**
- ii) the youth shelter be lit for a trial period of six months and a further report be brought back to this committee at the end of the trial period.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None.

9. LONDON 2012 OLYMPICS – TASK GROUP (DAL)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to advise Members of work being undertaken to develop a task group within Runnymede to support an action plan developed to use the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics as a focus for local initiatives to encourage more participants in Sports and Cultural activities.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 The location of the 2012 Olympics in London provides a range of opportunities for the Borough to generate interest in Sports and Cultural Activities.
- 2.2 The Borough has already participated in the Olympic Handover event on 24 August 2008, held at the Egham Royal Show. Over 40 young people participated, handing over a flag, raised by the Mayor of Runnymede and subsequently flown outside the Civic Centre.
- 2.3 There are a number of events and programmes linked to the 2012 Olympics currently up and running nationwide including:
- Cultural Olympiad - a nationwide programme of activities and events.
 - "Children's Promise" - where every child born on 20 December 2004 will be able to participate in an event or ceremony linked to 2012.
 - Volunteers to help at the games.
 - "Inspire Mark" - projects and events which are non-commercial can use the inspire mark as a promotional tool.
 - 2012 Education Programme – this includes "Get Set" and "playground to podium" which offers opportunities for 3-19 year olds to participate in a range of activities and initiatives.
 - Business Network – identifying potential contacts and other business opportunities.

3. Report

- 3.1 The 2012 Olympics and Paralympics offer a range of opportunities for organisations and individuals to take part in events or new activities as identified in paragraph 2.3. In Surrey an Olympics Co-ordinator has been appointed to be the main contact for the

County and also to work with Districts and Boroughs in developing programmes and encouraging participation in them.

- 3.2 In Surrey there are a number of sites that have been identified as training camps of which one, St George's College, is based in Runnymede. The College is offering Hockey, Athletics and Archery facilities. There is also a strong possibility that Royal Holloway University in Egham will be the base for the athletes participating in the rowing and flat water canoeing at Dorney Lake.
- 3.3 Due to the possibility of a training camp and athletes village being based in the Borough the setting up of a task group to maximise the opportunities offered has been considered. The task group would form part of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and it is proposed that it would include a variety of partners, including representatives from the Borough Council, Sport Runnymede, Royal Holloway, Youth Service, Local Business and Education. Maximising Opportunities offered by 2012 is already a key action of the Services for Young people task group and it is envisaged that they can help deliver a number of the actions proposed for the stand alone group.
- 3.4 An action plan has been developed and is due to be presented to the next LSP meeting in March 2009. A copy of the action plan is attached at Appendix 'C', identifying specific actions and leads. Royal Holloway has been consulted on the plan as a key partner and is keen to progress setting up of the task group.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 There are no specific resource implications identified at the moment although this may change as events and activities are identified. Where possible, existing events will be initially targeted as opportunities to celebrate 2012 but there may well be a need to look at additional funding potentially through external sources.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

- i) subject to support from sufficient other partners, a 2012 task group be created for the purposes set out in the report; and**
- ii) two or three Members of the Committee be nominated to serve on the group.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None.

10. CHERTSEY MEADS MANAGEMENT LIAISON GROUP - CONSTITUTION (DAL)

The Committee is asked to approve two amendments to the Constitution of the Chertsey Meads Management Liaison Group.

At its last meeting, a proposal that Sustrans be represented by two persons instead of one, in line with representation from the Chertsey Society, Chertsey Agricultural Association and the residents' representative groups was made and approved, and a new member, who is a Sustrans Ranger, joined the Group accordingly.

Also members agreed that they would like to increase the number of meetings, which at the moment is only once a year. Initially, it was suggested that the Group met three times a year. However, the Chairman considered that one additional meeting was more reasonable, half-way through the year, in September. This was approved and the flexibility to arrange special meetings of the Group, to be convened as necessary, by the Chairman of the Liaison Group, was retained.

This means that the Liaison Group's constitution needs to be amended, which having gained the Group's agreement, is now subject to the approval of this Committee.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

the Constitution of the Chertsey Meads Management Liaison Group be updated to include two representatives from Sustrans, with immediate effect and to increase the number of scheduled meetings from one to two, to be held in March and September.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP – AFTERMATH GRAZING ON CHERTSEY MEADS (DAL)
(Ref: Minutes of the Leisure and Environment Committee, November 2008, page 449, para 311)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a proposal to extend the grazing of cattle on Chertsey Meads, under the Environmental Stewardship Scheme.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 Members were notified at the meeting of this Committee in November 2008 that the Environmental Stewardship scheme had been confirmed for Chertsey Meads. This attracted funding from Defra of £10,000 each year for the next ten years. It was agreed that Officers would put forward a programme of projects to utilise this sum in addition to its use for running costs.
- 2.2 Members will recall that Environmental Stewardship is an agri-environment scheme that provides funding to farmers and other land managers in England who deliver effective environmental management on their land. It is designed to build on the recognised success of the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme and the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.
- 2.3 The primary objectives of Environmental Stewardship are to:
- conserve wildlife (biodiversity)
 - maintain and enhance landscape quality and character
 - protect the historic environment and natural resources
 - promote public access and understanding of the countryside
 - protect natural resources
- 2.4 The secondary objectives of Environmental Stewardship are:
- genetic conservation
 - flood management
- 2.5 There are three elements to Environmental Stewardship:
- Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) provides a straightforward approach to supporting the good stewardship of the countryside. This is done through simple and effective land management that goes beyond the Single Payment Scheme requirement to maintain land in good agricultural and environmental condition. It is open to all farmers and landowners.
 - Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS) is the organic strand of ELS. It is geared to organic and organic/conventional mixed farming systems and is open to all farmers not receiving Organic Farming Scheme aid; and

- Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) involves more complex types of management, where land managers need advice and support, and agreements are tailored to local circumstances. HLS applications will be assessed against specific local targets and agreements will be offered where they meet these targets and represent good value for money.

3. Report

- 3.1 A Higher Level Stewardship agreement relating to Chertsey Meads was finalised and signed by the Council and Natural England in October 2008 and came into effect from November 2008. It is a ten year agreement which runs to 31st October 2018. It binds the Council to certain management prescriptions on the parts of the Meads covered by the agreement (parts are specifically excluded).
- 3.2 In return for managing the Meads in the prescribed way Natural England will make an annual payment to the Council of £10,237 during the term of the agreement.
- 3.3 The agreement divides the Meads into parcels of land based on the type of land and/or vegetation there: grassland, woodland, scrub, reed beds, fen etc. It then describes objectives for each parcel and prescribes management techniques designed to achieve them. For example; the objective for some parts of the grassland has been set as 'restoration of a species-rich, semi-natural grassland' and the agreement describes in detail the management techniques that need to be employed to make progress towards this objective and states how progress will be measured.
- 3.4 In general, the management techniques prescribed by the agreement are those already employed by the Council; cutting the grass for hay, cutting the reed beds biannually etc. As a result there will be little or no impact on these existing arrangements.
- 3.5 However, Natural England is very keen on grazing as a management technique for the grassland and the agreement has been drafted to reflect this. It looks for the existing aftermath grazing to be extended across the whole of the Meads in year two (Autumn 2010). Natural England has stated that it could not support a gradual increase in the size of the grazed area over a number of years (as has been discussed by the Liaison Group previously), as they feel the necessary fencing and gates would impact on the openness of the Meads, which they thought to be one of its key features. If the whole of the site is grazed, it is proposed that cattle grids would be introduced at exit points to keep the cattle in.
- 3.6 Aftermath grazing is a recognised management technique for this type of landscape and can be a very effective way of increasing biodiversity and thereby improving the nature conservation interest. It involves leaving the grass uncut until mid to late June when it is harvested as hay. Cattle are then introduced to graze the area until the Autumn. The technique helps to create a varied sward structure and creates gaps in the grass where wildflower seeds can germinate. Cattle are also very useful in controlling unwanted weeds such as bramble and nettle which they destroy by trampling. As soon as the ground becomes so soft that the risk of surface damage by the cattle is too great they are taken off site. It is expected that the number of cattle grazed would be between 10 and 20 initially, possibly increasing to 40 or 50 over a number of years. Exploratory discussions have taken place with a local farmer and he has expressed an interest in grazing special breed cattle, probably Sussex, on the Meads should the project proceed.
- 3.7 During February 2001 a grazing Sub-Group of the Chertsey Meads Management Liaison Group met and concluded that cattle grazing should initially be trialled for three years in the far south east corner of the site and this proposal was approved by the Chertsey Meads Management Liaison Group at their meeting on 13 March 2001. In June 2001 this Committee approved this trial and confirmed that it would need to approve any proposed extension.
- 3.8 Council Officers and Natural England expect some users and local residents to have concerns about this proposal and are hoping to address these by conducting a comprehensive survey to identify what these concerns might be and dealing with them early on. The agreement provides some funds to help with the costs of this survey. It is

also proposed to pre-empt any negative public reaction by issuing press releases and writing to local residents explaining the reasons for the grazing and highlighting the benefits which it is expected to achieve. This will be done in consultation with the Council's Communications Manager and in line with the Consultation protocol.

- 3.9 The Liaison Group has supported the proposal, provided that the cattle are contained by suitable fencing, where appropriate, and cattle grids installed to prevent the cattle from getting into Mead Lane or residential properties.
- 3.10 It was recognised that extended grazing will encourage a greater diversity of flora which although good in itself also helps the case for re-instating the SSSI status of the Meads.
- 3.11 Members should be aware that the cattle will be free to roam across the Meads for approximately three months of the year, over the Autumn and early Winter period. This includes the roads on the Meads and suitable signage to prevent motorists from driving too fast will need to be installed. This would be similar to the situation in the New Forest where horses and cattle roam freely and residents and visitors have got used to their presence and behave sensibly.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Natural England was aware that the Liaison Group and the Council might not support the proposal. Should that be the case the Environmental Stewardship agreement would need to be re-negotiated, which would most likely result in, an as yet unknown, reduction in the annual grant.
- 4.2 The Environmental Stewardship agreement also provides funding towards specific and approved capital projects, although it is not yet clear whether these funds will cover all the full costs.
- 4.3 The projects to receive funding during the first three years of the agreement are:
- conversion of one of the derelict brick structures to a hibernacula for bats
 - construction of an otter holt
 - scrub management
 - professional help with conducting a survey and preparing an implementation plan for extending the grazing

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

the proposal to extend aftermath grazing across the whole of Chertsey Meads be approved.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

Relevant correspondence with Natural England, Defra et al on DAL files held by the Parks and Amenities Manager.

12. CABRERA TRUST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – MINUTES (DAL)

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 January 2009 are attached at Appendix 'D'.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None.

13. ADDLESTONE LEISURE CENTRE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – MINUTES (DAL)

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 February 2009 are attached at Appendix 'E'.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None.

14. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following report under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the report in question would be likely to involve disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in the paragraphs 1, 3, and 4 of Part 1 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>Paras</u> |
|-----|--|--------------|
| 15. | EGHAM LEISURE CENTRE ALL WEATHER FOOTBALL PITCHES – PROPOSED LEASING AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS | 1, 3 and 4 |
| b) | <u>Confidential Information</u> | |
| | (No reports to be considered under this heading) | |