

Leisure and Environment Committee

Thursday 24 September 2009 7.30pm

**Council Chamber
Runnymede Civic Centre, Addlestone**

Members of the Committee

Councillors M J Brown (Chairman), Miss M N Heath and J J Wilson (Vice-Chairmen), A J Davis, Mrs M T Harnden, Mrs G M Kingerley, M T Kusneraitis, A M Moore, C J Norman and Ms G Warner.

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, 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.

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(No reports to be considered under this heading)

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 18 June 2009, which were included in the July 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, June 2009, page 85, para 104)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the latest financial projections for the 2009/10 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 on the 2009/10 original estimates approved by this Committee in January. The Financial Forecast previously approved by Council in December 2008 has now been updated to reflect changes made during the updating of the Council's Revenue Estimates.

3. Report

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

- Leisure services
- Environmental services

Each statement is subdivided 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 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. PLAY BUILDER FUNDING (DAL)
(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, June 2007, page 64, para 93 and November 2007, page 517, para 365)

1. **Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of 'Play Builder funding' for Surrey, the level of capital funding to be allocated to Runnymede and to seek approval of the projects it is proposed to provide with the funding.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 The Play Builder Programme is a funding stream from the Department of Children, Schools and Families which is offered to all local authorities. Surrey is part of the 'wave 3' funding and £1.1 million was allocated to the County, to be spent in the 2009/10 and 2010/11 financial years.
- 2.2 Play Builder funding has been allocated to the top tier authorities. Surrey is expected to work closely with Boroughs and Districts, who over recent years have developed local play strategies linked to the recent Big Lottery funding made available to all authorities.
- 2.3 The Big Lottery funding to Runnymede was used to provide two play areas in the new Hythe Park and the employment of an activities co-ordinator who runs the popular Runnymede Open Access Recreation (ROAR) scheme across the Borough.
- 2.4 The lead on the Surrey Play Builder bid is the Early Years Service and the County Officer responsible met with Districts and Boroughs through the Surrey Chief Leisure Officers Group to produce the applications for funding. A County and Borough group was set up to lead the project, which submitted an initial application for funding in February 2009 and the final application in April 2009.

3. Report

- 3.1 The £1.1m allocated to Surrey is to provide 22 new or replacement play spaces across the County focussing on facilities for 8 -13 year olds. The play spaces are expected to be attractive, accessible and innovative with an emphasis on natural play. This is defined as 'places where children and young people can enjoy spending time, be physically active, interact with the natural surroundings, experience change and continuity, take risks in an environment, where they feel safe and play in a variety of ways'.
- 3.2 Discussions regarding how the funding might be allocated took place through the Children and Young Peoples Commissioning Partnership Group which includes County and Borough representatives. It was decided that the best option was to split the funding equally so Runnymede would receive £100,000 for two projects of £50,000 each, which

is the maximum that can be applied for at each site. Authorities were also encouraged to look at other funding that could be used for the identified projects. This may include assigned Capital Monies, Section 106 funding, local community funding and external grants.

- 3.3 The choice of projects for Play Builder should be based on the need for improved or additional play facilities, at which point Officers will be required to:
- Carry out a spatial study of existing provision to highlight any significant gaps
 - Compare this with childhood population
 - Compare this with deprivation data including economic & rural deprivation such as heat maps using either (or in combination) IDAC and IMD
 - Identify why any sites that could potentially accommodate any additional provision are considered necessary
- 3.4 This Council's Open Space Strategy highlighted any significant gaps in provision and introduced a play area replacement programme which identified areas that would need upgrading or replacement in the future. In addition, a number of other requirements will need to be fulfilled in order for a project to be considered for funding. These are:
- Innovation and creativity – projects that enable children and young people to enjoy imaginative, challenging and stimulating play. This can be achieved through a combination of natural play, innovative play equipment and landscaping
 - Providing a public play space that meets the needs of local children and young people
 - Involving children and young people in developing, designing and bringing the play space into use
 - Consulting with and involving the wider community
 - Access – children should be free to come and go as they please from the site which is also free of charge
 - Safety – children should be able to travel safely to and from the play space and play safely at the site
 - Maintenance and protection against damage
 - Environmentally friendly – the play space will be environmentally sustainable
- 3.5 The requirements detailed above would be considered at the development, specification and tender stages.
- 3.6 The Play Builder Steering Group will decide which projects will be funded. The group is comprised of representatives from Surrey County Council, the Districts and Boroughs. A project manager has also been appointed to work with the Boroughs to ensure that all the information on specific projects is collected to meet the set criteria.
- 3.7 The funding allocated to Surrey will be provided in two stages, the first of which has been received already and the second is payable in 2010. It is important that the initial funding is spent so Boroughs have been asked to develop proposals for projects as soon as possible to ensure that enough are completed or started in this financial year. This is a challenging task which necessitates public consultation, the production of specifications, assessment of tenders and then to appoint contractors within a short period of time. The installation of play spaces is also weather dependent and with much of the work likely to take place in the winter this could delay the completion of some projects.
- 3.8 At the original application stage each authority was asked to identify a number of projects that could be considered for play builder funding. In Runnymede the following five were identified:
- Hamm Moor Play Area – Replacement
 - Thorpe Skate and Play Facility (Frank Muir Memorial Field) – New
 - Pooley Green Play Area – Replacement
 - Charta Road Play Area – Replacement
 - Bishops Way Adventure Equipment – New

- 3.9 Three of these projects are in or around Egham Hythe where considerable investment in new facilities in recent years has taken place, resulting in the new Hythe Park and Bishops Way improvements. There is also funding in the capital programme for the replacement of the Pooley Green Play Area as part of the previously approved Parks play area improvement programme, so further local development will be taking place over the next 12 months.
- 3.10 It is now likely that Hamm Moor Play Area will form part of a larger development as reported to Economic Development Committee on 17 September. Therefore, any refurbishment is not recommended until this is resolved and Officers consider that another site should be identified. The focus on Addlestone Bourneside Ward with the original application was due to the relative level of deprivation in the Ward compared to other areas in Surrey and Officers would therefore wish to look at additional facilities at Aviator Park, Victory Park or Sayes Court.
- 3.11 The Thorpe project is one that has already been partly progressed and was reported to this Committee in June 2007. The initial project to install skate park equipment has received local support from residents, young people and Councillors. It was originally planned that funding would come from the Landfill Communities Fund. However, applications for this funding have so far been unsuccessful although there has been £12,000 allocated from the Youth Opportunity Fund and additional funding of £8,000 from other sources, including Procter and Gamble.
- 3.12 To meet the Play Builder criteria the original design for the Thorpe site would need to be revisited and additional play features added. However, Officers are confident this is a project that could be delivered within a fairly short timescale as much of the work has already been completed.
- 3.13 The Thorpe Project will be discussed by the Play Builder Steering Group in early September at which point the Council will be advised if it has been accepted as a scheme to progress with a requirement to be completed by March 2010. In principle support for the project was approved by this Committee in November 2007, and any development would be tendered on the basis of not exceeding the maximum amount available through consolidation of all the available funding.
- 3.14 The project manager appointed by Surrey County Council is responsible for monitoring the Play Builder projects. However, each authority will be expected to provide the information required on procurement procedures, maintenance and ongoing inspections.

4. Council Policy

- 4.1 The Service Plan identifies that the Council will:

Continue to invest in the parks, maintain the current high standards of provision, and improve where identified by need. Includes play area refurbishments and new builds.

- 4.2 Play Builder funding allows the Council to continue developing or improving play spaces in spite of limited capital budget for the planned replacement programme.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 Capital funding for the projects will be provided through Surrey County Council who manage the grant for the Play Builder programme. This can be added to any funding received from other sources. There is no expectation on the Council to make any contribution towards the capital costs of the projects. However, there will be a requirement for staff from the Parks section and Legal to be involved in the specification, tender and contract award process, as with any other capital projects of this type.
- 5.2 The ongoing revenue costs, which primarily consist of ongoing repairs and inspections, will come from an existing play area maintenance budget. There is likely to be a requirement to vire money from elsewhere in the parks budget to meet any additional costs.

6. Equality Issues

6.1 The specification for the play areas will incorporate the need to make them accessible to as wide a range of users as possible including those with disabilities. The target age groups will be 8 - 13 year olds, so it is likely that the equipment and facilities will be unsuitable for under 8's.

7. Environmental Implications

7.1 The emphasis of the Play Builder programme is on natural play. The specification will invite proposals that incorporate natural play and the use of sustainable products. For example, this could include the use of large boulders or tree trunks for climbing on, and incorporating equipment into the local environment, if there is a wooded area locally.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

- i) the Play Builder funding programme be supported to enable the Council to draw down the £100,000 allocated for two play area projects in the Borough;**
- ii) the Thorpe Skate Facilities on Frank Muir Memorial Field be progressed to meet the completion deadline for the first project of the end of March 2010; and**
- iii) Officers be instructed to consider options for a second project within the Addlestone Bourneside Ward, reporting back on proposals at a future meeting, to be no later than March 2010, to ensure that funding deadlines are met for the completion of the second project.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated.

8. HYTHE PARK PROJECT (DAL)
(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, March 2005, page 908, para 618, June 2006, page 58 para 80, March 2008, page 838 para 609, November 2008, page 454, para 319 and Economic Development Committee, September 2005, page 441, para 262)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to update Members on progress made in completing the new Hythe Park and the final costs of the project.**

2. Background Information

2.1 The provision of a new park on the site of the former Pooley Green Allotments and the former swan sanctuary has been an aim of the Council for a number of years. Consultation with local residents and the setting up of the Friends of Hythe Park led to the development of a scheme which it was agreed would incorporate the following features:

- A community garden and orchard with seating
- Surfaced footpaths and cycle routes through the park
- A multi-use games area (MUGA)
- Play areas for toddlers and older children
- An open grass area for community events
- Wildflower meadows
- Wet/dry area
- Two CCTV cameras linked to the Safer Runnymede control centre

- A securely fenced allotments site providing 18 plots, including raised beds for disabled users
- 2.2 Planning permission for the scheme was secured in 2006 with a number of conditions to be met. The most significant of these was to obtain Environment Agency approval for the scheme as the park is in the flood plain. The plans and landscaping element in particular were altered on a number of occasions but written agreement to the plans and the levels of the land was received from the Environment Agency (EA) in August 2007.
 - 2.3 In September 2007, Officers obtained permission from the Economic Development Committee to offer and negotiate terms with Woodland Environmental to carry out the initial landscaping work on site. Agreement on the specification and cost of this work was reached in December 2007.
 - 2.4 Work started on site in February 2008 and contractors were engaged to carry out the clearance work, laying out of the paths, landscaping and the installation of the play areas and multi use games area.
 3. Report
 - 3.1 Laying out of the Hythe Park and installation of the various elements was finally completed in March 2009. There were a number of delays to the project largely due to the weather, with a very wet period restricting access to the site and thus limiting the amount of work contractors could carry out.
 - 3.2 The first element to be completed was the Wet/Dry area as part of the initial landscaping. The Toddlers Play Area was completed in November 2008 and officially opened by the Mayor in early December. Pupils from the Hythe School were invited to attend the opening and use the new equipment.
 - 3.3 The Adventure Play Area and Multi Use Games Area were both installed in early 2009. The Play Area installation was particularly affected by the wet weather and led to a delay in the final handover of the facility.
 - 3.4 The report to this Committee in March 2008 highlighted that funding for lighting in the park had not been secured. However, funding was subsequently made available under Standing Order 42 and the lighting was installed and fully operational by March 2009.
 - 3.5 The weather created some difficulties (as highlighted in para 3.1) with certain areas of the park flooding. This was due to heavy rainfall and the high water table which meant that surface water could not drain away. The Council's drainage team looked at a number of options including the use of gullies to allow the water to flow into the wet/dry area. This worked to a limited extent but in the worst affected areas it was decided to install drainage to take the water away into the surface water drainage system. One of the most badly affected areas has had this work completed. A viable solution is still being worked up for the second area, by the adventure play area, and Officers hope this will have drainage installed later this year.
 - 3.6 Heavy rain and pooling of water meant that in some areas the grass did not take well. There has been additional seeding of the affected areas and over the summer the grass has taken on most of the park. There are, however, areas that will need further seeding this autumn. The grounds maintenance contractor is now cutting the park on a regular basis which will encourage grass growth and allow the park to continue maturing.
 - 3.7 There were a number of trees planted in the park; a mix of young trees (whips) and taller trees that had been grown on at an allotment in Egham. A number of these were damaged but have subsequently been replaced and are continuing to mature well. During the Easter holidays a tree planting morning was held with a number of local children involved and the Mayor came along to support the event. There are still gaps in some groups of trees where individuals have died for various reasons and these will be replaced over the coming autumn and winter.

- 3.8 The Mayor officially opened the park on 18 June. Over 100 people attended, including pupils of both the Hythe School and Magna Carta. Members of the active Friends group also attended and everyone was treated to an ice cream. There was also an opportunity for the young people to try out all the new equipment.
- 3.9 As previously reported, the costs of the project have been covered through a combination of the Capital Programme, funding via the Big Lottery Fund and landfill tax funding from Biffa and Sita.
- 3.10 There are still some outstanding works including the installation of some additional bins, main signage, further drainage works and some minor snagging works to the adventure play area. The bulk of this work will be carried out by the Council's DSO. The other significant part of the project not completed is the allotments. Officers are continuing to look at options for this but currently there are no internal sources of funding available and external funding is limited, although an application to the Association for the Improvement of Runnymede (AIR) will be considered if appropriate.
- 3.11 The Friends of Hythe Park group continues to support work in the park and has recently purchased some trees to be planted in the Community Orchard. The Friends have successfully obtained some external funding for their work, continuing to look at other funding options, and are due to make an application to AIR for the Orchard. The group is also organising an open day on Saturday 19 September in association with the Runnymede ROAR (Runnymede Open Access Recreation) project. This will include a number of activities during the day and bat watching in the evening.

4. Council Policy

- 4.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy and Service Plan identifies that the Council will:

Develop a new public park at Pooley Green to be called Hythe Park. This will include play facilities and an improved allotment site.

Improve access to and enhancing provision of parks and open spaces.

- 4.2 The Hythe Park is a large scale, high profile capital project which although it has taken a number of years to complete has been well received by local residents.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The total budget for the project was £616,200, funded from a variety of sources. Expenditure on the project as of the end of August 2009 totalled £615,600, a break down of which is attached at Appendix 'B'. It is anticipated that the scheme will be approximately £10,000 over budget once all retention monies have been paid.
- 5.2 Once finalised, there is likely to be an under-spend of £8,000 on the schemes receiving funding from the Big Lottery. Whilst the Council can still claim this money, unfortunately it will have to be utilised for other additional play activities, not necessarily within the park, or associated with this project.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

Officers continue to look at opportunities to fund the provision of allotments at Hythe Park and report to this Committee on progress in due course.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated.

9. VICTORY PARK PAVILION (DAL)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of a need to replace the sports pavilion at Victory Park in Addlestone.

2. Background Information

2.1 Victory Park lies between Chertsey Road and Victory Park Road in Addlestone. It is one of the Council's five staffed parks and provides sports facilities for football, bowls, croquet and tennis. There is an equipped play area and a paddling pool for children. The park has achieved a Green Flag Award for the last three years.

2.2 At the centre of the park is a sports pavilion which was built circa 1966 and provides changing rooms with showers, a room used during the week by the Minus Five pre-school, public toilets and an office for the parks staff. Victory Park hosts around 60 football matches for adults and children each season, and Minus Five currently provides pre-school places for around 18 children.

2.3 Buildings in three of the Council's parks are used by pre-schools as this ensures weekday use and income. It also has value in attracting more adults and children into the parks than might otherwise be the case, who often stay after using the pre-school to use other facilities.

3. Report

3.1 Over recent years it has become obvious that the pavilion is reaching the end of its useful life. The main structure is timber framed and clad with single glazed timber windows. The building suffers from an increasing amount of rot to the timber including the main support frame. The Council's Technical Services department maintains the building in accordance with the planned maintenance schedule. Repairs are now becoming increasingly difficult and costly, and will soon be impossible without major works and temporary closure of the building.

3.2 There are also problems with the ramped access, which does not comply with current regulations and is breaking away from the building. The roof structure, which is sagging, requires strengthening works.

3.3 It is also the case that the existing building is not ideal for the current mixed use by the pre-school and sports clubs as this results in both parties using the changing rooms, albeit at different times, for different purposes and this has proven problematic at times. The staff facilities in the existing building are also very poor and a temporary mess room has already been provided elsewhere in the park.

3.4 Officers have therefore been looking at the possibility of providing a replacement building. The current proposal is a new purpose built pavilion. The location currently preferred by the parks team and by Minus Five pre-school is on an unused grass tennis court, although the precise location may change as the project develops. The new building would house changing rooms for football and cricket teams, an office and mess room for the park's staff, public toilets and a space with classroom, toilets and kitchen for Minus Five.

3.5 Two types of building have been considered. A prefabricated building is estimated to cost around £374,000, and has a lifespan of approximately 25 years. Alternatively, a traditional brick construction with tiled pitched roof would cost around £400,000 and has a lifespan of 50 years and probably more. These estimates include for the demolition of the existing building and will be firmed up when the work goes out to tender. However, Officers have confidence in them and are therefore recommending a traditionally built pavilion because of it having a much longer life span with minimal additional cost. In addition, a traditional construction is far better suited to withstand the heavy usage and vandalism that is experienced from time to time in the park.

3.6 A location plan and photographs will be displayed at the meeting.

3.7 Some work has started on identifying external sources of funding for the project and Officers have been in discussion with Early Years, the Football Foundation and the Association for the Improvement of Runnymede (AIR). Early Years have an obligation to ensure pre-school facilities are provided in the area and are keen to see provision continue in Victory Park, so have been able to set aside £100,000 towards a new building. The Football Foundation are keen to help, but their main Facilities Funding capital grants programme is currently oversubscribed and is not considering new applications. Officers are looking at other possible grants with them and it is hoped that Facilities Funding may become available again. AIR have also been approached and will consider making an application to the Landfill Communities Fund at their board meeting in September.

3.8 If the pavilion is not replaced the existing building will become increasingly costly to maintain. At some point in the foreseeable future the pre-school will need to vacate the building and either relocate or close and the football changing facility would need to be withdrawn. This would have an impact on the park in terms of reduced usage, loss of income and poorer customer service.

4. Council Policy

4.1 Key Actions from the Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Plan 2009 include:

- Improve access to and enhancing provision of parks and open spaces
- Take opportunities to enhance formal leisure facilities

5. Resource Implications

5.1 The existing sports pavilion costs approximately £18,000 per year to run and maintain. Whilst the costs of a new pavilion would be significantly less than this, the costs of financing a brand new facility could potentially render a replacement building too expensive without the help of external funding.

5.2 A new pavilion will cost around £400,000 and Officers will seek to fund the majority from external sources. If this is not possible a request for capital funding may be required to make up the balance, subject to the constraints of the capital programme. A more detailed report will be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee once the external funding position is clear.

6. Planning and Technical Implications

6.1 Planning Permission will be required for a new building and an application will be made at the appropriate time.

6.2 Technical Services staff would manage the construction of a new building and the demolition of the existing.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

in principle support to replace the sports pavilion at Victory Park be approved and a further report be submitted to this Committee once the situation regarding external funding is clear.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated.

10. PETITION FOR BETTER PUBLIC TOILET FACILITIES IN CHERTSEY (DTS)
(Ref: Minutes of Leisure and Environment Committee, June 2006, page 55, para 79 and June 2009, page 89, para 110)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of a petition that has been received containing approximately 900 signatures asking for better public toilet facilities in Chertsey and to outline options that have been considered to address the situation.**
2. Background information
- 2.1 On 26 May 2009 a petition was delivered to the Civic Centre. The signatures were collected by Mr L Condon of Cowper Close, Chertsey. The petition was accompanied by a letter from Mrs L Stear, also of Cowper Close and a covering letter from the former County Councillor, Ray Lowther.
- 2.2 Owing to the late receipt of the petition it was not possible to report fully at the last meeting of this Committee. However, a brief report notified Members that the petition had been received.
- 2.3 Mrs Stear's letter explained that the petition had been prepared owing to the lack of public toilets in Chertsey and she added that there are no toilets for disabled people.
- 2.4 Mrs Stear also mentioned that the lack of amenities creates a very bad impression for many tourists who stay at the camp sites near Chertsey Bridge.
- 2.5 Mr Lowther's letter confirmed that he agreed with the petition. He stated that there used to be two toilets in central Chertsey, one at the old Town Hall and another at the old library site, since redeveloped. Mr Lowther commented that vandalism contributed to the decision to close the library toilets. He acknowledged that vandalism is generally an ongoing problem which results in the frequent closure of the toilets at the Sainsbury store in the town centre.
- 2.6 Mr Lowther stated that towns in other boroughs provide public toilets, despite vandalism and asked for the petition to be reported to the relevant committee.
- 2.7 The provision of public toilets is not a statutory requirement for Borough and District Councils but, traditionally, most Councils provide some public toilets to varying standards in their area.
- 2.8 Runnymede Borough Council has public toilets in some of its parks and open spaces and also has Council operated toilets at The Precinct in Egham and Cooper's Hill in Englefield Green.
- 2.9 Officers carried out a review of all the Council's public toilets to identify opportunities for revenue savings and the outcome was reported to this Committee in June 2006. The Committee resolved to close three of its existing toilets at Victoria Street in Englefield Green, Kingthorpe Gardens in Addlestone and St Ann's Hill and also to remove an automatic public convenience (APC) from The Broadway in New Haw, in order to save the cost of operating and maintaining these facilities. Seasonal opening of some of the public conveniences in Parks, was also introduced at this time.
- 2.10 Since 2007/08, to assist in keeping the Cooper's Hill toilets open, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has made an annual contribution of £2,000 towards the cost of maintaining these toilets for the benefit of visitors to the nearby Commonwealth Air Forces Memorial. This money is not guaranteed and cannot be relied upon in the future.
- 2.11 A Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) publication *Improving Public Access to Better Quality Toilets (2008): A Strategic Guide* states, "The extent to which people have easy access to good quality toilets also affects their general health and exercise, public behaviour and well being – and that of the whole community. Enabling different people, with different needs to make use of public toilets at different times of the day and night can have a significant impact on issues like public health and exercise, public behaviour, (and) use of public transport". It further states that "Some people may feel unable or reluctant to leave their homes and visit areas where they fear that they will not be able to find a public toilet".

- 2.12 Although the provision of public toilets is not a statutory responsibility for Councils it is clear there is a public expectation that good quality public toilets should be provided in town centres. Correspondence to this Council indicates that the public expects local councils to provide public toilets in communal areas such as town centres and parks.
- 2.13 The CLG Strategic Guide mentioned above also states that “public toilets that are badly designed, badly maintained and poorly located generate a sense of neglect, attracting vandalism, anti-social behaviour and social disorder”. Despite attempts by J Sainsbury PLC in Chertsey to maintain these toilets they still attracted vandalism and anti-social behaviour. The Council’s toilets at The Precinct in Egham, which are similar, being self-contained with an external entrance and not regularly supervised, suffer from the same problems. The conclusion is that they are poorly located. The guide states that “people increasingly prefer to use toilets in managed buildings such as shopping centres”.

3. Report

- 3.1 The public toilets in Chertsey were provided when the site between Guildford Street and Heriot Road was redeveloped in the 1970’s. The toilets are next to the Sainsbury store. Unfortunately, there is a history of vandalism in the toilets and, as a result, Sainsburys have kept them closed in recent months. Unlike more modern developments, the toilets are outside the store so Sainsburys has limited control over their use. The Sainsbury’s lease does not specifically require them to keep the toilets open.
- 3.2 Officers have asked Sainsburys to re-open the toilets. The previous Borough Valuer wrote to their Property Director explaining that the Council had received complaints and queries from local residents, the Chamber of Commerce and Ward Councillors about the toilets being closed and the matter has also been taken up by Members. To date the toilets remain closed.
- 3.3 Apart from this the only other public toilet facility in Chertsey was provided as a planning condition in the consent for The Boathouse public house by Chertsey Bridge. This condition requires the pub to display a sign allowing the general public, not just customers, to use their toilets. Other pubs and cafes provide toilets but these are only for their customers.

Options for Providing Public Toilets in Chertsey Town Centre Council Operation of the ‘Sainsbury’ Toilets

- 3.4 On the assumption that Sainsburys does not re-open its toilets the Borough Council could take over their operation and management. The Council’s existing toilets at The Precinct in Egham, which are similar in operation and suffer from the same problems, cost about £6,000 per year to manage and operate.

Community Toilet Schemes

- 3.5 Some local Councils operate schemes whereby businesses with toilet facilities, such as cafés and pubs, allow the general public, not just customers, to use their toilets in return for a small financial allowance from the Council. The allowance is mainly provided to cover the cost of ‘consumables’. These schemes require financial and staff commitments from the Council to allow them to operate.
- 3.6 The London Borough of Richmond operates a successful Community Toilet Scheme. This allows members of the public to use the toilet facilities in a range of approved local businesses during their opening hours. The service is free to the public, without any expectation that users will purchase goods or services. Participating premises undertake to keep their toilets safe, clean, hygienic, easily accessible and well stocked. A wide range of businesses participate in the scheme including restaurants, cafes, community centres, retail stores, Council offices and supermarkets.
- 3.7 There are currently 75 businesses participating in the Richmond scheme who are paid between £800 and £1,000 a year, depending on the facilities provided. Richmond

Council operates a monitoring procedure to spot check that each toilet meets cleanliness and other criteria.

- 3.8 Participating businesses display prominent signs and directional street signage is positioned near to the premises. Community notice boards publicise the scheme and a leaflet explaining the scheme is circulated. Details and locations are also shown on Richmond Council's website.
- 3.9 This type of scheme potentially avoids the worst features of public toilets; keeping them clean and free from vandalism and other misuse. Traditional public toilets such as the one at The Precinct in Egham cost the Council up to £6,000 a year to maintain and occupy only one location.
- 3.10 A Community Toilet Scheme would be a way for this Council to provide well located and clean public toilets in Chertsey, Egham and Addlestone and possibly in the smaller shopping areas such as Virginia Water, Englefield Green and New Haw.
- 3.11 The number of users would be significantly less than in Richmond so it would be reasonable to offer a smaller payment to participants than Richmond gives. For example between £400 and £500, depending on the facilities provided. In a town such as Chertsey five participating businesses, well spaced around the town centre, would be a significant improvement.

Development Opportunities for providing Public Toilets

- 3.12 The options for providing access to toilets in existing business premises such as cafés, restaurants and pubs exist as a separate initiative. It is also possible to establish a planning policy approach that could operate when new planning development proposals are being considered. Whilst it would take some time to establish a formal planning policy as part of the Local Development Framework, it may be possible to consider opportunities on an ad hoc basis as an interim measure. For example, as part of the proposed redevelopment of the Arndale Centre in Egham it was possible to secure a customer toilet in the proposed food store that would enable the existing public toilet in The Precinct to be closed. The requirement can be enforced as part of a Section 106 Agreement.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 If the Council decided to take over the management and operation of the public toilets in Chertsey the cost would be in the region of £6,000. As stated in paragraph 2.9, the Council closed some of its toilets after the Public Toilets Review in 2006 in order to meet its revenue reduction targets.
- 4.2 The difficulties for this Council in operating a Community Toilets Scheme would be the costs and the staff availability to set up and operate a Scheme. Also they would not necessarily address the issue of providing public conveniences which have disabled access. If, as suggested in paragraph 3.11 above there were five participants in Chertsey, each receiving £500 per year, the operating costs would be in the region of £2,500 per year. This could provide several toilets in various locations around the town centre and is significantly less than the cost of maintaining a single traditional toilet facility. A similar number in Egham could replace the existing facility in The Precinct, which costs approximately £6,000 to maintain. A large proportion of this cost is spent on repairing damage caused by vandalism.
- 4.3 If the Committee wished to pursue this option, it would be new expenditure for which a budget does not exist. Current council policy would require this additional expenditure to be met from within the Committee's existing budgets, by making reductions elsewhere. Unfortunately this method of budgetary virement is becoming increasingly difficult as the effect of previous revenue reduction exercises and the removal of past under-spends have been implemented.

5. Council Policy

- 5.1 The Council's principle aim is to play an effective role in enhancing the quality of life for residents and providing an attractive environment for residents and visitors.
- 5.2 The Sustainable Community Strategy and a key action from the Corporate Plan is to ensure that town centres and village centres are pleasant places to work, rest and play.
- 6. Legal Implications
- 6.1 The Borough Council does not have a statutory responsibility to provide public toilets.
- 7. Conclusions
- 7.1 After the review in 2006 the Council closed some of its public toilets as part of the revenue reduction programme. If the Council took over the management and operation of the Chertsey toilets most of the savings in closing the other toilets would be lost.
- 7.2 Whilst the feasibility of operating a Community Toilet System in Chertsey could be investigated, it would represent additional expenditure at a time when substantial further revenue reductions need to be found.
- 7.3 Officers are already taking opportunities where possible to negotiate the provision of public toilets in private commercial developments. Over time it may be possible to establish a formal planning policy as part of the Local Development Framework.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

Undated letter from Mrs L Stear
 Letter dated 26 May from Mr R Lowther, former County Councillor
 Undated petition received at the Civic Centre on 26 May 2009

11. CHARGING POLICY FOR THE SUPPLY OF WHEELED BINS (DTS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to seek authority for the introduction of a charging regime for the provision of new or replacement wheeled bins and to advise Members of improvements to the Green Waste Collection Service.**

2. Background information

2.1 The Council currently has a policy to charge for replacement wheeled bins where they are stolen or damaged. However, no charge is levied where bins are provided for new properties or where they require replacement through wear and tear.

2.2 The current charging regime, as agreed in the budget, is set out below:

New (based on the purchase cost of the container plus a sum for delivery, storage and administration cost)

- 360 litre bin (Families of 6 or more only)	£75
- 240 litre bin	£65
- 120 litre bin	£55

Second hand / refurbished (when available)

- 360 litre bin (Families of 6 or more only)	£45
- 240 litre bin	£35
- 120 litre bin	£25

2.3 The provision of bins for new properties is a considerable cost to the Council. The current requirement for new housing provision in Runnymede under the South East Plan is 161 dwellings per year and historically, many more than this have been built. The proposed number of dwellings at the former DERA site at Longcross alone is 2,500.

3. Report

3.1 Officers recommend that the above charges be introduced for the provision of bins for new developments or where bins have been stolen, lost or damaged. No charge would be levied where bins were damaged by Council collection staff or vehicles as part of the collection process.

3.2 It is recommended that the charge be implemented with immediate effect. Those on Council Tax or Housing Benefit would be given a 50% discount. The charge would be made for the supply, not the sale of the bin. Payment must be made at the time of the request and bins will not be supplied prior to the receipt of payment.

3.3 Residents who decline to pay for the supply of a wheeled bin will be served with a notice under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 requiring them to provide for the necessary containerisation of their waste. The Council will not empty resident-supplied bins that do not comply with its supply, design or safety requirements. Unsuitable bins may cause injury to staff and/or damage to the collection vehicle.

3.4 Based on current prices for containers, the following prices would apply rather than any prices agreed in the budget:

New (based on the purchase cost of the container plus a sum for delivery, storage and administration cost)

• 1,100 litre bin (communal facilities)	£235
• 360 litre bin (Families of 6 or more only)	£48
• 240 litre bin	£35
• 120 litre bin	£33

Second hand / refurbished (when available)

• 360 litre bin (Families of 6 or more only)	£45
• 240 litre bin	£25
• 120 litre bin	£20

3.5 Enhancements to the green garden waste scheme are also planned. Residents frequently request wheeled bins rather than the reusable bags. Neighbouring councils have found the sale of 240 litre wheeled bins to be very popular with subscribers to their service. It is therefore proposed that residents be offered for sale 240 litre wheeled bins at £35 (the price in paragraph 3.4 above). This is a 'one-off' price with residents owning the wheeled bin. The normal annual subscription fee would still apply. The proposed annual charge is the same as for 3 bags, currently £40.

3.6 The prices quoted above include £1 for a microchip in the bins. There could be concerns from residents that the microchips are an invasion of their privacy in that the contents of their bins could be weighed. However, Officers would stress that this is not the intention and the refuse collection vehicles do not have on-board weighing equipment. The microchips will be very helpful to residents if their bins are stolen or go missing as the operatives would try to locate their bins using hand-held readers to check the chips. It is much more expensive to chip bins at a later date.

4. Resource Implications

4.1 Clearly this measure will reduce Council costs as developers will be paying for the bins rather than the Council. Estimates are difficult as it is unclear the size of bin that residents or developers would opt for, whether it was new or used, or whether they would seek to provide their bin from another source.

- 4.2 Current income from the sale of bins is approximately £1,000 per year. Aligning the prices with those charged to developers will reduce this by £400. However, this will be more than covered by the new income stream.
- 4.3 However, if the development at the former DERA site is used as an example, the cost of 2,500 new 240 litre bins would be £50,000 without taking storage, delivery and administration into consideration.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 enables Councils to specify the type of receptacle to be used to collect waste and charge for the provision of that receptacle. However, occupiers or developers may provide their own receptacle if it meets the Council's specification.

6. Equalities Implications

- 6.1 Paragraph 3.2 above provides for discounts for those in receipt of benefits. The provision of large bins is allowed for, but only for households of six or more. The charging regime has flexibility to meet a range of needs and occupiers also have flexibility to provide their own bins.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

- i) the charges set out in paragraph 3.4 of this report be applied for the provision of wheeled bins and bulk containers for new properties or where bins are replaced as being lost, stolen or damaged;**
- ii) the charge be introduced with immediate effect;**
- iii) microchips be provided in the bins to enable the original purchaser of found bins to be identified;**
- iv) the policy be implemented as described in section 3 of this report; and**
- v) the green garden waste scheme be enhanced by giving residents who subscribe to the service the choice of purchasing a wheeled bin rather than using bags.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated.

12. ADDLESTONE LEISURE CENTRE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – MINUTES – 2 JUNE 2009 (DAL)

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Management Committee held on 2 June 2009 are attached at Appendix 'C'.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None.

13. CABRERA TRUST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – MINUTES – 17 JUNE AND 24 JULY 2009 (DAL)

The Minutes of the meetings of the Management Committee held on 17 June and 24 July 2009 are attached at Appendices 'D' and 'E' respectively.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None.

14. RIVERSIDE WALK ADVISORY COMMITTEE – MINUTES – 6 JULY 2009 (DAL)

The Minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Committee held on 6 July 2009 are attached at Appendix 'F'.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None.

15. 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(s) in question would be likely to involve disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in the paragraphs 1 and 3 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> |
| 16. | KERBSIDE RECYCLING CONTRACT – EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST | 1 and 3 |
| b) | <u>Confidential Information</u> | |

(No reports to be considered under this heading)