

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

TECHNICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SERVICE PLAN 2008/09



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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SERVICE PLAN 2008/09

1. SERVICE PROFILE

- 1.1 The Environmental Protection Division is comprised of four teams supported by a centralised Technical Services Administration: The operational sections are:
- 1.2 Commercial Team, which is responsible for carrying out duties under Food Safety and Health and Safety legislation in relevant premises within Runnymede. In addition, the team deals with infectious diseases, water supplies, and animal welfare licensing. The Commercial Team also has responsibility for dealing with pollution from premises where the division has food safety or health and safety enforcement responsibility.
- 1.3 Pollution and Health Team, which deals with air and noise pollution; industrial processes, accumulations and fly tipping on private land, air quality monitoring and contaminated land. In addition, other functions delivered by this team include Park home site licensing, the burial of deceased persons, and filthy and verminous premises.
- 1.4 Recycling Team, which deals with kerbside recycling schemes, developing mini recycling centres in flats and similar properties, car park and supermarket recycling centres and the promotion of home composting.
- 1.5 Licensing Team which licenses and monitors the sale and supply of alcohol, late night refreshment, entertainment, gaming machines and the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles.
- 1.6 The Council's Municipal Safety Advisor is also placed within this Division.

SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Aims and Objectives

- 1.1.1 To ensure that Runnymede residents and businesses live and operate in, as far as is possible, a safe, healthy and pollution free environment.
- 1.1.2 To meet statutory responsibilities in a cost effective and responsible manner in accordance with Council Polices, legislation and any centrally issued guidance.
- 1.1.3 To encourage best practice and publish advice in relation to any of the Division's areas of responsibility.
- 1.1.4 To carry out enforcement responsibilities as laid down in the Environmental Protection Division Enforcement Policy and the Enforcement Concordat adopted by the Council for Environmental Health Services in November 1999.
- 1.1.5 To undertake discretionary duties as determined by the Council to promote the protection, safety and well being of residents and businesses within Runnymede.

1.2 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

- 1.2.1 The Environmental Protection Service Plan fits into the Authority's corporate planning process, its services having been subjected to Best Value scrutiny and the production of a Continuous Improvement Plans.
 - The primary aim of the Council is to ensure that we play our role to enhance the quality of life of all the residents of Runnymede.
 - The financial aim of the Council is to maintain rigorous financial control of the Council's affairs, thus ensuring that we keep to a minimum any additional demand placed upon Council Taxpayers.

Both these objectives will be reflected in the Environmental Protection Service Plan commitments.

2. BACKGROUND

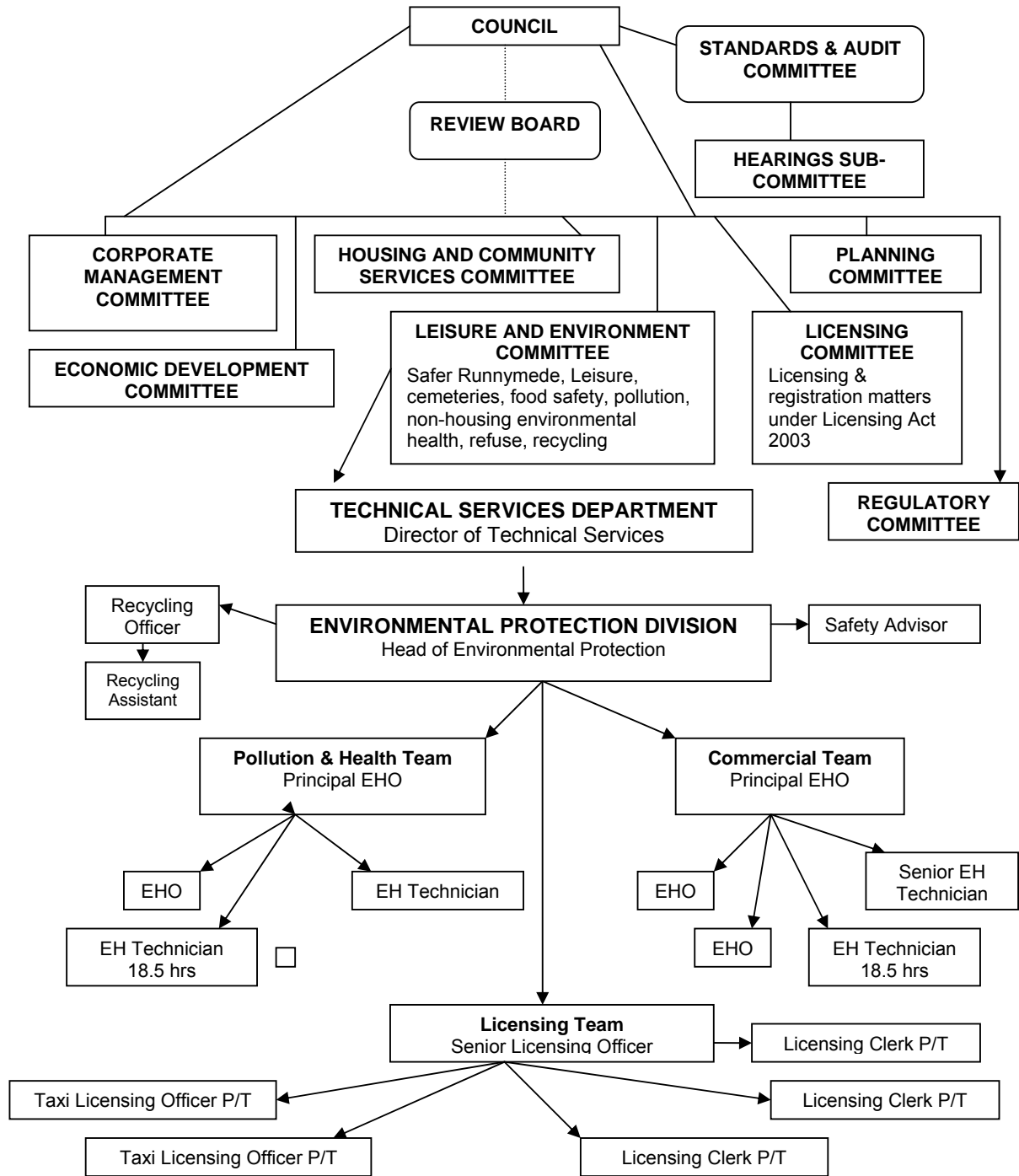
2.1 Profile of the Local Authority

2.1.1 With a population of just over 81,700 (2007) the Borough of Runnymede covers 30 square miles in the north west of Surrey where it has a lengthy boundary formed by the rivers Thames and Wey. Within its boundaries, which reach from Windsor Great Park almost as far south as Woking, the Borough comprises a number of towns and villages, including in the north, the town of Egham and the residential areas of Egham Hythe, Englefield Green, Thorpe and Virginia Water. Further south is the town of Chertsey, the newer town of Addlestone and the villages of New Haw, Ottershaw and Woodham. Although it has a number of light industries, Runnymede is basically a residential area bisected by the M25 running north-south and the M3 running east-west.

2.2 Organisational Structure

2.2.1 The organisational structure of the Council comprises the full council, 7 main service committees, a Standards and Audit Committee and a Review Board. All Environmental Protection issues fall under the terms of reference of the Leisure and Environment Committee. In addition, licensing issues are dealt with by the Licensing Committee, its relevant Sub-Committees and Regulatory Committee for Taxis and Charitable Collections. The Director of Technical Services has delegated responsibility for the Environmental Protection issues including enforcement with service delivery undertaken by the Environmental Protection Division.

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL - ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



2.3 Scope of the Environmental Protection Service

2.3.1 The Council carries out and is responsible for a wide range of environmental health duties under a plethora of legislation, including:

- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999
- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Public Health Acts 1936/1961
- Food Safety Act 1990
- Licensing Act 2003
- Household Waste Recycling Act 2003
- Control of Pollution Act 1974
- Health Act 2006
- Clean Air Act 1993

Specialist services are provided by:

- Public Analyst: Eurofins Scientific Ltd, 28-32 Brunel Road, Westway Estate, Action, London, W3 7XR
- Food Examiner: Health Protection Agency, Sussex and Surrey Environmental Microbiology Service, Princess Royal Hospital, Lewes Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 4EX.
- Surrey Health Protection Unit: Consultant in Communicable Disease Control
- Inside Housing Solutions: out of hours noise service
- Clements: collection of stray dogs
- Clements: pest control services

2.3.2 Some elements of the services such as water sampling are provided at the discretion of the Council. Discretionary services of this type have a complementary and reinforcing role in the Council's overall objectives of protecting public health.

2.4 Demands on the Environmental Protection Division

2.4.1 The demands on the division are high particularly in relation to reactive work with a steady rise in the numbers of complaints being received.

2.4.2 The division has enforcement responsibility for 676 food premises (up from 562 in 07/08), 1,378 health and safety premises, 34 industrial pollution processes, 15 Park home sites, collects recyclable waste from 29,242 households, issues premises licenses, licenses 251 taxi drivers and 254 hire vehicles and as approximately 600 potentially contaminated sites. In addition the Division has 2,271 premises together with an unquantifiable number of commercial vehicles within which it has responsibility for the enforcement of the Smokefree England legislation.

2.4.3 Complaints and requests for service across all areas of the service rose to 10,123 in 2007/08 compared with 8,750 in 2006/07. As was the case last year the vast majority of this total was taken by the Recycling team.

2.4.4 Having discontinued the 'out of hours' noise response service for in 2007 the service was reinstated as of 1 April 2008.

2.5 Enforcement Policy

2.5.1 The Council adopted the Central and Local Government Enforcement Concordat with regard to its Environmental Services Department in November 1999. In addition the Division works to the latest Environmental Protection Enforcement Policy approved and adopted in January 2008. All enforcement decisions are made in consideration of the Enforcement Policy and any deviations from the policy will be documented.

2.5.2 Copies of the Environmental Protection Enforcement Policy are available on request and the Policy is also available on the Council's website at www.runnymede.gov.uk.

2.5.3 The Division carried out the following enforcement actions in 2006/07:

Action	2005/06	2006/07	207/08
Prosecutions taken	4	3	4
Formal cautions issued	14	17	1
Food Safety Act Notices issued	9	30	33
H&S Notices issued	1	3	6
Abatement notices issued EPA	14	31	14
Written warning Food	232	196	171
Written warning H&S	58	16	14
Control of Pollution Notices issued	4	3	3
Other public health notices issued	8	5	12

3. **SERVICE DELIVERY**

3.1 The service is delivered through the Environmental Protection Division based at the Runnymede Civic Centre and the service is available from 8.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Monday to Thursday and 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. on Friday. (e-mail messages can be left outside normal work hours via the Council's website). In the event of a general environmental health related emergency the Safer Runnymede Centre holds contact details for all Environmental Health Officers.

3.1.1 Service delivery is broadly divided into proactive and reactive work which varies considerably among the teams within the Division.

3.1.2 The proactive parts of the service cover areas such as food safety, health and safety and integrated pollution control which all have regulated inspection programmes set by central government. Other areas for example recycling, contaminated land and licensing are regulated by the Council's own strategies and policies, normally directly, derived from central guidance.

It is the Council's policy to carry out programmed enforcement inspections in accordance with the minimum inspection frequencies defined by central government e.g. Food Standards Agency (FSA), Health and Safety Executive (HSE), and Department of Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). All inspection programmes are 'risk based' and priority will be given to inspections of higher risk premises as defined in the relevant guidance documents issued to the local authority by central bodies. Resources permitting, the authority intends to carry out 100% of the inspections due for 2008/09.

The current profile of premises by risk rating for food and health and safety is set out at Annexe A, together with details of the proactive sampling activity which the Division will participate in during the coming year.

3.1.3 The reactive work of the Division is undertaken by all four sections and includes complaints, service enquiries and pest control. All of which along with reports of accidents, food complaints, statutory nuisances, recycling issues, licensing, infectious disease notifications and other public health and protection matters are dealt in accordance with the relevant Council or Divisional procedures, relevant codes of practice and any centrally issued guidance. The Division aims to respond to 100% of complaints or requests for any of its services within the corporate target of three days.

3.2 **Liaison with other Organisations**

3.2.1 The Division has in place various arrangements to ensure liaison and exchange of information occurs with all relevant organisations and partners both internal and external across all its service areas. For example:

- Officers participate in all Surrey wide liaison and study groups i.e. food, Health & Safety, pollution and waste
- Officers participate in the Surrey licensing forum

4. **RESOURCES**

4.1 Financial Allocation

4.1.1 The Divisions overall budget for the year ending 31st March 2009 is set out below

	2007/8 Actuals £	2008/9 Estimate £
Pollution Control	203,042	255,100
Local Air Pollution	27,399	19,500
Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare	98,084	123,800
Food Safety and Hygiene	165,519	162,200
Pest Control and Dog Warden Service	40,182	43,000
Recycling and Environmental Issues	318,349	330,300
Green Waste Collection	143,042	93,300
Licensing and Regulatory Functions	87,620	121,700
Net Expenditure	1,083,237	1,148,900

Complied from relevant figures taken from the Runnymede Borough Council Budget 2007/08 and 2008/09

Individual budget details for each area of the service can be found in the Runnymede Borough Council Budget 2008/09.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

4.2.1 The number of staff working on Environmental Protection matters in the Division is 15.5 full time equivalents (FTEs) made up of 13 full-time (ft) and 7 part-time (pt) posts. Having successfully filled a long term food officer vacancy within the commercial team the previous year a similar vacancy arose on the health and safety side. Fortunately that vacancy has now been filled as of January 2008. Overall the actual staffing levels have changed little over the last couple of years.

4.2.2 Staffing levels include the full time Municipal Health and Safety Advisor post. Administrative support is provided centrally in the Technical Services Department. Administration for the Division remains at a little over 2 FTE posts. The FTE figure does not include any external services provided to the division by legal, financial services and IT support staff.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

4.3.1 The Council operates a staff appraisal scheme, which includes an agreed Personal Development Programme for the forthcoming twelve months following any appraisal. Each year training needs are identified and may be provided in house or externally depending on the requirement. Environmental Health Officers are required to undertake 20 hours per year Continuous Professional Development. Records are kept of training undertaken and continuous professional development records are available for scrutiny by the professional body (CIEH).

5. QUALITY ASSESSMENT

5.1 Quality Assessment

5.1.1 A range of monitoring arrangements is in place across the various areas of the service to assess performance.

5.1.2 The Division is presently subject to a number of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's). BV166 covers the area of Environmental Health enforcement duties, and the Division has achieved 100% compliance for this indicator. Indicators related to Recycling/composting are BV82a and 82b, 91a and 91b.

5.1.3 Indicators BV 216a and 216b identifying information on contaminated land together with BV217 pollution control improvements in regard to industrial premises. Additionally there are a number of new national indicators for 2008 covering the work of Environmental Health including:-

- NI 182 Satisfaction of business with local authority regulation services.
- NI 184 Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law.
- NI 192 Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting.

5.1.4 The Division is required to submit performance data to central government in the form of yearly returns in respect of amongst other work, food safety inspections and enforcement work, health and safety inspections, authorised process inspections and enforcement work, statutory nuisance work and complaints. All data submitted is used by central government to assess the compliance of the authority in relation to set down standards and in the compilation and publication of performance tables.

5.1.5 The service is also subject to regular financial audits both internal and external. The majority of the Divisions service areas have been subject to the Best Value review process. The service also receives continuous feedback on levels of service quality and satisfaction levels via various customer feedback mechanisms.

6. REVIEW

6.1 Review against the Service Plan

6.1.1 The introduction of the Smokefree England legislation was successfully carried out across the borough. Information was sent out to all applicable premises backed up by a number of advisory and enforcement visits. Feedback on the impact of the legislation from both trade and members of the public indicates that the legislation has been well received and it is seen as providing a positive health benefit across the board.

6.1.2 There is limited progress to report on the implementation of the Council's Contaminated Land Strategy due to lack of staff. A consultant was engaged for 3 days to review progress on the strategy. The consultant highlighted the lack of progress with the strategy and the need to appoint a dedicated officer to carry out contaminated land work. The contaminated land work carried out during the year was related to remediation of land that is being developed through the planning process.

6.1.3 Progress was made on updating and revising Divisional policies and procedures, this work is ongoing.

6.1.4 The green garden waste scheme continued to expand with 4,500 subscribers by the end of March 2008.

6.1.5 There was limited progress with making available Environmental Protection information on the Council's website due to demands on IT staff.

6.2 Areas for Improvement

6.2.1 The following improvements are planned for 2008/09:

- Implement the new interventions inspection regime, monitoring and reporting data system as required by the Food Standards Agency.
- Implement the outcomes of the Food Standards Agency proposals for establishing a UK-wide 'scores on the doors' scheme to provide consumers with information about hygiene standards in food businesses. Due to launch in early 2009.
- Implement the new Best Value Performance Indicators.
- Ensure the successful introduction of smokefree legislation in mental health accommodation. Whilst the majority of premises became smokefree in July 2007, mental health accommodation is exempt until July 2008.
- Continue to expand the green garden waste service.
- Progress work on making Environmental Protection information electronically on the Runnymede website.