



**Planning & Countryside Service
Annual Report
RUNNYMEDE LOCAL COMMITTEE
22 Oct 2004**

KEY ISSUE:

The following is a summary of planning and development issues, and countryside and heritage issues relating to the Runnymede area for the year ended 31 March 2003.

SUMMARY:

The report contains local performance information for Transportation Development Control which has the responsibility of responding to consultations from all the planning authorities in Surrey, on behalf of the County Council or the Highways Authority, on the transportation implications of planning applications

Surrey wide performance information is available for Minerals and Waste and Strategic Consultations on the County website at www.surreycc.gov.uk. The relatively small numbers of applications and consultations dealt with per district mean that the local statistics for these services will have little validity.

The report also highlights the work of the Countryside & Heritage Division including Rights of Way.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked:

1. to note the report
2. to comment on the performance of the service in the Runnymede area.

1. INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

This report includes an overview of major applications and policy developments over the past year and also any anticipated issues for the year ahead. The intention is that Members are kept informed of major developments. All statistics and performance data in this report are for the Runnymede area.

2 THE LOCAL PROFILE

The local profile was dealt with in a report to this committee on the Census Data earlier this year.

3 TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Transportation Development Control (TDC) has the responsibility of responding to consultations from all the planning authorities in Surrey, on behalf of the County Council or the Highways Authority, on the transportation implications of planning applications.

3.1 Number of responses to applications dealt with within 14 days:

Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) consulted Surrey County Council as Highway Authority on approximately 1473 planning applications in 2003-04. TDC responded to 77% of these applications on the same day or the next day because the applications had little or no impact on the highway.

TDC selected 338 applications (23%) for further action and responded to 91% (average over the year) of these applications within 14 days. TDC aims to respond to 85% of applications within 14 days and this target was met in respect on RBC.

Local planning authorities like RBC are under increasing government pressure to determine planning applications quickly, within fixed timescales. TDC's fast response to consultations helps RBC meet its performance targets.

3.2 Transportation gains

Where appropriate TDC request transportation improvements from planning applications. The type and level of transportation benefits sought depends on the nature of development proposed. Development proposals vary between the districts and each area has its own characteristics.

Over the last year have negotiated substantial contributions and works towards, transportation initiatives, highway works, and public transport improvements in the Runnymede area as follows:

Unilec House Kings Lane, Englefield Green (10 residential units)	£10,000 towards improved street lighting and road markings
79-107 New Haw Road, Addlestone (10 residential units) + 11-12 Rivermead Close. Addlestone (9 residential units)	£6,000 towards speed constraint measures £7,000 towards speed constraint measures
Woburn Corner Station Road Addlestone (Sheltered housing complex)	£10,000 towards upgrading Toucan crossing and civil works to provide improved cycle/pedestrian facilities
Savill Gardens Wick Road Virginia Water (New visitor centre, restaurant, conference facilities, etc.)	£10,000 towards remedial works to verge in vicinity and civil works to improve car parking and coach/bus parking and turning within site.
157 – 158 High Street, Egham (Mixed retail, office and residential development)	£15,000 towards Local Transport initiatives and civil works to provide widening to existing footways
Radamec Site Bridge Wharf Chertsey (50 residential units)	£25,000 towards cycling facilities and footpath provision
Ensign House Brighton Road Addlestone (25 residential units)	£10,000 towards new bus shelters and £1000 to optimise traffic signal operation.
Simplemarsh Farm Green Lane Addlestone (20 residential units)	£15,000 for extension of 30mph limit and towards cycleway scheme
Thorpe Park Staines Road Chertsey (Medium Term Development Plan)	£30,000 towards cycling and lighting improvements along Staines Road corridor and civil engineering works to improve entry capacity of the site so as to reduce peak day queuing onto highway. Also secured Car Park Management Plan, Travel Plan, Transport Liaison Group all so as to reduce impact of this major leisure facility on the highway network.
93-133 Eastworth Road,	£10,000 towards local transportation schemes and land for and provision of new bus shelter and civil works to widen footway along

Chertsey (30 residential units)	frontage.
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The above list is not exhaustive and there have been numerous other small developments that have provided smaller scale highway works and contributions to the benefit of highway safety and convenience for all users of the highway.

3.3 Working in Partnership

TDC has a close working relationship with the Local Transportation Service (LTS) and has weekly informal meetings at the LTS offices as well as a formal monthly meeting. Copies of the minutes of the monthly meeting are distributed to Surrey's Elected Members for the Runnymede area.

We also have excellent working relationships with Runnymede Borough Councils Planning and Enforcement officers. Over the last 12 months TDC has attended Runnymede's Planning Committee Meeting as and when requested to do so. It is still the case that it is a rare event for the Borough to set aside a TDC recommendation.

3.4 Appeals and Public Inquiries

Over the last 12 months the number of appeals against a refusal of planning on highway grounds have been few. The Division presented evidence at these appeals in support of its recommendations and these were all upheld by the Inspectors.

4 COUNTRYSIDE AND HERITAGE

4.1 Rights of Way

Our work on public rights of way included replacing 52 missing signposts and clearing over 25,000 metres of surface vegetation. We also arranged for adjoining residents and landowners to cut back overhanging vegetation and worked with the Egham and Staines Conservation volunteers on footpath clearance and minor maintenance tasks.

5 STRATEGIC CONSULTATIONS

During 2003/04 the Spatial Policy Group has continued preparing the Surrey Structure Plan which reached its crucial Public Examination stage in November 2003. The final Structure Plan is expected to be approved by the County Council in October 2004. The Local Committees have had opportunities throughout the process to comment on the plan as it developed. The Group has also been very involved in the preparation of the South East Plan (being prepared by the Regional Assembly) and in particular, has acted as the lead officer support for the preparation of various sub-regional strategies. The group has also played a key role in the continuing push for more affordable housing in the county and has taken a lead role in the proposed 'S' developments being promoted by the County Council using its own land.

6 MINERALS, WASTE AND COUNTY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT

Surrey County Council is responsible for deciding planning applications for:

- mineral developments (proposals for the extraction of minerals such as sand, gravel, clay, chalk and oil and gas or facilities for their initial processing);
- waste developments (proposals for the disposal, storage and processing of waste, such as landfills, energy from waste plants, recycling, transfer stations, composting facilities, etc); and
- developments the County Council needs to carry out for itself, or jointly with another body, to deliver the services for which it is responsible for providing (for example proposals at schools, social services facilities, the County Council's own office buildings, and new or significantly improved roads).

In this report applications for minerals and waste developments are referred to as 'county matter' applications and applications for the County Council's own development are referred to as 'county development' applications.

Within the Planning and Countryside Service the Minerals, Waste and County Development Division is responsible for processing both county matter and county development planning applications and reporting them, as necessary, to the Planning and Regulatory Committee.

6.1 County Matter Decisions

During the year the County Council issued decisions on 31 county matter applications (28 permissions and 3 refusals) and 16 submissions for approval of details required pursuant to conditions on an existing planning permission (details pursuant) or schemes of conditions on Interim Development Order permissions or Review of Old Minerals Planning permissions (all approved). None of the 31 county matter applications determined were for developments requiring an environmental impact assessment (EIA) to be undertaken and the applications accompanied by Environmental Statements. Details of the decisions issued within the Runymede Borough Council area can be found in Annexe 1 of this report.

Of the 47 county matter decisions (applications, details pursuant and schemes of conditions) issued in 2002/03, 47% were determined under delegated powers by the Head of Planning and Countryside, and 53% by the Planning and Regulatory Committee.

Due to the more complex nature of many minerals and waste development proposals longer periods are required to enable extensive consultations and negotiations, and to ensure that the proposed development is acceptable in all respects. In recognition of this no targets are set by Government to apply to county matter applications for Best Value performance indicator BVP109. Instead the County Council is required to set its own year on year target for determining county matter applications subject to BVP109.

BVP109 only applies to decisions on county matter applications not accompanied by environmental statements. Of the 31 decisions to which BVP109 applies, 32% (10) were determined within 13 weeks exceeding the target set for 2002-2003 of 25%. Given the very small number of cases involved no meaningful statistics can be produced for each of the Districts.

Turning to a few matters of detail that may be of interest to Members, the Lyne Lane Landfill site, which was being used for landfill/household waste ceased operation in mid summer this year. It was closed down by the Environment Agency and the operator was fined. The site had been giving rise to odour problems. Although the site features in the 1997 Waste Local Plan, there are currently no new policies or proposals regarding it.

An adjacent field, also known as Trumps Farm is currently the subject of a planning application for the importation of 30,000 cubic metres of material, made up of 4,000 cubic metres of mature compost and 26,00 cubic metres of soil. The material is to be used to make good an area of approximately 3 hectares, within the 120 hectare farm, which has suffered from soil erosion. This will result in an average depth increase over the 3 hectares of approximately 0.7 metres. The compost material is mature, so it will not give rise to any odour problem.

A temporary 2 year planning permission for a trial of two Ecopods was granted for the Trumps Farm Landfill site in July 2003. An Ecopod is a composting facility using something akin to a large polythene sausage. The facility is totally sealed and is completely controllable. There is no leaching of liquids into the soil, and gases are positively drawn off and stored for other uses elsewhere. The recycling time is 16 weeks, and this produces a mature odour free material which can be used as a soil enhancer on the site. For various reasons, the trial has not yet been implemented, and as the temporary permission is only valid until July 2005, it appears likely that a fresh permission would be sought in the event that difficulties in commencing the trial can be overcome.

6.2 County Development Decisions

During the year the County Council issued 60 decisions for county development proposals (56 permissions and four details pursuant submissions approved). Details of the decisions issued within the Runnymede Borough Council area can be found in Annexe 2 of this report.

Of the 60 decisions on county development applications and submissions, 67% (40) were determined under delegated powers by the Head of Planning and Countryside, and 33% (20) by the Planning and Regulatory Committee.

There are no Best Value performance indicators which apply to county development applications. However, of the 56 planning permissions issued for county development applications in 2003/04, 70% were determined in less than 13 weeks.

6.3 Applicant satisfaction surveys

In 2003/04 the County Council was required by Best Value Performance Indicator BV111 to survey applicants who had received a decision on a minerals and waste application over the period 1 April to 30 September 2003. The survey questions, set by government were designed to investigate applicants experience with the planning service delivered by the County Council, and their overall satisfaction with the service. Eleven applicants were surveyed of which nine responded. Of these six (66.6%) were very or fairly satisfied, one (11.1%) was fairly satisfied and two (22.2%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the service provided.

Although the County Council did not achieve the BV111 target of 75% satisfaction and the satisfaction level is down on the 2000/01 survey 76.9% satisfaction level, rapport with applicants is generally good. The small number of applicants dealt with means that disproportionate percentage swings can result from slight variations in results.

As BV111 only applies to applicants receiving decisions on minerals and waste applications the County Council decided to run a similar survey for applicants who had received a decision on county development applications (County Council applications). The survey was conducted in the same way as the BV111 survey.

20 applicants were surveyed on the county development survey, of which eight responded. Of these six were very satisfied and two fairly satisfied with the service, giving an overall satisfaction score of 100%.

6.4 Summary of Minerals and Waste Planning Enforcement Activities During 2003

The 2003 Annual Monitoring Report, to be published later this year, will contain a chapter on Enforcement that gives statistical information regarding visits and complaints in addition to a broad-brush view of enforcement officers work and details several specific sites of particular interest that have been dealt with throughout the County during the year.

The associated appendix then details sites, the number of site visits and a brief individual site update on both the mineral and major waste sites within the 11 local planning authorities within the County.

In the Borough of Runnymede, 40 monitoring site visits to authorised mineral and waste sites took place with a further 11 investigative visits to sites reported as unauthorised waste operations. Details of the site visits can be found in Annexe 3 of this report.

CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

This report details the work and performance of the various aspects of the Planning and Countryside service in the Waverley area. Members are asked to note the work of the service and comment on any of its aspects.

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