

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Wednesday 20 JANUARY 2016 at 7.30pm

**Council Chamber
Runnymede Civic Centre, Addlestone**

Members of the Committee

Councillors P J Waddell (Chairman), I A Chaudhri, (Vice-Chairman), Mrs V A Dunster, J M Edwards, Mrs M T Harnden, D J Knight, M T Kusneraitis, S M Mackay, B W Pitt and Miss J K Sohi

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 **Mr M L White, Democratic Services Section, Law and Governance Business Centre, Runnymede Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel: Direct Line: 01932 425623). (Email: malcolm.white@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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বাঙলা

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简体中文

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اردو

اگر آپ انگریزی زبان پڑھ اور بول نہیں سکتے ہیں اور آپ کو اس دستاویز کو سمجھنے میں دقت پیش آتی ہے؛ تو برائے مہربانی سے وٹس لنک لائن کو اس نمبر 01483 750548 پر رابطہ کریں اور اپنی زبان میں اپنا پیغام چھوڑیں۔

Polski

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LIST OF MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

PART I

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

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PART II

Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection

a) Exempt Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)

(b) Confidential Information

(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 19 November 2015. The Minutes of this meeting were included in the December 2015 Council Minute Book.

4. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

5. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

If Members have an interest in an item, please record the interest on the form circulated with this Agenda and hand it to the Legal Representative or Committee Administrator at the start of the meeting. A supply of the form will also be available from the Committee Administrator at meetings.

Members who have previously declared interests, which are recorded in the Minutes to be considered at this meeting, need not repeat the declaration when attending the meeting. Members need take no further action unless the item in which they have interest becomes the subject of debate, in which event the Member must leave the room if the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest or if the interest could reasonably be regarded as so significant to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest.

6. **SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL AGENCY AGREEMENT FOR HIGHWAY VERGE CUTTING AND WEED CONTROL (ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES)**

Synopsis of report:

To inform Members of the offer from Surrey County Council to renew the agency agreement for highways verge grass cutting and weed control.

Recommendation(s):

- i) The agency agreement with Surrey County Council for highways verge cutting and weed control be renewed for 4 years commencing April 2016.
- ii) Contracts with Grasstex Ltd and Environmental Husbandry be extended for 2 years commencing April 2016.
- iii) The Corporate Management Committee be requested to approve a Supplementary Revenue Estimate of £21,000 per annum to meet the costs associated with the contract

1. **Context of report**

- 1.1 In November 2011 Surrey County Council (SCC) invited the Borough and District Councils, including RBC, to enter into a formal 4 year agency agreement for the highways verge cutting, hedge cutting and weed control starting April 2012. The budget offered at this time reduced from £159,642 in 2012/13 to £139,642 in 2015/16.

- 1.2 A report to Environment and Sustainability Committee on the 17 January 2013 approved the award of contracts with Grasstex Ltd for highways verge grass and hedge cutting and Environmental Husbandry Ltd for weed control. Both contracts were entered into to start on the 1 April 2013, with initial terms of three years, but with options for the Council to extend their duration for additional periods of up to four years.
- 1.3 The standard prescribed by SCC is 6 urban cuts, 2 rural cuts and 2 weed-spray applications per year. High speed roads are cut only twice a year due to the need for traffic management provided by SCC.
- 1.4 For the budget allocated over the past 4 years, Runnymede has been able to provide an enhanced service with 8 urban cuts, 3 rural cuts and 3 weed-spray applications. RBC have also been able to cover around £20,000 supervision and back-office costs and make a surplus.

2. **The Report**

- 2.1 In an attempt to reduce highways service provision costs, SCC have carried out a formal tendering exercise to produce a 4 year framework contract.
- 2.2 Based on the results of the tenders, SCC is offering Runnymede a budget of £88,325, split £56,550 for grass cutting and £31,775 for weed-spraying. Hedge-cutting no longer forms part of the proposed agency agreement. There will be no RPI adjustment for 2 years.
- 2.3 The proposed budget allows for 1 less urban and 1 less rural cut, so there will be a slight reduction in quality.
- 2.4 The original offer from SCC stated they were prepared to pay an on-cost of between 10-15% over and above the contract figures. In the most recent communication this offer has been increased to 20%. (£17,665)
- 2.5 SCC has stated that they are very keen to continue working with Runnymede and appreciate the good work this Authority has undertaken in managing the function to provide a joined-up service.
- 2.6 RBC's existing contractors Grasstex Ltd and Environmental Husbandry have both confirmed that they are prepared to accept a 2 year extension of contract (allowed in the original contract) keeping their current rates fixed for the 2 years.
- 2.7 The SCC framework contract has been drafted in such a manner to allow the Districts and Boroughs to use their framework if they wish, however, providing the service specification is met they are agreeable to RBC using its own contractors.
- 2.8 The key advantages for Runnymede to retain the existing contractors are:
 - Competitive rates;
 - Their existing familiarity with the Borough and associated reduction in the need for direct supervision;
 - They provide a known degree of quality;
 - It retains a greater degree of control within the Borough, enabling the Council to respond to resident concerns and requests; and

- It retains the supervisory recharge, which in turn supports the overall on-costs of Civic Centre back-office and customer service functions, maintaining their efficiency.

2.9 The table below compares the existing contractor's rates with SCC's proposed budget.

Grass Cutting			
Type of cut	No.	Rate	Total (£)
Urban cut	7	6,153	43,071
Rural cuts	2	3,880	7,760
High speed roads	2	1,498	2,996
	Total		53,827
	SCC Budget		56,550

Weed Control			
Type of application	No.	Rate	Total (£)
Hard surface areas	3	5,848	17,544
Injurious and noxious weeds	1	997	997
	Total		18,541
	SCC Budget		31,775

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 “An environment which residents can be proud of” is a main theme in the Sustainable Community Strategy and this is achieved in this proposal as it will maintain a high quality of public realm.

4. Resource implications

- 4.1 No additional staffing provision will be needed to manage the contracts related to the agency agreement. As the budget for 2016/17 onwards has not yet been set, a Supplementary Estimate of £21,000 will be required to incorporate this function into the Budget of that year. Negotiation undertaken by Officers around contract price and supervision contribution have minimised the financial impact of the changing contract, meaning this is lower than the adjustment previously estimated in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, of £35,000, and, in fact, enables the Council, in retaining the contract to continue to cover £20,000 of overheads and make a reduced surplus of £11,222 in 2016/17.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 The works are being undertaken as an agent for SCC by the Council, through its own contractors, which is acting as a ‘Supplier’ and so needs to comply with the requirements of Standing Orders for Contracts, paragraph 7.
- 5.2 This is a proposal that the Council can lawfully enter into and can charge for the service. The financial viability of the business case must be considered and this is addressed elsewhere in the report, with the conclusion that the overhead will be covered along with an estimated surplus.
- 5.3 The Council can, as of right, extend the duration of both the existing works contracts for additional periods of up to a total of four years. This does not preclude negotiating a better deal with the contractors for the extended periods.

6. Equality implications

None

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The continuation of the agency agreement, under the new terms, with SCC and with the contract with existing contractors is the most cost effective way to continue to deliver these essential public services to Runnymede's residents. Officers consequently recommend the renewal of the Agency Agreement and the extension of the Contractors Agreement as set out above.

(To resolve)

Background papers

None

7. AIRPORTS CAPACITY (ACE)

Synopsis of report:

The Government has given an initial response to the Airports Commission recommendation and has accepted that additional runway capacity is needed and confirmed the planning route to progress this. Whilst it has accepted the three short-listed options, it has made no indication of any preference and is seeking more information on environmental mitigation before coming to a conclusion in the Summer.

Recommendation(s):

None - For information

1. Context of report

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Davies Commission (Airports Commission) was established in 2012 to make recommendations as to whether the UK's airports capacity needed to be increased and if so, where.
- 1.2 They published an Interim Report in 2013 which suggested that there was a clear case for one net additional runway in London and the South East, to come into operation by 2030.
- 1.3 At the end of 2014, the Commission published a consultation on its favoured three short-listed options – a second runway at Gatwick Airport, a third runway at Heathrow Airport and an extended northern runway at Heathrow.
- 1.4 The Council's view on airports expansion was determined by the Corporate Management Committee in January 2015. The Council supported the expansion of runway capacity at Gatwick Airport in preference to the options associated with Heathrow Airport. The Council also supported improved connectivity between Heathrow and Gatwick Airports and appropriate mitigation measures in any case to limit the environmental impact of aviation traffic at both airports.
- 1.5 In July 2015, the Airports commission published their final report, indicating a unanimous recommendation that the additional airport capacity be met by a new third runway at Heathrow. In addition, it recommended a significant package of measures to address environmental and community impacts.
- 1.6 The Government indicated that it would respond to the Commission's recommendation before the end of 2015.

2. **Report**

- 2.1 The Government set up a new Economic Affairs (Airports) Sub-Committee, with ten members, chaired by the Prime Minister, to consider matters relating to airport capacity in the South East of England in the light of the Airports Commission's report.
- 2.2 At the end of November, the Government's Environmental Audit Committee published a report on the Airport Commission's final report. It focused on noise, air quality and carbon emissions and indicated that before the Government made any decision on airport expansion, it needed to set clear and binding responsibilities and milestones to ensure environmental standards are enforced and measures can be implemented, monitored and evaluated in a timely way.
- 2.3 On 10 December, the Government issued a press release and this was followed by a statement to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Transport on 14 December.
- 2.4 The statement clarified three issues. Firstly the Government has accepted the case for airport expansion in the South East and has also accepted the recommended shortlist of options.
- 2.5 The third matter clarified was that the mechanism for delivering planning consents will be for the Government to produce an Airports National Policy Statement (NPS), following which the scheme promoter would need to apply for a Development Consent Order. This has been chosen in preference to introducing a Hybrid Bill into Parliament.
- 2.6 The Government has not however given any indication of which of the three options it will support. Instead, it indicated that it wanted to undertake a package of further work in relation to air quality, noise, carbon emissions and other impacts on local communities. It confirmed that it expected the airports to put forward 'ambitious solutions' to environmental impacts.
- 2.7 The Government expects to conclude this package of work by the Summer and has indicated that this means the Airports Commission's timetable for delivering extra runway capacity by 2030 will not alter.
- 2.8 Heathrow Airport Ltd's original timetable suggested the approval of an Airports National Policy Statement (including consultation) in 2017, with the Development Consent Order being submitted in 2018 and gaining approval in 2019. They wished to commence construction in 2019 with the new runway operational in 2025.
- 2.9 It is assumed that the Government will require more work on environmental mitigation to be undertaken by the three promoters and that there will be a further period of consultation on this. If this is the case then further reports will be brought forward to this Committee to enable a response to be made to any consultation.

3. **Policy framework implications**

- 3.1 As indicated above, the Council's policy is to support the expansion of runway capacity at Gatwick Airport in preference to the options associated with Heathrow Airport. There is no requirement to revisit that policy at this time.
- 3.2 Recently, a Heathrow Strategic Planning Group has been formed involving Planning Officers from Councils surrounding the airport and Runnymede officers have been in attendance. This is part of the Statutory Duty to co-operate and will enable Local Plans to take into account issues relating to the Airport, whether or not it develops a

third runway. Government recognition of the Group and support for it is being sought.

4. Resource implications

- 4.1 Reports on any further mitigation measures put forward by promoters will be brought forward using in-house expertise and resources. Depending on the Government's final choice and decision for runway expansion, any involvement that Runnymede may decide appropriate into the planning process may well require the employment of specialist advisors and in this event a Supplementary Estimate will be required to cover these costs.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 It is clear that the Government's nervousness about addressing environmental impact is to minimise the likelihood of Judicial Review of any final decision.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The Government decisions on accepting that airport capacity in the South East needs to increase, that the three short-listed options are appropriate, and the planning method for bringing this forward does mean that the process has moved further forward.
- 6.2 The concerns expressed by both the Environmental Audit Committee and the Government regarding proper environmental mitigation are welcomed and go to the heart of this Council's concerns about impacts of additional runways on local residents.
- 6.3 It is anticipated that both Airports will undertake further work and put forward greater certainty about their ability to satisfy environmental standards in relation to air quality, noise and carbon emissions and packages of community support and compensation.
- 6.4 Officers will bring back further reports to keep the Committee informed of developments.

(For information)

Background papers

Environmental Audit Committee: The Airports Commission Report: Carbon Emissions, Air Quality and Noise Contents, November 2015.

Department for Transport Press release, 10 December 2015; Secretary of State for Transport oral statement to Parliament, 14 December 2015.

8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of following reports under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the reports in question would be likely to involve disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in appropriate paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Act.

(To resolve)

PART II

Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection

- a) Exempt Information Para
(No reports to be considered under this heading)

- b) Confidential Information
(No reports to be considered under this heading)