

COUNCIL
27 OCTOBER 2004
(7.30 pm – 9.10 pm)

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Browne), Councillors Baily, Mrs Ballin, Barnard, Mrs Barnard, Beadsley, Mrs Beadsley, Bettison, Birch, Mrs Birch, Brunel-Walker, Dudley, Earwicker, Edger, Finch, Finnie, Grayson, Harrison, Miss Haydon, Mrs Hayes, Jones, Kendall, Leake, McCracken, McLean, Mihell, Mills, North, Osborne, Packham, Piasecki, Mrs Ryder, Sargeant, Mrs Shillcock, Thomas, Thompson, Turrell, Wade, Ward and Worrall

Apologies for absence were received from:
Councillors Adams and Mrs Pile

The Mayor's Chaplain, the Reverend Guy Cole, St Michael's Church, Easthampstead, opened the proceedings with prayers.

36. Minutes (Item 2)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 28 July 2004 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Mayor.

37. Declarations of Interest (Item 3)

No member of the Council declared any personal or prejudicial interest in any item of business on the agenda for the meeting.

38. Mayor's Announcements (Item 4)

Annual Civic Service

The Mayor extended gratitude to all those Members, officers and guests who had attended the previous month's annual civic service and contributed towards its success. The service collection had raised £300 in respect of the Mayor's charity.

School 'mufti days'

The efforts of numerous local schools, including seven primary schools, which had held 'mufti days' during September and collectively raised almost £2,000 towards the Mayor's charity, were applauded.

Community Fun Days

The Mayor announced that the two community fun days organised in Great Hollands and Priestwood during September by the staff of Bracknell Forest Services were well attended and successful despite inclement weather. Charity contributions towards the Ark collected on the fun days amounted to a further £213.71.

Halloween Walk

A Halloween Walk to raise funds for the Sebastian Gates Action Against Cancer Appeal and the Mayor's charity was taking place on Sunday 31 October and would commence at 11.00 am at the Look Out, Nine Mile Ride. Councillors who were unable to attend were invited to sponsor the Mayor.

Annual Mayor's Charity Golf Day

Having been advised that the Annual Mayor's Charity Golf Day would be held on Thursday 7 April 2005 at Mill Ride Golf Complex, Ascot, Members were invited to take part.

National Recognition and Accolades for Staff

The Mayor drew attention to additional national recognition and accolades recently conferred upon members of the Borough Council's staff. On the invitation of the Mayor, Councillor Birch announced the award of the:

- Customer Care Trainer of the Year award to Jane Sherwood, Training Officer;
- APSE Construction and Building Maintenance Team of the Year award to Bracknell Forest Services;
- SOCITIM IT Excellence award to the Borough Council owing to the efforts of Ian Slee and Tony Madden, Borough Personnel Officer; and
- National Training Award to Leah Thompson and Joan Lindsay, Training Section, on the strength of the Borough Council's management training programme.

Councillor McCracken reported further accolades in the form of Chartermark awards for The Look Out, which complemented those Chartermark awards previously allocated to Coral Reef and the Bracknell Sports and Leisure Centre.

Children and Young People's Champion

In her capacity as Children and Young People's Champion, Councillor Miss Haydon took the opportunity to invite Members to recognise their role as corporate parents by contributing to a Christmas gift of £10 per looked after child or filling a carrier bag with presents.

Mr Chris Herbert, Borough Finance Officer

The Mayor undertook to convey the congratulations of the Council to one of its officers, Mr Chris Herbert, the Borough Finance Officer, who would be marking his 30 years service with the Borough Council the following week, having commenced employment at the Authority on 4 November 1974.

39. Executive Report (Item 5)

The Leader of the Council presented the Executive Report to the Council which had been circulated as a separate enclosure. Since the last meeting of the Council, the Executive had met on 21 September and 19 October, 2004, and had reached decisions in respect of the following matters:

- Berkshire Structure Plan 2001 – 2016 – Modifications and Adoption
- Amendment to Bracknell Forest Employment of Children Byelaws
- Bracknell Forest and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Safer Communities Partnerships: Joint Review;
- Selection of Preferred Partner Registered Social Landlords;
- Streetcare Best Value Review – Improvement Plan;
- Approval for Virement of Capital Budgets;
- Local Development Scheme;
- Redesigning and Improving the Council's Web Site; and
- Corporate Performance Overview Report.

The Leader invited Members' comments on the Council's enhanced website which became operational from 26 October and would be officially launched in November, 2004. The recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment of the Council was highlighted and the Leader advised that interim feedback was positive. The Audit Commission would be seeking comments in response to its draft inspection report, the receipt of which was expected on 12 November, prior to publication of the final report in mid December. Notification of the Council's financial settlement for 2005/06, which would impact on the budget and Council Tax level, was due in mid November. Negotiations relating to two local public service agreements would take place in late November and a needs gap analysis of Children's Services would be carried out in January.

The Leader of the Council and Executive Members then responded to questions arising from the report.

40. **Budget and Policy Framework (Item 6)**

Food Law Enforcement Plan (Item 6(i))

The Council was invited to ratify the Food Law Enforcement Plan for 2004/05 following the expiry of the related two-month period of consultation, during which time no representations had been received. The five-year Plan addressed all matters concerning food hygiene, food standards and the sale of animal foodstuff. The format of the Plan, now in its fourth year, had been revised several times since first approved by the Executive in June 2002 to improve its readability and facilitate updating. Further improvements to the Plan's presentation were intended during the next 12 months.

In moving adoption of the recommendations set out in the related report, Councillor Mills explained the background to the Plan and the work of the Environmental Health and Trading Standards and Services Sections of the Council. On being put to the meeting, the motion was declared carried. It was thus

RESOLVED that

- (i) Supporting information in relation to the outcome of the period of consultation in respect of the Food Law Enforcement Plan for 2004/05 be noted; and
- (ii) The Food Law Enforcement Plan for 2004/05 be ratified.

Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016 Modifications and Adoption (Item 6(ii))

The Council considered a report from the Director of Environment and Leisure seeking approval for the adoption of the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016 which had been circulated as a separate enclosure to the agenda relating to this meeting. In moving adoption of the recommendations contained in the report, Councillor Mrs Ballin explained the background to the preparation of the Plan and highlighted areas of significance for Bracknell Forest including the absence of a shopping hierarchy and the policy concerning the percentage of affordable housing to be provided.

Whilst Members were supportive of the Plan, some concern was expressed in respect of a diagram appended thereto which they felt did not accurately reflect the traffic congestion pressures experienced in the Borough as a result of the M3/M4 motorway corridor. Accordingly, officers were requested to reconsider the appropriateness of this diagram.

On the proposition of Councillor Mrs Ballin, seconded by Councillor Birch, it was

RESOLVED that

- (i) the following decisions of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee reached on 13 July 2004 be acknowledged and ratified:
 - (a) *“That,....., the Joint Committee formally approves the factual updates and points of clarification to the Berkshire Structure Plan and Explanatory Memorandum, detailed in Appendix 1.”* (to the report to that Committee);
 - (b) *“That, the Joint Committee agrees to the responses to representations made during the deposit period, as set out in Appendix 1.”* (to the report to that Committee); and
 - (c) *“That, the Joint Committee recommends that the Berkshire Unitary Authorities follow the process leading to adoption set out in paragraph 3.6 of the report.”* (to that Committee).
- (ii) No further Examination in Public be required;
- (iii) The Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016 be adopted on Friday 10 December 2004 or such other date as the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Transportation, shall agree with the Berkshire unitary authorities;
- (iv) The publication of the Form 3 – Notice of intention to adopt proposals for the alteration or replacement of a structure plan without proposing modifications or further modifications be authorised; and
- (v) The publication of the Form 5 – Notice of adoption of proposals for the alteration or replacement of a structure plan be authorised.

41. Public Speaking in Relation to Planning Matters (Item 7)

The Council considered a report from the Constitution Review Group which proposed amendments to the Constitution to enable the Planning and Highways Committee to

adopt public speaking arrangements at its meetings. On the proposition of Councillor Wade, seconded by Councillor Worrall, it was

RESOLVED that paragraph 9.2 of part 4.1 of the Council's Constitution (Council Procedure Rules) be amended by adding "and the Planning and Highways Committee" after "The Licensing and Safety Committee", thus enabling the Planning and Highways Committee to develop and adopt a scheme for public speaking at its meetings.

42. **Annual Report of the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Champion (Item 8)**

The Tenants' and Leaseholders' Champion, Councillor Edger, presented his annual report to the Council which represented the aspects of housing services that had been dealt with during the period since his last report. Matters relating to tenants and leaseholders, the Housing Section, housing maintenance, stock condition survey, housing stock options, allocations and miscellaneous details were addressed in the report.

Having drawn Members' attention in particular to briefings in respect of housing needs and stock options and to the satisfaction expressed by users in relation to the housing maintenance service, Councillor Edger responded to questions arising from consideration of his report.

43. **South East Charter for Elected Member Development (Item 9)**

In partnership with the Improvement and Development Agency, the South East Employers organisation had developed a new Charter on Elected Member Development. The Council considered a related report which invited it to become a signatory to the Charter and to appoint a Member working group to steer the Council towards full Charter status by 31 March 2006.

In moving adoption of the recommendations set out in the report, Councillor Birch referred to the provisions of the Charter which included external assessment and enhancement of the Council's current Member training scheme to facilitate individual development with a view to identifying and adopting best practice. The motion was seconded by Councillor Bettison and, on being put to the meeting, was declared carried. It was thus

RESOLVED that

- (i) The Council's commitment to good practice in Elected Member Development by becoming a signatory to the South East Charter for Elected Member Development be confirmed;
- (ii) A Member Development working group be established comprising Councillors Barnard, Brunel-Walker, Leake, McLean, Mrs Shillcock and Worrall, with the following terms of reference:
 - (a) to conduct a self-assessment exercise against the Charter criteria;
 - (b) to develop an action plan for achieving Charter status by 31 March 2006;

- (c) to oversee implementation of the action plan and to monitor and advise on the Council's ongoing arrangements for Member Development.

44. Miscellaneous Appointments (Item 10)

The Council considered a report from the Director of Corporate Services and Resources inviting appointments to various bodies where vacancies had arisen and providing related supporting information. A motion from Councillor Birch nominating appointees to these vacancies was circulated at the meeting. Having been seconded by Councillor Bettison and put to the meeting, the motion was declared carried. It was therefore

RESOLVED that

- (i) Councillor Wade be appointed to serve as one of the Council's three representatives on the Blackwater Valley Network Member Steering Group for the remainder of the municipal year;
- (ii) Councillor Baily be appointed to serve as a member of the Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Panel and Councillor Harrison be appointed to serve as a substitute member of the Panel for the remainder of the municipal year;
- (iii) Councillor Browne be appointed to serve on the Licensing and Safety Committee for the remainder of the municipal year;
- (iv) Councillors Mrs Hayes and Packham be appointed to serve on the Planning and Highways Committee for the remainder of the municipal year, with Councillors Mrs Birch and Miss Haydon added as substitute Members;
- (v) The appointment of Councillor Mills by the Leader of the Council to the Safer Communities Strategic Partnership be noted; and
- (vi) Councillor Leake be appointed as the Council's representative on Home Start for the remainder of the municipal year.

45. Questions Submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10 (Item 11)

Questions by Councillor Earwicker to the Leader of the Council:

- (i) *"To ask the Leader of the Council on what basis and terms did the Council decide to financially support the proposed refurbishment of Crowthorne Village Hall?"*

Councillor Bettison in response stated that, at its meeting held on 7 November 2001, the former Strategy and Policy Committee had approved an award of £69,000 to Crowthorne Parish Council in respect of a modest extension and refurbishment of Crowthorne Parish Hall. The Leader of the Council advised that the Parish Council had subsequently reviewed its proposals and was seeking to pursue a more significant project which better met the needs of the community and allowed full access for disabled people. In order to release the grant, the Director of Environment and Leisure required a copy of the accepted tender and a letter from the Parish Council requesting release. The Parish Council had made an undertaking to repay

all or part of the award should the project not proceed or showed significant variation in terms of outcome or underspend. Councillor Bettison then responded to a supplementary question from Councillor Earwicker in this regard.

- (ii) *“What assurances can the Leader of the Council give that the safer communities strategic partnership with Thames Valley Police has not been irreparably damaged by the recent public statements of the Executive Member for Emergency Services and Community Safety about an individual member of that Force?”*

In response, Councillor Bettison assured the Council that the partnership with Thames Valley Police continued to strengthen and flourish and advised that the development of the Council’s Sustainable Communities Division within the Social Services and Housing Department had provided new momentum to the Safer Communities agenda. Together with the Police and its other partners within the Safer Communities Partnership, the Council was making good progress towards the key priorities identified through this strategic group. The Leader of the Council then provided a number of examples of the success of the Partnership and responded to a supplementary question from Councillor Earwicker.

MAYOR

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