

**SOCIAL SERVICES & HOUSING COMMITTEE**  
**9 JUNE 1998**

Present: Councillors Angell (Chairman), Bayle, Mrs Clifford, Harrison, Miss Haydon, Mrs Hirst, Jones, McCormack, Mrs Pile, Ryan, Simonds, Mrs Sutcliffe and Worrall

Substitutions: Councillor Thompson for Councillor Egan  
Councillor Grayson for Councillor Mrs Shillcock

Apologies for Absence:  
Councillors Egan and Mrs Shillcock

**Substitute Members**

Councillor Thompson for Councillor Egan  
Councillor Grayson for Councillor Mrs Shillcock

**53. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 March 1998 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**54. Housing Sub Committee - Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Sub Committee held on 19 May 1998 as set out in Appendix A be received and noted.

**55. Social Services Sub Committee - Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Social Services Sub Committee held on 26 May 1998 as set out in Appendix B be received and noted.

**56. Joint Advisory Sub Committee on Children's Services - Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Advisory Sub Committee on Children's Services held on 27 May 1998 as set out in Appendix C be received and noted.

**57. Sex Offenders and Managing Dangerousness (Item 1)**

In a detailed report the Director of Social Services & Housing advised Members of the requirements of the Sex Offenders Act 1997, advised on the requirements of the Probation Service to establish a register of potentially dangerous offenders, and identified possible courses of action.

Local discussion had taken place between representatives of the Social Services & Housing Department, the Police and the Probation Services about options to develop effective local multi-agency working in the management of dangerousness with the community. All of the agencies concerned were in agreement that protocols for the

sharing of information and the assessment and management of risk should be devised which integrated the respective responsibilities of the individual agencies. Such protocols would need to support a local risk management forum which would have clear links to the Area Child Protection Committee. Such a forum could not only facilitate the successful management of risk and act as a co-ordinator for inter-agency training, but, through a review of significant issues which arise, enhance the policy development of the constituent agencies as relates to the management of dangerousness. The protocols would be brought back to the Committee for consideration in due course.

Members considered the report in depth and the Director of Social Services & Housing gave detailed responses to Members on issues that were raised, particularly in response to the areas of risk management.

**RESOLVED** that meetings between officers with the local Police, Probation Managers and relevant others to develop local protocols for both the assessment and the management of risk and the exchange of information be endorsed.

**58. HIP Strategy Statement 1999/2000 and Beyond (Item 2)**

The Director of Social Services & Housing submitted a report seeking the Committee's approval to the contents of the draft Housing Investment Programme (HIP) Strategy Statement for 1999/2000 for the purpose of consultation and submission to the Department of Environment Transport and the Regions.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the draft HIP Strategy Statement for 1999/2000 and beyond be approved for the purpose of consulting with interested parties and submission to the Department of Environment Transport and the Regions by the end of July 1998; and
- (ii) the comments of consultees be incorporated as appropriate and the final draft be presented for adoption by the Committee at its September 1998 meeting, ready for publication by the autumn (October/November 1998),

**59. Foster Care Allowances 1998/99 (Item 3)**

At its last meeting (minute 593 refers) the Committee had requested further analysis of the impact of approving a 3% increase to the basic rate allowance and further information on the distinction between the various allowances. Accordingly, the Director of Social Services and Housing reported on the minimal impact of the proposal and answered questions thereon.

**RESOLVED** that approval be given to increase of 3% across the range of fostering allowances.

60. **Montgomery of Alamein Court, Cumberland Drive, Bracknell (Item 4)**

The Director of Social Services & Housing reported that Housing 21, a registered social landlord, wished to improve and update Montgomery of Alamein Court. Funding for phase 1 had already been approved by the Committee in 1997 and a request for phase 2 capital funding and a proposal regarding revenue funding of the scheme had been received.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) an allocation of £178,090 (+/- 10%) be made to Housing 21 to contribute to the funding of phase 2 of the improvement and re-modelling works at Montgomery of Alamein Court; and
- (ii) subject to meeting the requirements of accreditation, Housing 21 be given "preferred provider" status.

61. **Inspection Unit Advisory Panel (Item 5)**

In a joint report the Director of Social Services & Housing and Borough Administrator sought approval to the appointment of a Councillor to the Advisory Panel for the Registration and Inspection Unit which was one of the joint agreement bodies established on reorganisation.

In responding to questions from Members, the Director of Social Services & Housing undertook to provide reports listing homes for inspection at future meetings.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Councillor Simonds be appointed to the Advisory Panel for the Registration and Inspection Unit; and
- (ii) attendance at the Panel meetings be approved for purposes of attendance and travel allowances.

62. **Social Services & Housing Focus Group (Item 6)**

The Borough Administrator submitted a report recommending the appointment of a Focus Group to develop a framework of performance indicators and performance standards in the areas of Social Services & Housing and to report back to the Committee as appropriate.

**RESOLVED** that a Focus Group be formed comprising of Councillors Angell, Harrison and Worrall (*plus two others*) and appropriate officers with the following terms of reference:

- (a) to develop and consider a framework of performance indicators for the Council in the areas of Social Services & Housing provision;
- (b) to develop and consider a framework of performance standards for the Council in the areas of Social Services & Housing provision;
- (c) to report to future meetings of the Social Services Sub Committee and Housing Sub Committee with regard to (a) and (b) above prior to firm

proposals being submitted to a future meeting of the Social Services & Housing Committee; and

- (d) to review and monitor performance indicators and performance standards as required and report to the Sub Committee(s) or this Committee as appropriate.

**63. Working Together to Safeguard Children: New Government Proposals for Inter-Agency Co-operation**

In a report tabled for information with the agreement of the Committee, the Director of Social Services & Housing submitted details of the Government's consultation paper 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' which was the first major review by the Government of the guidance issued to all agencies involved in safeguarding the welfare of children. In particular the report concentrated on the following key areas:

- Co-operation and joint working by all agencies - Social Services, Health, Education, Police, Probation and the Voluntary Sector, as an essential pre-requisite for safeguarding the welfare of children.
- Review of the guidance necessary to facilitate a wider, more holistic view of the needs of vulnerable children and their families.
- New thinking on the way forward to inform the development of new guidance.
- Placing child protection work firmly within the context of wider services for children in need and with the emphasis on early intervention to tackle parenting difficulties before they escalate to abuse.
- The Government's commitment to reinforcing the best elements of the existing Child Protection system and providing clearer guidance about routes into and out of the Child Protection system and on the interface between this system and services for children in need.

Members gave consideration to the procedures for vetting foster parents and the Director reported that this matter had already been considered at the meeting of the Joint Children's Services Sub Committee when it had been agreed that a seminar on this area would be held for Members.

**RESOLVED** that the issues raised in the Government's consultation paper, as reported, be noted.

**64. Items for Information**

The Committee received and noted the following information items:

- Revenue Outturn 1997/98 (Item 7)
- Local Authority Performance Indicators (Item 8)

**65. Exclusion of Public and Press**

**RESOLVED** that pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration

of the following item which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- (1) Information relating to employees or former employees of the Council (Item 9)

**66. Homecare Services (Item 9)**

In a report containing exempt information the Director of Social Services & Housing reported that the revenue budget identified a number of service economies to be achieved in the financial year 1998/99, one of which was identified for the Homecare Service. The target reduction was £70,000 and it was anticipated that this could be achieved by outsourcing part of the service, thereby achieving management savings and a reduction in unit costs and accordingly submitted detailed proposals to achieve the target reduction.

The Local Joint Committee had considered the report earlier in the day and had made no adverse comment.

In considering the report, Members were of the view that a greater examination was required with regard to the possibilities of outsourcing savings that could be achieved on the budget as a whole.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) whilst retaining the budget requirement to achieve £70,000 savings by outsourcing, the proposed rationalisation of the management structure to achieve additional budget savings in the year 1998/99 of £65,000, less any potential redundancy costs, be endorsed; and
- (ii) officers review the Homecare Service within the context of the Government guidelines of Best Value and bring forward a report to the next Committee.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and concluded at 9.50 p.m.

**CHAIRMAN**