

**JOINT ADVISORY SUB COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
27 MAY 1998**

Present: Councillors Angell, Barnard, Mrs Hirst, Mrs Shillcock, Ward
and Worrall

1. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Angell be nominated as Chairman of the Advisory Sub Committee for the municipal year 1998/99.

COUNCILLOR ANGELL IN THE CHAIR

2. Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Ward be appointed Vice Chairman of the Advisory Sub Committee for the municipal year 1998/99.

(In taking office the Chairman and Vice Chairman stated that the Chairmanship of the Sub Committee may vary between Chairman and Vice Chairman, dependent on whether the issues could be debated were Social Services or Education led.)

3. Notes of Previous (Informal) Meeting

The notes of the previous informal meeting of the Advisory Sub Committee held on 22 October 1997 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Working Together To Safeguard Children - Government Proposals (Item 1)

The Director of Social Services & Housing submitted a detailed report on 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 detailed consideration to the procedures for vetting foster parents and were of the view that this would be a useful area for consideration at a seminar to be held for all Members. Accordingly, the Director of Social Services & Housing undertook to examine this area and report back.

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

5. Social Services Children's Service Plan 1998 - 2001 (Item 2)

The Director of Social Services & Housing gave an update on the Children's Service Plan 1998-2001 and reported that the final version of the plan would be ready for printing very shortly and would then be widely distributed within Bracknell Borough, neighbouring boroughs and to key agencies.

RESOLVED that the Children's Service Plan 1998-2001 be endorsed along with appropriate cross departmental activity to facilitate implementation of the plan being carried through corporate communication and collaboration.

6. Progress with Early Years Development Plan (Item 3)

The Director of Education submitted a report updating the Advisory Sub Committee on the progress made by the Early Years Development Partnership in preparing and implementing Bracknell Forest Early Years Development Plan.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

7. Consultation on Regulation of Early Education and Day Care (Item 4)

The Director of Education submitted a report informing the Advisory Sub Committee of the broad direction that the Government was taking in its recently published consultation paper on the regulatory arrangements for early education and day care, the implications which, if implemented, would have a far reaching affect for the delivery of services currently provided through the Social Services & Housing and Education Departments.

Details of the Government proposals, together with a summary of the existing regime, were presented.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

8. Joint Arrangements (Item 5)

The Director of Education and Director of Social Services & Housing submitted a joint report identifying issues regarding joint arrangements and indicating the progress that was being made to ensure collaborative working between the two departments on such issues.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

9. **Sex Offenders and Managing Dangerousness (Item 6)**

In a detailed report the Director of Social Services & Housing advised Members of the requirements of the Sex Offenders Act 1997 and proposed protocols for the risk assessment and information sharing between agencies, advice on the requirements of the Probation Service to establish a register of potentially dangerous offenders, and identified a possible courses of action.

Local discussion had taken place between representatives of the Social Services & Housing Department, Police and Probation services about options to develop effective local multi-agency working in the management of dangerousness within 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 integrate 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 inter agency training, but, through a review of significant issues which arise, enhance the policy development of the constituent agencies as it relates to the management of dangerousness.

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

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and concluded at 9.30pm

CHAIRMAN