

**STRATEGY & POLICY COMMITTEE**  
**15 JULY 1998**

Present: Councillor Bettison (Chairman), Councillors Adams, Angell, Mrs Ballin, Bayle, Birch, Good, Harrison, Jones, Mrs Keene, McCormack, Mills, Sargeant, Wade, Wheaton and Worrall

Also Present: Councillor Flood

Apologies for Absence were received from:  
Councillors North, Mrs Shillcock and Ward

**157. Substitute Members**

The Committee noted the attendance of the following Substitute Members under Standing Order 38:

Councillor Adams for Councillor Mrs Shillcock  
Councillor Harrison for Councillor Ward  
Councillor Worrall for Councillor North

**158. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 March 1998 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**159. Audit Performance & Scrutiny Committee**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings of the Audit Performance & Scrutiny Committee held on 23 February 1998 and 24 June 1998, as set out in Appendices A and G hereto respectively, be received.

**160. Local Government Reorganisation Sub Committee**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Local Government Reorganisation Sub Committee held on 30 March 1998, as set out in Appendix B hereto, be received and that the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

**161. Access Advisory Sub Committee**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings of the Access Advisory Sub Committee held on 21 May 1998 and 17 June 1998, as set out in Appendices C and E hereto, be received and that the recommendation contained therein be adopted.

**162. Town Centre Sub Committee**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Town Centre Sub Committee held on 2 June 1998, as set out in Appendix D hereto, be received.

163. **Millennium Sub Committee**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Millennium Sub Committee held on 17 June 1998, as set out in Appendix F hereto, be received and that the recommendation contained therein be adopted.

164. **Finance & Property Sub Committee**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Property Sub Committee held on 1 July 1998, as set out in Appendix H hereto, be received and that the recommendation contained therein be adopted.

165. **Personnel Sub Committee**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Sub Committee held on 6 July 1998, as set out in Appendix I hereto, be received.

166. **Building Better Schools Initiative  
(Reference from Education Committee) (Appendix J)**

The Committee received a recommendation by the Education Budget Sub Committee (Minute 15) which had been subsequently adopted by the Education Committee (Minute 94) and which sought the release of funding for capital projects at schools and for the Bracknell Forest Schools' Music Festival. The Committee further noted that the request had been considered by the Finance & Property Sub Committee in the context of the capital programme review and that additional capital funding had been identified which would enable the request from the Education Budget Sub Committee to be supported.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) the recommendations of the Education Budget Sub Committee in Minute 15 be approved;
- (ii) the funding requirements for the Building Better Schools initiative be met from the additional capital funding identified by the Finance & Property Sub Committee; and
- (iii) the funding for the School's Music Festival be made from the available contingency provision.

167. **Quarterly Report (Item 1)**

The Chief Executive submitted the first quarterly report outlining the key activities and performance of the Council during the first three months of the year. The report

highlighted work which had been carried out and, in some cases, would be ongoing with particular reference being made to a number of initiatives which had been pursued including work on the Corporate Games and a series of Ward meetings with local Members. The Chief Executive particularly drew the Committee's attention to the requirement for the Council to conduct a Crime and Disorder Audit in partnership with the local Police and requested the Committee to consider the establishment of a Focus Group to progress this work.

**RESOLVED** that the Quarterly Report be noted and that approval be given to the setting up of a Focus Group comprising five Councillors (3 : 2) and appropriate Officers to develop the Crime and Disorder Audit and subsequent action plan by April 1999.

168. **Commitment Budget 1999/2000 - 2001/02 (Item 2)**

The Committee received a joint report by the Director of Corporate Services and Borough Finance Officer which identified the Council's existing commitments for future spending on services on the basis of decisions made when setting the current year's budget and resource monitoring to date. This represented the first formal step in the annual financial planning process and would provide a basis for service committees to begin consideration of medium term policy objectives and priorities and initial preparations for next year's revenue budget.

The Director of Corporate Services also referred to the announcements subsequently made by the Government following the Comprehensive Spending Review and advised that preliminary indications were that nationally SSA levels would increase by between 4.5% and 5% although Aggregate Exchequer Grant from Central Government would increase by 1.5%. In the light of the Government plans the potential shortfall in the Council's funding in 1999/2000 was likely to be towards the lower end of the predicted range but would still be significant.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) the Commitment Budget and possible budget "gap" for 1999/2000 be noted;
- (ii) the proposed budget strategy be agreed;
- (iii) Service Committees be asked at their next meetings to review their Commitment Budget and medium term priorities, to investigate the scope for further cash limitation of running expenses and to identify priority areas for service development in the medium term; and
- (iv) Service Committees be asked to examine appropriate opportunities for increasing income.

169. **Performance and Financial Management Programme (Item 3)**

The Committee received proposals for developing a comprehensive Corporate Performance Management Programme designed to ensure that new and existing services continued to be delivered at a high standard and that the plans for each

service area reflected the Borough Council's corporate objectives. The proposals took account of the likely requirements of legislative changes covering future delivery of local authority services.

Following detailed discussion it was

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) the Committee endorse the approach to a Performance Management Programme set out in the report;
- (ii) the initial areas for a fundamental review set out in paragraph 4.5.5 be approved and, as a first step, by January 1999, the strategic options for two of the services subject to CCT be examined with a view to commencing a possible market testing exercise in February 1999; and
- (iii) the outcome of the strategic option review of the two chosen services be implemented by 1 October 1999 at the latest.

**170. A Regional Chamber for the South East - Response to SERF Consultation Paper (Item 4)**

The Chief Executive submitted a consultation paper by the South East Regional Forum on proposals to establish a Voluntary Regional Chamber for the South East Region together with a draft response on behalf of the Council.

In discussion the Committee formed the view that the establishment of such a Voluntary Regional Chamber represented an opportunity to influence the policies and activities of the Regional Development Agencies proposed by the Government and that the Council should therefore participate in this process. The Committee was nevertheless of the view that a Voluntary Regional Chamber for the South East Region should be comprised solely of elected Members of the local authorities within the region.

**RESOLVED** that the Chief Executive be authorised to respond to the consultation paper issued by the South East Regional Forum on the basis of the Committee's discussion.

**171. HIP Strategy Statement and Forward Programme 1999 - 2002 (Item 5)**

The Director of Social Services and Housing submitted the draft Housing Strategy Statement which had been prepared in accordance with Government guidance and developed through the Housing Strategy Officer Group comprising representatives of each Directorate.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee endorse the content of the draft Housing Strategy Statement for consultation purposes prior to formal adoption in September 1998.

**172. Management of Public Rights of Way (Item 6)**

The Committee noted arrangements proposed for undertaking the Highway Authority responsibilities in relation to the review and updating of the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) "Royal County of Berkshire" is replaced by "Bracknell Forest" in the title of the current Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way for the Bracknell Forest Borough Council area; and
- (ii) the Borough Solicitor, in consultation with the Director of Planning and Transportation and Director of Leisure, be given delegated authority to perform the Council's functions under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Section 53 and 54.

**173. Millennium Sub Committee (Item 7)**

The Director of Leisure Services reported on the recommendations arising from the first meeting of the Millennium Sub Committee held on 17 June 1998, the minutes of which had been previously submitted.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) £10,000 be transferred from the contingency sum of £500,000 to the Millennium Sub Committee in order to develop events and activities;
- (ii) the Millennium Sub Committee be given delegated authority to utilise this amount in the development of Millennium events and activities; and
- (iii) the Committee note that further funding may be required in 1999/2000 but this will be considered as part of the normal budget process.

**174. Representation on Outside Bodies (Item 8)**

The Committee received details of further appointments to outside bodies which arisen since the Annual Council meeting on 25 March 1998.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council:

- (i) nominates a further representative, observer and reserve to represent the Council at meetings of A.C.T.V.a.R.;
- (ii) nominates two representatives and one reserve to represent the Council on the Consultative Committee for Museums in Berkshire;
- (iii) approves the appointment of eligible Councillors to serve as LEA representatives on Education Appeal Committee convened by the Portsmouth Diocesan Board for Education;
- (iv) in accordance with the recommendations of Leisure Services Committee, appoints one additional member to serve as a Council representative on Southern Arts and one member to serve as the Council's representative on the Berkshire Association of Youth Clubs; and

**RESOLVED** that the Committee:

- (i) confirms the appointment of Councillor Mrs Sutcliffe as the Council's representative on the Crown Wood Community Association;
- (ii) confirms the appointment of Councillor Birch as the Council's representative on the Eastern Wessex Territorial Auxiliary and Volunteer Reserve Association;
- (iii) confirms the appointment of Councillor Mrs Pile as the Council's representative on the Hanworth Community Association;
- (iv) confirms the appointment of Councillor Mrs Pile as the Council's representative on the Harmanswater Community Association;
- (v) confirms the appointment of Councillor Grayson as the Council's reserve representative on the South East Employers;
- (vi) confirms the appointment of the Chief Executive as the Council's representative at meetings of the Thames Economic Partnership;
- (vii) confirms the appointment of Councillor Wheaton as an additional representative to the Bracknell Job Centre.

**175. Annual Conferences (Item 9)**

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a list of annual conferences arranged by local authority related bodies reflecting the Council's increased range of responsibilities as a unitary authority.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) approval be given to the attendance of one member at the annual conferences of the Local Authority related bodies listed below:

Association of Councils in the Thames Valley Region  
Association of Directors of Social Services  
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health  
Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants  
Council of Local Education Authorities  
Institute of Housing  
Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (including service conferences)  
Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation Association  
Institute of Trading Standards Administration  
Institute of Waste Management  
Local Government Association (2 Members)  
Local Government Information Unit  
All Local Government Association Annual Service Conferences  
Public Libraries Authorities  
Royal Town Planning Institute  
South East Employers  
Town and Country Planning Summer School (2 Members)

- (ii) attendance at these conferences be confirmed as an approved duty under the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances.

**176. Scheme of Members' Allowances - Approved Duties (Item 10)**

The Committee noted that the Council's current Scheme of Allowances did not fully reflect the wider range of activities undertaken by Members of the unitary authority. The Committee further noted that expenditure over the first two months of the financial year on attendance allowances was running slightly ahead of budget provision.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) Schedule 2 item (v) of the Scheme of Members' Allowances be amended as follows:  
  
"attendance at internal and external training and other seminars arranged by or on behalf of the Council";
- (ii) the Director of Corporate Services be give delegated authority to approve, in consultation with Chairmen, attendance at conferences, subject to there being resources available within the approved budget;
- (iii) the attendance allowance payable to Members in respect of approved duties be reduced from £30 to £26 for the remainder of 1998/99.

**177. Joint Strategy and Policy/Audit and Performance Review Focus Group (Item 11)**

The Committee noted an information report on the work undertaken by the Joint Focus Group established by the Committee and the Audit and Performance Review Committee and the outstanding matters to be dealt with during the forthcoming cycle of meetings.

The meeting commenced at 7.30 p.m.  
and concluded at 10.35 p.m.

**CHAIRMAN**