

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION SUB COMMITTEE
30 MARCH 1998

Present: Councillor Bettison (Chairman), Councillors Angell, McCormack and Wheaton

Ufton Court (Item 1)

The Borough Solicitor introduced a report giving details of the proposed agreement to be entered into by the unitary authorities concerning Ufton Court, a Grade 1 listed building which was currently used as an outdoor and field study centre. It was proposed that the lease, currently held by Berkshire County Council with 11 years to run, be vested in Newbury District Council with the other unitary authorities contributing towards the maintenance of the property and other costs under the lease in proportion to "popbase". The agreement would further require that within six weeks of 1 April 1998 Newbury D.C. must submit a detailed business plan and specification for the property and its use. The parties to the agreement would be required to use their reasonable endeavours to negotiate and within three months, conclude an agreement relating to the management and use of the property as an education centre or for conferences, staff training, recreation and/or heritage interpretation. The costs of this service (as distinct from the cost of the lease) were to be shared in proportion to primary school pupil numbers. In recent years the County Council has spent approximately £35,000 per annum on "reactive maintenance" and a surveyor's report had indicated that works costing in the region of £425,000 would be required over the next five years. Bracknell Forest Borough Council's share of these costs would need to be absorbed from within existing budgets or met from the contingency provision. Unless an agreement was reached between the unitary authorities by 1 April 1998 vesting the lease in the unitary authority, it would vest in the residuary body.

RECOMMENDED that the Council enter into an agreement concerning Ufton Court as detailed in the officer's report.

It was further **RESOLVED** that the Borough Solicitor should write to the Ufton Court Management Committee requesting that Bracknell Forest Borough Council be allowed to nominate a representative to that Committee.

Education Library Service and Other Joint Arrangements (Item 2)

The Sub Committee considered a report on possible redundancy costs payable resulting from Wokingham District Council withdrawing from some of the proposed joint arrangements, including the Education Library Service for which Bracknell Forest Borough Council would be responsible from 1 April 1998. It was proposed all six unitary authorities should enter into an agreement to contribute to these redundancy costs.

RESOLVED that any redundancy costs paid within three months from reorganisation date arising from Wokingham District Council not participating in joint arrangements for the provision of services, be met from a fund set up by the Designated Authority (Reading Borough Council) from the County Council's balances and spare SCA.

Berkshire Sports and Social Club, Sonning (Tabled Item)

The Chairman agreed to the consideration of this report as an urgent item since it concerned a proposed agreement between the Berkshire Unitary Authorities to be entered into prior to 1st April. The report considered proposals as to the interim funding of the Berkshire Sports and Social Club and the future management of the property at Sonning, currently owned by the County Council. The proposed arrangement between the six unitary authorities was to support the funding of the Club over the next three years at a cost of £24,000 County-wide during the first year, £16,000 in the second year and £8,000 in the third. It was proposed that the Sports and Social Club should aim during this time to manage the financial transition, with a view to achieving viability in its own right by the end of the third year. If financial viability were to be achieved the club would be granted a lease by Wokingham District Council, in whom the property would vest on reorganisation.

RECOMMENDED that the Council confirms its agreement to the proposed arrangements set out in the Officer's report regarding the funding of Berkshire Sports and Social Club at Sonning.

Highway and Transportation Contracts (Tabled Item)

The Chairman agreed to the Sub Committee considering an urgent tabled report on the ground that the matter required determination prior to Local Government Reorganisation. The report concerned the highway and transportation contracts to be taken over by the Borough Council from the County Council upon reorganisation. It was proposed that these contracts should be formally recognised and managed on the present day system by the Director of Planning and Transportation and that delegation be given to the Director of Planning and Transportation to place various orders under these contracts to a value of £50,000.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the continuing contracts and approved list of contractors for works, goods and services of the former County Environment Department relating to the Borough Council be recognised and be managed on the present basis by the Director of Planning and Transportation (or other such Director as appropriate); and
- (ii) that for term and schedule of rates contracts involving work on the highway, the Director of Planning & Transportation be given delegated authority to place individual orders up to the value of £50,000.

Delegated Authority

The Borough Solicitor gave a verbal report upon the need for delegated authority to be given to the Chief Executive or in his absence the Director of Corporate Services, to deal with any urgent matters relating to local government reorganisation between the end of this Sub Committee and 1 April 1998 in order to ensure that all appropriate agreements be entered into and arrangements made before the reorganisation date.

RESOLVED that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, or in his absence the Director of Corporate Services to deal with any matters relating to local government reorganisation from the end of the Sub Committee meeting to 1 April 1998.

Draft Agreement

The Borough Finance Officer gave a verbal report regarding the need to approve delegation to the Section 151 Officer to agree changes in the management and profile of the Berkshire County Council debt outstanding managed by Reading Borough Council subject to there being no increase in revenue costs to Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

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 Items 4 to 6 in which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following categories of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- (1) Information relating to employees (Item 6)
- (2) Information relating to terms proposed for a contract (Items 4 & 5)

Category 2 Properties (Item 4)

In a report containing exempt information the Borough Solicitor and Chief Valuer gave details of the terms of a proposed agreement between the unitary authorities as to Category 2 properties, seeking authorisation for the Council to enter an agreement on the terms detailed in the report.

RESOLVED that the Council enter into an agreement with the other unitary authorities concerning Category 2 properties in accordance with the terms set out in the Officer's report.

Sale of Shire Hall and Replacement Archives Building (Item 5)

In a report containing exempt information the Borough Solicitor updated the Sub Committee on the position in relation to the sale of Shire Hall and the distribution of the proceeds of sale and the provision of a replacement archive facility currently proposed for Yeomanry House, Reading..

RESOLVED that the Council enter into the proposed agreement for the distribution of the proceeds from the sale of Shire Hall, the management of Shire Hall and the funding and award of contracts for a replacement archives building as outlined in the Officer's report.

Funding of NJC Staff (Item 6)

In a report containing exempt information the Borough Finance Officer and Director of Corporate Services gave details of the method of financing NJC staff.

RESOLVED that the Sub Committee approve the detailed method of financing NJC staff set out in the officer's reports.

Tuns Lane, Slough

In a verbal report containing exempt information the Borough Solicitor gave an update on the situation with regards to the selling of the site in Slough District Council's area.

RESOLVED that the Council agree that all the Unitary Authorities should contribute to costs and expenses which Slough Borough Council may incur resulting from the County Council entered into by Berkshire County Council.

The meeting commenced at 5.45pm and concluded at 6.50pm.

CHAIRMAN