

LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE
13 OCTOBER 1998

Present: Councillor North (Chairman), Councillors Bettison, Blatchford, Egan, Fawcett, Finnie, Flood, Good, Miss Haydon, Mrs Hayes, Mrs Keene, McCormack, Taylor, Thompson and Wheaton

Apologies for absence: Councillor Grayson

249. Announcements

The Mayor, Councillor Finnie, announced a contribution of £5 would be made to the Mayor's charity, the British Heart Foundation, if members purchased tickets for the rugby match between Richmond and Bedford on 1 November from the Mayoral/Civic Support Officer or the Leisure Development Manager by 26 October.

250. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 25 March and 30 June 1998 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

251. Bracknell Forest & Wokingham Joint Golf Course Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Bracknell Forest & Wokingham Joint Golf Course Committee held on 12 March 1998 be received.

252. Leisure Services Special Sub Committee and Strategy and Policy Special Sub Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Leisure Services Special Sub Committee and the Strategy and Policy Special Sub Committee held on 30 July 1998 as set out in Appendix A hereto be received.

253. Quarterly Summary Report (Item 1)

The Director of Leisure Services submitted the Quarterly Summary Report to the Committee, which set out the key operational issues, including details on revenue and capital expenditure, since the last meeting of the Committee. The report also detailed progress in achieving the policy objectives in the Operational Service Plan for 1998/99 as achieved by the four Sections in the Department.

RESOLVED that the Quarterly Summary Report, detailing work undertaken by Leisure Services since the last meeting of the Committee, be received.

254. **Commitment Budget and Service Plans 1999/2000 – 2001/2002 (Item 2)**

The Committee was advised that in the light of the anticipated budget shortfall in 1999/2000 it was necessary to review its commitment budget and to agree its medium term objectives. The Committee noted that there were no new commitments which affected the Leisure Services Committee's future budget. The Committee also provisionally agreed its medium term objectives, covering areas such as health, community safety, lifelong learning, the environment, economic development and tourism, and facilities. The Committee also put on record its gratitude to all those involved in the summer holiday fun programme.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Commitment Budget (as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report) be noted; and
- (ii) the Medium Term Objectives (as set out in Annexe A to the report) be provisionally approved, subject to the addition of the following objective in the section on Lifelong Learning: "Promote and facilitate an appreciation of the arts."

255. **Capital Programme – Upgrade of Libraries (Item 3)**

The Director of Leisure Services submitted proposals for capital expenditure on the Borough's libraries, including the installation of automatic doors at Bracknell Library, as well as redecoration and improvements to the lighting at that library and improvements at other local libraries. The Committee approved these schemes, for which provision had been made in the approved capital programme.

RESOLVED that expenditure of up to £55,000 be approved on the following projects:

- (a) installation of automatic doors, redecoration, improvements to the lighting and upgrade of public areas in Bracknell Library.
- (b) re-shelving of Harmans Water Library.
- (c) redecoration and furniture upgrade in branch libraries.

256. **Capital Programme – Youth Centres (Item 4)**

In a report by the Director of Leisure Services, the Committee considered proposals for capital expenditure to provide refurbishment works at three youth and community centres. The Committee was also advised on progress with the partnership building project between Edgbarrow School and the Youth Service and a further report would be submitted to the Committee in January 1999.

RESOLVED that

- (i) £30,000 be approved from the 1998/99 capital programme for refurbishment works at Coopers Hill, Priestwood and Sandhurst Youth and Community Centres; and

- (ii) a detailed report concerning the Edgbarrow Youth Centre and Edgbarrow School partnership be considered in January 1999.

257. New Capital Project – Bracknell Sport & Leisure Centre (Item 5)

The Committee supported proposals set out in a report by the Director of Leisure Services for capital expenditure on replacement floodlights at the artificial turf pitch at the Bracknell Sport and Leisure Centre at an estimated cost of £67,000. This expenditure could be funded from underspends in capital budgets, including the budget for the renewal of the artificial turf pitch, and could include a contribution from the Direct Service Organisation. The Committee was advised that it had apparent authority under the Scheme of Council and Committee Management to resolve the matter, but it was possible that the Strategy and Policy Committee had not intended to allow service committees to make such variations.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Strategy and Policy Committee be requested to confirm whether service committees could agree variations to their capital programmes, as detailed in the existing Scheme of Council and Committee Management;
- (ii) in the event of the Strategy and Policy Committee confirming that service committees could agree variations to their capital programme, the replacement of the floodlights on the Bracknell Sport and Leisure Centre artificial turf pitch be included as an approved scheme within the 1998/99 Leisure Services Capital Programme and funding be released to undertake the project; and
- (iii) in the event of the Strategy and Policy Committee confirming that it was not intended that service committees could agree variations to their capital programmes, the Strategy and Policy Committee be requested to approve the replacement of floodlights on the Bracknell Sport and Leisure Centre artificial turf pitch for inclusion as an approved scheme within the 1998/99 Leisure Services Capital Programme and funding to be released to undertake the project.

258. New Capital Project – Edgbarrow Sports Centre (Item 6)

After consideration of a report by the Director of Leisure Services the Committee supported proposals for a variation in the 1998/99 Leisure Services Capital Programme, which would enable the £50,000 identified for partnership projects to be used for the refurbishment the Health and Fitness Suite at Edgbarrow Sports Centre. The Committee was advised that it had apparent authority under the Council's Scheme of Management to resolve the matter, but it was possible that the Strategy and Policy Committee had not intended to allow service committees to make such variations. The Committee also advised the Strategy and Policy Committee that in its opinion service committees should have the flexibility to re-assess priorities and agree variations within an agreed capital programme.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Strategy and Policy Committee be requested to confirm that it intended that service committees could agree variations to their capital programme, as detailed in the existing Scheme of Council and Committee Management;
- (ii) in the event of the Strategy and Policy Committee confirming that service committees may agree variations to their capital programmes, the refurbishment of the Health and Fitness Suite at Edgbarrow Sports Centre be included as a approved scheme within the 1998/99 Leisure Services Capital Programme and funds be released to undertake the project; and
- (iii) in the event of the Strategy and Policy Committee advising that service committees may not agree variations to their capital programmes, the Strategy and Policy Committee be requested to approve the refurbishment of the Health and Fitness Suite at Edgbarrow Sports Centre for inclusion as an approved scheme within the 1998/99 Leisure Services Capital Programme and funding be released to undertake the project.

259. **Easthampstead Park Conference/Education Centre – Fire Detection/ Alarm System and Building Maintenance Issues (Item 7)**

The Committee was advised of the need to renew the fire detection/alarm system at Easthampstead Park Conference/Education Centre at an estimated cost of £100,000 and that there was no currently capital budget provision for this. The Committee noted that because of the inter-departmental uses associated with the building, it was appropriate that related capital expenditure was funded from a central budget. The Committee also noted a variety of other maintenance items, some of which would be addressed from the 1998/99 revenue budget and other non-urgent items, which would be reviewed at the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Strategy and Policy Committee be requested to commit funding of £100,000 from the 1999/2000 Finance and Property Capital Programme for a fire alarm/detection system at Easthampstead Park Conference/Education Centre and the work be carried out on the timetable specified by the Borough Surveyor;
- (ii) urgent maintenance items be funded this financial year from within the revised Easthampstead Park revenue budget; and
- (iii) non-urgent but necessary maintenance be reviewed at the end of this financial year by the Borough Surveyor with the intention of including this in the Finance and Property Sub Committee's Capital Programme for 1999/2000.

260. **Section 106 Funds – Open Space and Community Facilities (Item 8)**

The Director of Leisure Services presented an overview of Section 106 Funds that were available for open space and community facilities. The report gave details of commitments and contained proposals for the allocation of remaining funds.

RESOLVED that

- (i) it be noted that funds have already been committed to projects at:
 - (a) Carnation Hall,
 - (b) Martins Heron Community Centre,
 - (c) Priestwood Community Centre
 - (d) Binfield Boys Football Club
 - (e) Jubilee Gardens
 - (f) Warfield/Winkfield Countryside Park

- (ii) the monies shown as provisionally allocated in Annexes A and B of the report be committed as follows:
 - (a) £620 from fund 2.4 [Foxley Lane, Binfield] for capital works at Binfield Library;
 - (b) an additional £7,800 from fund 9.1 [Parkestrel] be spent on capital works associated with the new entrance and approach to Sandhurst Sports Centre;
 - (c) £7,650 received for Chaucer Woods be spent on general improvements to the site;
 - (d) £10,570 from fund 7.5 [Ringmead, Birch Hill] be released for improvements to Birch Hill Community Centre;
 - (e) £5,949 from fund 7.4 [Frog Lane] be released for improvements to Easthampstead Community Centre;
 - (f) an additional £20,000 be released for land acquisition for the Warfield/Winkfield Countryside Park;
 - (g) £4,825 be spent on new equipment at Branksome Hill play area; and

- (iii) funds be provisionally allocated for the following projects and further work be undertaken so that a detailed report can be submitted to the Committee:
 - (a) provision of outdoor youth facilities at Coopers Hill Youth & Community Centre;
 - (b) provision of a new pedestrian access to Ambarrow Court from the railway bridge on Church Road as identified in the Local Plan;
 - (c) improvements to Anneforde Place Recreation Ground - see separate report;
 - (d) a project which aims to improve recreation facilities at Sandhurst School and Sports Centre and Branksome Hill open space, as identified in a report to the Committee in June 1998;
 - (e) The Cut path;
 - (f) provision of a pavilion at Westmorland Drive;
 - (g) restoration of Lily Hill Park;
 - (h) improvements to community facilities in North Bracknell; and
 - (i) recreation facilities in Crowthorne.

261. Development of Harmans Water Library (Item 9)

In a report by the Director of Leisure Services, the Committee was advised that St Paul's Shared Church was planning to redevelop its Church building. The proposals could involve either stand-alone church or a facility which would include Harmans Water Library. The Committee noted that any redevelopment of the library

together with St Paul's Church would enhance access and enable an expansion of services available from the library.

RESOLVED that the concept of developing the library as part of the St Paul's Shared Church development be supported, but on the explicit understanding that there would be no financial commitment to the development at this time.

262. Annual Library Plan (Item 10)

The Committee considered a report on the Annual Library Plan - a strategic document designed to shape the future of the library service within the Borough. The Committee, in noting the extensive work involved in the preparation of the Plan, gave it their approval.

RESOLVED that the Annual Library Plan be approved.

263. Delegated Authority (Item 11)

The Committee was advised that the existing Scheme of Council and Committee Management did not adequately provide the required specific authorities for the Director of Leisure Services in respect of several operational matters. For example, the Director needed to react quickly to market factors in the setting of charges and needed authority to set charges for any new services provided. Consequently, the Director sought the Committee's agreement for the required delegated authorities.

Some reservations were expressed by the Committee in relation to the proposed delegations and the Director gave an undertaking that variations to charges that might be considered sensitive would be referred to the Committee for decision. The Committee was also informed that Financial Regulation 33 required that the Committee review charges at least annually and the Director would present the core charges for all leisure services at the same committee meeting at which the budget was agreed. This was because the charges were an integral part of the Committee's budget and consequently the delegated authority was essentially to enable the Director to respond to changing conditions within the Committee's overall policy framework.

A motion in relation to this item was moved and seconded and in accordance with Standing Order No. 45, a request was made that voting on the motion be recorded. On being put to the meeting the voting on the motion was as follows:

For (10): Councillors Bettison, Blatchford, Egan, Fawcett, Finnie, Good, Mrs Hayes, North, Thompson and Wheaton.

Against (2): Councillors Flood and Miss Haydon.

Not Voting(3): Councillors Mrs Keene, McCormack and Taylor.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the Director of Leisure Services be given delegated authority to:

- (a) seek/accept sponsorship;
- (b) sign agreements after consultation with the Borough Solicitor;
- (c) seek and accept public donations;
- (d) fix charges for any new service within his remit;
- (e) vary charges for services, such variations to be reported to the next meeting of the Committee;
- (f) introduce or vary any ticketing arrangement; and
- (g) determine hours of operation at all Leisure facilities

264. Leisure Grants for Young People (Item 12)

The Director of Leisure Services reported on proposals to revise the policy on sports and arts grants for young people. These related largely to the widened remit of the Leisure Services Department. A budget of £3,000 has been provided for such grants in 1998/99.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the policies for administrating the Leisure Grants for Young People, as set out in the Annexe to Item 12 of the agenda, subject to the two minor amendments made at the meeting, be approved; and
- (ii) the scheme be advertised through local papers forthwith.

265. Anneforde Place Playing Field, Priestwood (Item 13)

The Committee considered a request for grant by Bracknell Town Council for improvements, to its open space at Anneforde Place, estimated to cost £14,200. The Town Council had raised £11,000 for the scheme and a grant for the remainder was proposed. The Committee noted that the scheme would improve access to Garth Meadows - a new countryside site recently opened to the public by the Borough.

RESOLVED that a grant of £3,200 be given to Bracknell Town Council for improvements to open space at Anneforde Place.

266. Wildlife Heritage Sites (Item 14)

The Committee was advised by the Director of Leisure Services of recent changes for the criteria under which Wildlife Heritage Sites were designated and the implications of these changes for the Borough Council. The Committee noted that as a result of the revised criteria there was a need to re-assess against the criteria the existing 75 designated Wildlife Heritage Sites in the Borough. It was intended that this would be undertaken by January 1999.

RESOLVED that the revised criteria for the designation of Wildlife Heritage Sites, drawn up by the Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum and listed in Annexe 1 to Item 14 of the agenda be endorsed.

267. Provision of Recreational Pitches (Item 15)

A report by the Director of Leisure Services highlighted the results of a study which had assessed the provision of recreational pitches in the Borough with regard to relevant national and local standards. The report had indicated that there was a shortfall in pitch provision in the Borough, particularly in Sandhurst and Winkfield. The report set out a range of policies to address the shortage and the Committee agreed that ways of improving the pitch provision in the Borough should be investigated.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the report on the provision of recreational pitches be noted; and
- (ii) the Director of Leisure be requested to investigate ways of improving the quantity and quality of pitch provision in the Borough.

268. Appointment of Edgbarrow and Sandhurst Sports Centre Management Committee (Item 16)

The Committee considered a report seeking the re-appointment of the Edgbarrow and Sandhurst Sports Centre Management Committee.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Edgbarrow and Sandhurst Sports Centre Management Committee be re-appointed on the following basis:
 - (a) Bracknell Forest Borough Council – three representatives
 - (b) Edgbarrow School - the head teacher or the head teacher's nominee and one other representative appointed by the Governing Body
 - (c) Sandhurst School – the head teacher or the head teacher's nominee and one other representative appointed by the Governing Body
 - (d) Crowthorne Parish Council – two representatives
 - (e) Sandhurst Town Council – two representatives
- (ii) three Bracknell Forest Borough Council representatives be appointed to serve on the Edgbarrow and Sandhurst Sports Centre Management Committee for the remainder of the 1998/99 municipal year.

269. Information Items

The Committee received the following reports submitted for information only:

The National Year of Reading (Item 17)

Summer Holiday Fun Programme (Item 18)

South Hill Park – Activities Report (Item 19)

270. **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 for the consideration of the following Items which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following categories of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- (7) Information relating to the financial affairs of a particular third person (Items 20 & 21)
- (8) Information relating to a proposed contract (Items 20 & 21)

271. **Techniquet Exhibition – The Look Out (Item 20)**

In a report containing exempt information the Director of Leisure Services advised the Committee on arrangements relating to an extension of the present agreement between the Council and Techniquet for the provision of interactive science exhibits at the Discovery Outpost at The Look Out.

RESOLVED that

- (i) in accordance with Standing Order 67 [Exceptions to Standing Order 65 and 66], Standing Order 65 [Quotations] and Standing Order 66 [Tenders] be waived and the Director of Leisure Services be authorised to agree an extension of up to six months for the existing agreement with Techniquet; and
- (ii) in accordance with Standing Order 63 (2) the Strategy & Policy Committee be notified of the Committee's declaration of an exception to Standing Orders with respect to contracts.

272. **Horseshoe Lake – Terms of the Management Contract (Item 21)**

The main terms of a proposed contract negotiated with Freetime Leisure Limited, the management company which currently operates Horseshoe Lake Watersports Centre on behalf of the Council were reported to the Committee. After consideration of the existing and proposed arrangements the Committee approved the revised terms and in addition gave the Director of Leisure Services delegated authority to deal with all other details relating to the agreement.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the terms of the management contract, as shown in Annexes 1 and 3 of Item 21 of the agenda be approved; and
- (ii) the Director of Leisure Services be authorised to agree all other details concerning the agreement.

The meeting commenced at 7.30 p.m.
and concluded at 9.55 p.m.

CHAIRMAN