

**STRATEGY & POLICY COMMITTEE**  
**28 OCTOBER 1998**

Present: Councillor Bettison (Chairman), Councillors Mrs Ballin, Beadsley, Birch, Flood, Good, Jones, Mrs Keene, McCormack, Mills, North, Sargeant, Mrs Shillcock, Wheaton and Worrall

Also Present: Councillor Blatchford

Apologies for Absence were received from:  
Councillors Bayle, Wade and Ward

**303. Substitute Members**

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

Councillor Beadsley for Councillor Bayle  
Councillor Flood for Councillor Wade  
Councillor Worrall for Councillor Ward

**305. Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 25 March and 15 July 1998 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**306. Urgent Business**

The Chairman advised the Committee that he had agreed that the following item should be added to the agenda for consideration at this meeting on grounds of urgency in order to meet the statutory timetable.

**307. CCT Functional Work – Annual Reports by Direct Service Organisations (Tabled item)**

The Committee received the annual reports and statement of accounts for the year 1997/98 approved by the Direct Services Board in relation to the Grounds Maintenance DSO, the Leisure DSO and the Building Works DLO. It was noted that the Council was required to publish and submit the annual reports to the Secretary of State and to the external auditor by no later than 31 October each year.

**RESOLVED** that the annual reports for the Grounds Maintenance DSO, Leisure DSO and Building Works DLO for the year 1997/98, as submitted by the Direct Services Board, be adopted.

308. **Millennium Sub Committee**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Millennium Sub Committee held on 20 July 1998, as set out in Appendix A hereto, be received and that the recommendation in Minute 12 be adopted.

309. **Leisure Services and Strategy & Policy Special Sub Committee**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Leisure Services and Strategy & Policy Special Sub Committee held on 30 July 1998, be received.

310. **Finance & Property Sub Committee**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Property Sub Committee held on 23 September 1998, as set out in Appendix B hereto, be received.

311. **Audit & Performance Review Committee**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit & Performance Review Committee held on 14 October 1998, as set out in Appendix C hereto, be received.

312. **Access Advisory Sub Committee**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Access Advisory Sub Committee held on 14 October 1998, as set out in Appendix D hereto, be received.

313. **Personnel Sub Committee**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Sub Committee held on 21 October 1998, as set out in Appendix E hereto, be received and that the recommendations contained in Minute 20 and 22 be adopted.

314. **References from other Committees**

The Committee considered the following references and requests from other committees during the current cycle of meetings.

Public & Environmental Services Committee – Minutes 218 and 219

Leisure Services Committee – Minutes 257, 258, 259 and 271

Education Committee – Minute 276

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) minutes 218 and 219 of the meeting of the Public & Environmental Services Committee held on 22 September 1998 be noted and that attendance at meetings of the Grounds Maintenance Tender Assessment Sub Committee and of the Emergency Planning Panel be classified as approved duties for the purposes of the Scheme of Members' Allowances;

- (ii) in relation to minute 257 and 258 of the meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held on 13 October 1998, approval be given to the following new capital projects funded from within existing budgets:

Edgbarrow Sports Centre – Refurbishment of Health & Fitness Suite  
Bracknell Sport & Leisure Centre – Replacement of Floodlights;

- (iii) in relation to minute 259 of the meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held on 13 October 1998 consideration be given to the proposed capital works at Easthampstead Park Conference/Education Centre during preparation of the draft capital budget for the forthcoming year;
- (iv) in relation to minute 271 of the meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held on 13 October 1998, the exception made to Standing Order 65 and 66 be noted; and
- (v) the request made by the Education Committee at its meeting on 14 October 1998 set out in minute 276 be dealt with as part of the Committee's consideration of the Commitment Budget and Service Plans for 1999/2000 – 2001/02 at agenda item 7(2). (Minute 315 refers).

### 315. **Quarterly Operations Report (Item 1)**

The Chief Executive submitted the Quarterly Operations Report outlining the key activities and performance of the Council over the second three monthly period of the municipal year (July to September). The report highlighted work which had been carried out and, in some cases would be ongoing with particular reference made to the significant progress which had been made on a number of core processes and systems. The Chief Executive specifically drew the attention of Members to the demanding programme of new legislation and other directives received from Central Government, especially in the Education Service, and to the establishment of several inter- agency groups to review wider issues arising from the new millennium and the accompanying celebrations.

Members discussed a number of issues highlighted in the report including the possible need to consider establishing a protocol covering sponsorship. In addition Members were particularly concerned to ensure that satisfactory progress was being made to ensure Year 2000 compliance for all essential IT and non IT systems.

**RESOLVED** that the Quarterly Operations Report be noted.

### 316. **Commitment Budget and Service Plans 1999/2000 – 2001/02 (Item 2)**

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report covering the Committee's priorities and commitments for the period 1999/2000 – 2001/02 together with similar information and details put forward by other service committees for that period. The Committee noted that a significant budget gap was likely to exist in 1999/2000 and that service committees were examining their spending plans in line with their medium term objectives.

The Committee also considered requests from the Education Committee and Personnel Sub Committee for resources from the contingency provision set aside as part of the 1998/99 budget strategy.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) the Strategy and Policy Committee's Commitment Budget for 1999/2000 as outlined in Table 1 within the report submitted be approved;
- (ii) the statement of the Committee's medium term objectives included in Annexe B of the report submitted be approved;
- (iii) the areas where service pressures are emerging be noted and officers be instructed to examine these in more detail prior to the budget meeting in February 1999;
- (iv) the Commitment Budgets proposed by other Committees as summarised in Table 2 within the report submitted be approved;
- (v) the medium term objectives identified by Service Committees included in Annexe D of the report submitted be approved;
- (vi) an amount of £65,000 be transferred from the Contingency Fund to the Education Committee's Revenue Budget in the current year of which £22,000 also be included in the Education Committee's Commitment Budget for 1999/2000;
- (vii) an amount of £30,000 be transferred from the Contingency Fund to the Finance and Property Sub Committee's Revenue Budget, in the current year only, to fund the harmonisation of long service awards; and
- (viii) the "earmarked" provision within revenue balances for the Local Plan Inquiry and Town Centre Planning Inquiry be increased to £825,000.

**317. Rail Access to Heathrow from the South and West (Item 3)**

The Director of Planning and Transportation submitted details of the feasibility study into a proposal to provide a rail link to London Heathrow from the South and West. The feasibility study had been commissioned by a consortium of local authorities and private bodies who had jointly funded the study with Bracknell Forest acting as the lead co-ordinating authority. The feasibility study had shown that a financially viable service could be provided with minimum infrastructure investment and would make a significant contribution to the established regional and local objective of promoting sustainable development.

The outcome of the feasibility study was welcomed by the Committee and it was emphasised that the Council should now commit itself to supporting the project and to using all opportunities to promote the proposed link through lobbying and other activities.

**RESOLVED** that the main findings of the consultant's report be noted.

**318. Berkshire County Council – Draft Final Accounts (Item 4)**

The Committee received a summary of the draft final accounts for 1997/98 for the Berkshire County Council which were subject to the agreement of the District Auditor.

In addition the Committee noted a list of capital schemes committed by the County Council and transferred to the Borough Council together with funding on the basis of outstanding capital payments.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) the Committee note the draft final accounts of Berkshire County Council for 1997/98 and the provisional distribution of Berkshire County prudential reserves; and
- (ii) the list of capital schemes transferred from Berkshire County Council be approved and included within the Council's Capital Programme.

**319. UK and Ireland Corporate Games 1998 – Evaluation (Item 5)**

The Head of Policy Development submitted a detailed report on the benefits accruing to the Borough and other issues arising from the hosting of the UK and Ireland Corporate Games over the weekend of 12-14 June 1998.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) the Committee notes that it is estimated that the UK and Ireland Corporate Games attracted additional income of £740,000 to the Borough over the weekend of 12-14 June 1998; and
- (ii) the Committee formally extends the Council's thanks to the local Police and to the John Nike Organisation as well as the Council's Officers for their support for the Games.

**320. Voluntary Sector Partnerships – Grants and Processes (Item 6)**

The Committee received a report on the recommendations of the Voluntary Sector Focus Group established to review the corporate processes for dealing with grants to voluntary organisations and related issues.

The Committee received assurances that the corporate processes were designed to provide a clear non-bureaucratic interface between the Council and voluntary organisations and that a flexible approach should be adopted which would avoid overburdening small scale voluntary organisations. The Committee also noted that draft guidance for persons nominated to represent the Council on a range of outside bodies had been accepted by the Focus Group.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) a corporate process be adopted for the allocation of grants to the Voluntary Sector;

- (ii) a common application form be adopted for all Voluntary Sector grant aid throughout Bracknell Forest Borough Council;
- (iii) the grants criteria and service standards as set out in "Voluntary Sector Funding for 1999/2000 Explained" be adopted;
- (iv) all grants under £1,000 are subject to a letter of memorandum stating clearly that the grant can only be used for the purpose for which it was applied;
- (v) all grants identified in the Voluntary Sector Grants Scheme over £1,000 are subject to a Service Level Agreement and to monitoring and evaluation;
- (vi) all grants over £1,000 be subject to a contract if they are supplying a service for individuals referred to a Voluntary Organisation by the Borough Council;
- (vii) the Borough Council's Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme be continued and identified to members annually as part of the information available to committee when considering Voluntary Sector Grants; and
- (viii) all grants to Voluntary Organisations be considered annually.

**321. Member Effectiveness and Democratic Practice : Proposals for Review (Item 7)**

The Chief Executive submitted proposals for reviewing democratic practice, effective decision making and wider member roles within the Council in the context of the Government's proposals published in the White Paper on Local Government "In Touch with the People". This Government's proposals were likely to be enacted in the forthcoming parliamentary session and would bring about a fundamental change in the working practices of local authorities. The Chief Executive recommended that a small group should be established to review the relevant issues and to produce a report with recommendations to the new Council in May 2000.

The proposals put forward in the report were supported by Members on the basis that an interim report would be made before final recommendations were brought forward.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) a group be established comprising 9 members (5 : 4) together with appropriate Officers to explore the issues outlined in the report and to report back to the Council as appropriate; and
- (ii) attendance at meetings of the group by appointed Members be classified as an approved duty for the purposes of the Scheme of Members' Allowances.

**322. Criminal Damage to Council Property (Item 8)**

The Director of Public and Environmental Services reported on the need to ensure that the Council had a clear policy regarding action to be taken against those persons found to be responsible for deliberately damaging Council property.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) the Police be notified of all instances of criminal damage to Council property; and
- (ii) the Police be requested to investigate and pursue all instances of criminal damage to Council property of which they receive notification.

**323. Bracknell Forest Borough Council/Sandhurst Town Council Partnership Development – Officer Exchange (Item 9)**

The Director of Corporate Services submitted the concluding evaluation report by the Officers involved in the Partnership Exchange Scheme between the Borough Council and Sandhurst Town Council.

The Scheme was considered to have been successful, meeting all the objectives defined at the outset.

**RESOLVED** that the initiatives undertaken as part of the pilot Officer Exchange programme be noted.

**324. Information Item**

The Committee noted the following item submitted for information only:

New Legislation (Item 10)

**325. 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 11 and 12 which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following categories of Schedule 12A of that Act:

(9) Terms proposed for a contract (Item 11)

(1) Information relating to particular employees (Item 12)

**326. Bracknell and Wokingham Joint Arrangements (Item 11)**

In a report containing exempt information submitted by the Director of Planning and Transportation, the Committee received details of the negotiations which had taken place for the acquisition by the Council of the part of the freehold interest in Downshire Golf Course owned by Wokingham District Council and the terms provisionally agreed for that acquisition and other related issues.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) the Council purchases Wokingham District Council's share of the freehold interest in Downshire Golf Course on the terms contained in the report submitted;
- (ii) the Joint Golf Course Committee continues to administer the Leases and Management Contract with Broadflow Ltd (for both Downshire and Hurst Golf Courses) until these expire on 17 August 1999;
- (iii) the Joint Golf Course Committee be wound up at the end of the current Broadflow Agreements, or as soon as practicable thereafter, and its assets/liabilities distributed to the constituent Authorities on the basis indicated in the report;
- (iv) the renewal funds and any revenue surpluses for the financial year 1998/99 be transferred to the balances and distributed as part of the assets on the close down of the Joint Golf Course Committee accounts in August 1999;
- (v) the proposals in the report for winding up the affairs of the Joint Golf Course Committee be substituted for the termination arrangements contained in the Joint Course Committee Agreement, together with any consequential amendments to the Joint Agreement, dated 30 June 1975; and
- (vi) the Borough Finance Officer be authorised to make arrangements to waive exemption to tax on the Downshire Golf Course.

### 327. **Chief Officers Pay Settlement (Item 12)**

In a report containing exemption information, the Committee received details of the agreement which had been reached by the appropriate national Joint Negotiating Committee on a new package of pay and conditions for Chief Officers in England and Wales. The Committee reviewed the salary structure and other matters raised.

#### **RESOLVED** that

- (i) no change be made to the existing salary structure for the Council's Directors and Assistant Directors; and
- (ii) the Fringe Area Allowance for Directors and Assistant Directors be linked to that of all other Bracknell Forest Borough Council employees and annually updated accordingly.

The meeting commenced at 8.00 p.m.  
and concluded at 11.10 p.m.

**CHAIRMAN**