

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

20 JANUARY 1999

Present: Councillor Ward (Chairman)
Councillors Beadsley, Mrs Doyle, Egan, Fawcett,
Good, Harrison, Mrs Hayes, Mrs Hirst, Mrs Shillcock,
Mrs Sutcliffe, Thompson, Wheaton, Worrall

Church Representatives:
Mr G Anderson, Mr D McCann

Teacher Representatives:
Mrs M Desai, Mr J Haig

Apologies for absence were received from:
Councillors Barnard, Mills, Taylor and Mrs L Wales

381 **Substitute Members**

The Committee noted the attendance of the following substitute Member under Standing Order 38:

Councillor Mrs Ballin for Councillor Mills
Councillor Flood for Councillor Barnard.

382 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 October 1998 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

383 **Quality Assurance Sub Committee**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Quality Assurance Sub Committee held on 17 November 1998, as set out in Appendix A, hereto be received.

384 **Education Consultation Panel**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Education Consultation Panel held on 7 December 1998, be received.

385 **Joint Advisory Sub Committee for Children's Services**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Advisory Sub Committee for Children's Services held on 9 December 1998, be received.

386 **Budget Sub Committees**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Budget Sub Committee held on 14 December and 13 January 1999, as set out in Appendices B and E respectively hereto, be received.

387 **Transport and Awards Sub Committee**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Transport and Awards Sub Committee held on 16 December 1998, as set out in Appendix C hereto, be received.

388 **Governors Selection Sub Committee**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Governors Selection Sub Committee held on 11 January 1999, as set out in Appendix D hereto, be received.

389 **Review of Primary School Provision in North Bracknell (Item 1)**

Following receipt of a petition, expressing concern about the changes made to the designated area for Winkfield St. Mary's C of E Primary School in January 1997, at its meeting in October the Committee commissioned an immediate review of primary school provision in North Bracknell. Specific consideration was given to the option of returning Chavey Down to Winkfield St. Mary's designated area.

The review had examined the existing accommodation capacities and identified issues which could become topics for consideration by the School Organisation Committee. Discussions had been held with each Headteacher to obtain their views on future pupil numbers, in the short term, from the admission lists. These were then compared with the computer generated pupil forecasts for each school so that any discrepancies could be investigated. The forecasts revealed adequate capacity across the area until April 2004 or possibly a year earlier. It was anticipated that additional accommodation would be installed at Sandy Lane School and Binfield Primary School to alleviate the predicted shortfalls. The situation would continue to be monitored.

In considering the detailed proposals for each school the Committee's attention was advised that the reference to the possibility of housing development in St. Mary's Lane under paragraph 4.14.9 should be deleted from the paper.

After carefully considering the detailed proposals it was

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Ascot Heath designated area be retained as currently defined
- (ii) the Governors of Ascot Heath Infant School be invited to reconsider a reduction in the school's Standard Number
- (iii) there be no change to the designated area for Binfield Primary School
- (iv) there be no change to the designated area for Cranbourne Primary School
- (v) there be no change to the designated area for the Holly Spring Schools
- (vi) additional accommodation for Sandy Lane Infant School be considered for inclusion in the capital programme for 1999/2000

- (vii) forward planning for additional accommodation at Sandy Lane Junior School be considered
- (viii) the possibility of adjustments to the Sandy Lane/Meadow Vale designated area be looked at as the School Organisation Plan is prepared
- (ix) the present system of a shared area between Warfield Primary School and Whitegrove Primary School be continued
- (x) the future of the modular accommodation at Warfield be a subject for consideration as the School Organisation Plan is prepared
- (xi) there be consultation with the governing body and parents of Winkfield St. Mary's Primary School and parents in Chavey Down on the possibility of returning the Chavey Down area to the Winkfield St. Mary's designated area and
- (xii) the pressure on places at Winkfield St Mary's Primary School be considered further in the preparation of the School Organisation Plan.

390 **School Organisation Plan and School Organisation Committee (Item 2)**

The Director of Education reported on arrangements, under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, for decisions on School organisation to be taken at a local level.

The LEA is required to produce a draft School Organisation Plan which will draw conclusions about the need to add or remove school places within the local authority area. The plan will be subject to widespread consultation and to approval by the School Organisation Committee, which replaces the Secretary of State in decision taking on school organisation proposals, by 31 August each year. Although the School Organisation Committee is not a Committee of the LEA the LEA has the responsibility of forming it and appointing the members. It is organised on the basis of groups of Members, each group having a single vote and, although there could be up to seven groups it was appropriate to have five for Bracknell Forest. These would represent

- the LEA : elected members appointed in proportion to the balance of political power
- the Church of England, nominated by the diocese
- the Roman Catholic Church, nominated by the diocese
- schools, with Members drawn from serving school governors who may be parent, headteacher, teacher or staff governors but not LEA appointed governors.

To allow adequate time to give consideration to the content of the draft School Organisation Plan it was proposed to establish a focus group which would include the elected members who would be appointed to the School Organisation Committee.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the requirement to produce a School Organisation Plan and establish a School Organisation Committee be noted
- (ii) the Composition of the School Organisation Committee be as set out in Appendix 1 to the report subject to taking account the views of the diocesan authorities
- (iii) a focus group with terms of reference as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report be established

- (iv) the following Borough Councillors be nominated to serve on the Focus Group (3 :2):
Councillors Mrs Hayes, Thompson, Ward, Fawcett and Wheaton.

391 **Revenue Budget 1999/2000 (Item 3)**

The Director of Education introduced the revenue budget which had been prepared within the framework set by Strategy and Policy Committee on 6 January 1999.

Service Committees had been asked to scrutinise their 1999/2000 budgets to identify essential service developments and opportunities to rationalise expenditure through a mixture of good housekeeping and service reviews, particularly where these would have a minimal impact on front line service levels.

The Commitment budget, reflecting the position at 31 August, had been reported to the Committee on 15 October. Some variations had been identified since then and the revised 1999/2000 commitment budget was shown as Annexe A.

Although Committees did not have to include figures in respect of inflation at this stage of the process they had been asked to reappraise work done last year to identify where inflation on running expenses could be contained within existing budget allocations. The Committee had previously indicated that inflation could be contained on base budgets in respect of centrally managed funds for office expenses and supplies and services and revised details of potential savings were shown as Annexe B.

Committees had also been asked to identify areas for new service developments and, where possible, options for reducing expenditure either through good housekeeping measures, reviews of service delivery and/or increasing income by more than the rate of inflation. Key issues facing the Committee included responding to demographic growth in demand for educational provision and raising standards of achievement to meet national and local targets. Legislation had resulted in far reaching changes for schools and the LEA. A list of the pressures and developments for consideration for inclusion in the budget was shown in Annexe C and possible economies in Annexe D. There was limited scope for increasing income in excess of the rate of inflation but the renegotiated school meal contract was expected to generate additional income of £18,000 in 1999/2000 increasing to £30,000 in a full year.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the draft base budget for 1999/2000 as shown in paragraph 4.21 be agreed
- (ii) the Strategy and Policy Committee, in considering the Council's budget for 1999/2000 be requested to
- (a) approve the changes to the base budget as identified in the latest commitment budget as shown in Annexe A
 - (b) note the potential for cash limiting running expense budgets set out in Annexe B
 - (c) consider the potential service developments, pressures and economies identified in Annexe C and D respectively
 - (d) note the additional income due from the additional cash return from the turnover on the school meals contract as described in paragraph 4.18.

392 The Education Development Plan (Item 4)

The Director of Education introduced the draft Education Development Plan which had been submitted to the DfEE on 14 December 1998. He also circulated a copy of a letter received from the DfEE giving feedback on the submission which was recognised as having major strengths such as a clear set of priorities linked to targets backed by a clear and relevant action plan reflecting local and national priorities. There were some minor weaknesses in setting target selection and the school improvement programme and the supporting information which could be addressed before submitting the final plan.

In expressing its appreciation of the efforts of all involved in the production of the Plan the Committee

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Education Development Plan be approved
- (ii) the Director of Education, in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman be authorised to make any further changes to the Education Development Plan to take account of comments by the DfEE and further consultation with Bracknell Forest Headteachers and Governing bodies.

393 Early Years Development and Childcare Plan (Item 5)

The Director of Education informed the Committee that an Early Years Development and Childcare Plan had to be submitted to the Secretary of State for approval by 1 February 1999.

A Bracknell Forest Early Years Development Partnership had been formed in November 1997 to prepare an Early Years Plan for the Borough and its key targets had been met. The partnership had been reconstituted to reflect the wider interests involved in the preparation of the new plan and had been working on its production and a paper outlining the headings of the new plan was submitted at the meeting

RESOLVED

That, subject to final adjustment by the Director of Education in consultation with the Chairman of the Education Committee, the Bracknell Forest Early Years Development and Childcare Plan be submitted, by 1 February 1999 to the Secretary of State for approval.

394 Active Schools Officer (Item 6)

The Director of Education reported on a request to seek agreement to entering into a partnership with the Sports Council Southern Region to employ an Active Schools Officer to develop the TOP Play, TOP Sport and TOP Community programmes in the Borough.

The post would be based in the Leisure Services Department and would apply approximately 50% to schools based and 50% to community based sports development work. Day to day line management would be through the Head of Sport and Recreation in liaison with Advisory headteachers in the Education department

and there would be a management group to agree and review the programme of work.

RESOLVED that

- (i) a partnership between the Sports Council and Bracknell Forest Borough Council be agreed
- (ii) if the post is a success and suitable revenue funding was available the Committee notes the desire to establish the post within the council's permanent staff structure after the initial three year period.

395 **Quarterly Operations Report (Item 7)**

The Director of Education presented the third quarterly operations report on the running of the Education service and referred to a paper circulated at the meeting which provided information relating to the notes referred to in Annex A.

He reminded the Committee of the work being undertaken on the major new initiatives to which the Department was required to respond.

He also reported that the consultation period regarding the proposed closure of the Holly Spring Assessment Unit had now ended and a report on the conclusions would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED

that the Quarterly Operations report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and concluded at 9.30pm

CHAIRMAN