

**EDUCATION BUDGET SUB COMMITTEE
13 JANUARY 1999**

Present: Councillor Mrs Hayes (Chairman), Barnard, Beadsley, Good,
Thompson, Ward, Wheaton, Worrall

46. **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Sub Committee held on 14 December 1998 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

47. **New Deal for Schools (3) (Item 1)**

The Director of Education presented a report summarising details of the proposed submission to the Department for Education and Employment for funding within the New Deal for Schools (3) Programme. Local Education Authorities had been requested to identify areas where there was an urgent need to raise standards and work was currently progressing on details of a submission covering eight schools where improvements to teaching accommodation and planned maintenance projects would reflect the criteria and effectively increase standards.

RESOLVED that

- (i) a submission be made by the Director of Education, in consultation with the Chairman, to fund a number of schemes in Bracknell Forest Schools.
- (ii) details of the scheme be reported to the next meeting of the Sub Committee.

48. **Asset Management Plan (Item 2)**

The Director of Education reported on the next stage in the development of the Bracknell Forest Borough Council Asset Management Plan, the purpose of which was to help to ensure that resources for school premises were used as effectively as possible and to establish a framework for planning.

A Local Policy Statement had been developed and would be used as the basis of consultation with schools who would be invited to comment on the statement and suggest ways in which it may be developed.

RESOLVED

that the local policy statement be adopted as a basis for consultation with schools.

49. **Fair Funding: Improving Delegation to Schools (Item 3)**

The Director of Education introduced a report describing the production of a scheme of financial management which set out the relative responsibilities and relationships between the Local Education Authority and its maintained schools. The scheme, which provided a legally binding framework and set requirements relating to financial management and associated issues, would be circulated to schools for consultation following which it would be submitted, by 1 February, to the Department for Education and Employment for approval.

In discussing the draft scheme Members were concerned as to the wording of Paragraph 4.9 and agreed that the Director of Education should reconsider this to reflect that it would only be in exceptional circumstances where licensed deficits would be permitted.

RESOLVED that

- (i) following the rewording of Paragraph 4.9 the draft scheme of financial management be used for statutory consultation with schools and other interested parties
- (ii) in view of the limited time scale the Director of Education be authorised, in consultation with the Chairman of the Education Committee, to finalise the document for submission to the Department for Education and Employment.

50. **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 consideration of item 4 which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act.

- (9) Information Relating to Contract Items

51. **School Meals Catering (Item 4)**

The Director of Planning and Transportation – Surveying presented a report regarding the extension of the school meals catering contract which terminates on 31 July 1999. Consultation with the schools had revealed the majority were in favour of remaining with the current company and extending the contract for a further two years. During discussions the Company had indicated that they were prepared to increase the rate of return from that paid under the current contract and, in addition, would meet any cost implications of nutritional standards when introduced by the Government and regard the total rebate as a “fund” to be held centrally by the LEA.

The offer from the company was dependent upon all 39 schools remaining within the same contract arrangements at 1 August 1999. Should schools wish to opt out of the central LEA arrangement from 1 April 2000, whilst penalties would not be imposed by the contractor, it may be necessary to

review the level of rebate returned, dependent upon the particular schools and the number of schools opting out.

RESOLVED that

- (i) in order to provide security for schools in working with a known supplier, a known level of monetary return on the contract, flexibility to schools wishing to opt out of the LEA arrangements at a later stage, the necessary period of time for the Council to put in place new arrangements from August 2000 for those schools requiring it and to take account of the views of the schools, approval be given to the renewal of the existing contract with Initial Catering for a further two years to 31 July 2001;
- (ii) noting the potential increases in revenue to the Authority from the renewal of the contract, the return to primary schools be maintained at 4% of sales, the return to secondary schools be maintained at 5.5% of sales and the increases in returns be held centrally by the LEA.

The meeting commenced at 5.30pm
and concluded at 6.35pm

CHAIRMAN