

## SOCIAL SERVICES & HOUSING COMMITTEE

16 MARCH 1999

Present: Councillors Worrall (Chairman), Barnard, Mrs Clifford, Mrs Doyle, Egan, Harrison, Miss Haydon, Mrs Hirst, Jones, Mrs Keene, McCormack, Mrs Pile, Ryan, Simonds, Mrs Shillcock and Mrs Sutcliffe

Apologies: Councillor Bayle

### 498 **Substitute Members**

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

Councillor Mrs Keene for Councillor Bayle

### 499 **Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 19 January 1999 and 16 February 1999 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 500 **Minutes of Sub and Advisory Committees**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the following meetings as set out in Appendices A, B and C hereto, be received:

Joint Advisory Sub Committee	17 February 1999
Housing Sub Committee	2 March 1999
Social Services Sub Committee	3 March 1999

### 501 **Quarterly Operations Report (Item 1)**

The Director of Social Services & Housing presented the Quarterly Operations Report regarding the activities of the Social Services & Housing Department for the third quarter of the 1998/99 municipal year. The report summarised current issues affecting the department, progress in achieving service objectives set out in the main service plans of the department. The Director reported that much departmental work was currently being undertaken on the numerous Governmental Papers that had recently been released. It was noted that further to work undertaken with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, the Department would now be planning for a Stand Alone YOT.

The key tasks of each section were detailed under six main headings which gave the focus to the objectives for the year. The quarterly operations report also presented a summary of planned and actual revenue and capital expenditure together with the current overall staffing position. The Director reported that the Management Information section of the report would now become part of the regular format.

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

502 **Revenue Budgets 1999/2000 (Item 2)**

The Committee considered a report on Social Services & Housing Revenue Budgets 1999/2000 in light of the overall budget package agreed by the full Council meeting on 3 March 1999. The report gave details of the Housing Revenue Account in the same detailed format being adopted for the General Fund.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee approves the Social Services & Housing Committee detailed budget as outlined in Annexe A of the report.

503 **Capital Programme 1999/2000 – 2001/2002 (Item 3)**

The Director of Social Services & Housing introduced a report giving details of the request by Strategy & Policy Committee for each service committee to review the capital spending requirements for inclusion within the Council's three year capital programme. The process included focusing on the capital expenditure requirements for 1999/2000 and estimates for future years' schemes included within the three year programme. New schemes were required to be evaluated and prioritised under a number of categories as detailed in the report.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee submit the scheme summarised in Annexe E of the report to Strategy & Policy Committee for inclusion within the Capital Programme for 1999/2000.

504 **Service Plan 1999/2000 (Item 4)**

The Committee considered the Social Services & Housing Committee's Draft Service Plan for the year 1999/2000 which detailed the proposed provision of services for 1999/2000, covering the framework of legislation, themes and objectives for the coming year which would shape management responsibility to deliver the services against the targets and priorities set.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) the Social Services & Housing Committee's Draft Service Plan outlined in Annexe A to the report be agreed; and
- (ii) the policy objectives within the Draft Service Plan be submitted to the Strategy & Policy Committee for inclusion in the Council's overall Service Plan 1999/2000.

505 **Housing Management Compulsory Competitive Tendering (HMCCT) Specification – Consultation with Tenants and Leaseholders (Item 5)**

The Committee received a report regarding the process undertaken to consult with tenants and leaseholders on the proposed draft specification for the Housing Management Compulsory Competitive Tendering. Consideration was given to the returned comments and the proposed amendments to the specification.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the Social Services & Housing Committee note the result of the consultation on the Housing Management Service Specification;
- (ii) the amendments as listed in Annexe A of the report be made to the draft specification; and
- (iii) the Committee agrees that the final version of the specification be drawn up on the basis of the responses to the consultation process by the Director of Social Services & Housing in consultation with the Chairman.

506 **Modernising Social Services – The Modernisation Fund (Item 6)**

The Committee received a report giving details of the Government White Paper "Modernising Social Services" which had been published on 30 November 1998. The paper aimed to set standards for performance, better regulation of domiciliary and residentially based care, enhance inspection of services and ensuring more carefully controlled training and professional standards of staff in order to result in safer practice with vulnerable service users. The Government had announced that the Social Services modernisation fund would be set up in order to deliver the proposals with the White Paper. The funding would be linked to Government priorities and targets for the improvement of personnel social services in the form of grants. The Committee noted the allocations of grants that had been proposed for Bracknell Forest and the approach made to planning the works to be undertaken.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) the Committee notes the details of the Modernisation Fund Grants as they apply to Bracknell Forest; and
- (ii) the Committee endorses the broad approach being adopted in planning for improvements in services.

507 **Berkshire Chief Executives' Annual Report of the Joint Inspection Unit (October 1997- September 1998) (Item 7)**

The Head of Policy introduced a report giving details of the Berkshire Chief Executives' Annual Report of the Joint Inspection Unit which had followed the methodology recommended by the Department of Health. The emphasis followed was that of undertaking a monitoring role of the inspection procedure at arms-length from the Social Services and Housing Department. The report had been required to address the work of Bracknell Forest Borough Council's Social Services and Housing Department in two ways: firstly by assessing the effectiveness of the department's follow-up work, and secondly, in relation to investigating the process for making inspection reports available locally. It was noted that a further report would be put to a later meeting of the Social Services and Housing Committee regarding report availability. A report summarising inspections undertaken within the Borough,

recommendations made thereon and follow-up work undertaken would be presented to Social Services Sub Committee. The Committee considered the report and the recommendations contained therein.

**RESOLVED that**

- (i) the Committee notes the contents of the Chief Executives' Annual Report for October 1997 to September 1998 of the Joint Inspection Unit attached to Annexe A of the report; and
- (ii) request investigation of ways in which the reports could be made more widely available as outlined in paragraph 7.9 of the report.

**508 Communal Aerial System – Changes to Provision (Item 8)**

The Director of Social Services & Housing introduced a report highlighting the concerns relating to possible discontinuation of the provision of the current television and radio services to Council houses and flats by the company Comtel and their replacement by a digital system. Although approaches had been made to Comtel regarding the concerns of discontinuation of service, no formal information had been received as yet regarding their proposals. It was noted that officers were pursuing negotiations with Comtel to determine the company's intentions. Full investigation of the impact of the removal of the current level of service to Council tenants and leaseholders would be undertaken and reported back to Committee at the earliest opportunity. It was considered that the use of Chairman's delegated powers under the Urgent Action procedure might be required before the next Committee to maintain provision.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee notes the action proposed by the Officers to bring a full report to Committee regarding the changes to provision to the communal aerial system, once the facts are established, but in the interim to approve the use of the Chairman's delegated Urgent Action powers to maintain services to Council tenants and Council leaseholders should the need arise.

**509 Items submitted for information**

The Committee received and noted the following items which were submitted for information only:

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| Social Services White Paper – Modernising Mental Health Services | (Item 9)  |
| Caring about Carers : A National Strategy for Carers             | (Item 10) |
| Millennium Planning  | (Item 11) |

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm  
and concluded at 10.30pm

**CHAIRMAN**