

**FINANCE & PROPERTY SUB COMMITTEE  
24 MARCH 1999**

Present: Councillors Bettison (Chairman), Mrs Doyle, Egan, Fawcett,  
Jones, Mrs Pile, Wade and Wheaton

Apologies for Absence were received from:  
Councillors Mrs Hayes and Mrs Hirst

**40. Substitute Members**

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

Councillor Mrs Doyle for Councillor Mrs Hayes  
Councillor Jones for Councillor Mrs Hirst

**41. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 28 January 1999 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**42. Voluntary Grants Panel**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Voluntary Grants Panel held on 16 March 1999 be received and the recommendation in Minute 6 be adopted.

**43. Quarterly Operations Report (Item 1)**

The Director of Corporate Services submitted the Quarterly Operations Report to the Sub Committee which detailed the work undertaken by the individual business units within the Department since the last meeting. The report also included revenue and capital budget monitoring and information for each of the Department's sections on their performance against targets.

**RESOLVED** that the Quarterly Operations Report, detailing the work undertaken by Corporate Services since the last meeting, be received.

**44. Capital Programme 1999/2000 – 2001/2002 (Item 2)**

The Sub Committee considered a report on its Capital Programme, in which it had been projected that resources from the 1998/1999 Capital Programme of £494,000 would be carried forward into 1999/2000. The Sub Committee considered proposals for its 1999/2000 Capital Programme and agreed to submit a package of schemes to the Strategy and Policy Committee, which included £1.4 million for the development of a Smart Card.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) the projected carry forward of resources from the 1998/1999 Capital Programme, as outlined in Annexe A to the report, be noted; and
- (ii) the schemes, summarised in Annexe C to report (subject to the deletion of the scheme relating to the Sandhurst School Site – £30,000), be submitted to the Strategy and Policy Committee for inclusion within the Capital Programme for 1999/2000.

45. **Information and Communications Technology Strategy and Plan 1999/2000 – 2001/2002 (Item 3)**

The Sub Committee considered an ICT Strategy and Plan which would set the framework for future IT developments within the Council and co-ordinate the workload of the IT Department. The Sub Committee was advised of the importance of the document in improving and enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery across all Council departments and considered a number of the detailed projects within the Plan.

**RESOLVED** that the Information and Communications Technology Strategy and Plan for 1999/2000 – 2001/2002 be adopted.

46. **Transition Expenditure Update (Item 4)**

The Sub Committee considered a report containing updated information on transition related expenditure against the previously approved budget. The Sub Committee considered and noted the differences between the budget allocation for 1998/1999 and the provisional outturn and the reasons for the major variances that had arisen. The Sub Committee also considered proposed expenditure for the coming two years and approved a net transition budget of £815,000 for 1999/2000.

**RESOLVED** that the expenditure against budget for transition expenditure in the 1998/1999 year be noted and the amended 1999/2000 Transition Budget be approved.

47. **Pension Fund Actuarial Valuation (Item 5)**

The Sub Committee considered a report in which it was advised that the Berkshire Pension Fund had been subject to an actuarial valuation in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations. The Sub Committee noted that the Fund now covered 114% of liabilities. However, a new contribution rate of 6.2% would be required in 2000/2001.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted and the Strategy and Policy Committee be requested to amend the commitment budget in 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 to reflect the new contribution rate.

48. **Draft Economic Development Strategy 1999/2000 (Item 6)**

The Sub Committee noted that the Strategy and Policy Committee on 16 February 1999 had delegated authority to the Sub Committee to determine what steps the Council would take to promote economic development during the 1999/2000 financial year. The Sub Committee considered a draft economic development strategy for the year which highlighted the main issues facing the Borough Council such as supporting the schools development of the local work force; strengthening and promoting the position of the town centre; continuing to promote Bracknell Forest to national and international businesses; and fostering new business formation development and encouraging a diversity of businesses.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) the proposed draft Strategy, attached at Annexe A to the report, be endorsed; and
- (ii) any further representations received be reviewed and considered by the Head of Policy Development, in consultation with the Chairman.

49. **Revenue Budgets 1999/2000 (Item 7)**

In the light of the overall budget approved by the Council on 3 March, the Sub Committee considered the detailed revenue estimates for its own services for 1999/2000. For each of the service areas in the Department, expenditure on employees, premises, transport, supplies and services were detailed.

**RESOLVED** that the Detailed Budget of the Sub Committee, as outlined in Annexe B to the report, be noted.

50. **Approved List of Contractors: Property Services (Item 8)**

The Sub Committee considered proposals for the use of a national contractor database, sponsored by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions which would operate as a source for the Council's own construction tender list and would be used alongside the Council's own approved list of contractors, which would continue to be reviewed and maintained. The Sub Committee noted the benefits of the scheme, which would be of no cost to the Council, in terms of accessing a wider database of potential contractors.

**RECOMMENDED** to the Strategy and Policy Committee that

- (i) for a trial period of two years the Constructionline database be adopted as a source for construction tender lists and a limited review be carried out of the Council's own approved lists of contractors; and
- (ii) for this period the requirement of Standing Order 68(2)(a) and (b) to maintain lists of no more than 25 "names of persons or bodies", and 68(3) and (4) "to compile and review lists at intervals", be lifted except to the extent described in paragraph 4.2 and 4.3 of the report, as allowed by Standing Order 63(2)(1).

51. **Energy Purchase Contracts (Item 9)**

The Sub Committee was advised that the Council entered into annual contracts for the provision of gas and electricity to its larger sites. The Sub Committee considered and approved the arrangements for the tendering process.

**RESOLVED** that the Borough Surveyor be authorised, in consultation with the Chairman, to accept the lowest tenders for the supply of gas and electricity, respectively.

52. **Portable Electrical Appliance Testing Contract (Item 10)**

The Sub Committee was advised of the legislative background and codes of practice relating to the testing of electrical equipment including portable electrical appliances and concluded that a contract for portable electrical appliance testing should be put in place. The Sub Committee delegated arrangements for the tender list and tender acceptance to the Borough Surveyor, in consultation with the Chairman.

**RESOLVED** that the Borough Surveyor be authorised, in consultation with the Chairman, to:

- (i) agree the list of tenderers; and
- (ii) accept the most economically advantageous tender for portable electrical appliance testing.

53. **References from Other Committees (Item 11)**

The Sub Committee considered references from two other committees.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) in relation to the request for capital funding from the Social Services and Housing Committee, it be noted that the Strategy and Policy Committee would be considering this request in the context of its deliberations on the Council's overall capital programme at its next meeting; and
- (ii) in relation to the proposal from the Leisure Services Committee for a wheeled sports park at Longhill Park, it be noted that land at Longhill Park would be made available for use as a wheeled sports park subject to capital monies being available.

54. **Item for Information**

The Sub Committee noted the following item submitted for information only:

Year 2000 Progress Report (Item 12)

55. **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 Item 13, which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act.

- (9) Terms Proposed for the Sale of Property (Item 13)

56. **Proposed Sale of Land at Crown Row (Item 13)**

In a report containing exempt information the Sub Committee considered proposals for the sale of land adjacent to No.5 Crown Row and related issues.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) the Council dispose of the land adjacent to No.5 Crown Row;
- (ii) the Borough Surveyor be authorised to agree terms for the freehold disposal of this land to Mr P T R, the title to contain restrictions on use, including that the shop should only be used as a chemist for a period of two years from initial opening;
- (iii) the purchaser be responsible for obtaining all other necessary consents to facilitate the development; and
- (iv) the Borough Surveyor write to the Berkshire Health Authority outlining the Council's concern at the process for allocating pharmacy authorisations.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm  
and concluded at 8.50 pm.

**CHAIRMAN**