

**EDUCATION BUDGET SUB COMMITTEE**

**23 SEPTEMBER 1999**

Present: Councillors Mrs Hayes (Chairman), Barnard, Beadsley,  
Mrs Shillcock, Thompson, Ward, and Wheaton

Apologies for absence were received from:  
Councillors Bailey and Good

**19. Substitute Members**

The Committee noted the attendance of the following substitute member under standing order 38:

Councillor Mrs Shillcock for Councillor Good

**20. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 21 July 1999 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**21. Education Library Service (Item 1)**

The Sub Committee considered the draft Annual Report of the Library Service and the Budget Strategy for 2000-2003.

The Education Library Service was funded to provide a loan collection, project service and other services on behalf of Bracknell Forest and three other Berkshire Authorities.

It was reported that the Library Service had a successful first year and that the partners had agreed that the service should continue. Both the draft Annual Report and the Budget Strategy Report would be considered by the Inter-Authority Client Officer Group at their next meeting.

It was noted that the move from Shire Hall to Darwin Close had affected topic collections. This was mainly due to teachers not knowing where the new centre was located and the roadworks on the A33 relief road.

It was reported that the budget for this service was determined prior to Reading Borough Council confirming their charges. It was also reported that the supply time for new books was eight weeks and above. This caused problems when ordering books in one financial year for them to arrive in another. An over-spend of £11,768 was reported.

The Budget Strategy outlined how the Education Library Service would deal with the effects of insufficient schools buying back into the service from the delegated or earmarked funding.

It was reported that Slough Borough Council chose to delegate funding to schools in advance of the fair funding legislation in April 1999. The effect on the library service was that 44 Slough schools had still to sign the agreements for the service, although the majority had indicated their intention to do so. It was anticipated that 90-95% of schools would eventually buy back into the service. However, the concern was that the budget pressures many schools would suffer would mean that they would buy back at a reduced level. It was noted that should the schools in Bracknell Forest and the three other Authorities respond in a similar way to Slough, there would be a reduction in the service budget of between 5½%-12%, depending on whether primary and special school budgets were delegated or devolved and earmarked.

**RESOLVED that**

- (i) the draft Annual Report be noted prior to its consideration by other partner authorities; and
- (ii) the Budget Strategy for 2000-2003 be amended and recommended to other partner authorities.

**22. Arrangements for Music Tuition and Access to Musical Experiences (Item 2)**

The Sub Committee considered a report on the contract with the Berkshire Young Musicians Trust. It was reported that the new contract with Berkshire Young Musicians Trust was due for negotiation, so the opportunity had arisen to establish a policy framework for music tuition and access to musical experiences.

Concern was expressed regarding part of the policy framework that suggested a selection of ensembles would only be for pupils who live or are educated in Bracknell Forest area. It was felt that this was selective. Officers were asked to re-word this section.

**RESOLVED that**

- (i) the policy framework for music tuition and access to musical experiences (attached as Appendix 1 to the report) be approved, and
- (ii) payments be made to the Berkshire Young Musicians Trust in accordance with the current contract provisions until the new contract is agreed by the Sub Committee.

**23. Fair Funding – Delegation April 2000 (Item 3)**

The Sub Committee considered a report on the timetable for consultation and implementation on fair funding. It was reported that the first phase of fair funding in Bracknell Forest schools was implemented in April 1999 and the Authority were about to launch into phase two.

It was reported that the DFEE produced a further consultation document in August, clarifying those areas which required further research prior to legislation. Local

Education Authorities have been asked for their views on the latest proposals by 6 October. It was noted that the Education Department would not await the outcome of the DFEE's consultation process before consulting with schools on the proposals. The final version of the consultation document would be submitted to the Education Committee in October and would then be sent to schools.

Concerns were raised regarding what could happen to property owned by the LEA when budgets were delegated. It was noted that schools would ask permission before carrying out changes to property owned by the LEA.

It was reported that the LEA would provide advice on budget expenditure to schools. However, should this advice not be followed the governing body would be responsible for the outcome.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the proposals in the DfEE consultation document be noted; and
- (ii) the timetable for consultation and implementation attached at Appendix A be approved; and
- (iii) the draft consultation document attached as Appendix C be noted.

**24. Winkfield St Mary's CE Primary School (Item 4)**

The Sub Committee considered a report on the over-subscription of Winkfield St Mary's CE Primary School. It was reported that the school would continue to be over-subscribed from its designated area. It was noted that there were no spare places in most of the neighbouring schools. In an attempt to address this issue, Berkshire County Council removed part of the designated area of St Mary's in 1996 and added this to the areas of the Holly Spring Schools. This did not resolve the issue, however and pupil forecast showed that there would be pupils from within the existing area of St Mary's for whom no place would be available over the next three years. The report introduced four possible options to overcome the over-subscription problem.

Option 1 was to do nothing and allow parents to find their own places for their children in other schools.

Option 2 was to enlarge the existing St Mary's School.

Option 3 was to share part or all of the designated area with Cranbourne School and Holly Spring Schools.

Option 4 was to enlarge Whitegrove School and/or Warfield School and extend their designated area to share part of St Mary's School area.

It was emphasised that other options would be investigated if they came to light and this list was not exhaustive.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the shortfall of places in the designated area of St Mary's CE Primary School be noted; and

- (ii) that officers be requested to investigate the possible options to resolve this.

**25. Fox Hill Primary School Fire Damage (Item 5)**

The Sub Committee considered a report on the progress of repairing the fire damage inflicted upon Fox Hill Primary School during the school holidays. It was reported that remedial work started almost immediately on 23 August with priority being given to making the school ready for the start of the autumn term. The longer term work to reinstate the damaged buildings was under way for completion in December to allow full and normal use of the school from January 2000.

Except for the policy excess of £25,000, the estimated reinstatement cost of £312,730 would be reimbursed by the Council's insurer.

The Sub Committee expressed gratitude to the Borough Surveyor and his staff for the prompt action taken following the fire.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the action taken under urgency powers in respect of single tender action be endorsed for the repair of fire damage; and
- (ii) the costs associated with this be noted.

The meeting commenced at 5.30pm and concluded at 7.14pm

**CHAIRMAN**