

STRATEGY AND POLICY COMMITTEE

3 NOVEMBER 1999

Present: Councillors Bettison (Chairman), Mrs Ballin, Barnard, Bayle, Birch, Blatchford, Good, Jones, Mrs Keene, McCormack, Mills, North, Sargeant, Mrs Shillcock, Wade and Wheaton

Also Present: Councillors Flood and Mrs Hayes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ward.

338 **Substitute Members**

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

Councillor Blatchford for Councillor Ward

339. **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 5 May 1999 and 14 July 1999 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

340. **Town Centre Sub Committee**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Town Centre Sub Committee held on 27 July 1999, as set out in Appendix A hereto, be received.

341. **Health Panel**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Health Panel held on 6 September 1999, as set out in Appendix B hereto, be received.

342. **Finance & Property Sub Committee**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Finance & Property Sub Committee held on 22 September 1999, as set out in Appendix C hereto, be received.

RECOMMENDED that the recommendation in Minute 23 [Revenue Grant of £2,000 for 1999/2000 to Commerce to Community under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972] be adopted.

343. **Audit & Performance Review Committee**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit & Performance Review Committee held on 29 September 1999, as set out in Appendix D hereto, be received.

344. **Personnel Sub Committee**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Sub Committee held on 20 October 1999, as set out in Appendix E hereto, be received.

345. **Millennium Sub Committee**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Millennium Sub Committee held on 21 October 1999, as set out in Appendix F hereto, be received and the recommendation in Minute No 10 be adopted.

346. **Access Advisory Sub Committee**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Access Advisory Sub Committee held on 21 October 1999, as set out in Appendix G hereto, be received.

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

The Chief Executive introduced the Quarterly Operations Report, which outlined the key activities and performance of the Council during the second quarter of the year (July-September). He highlighted the success of 'Bracknell Beach', in particular the positive publicity which it had generated for Bracknell Town Centre. He also highlighted the issue of 7,500 Edge cards to residents and the shortlisting of the Council's website in the Financial Times International Website of the Year Award.

RESOLVED that the Quarterly Operations Report be received.

348. **Commitment Budget and Medium Term Objectives 2000/01-2002/03 (Item 2)**

The Director of Corporate Services presented a report on the Strategy and Policy Committee's own medium term objectives and commitment budget and those of the Council's other service Committees. These had been prepared against the background of an underlying funding gap of around £3 million per annum for the foreseeable future, although this was offset in the short term by the availability of relatively high levels of balances. The Committee was also advised of emerging service pressures in several areas such as the development of the Smartcard, Best Value and external audit fees.

The Committee also considered and approved several inter-committee virements for the period April to June 1999.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) changes to the Strategy and Policy Committee's Commitment Budget as outlined in tables 2 and 3 of the report be approved;
- (ii) the statement of the Committee's medium term objectives, as set out in Annex A to the report, be approved;
- (iii) the areas where service pressures were emerging be noted and officers be instructed to examine these in more detail prior to the budget meeting in February 1999;

- (iv) variations to the Commitment Budgets submitted by other Committees as summarised in tables 4 and 5 within the report and detailed in Annexes B and C be approved; and
- (v) the virements identified by service committees as summarised in table 6 and detailed in Annexe D to the report and as set out in paragraph 4.29 be approved;
- (vi) the overall Commitment Budget, including non-committee items, as summarised in table 7 and detailed in Annexe E to the report, be approved; and
- (vii) the medium term objectives identified by Service Committees, as set out in Annexe F to the report , be approved.

349. 1999/2000 Capital Programme: Community and Environmental Initiatives (Item 3)

Following the allocation of £500,000 of capital in April 1999 for a programme of community and environmental initiatives, the Committee considered a report setting out proposals for allocating the money to a series of local projects, a number of which would be undertaken in partnership with other organisations. Two of the schemes proposed expenditure, totalling £55,000, which would be made under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 and would thus, require confirmation of the Council. The projects fitted in with the Council's key priority areas within the theme of community and environment, embracing safety, education and leisure.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) subject to approval of items 19 and 23 by the Council, the projects listed in the Annex 1 to these minutes be approved as the Borough Council's programme of Community and Environmental Initiatives for 1999/2000;
- (ii) the capital funding for each of the schemes be transferred to the budget of the Committee indicated against each scheme; and
- (iii) grant payment be subject to agreement of appropriate implementation plans with the partner organisation.

RECOMMENDED that the expenditure in relation to items 19 and 23 of Annex 1 to these minutes be authorised under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

350. Voluntary Sector Development (Item 4)

The Committee considered a report suggesting ways in which the Local Authority could develop its relationship with the voluntary sector in the future and the outcome of the voluntary sector Mapping Project. The Council, through the Partnership Officer, had been working with the voluntary sector locally to develop and enhance the Local Authority's understanding of the sector. Representatives from a number of voluntary organisations had been invited to form a Steering Committee to plan a joint voluntary sector and Borough Council conference. The voluntary sector Mapping Project was launched at this conference. Mapping the voluntary sector was seen as a way of building a picture of the voluntary sector in the Borough. A voluntary sector and Borough Council consortium was established to develop this project. The

Committee supported the establishment of a Compact with the voluntary sector, which would aim to develop processes covering issues such as long term funding.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the outcome of the Mapping Project, as set out in Annex 1 to the report, be noted;
- (ii) the development of a joint Voluntary Sector and Local Authority Compact be supported; and
- (iii) 3 (2:1) Members be nominated to sit on a Voluntary Sector Compact Steering Group and attendance at meetings of the Compact Steering Group be deemed as an approved duty for Members' allowance purposes.

351. Best Value (Item 5)

The Committee considered a report detailing the progress made to date on preparing for the introduction of Best Value across all Council services and seeking approval for the first year's timetable for the programme of fundamental reviews. The Council's approach and systems for Best Value was subject to an audit by the internal auditors Deloitte & Touche in July/August. The auditors stated that the broad framework for implementation of Best Value legislation was in place and that much progress had been made during the course of the audit. They also identified areas for further development.

The Council was required to publish a Local Performance Plan by 31 March 2000 and to this end, the Committee agreed that service plans would be considered in the January-February cycle for Committee meetings, together with revenue budget plans. Consultation was an important element in the Best Value regime and the Committee approved the establishment of a consultation panel and principles which would underline consultation processes. To develop Member involvement in the process a Focus Group would be established.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the progress made to date in preparing for the introduction of the Best Value legislation be noted;
- (ii) the draft programme of Best Value reviews, as set out at Annex A to the report, be endorsed;
- (iii) service plans be considered at the January-March cycle of committees in order to meet the statutory deadline for the Best Value Performance Plan;
- (iv) the principles of consultation, as set out at Annex B to the report, be endorsed;
- (v) the establishment of a Consultation Panel to facilitate future consultation exercises be agreed; and
- (vi) the establishment of a Member Focus Group (3:2) to pilot and develop Members' role in Best Value be approved and attendance at meetings of the Focus Group be deemed as an approved duty for the purposes of Members' allowances.

352. Local Government Improvement Programme – Visit to Bracknell Forest (Item 6)

The Committee considered a report on the findings of the recent Local Government Improvement Team visit and the Council's proposed action plan to address key issues raised. The LGIP Team's overall message was that Bracknell Forest was a well run Local Authority and there was much to praise within the Council. Inevitably given the relatively short time the project team was present in the Council, a number of its findings were based on perceptions and it was not always possible to get a full picture of all activities and issues within the Local Authority. Nevertheless, an action plan had been developed, which aimed to address the issues raised by the team.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the Review Team's report, as set out at Annex A to the report, be received; and
- (ii) the action plan attached, as set out at Annex B to the report, be endorsed.

353. Initial Youth Justice Plan (Item 7)

The Director of Social Services & Housing reported that each Local Authority was required to submit an Initial Youth Justice Plan for 2000/2001 to the Youth Justice Board by 20 December 1999. It must set out how youth justice services in a Council's area were to be provided; how the youth offending team was to be composed and funded; and what actions it would carry out. The plan involved a number of departments within the Local Authority and would be produced in conjunction with a number of other partner agencies including Thames Valley Police, The Health Service and Berkshire Probation Service. Given the timescale for the submission of the plan, an appropriate delegation to finalise the plan was approved.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the work already undertaken to develop the Initial Youth Justice Plan be noted; and
- (ii) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairman of the Strategy & Policy Committee, be authorised to give final approval to the submission of the Youth Justice Plan to the Board by the specified deadline.

354. Bank Tendering (Item 8)

The Director of Corporate Services reported that the Finance & Property Sub Committee at its meeting on 28 June 1999 had agreed a process for tendering the Council's bank accounts. A consultant had been appointed to assist in the process to ensure the maximum benefit was derived in respect of both costs and service quality and had identified a number of issues which would need to be considered in respect of the Council's service requirements as the tendering process proceeded. The Council's banking arrangements would be renewed from 1 July 2000 and the new contract was likely to be for five years with an option to extend for a further two years. The Committee agreed to the appointment of a Sub Committee to oversee the process.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) a Banking Services Tender Assessment Sub Committee of five Members (3:2) be established to act with delegated powers to award the contract for the Council's service requirements;
- (ii) the following terms of reference of the Sub Committee be approved:
 - a) to provide guidance to officers in the preparation of the specification and tender documents and tender selection process;
 - b) to agree a short-list of contractors to be invited to interview;
 - c) to consider the final bids;and
 - d) to agree the awarding of the contract for banking services from 1 July 2000;
- (iii) nominations to serve on the Sub Committee (including substitutes) be approved.

355. Closed Circuit Television - Sandhurst (Item 9)

It was reported that the Council had submitted two bids to the first round of the Home Office's Crime Reduction Programme (CCTV initiative). These were for the Bracknell Town Centre Project and the Sandhurst Crime Reduction Plan, which would install CCTV at the Sandhurst School/Sports Centre site and the Sandhurst Memorial Ground. The Home Office had requested that a detailed bid for Sandhurst be developed.

The Committee therefore agreed to the submission of a bid to the final stage of the Home Office's Programme and to approve potential future revenue funding should the proposal be approved. It was noted that the CCTV cameras proposed would be of good quality and would be monitored 24 hours per day.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) a bid be made to the Home Office for a capital grant to install CCTV cameras at the Sandhurst School/Sports Centre Site and the Sandhurst Memorial Ground;
- (ii) in the event of success in the bid for capital funding, a budget of up to £50,000 per annum be included in the 2000/2001 revenue budget; and
- (iii) up to £5,000 be released from this Committee's consultancy budget to enable the bid to be prepared.

356. Health Partnership Initiatives – Health Planning/General Practitioner Referral (Item 10)

The Committee considered a report on recommendations arising from the Health Panel to the Committee in connection with health partnership initiatives in Bracknell Forest relating to Health Planning and the General Practitioner Referral Schemes. These schemes demonstrated the Council's commitment to developing relationships with health services.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) funding be allocated to sustain a jointly funded Bracknell Forest Health Partnership post for a two year fixed term period, to be reviewed after twelve months, as detailed in annexe A to the report;
- (ii) the management arrangements for the post, as outlined in the report to the Health Panel, be endorsed; and
- (iii) funding of £16,000 be allocated to meet the cost of the Council's contribution towards the General Practitioner Referral Co-ordinator for the remainder of 1999/2000 and thereafter £15,000 on an ongoing basis, subject to satisfactory annual review by the Health Panel.

357. Establishment of a Standards Committee (Item 11)

The Director of Corporate Services reported on proposals to establish a Standards Committee to deal with ethical and probity issues, which would be required in forthcoming legislation on local government organisation and standards. The Committee agreed that a Standards Committee of six members should be established, comprising two independent persons and two members from each of the political groups. As this proposal would not be in accordance with political proportionality legislation, the agreement of all Members of the Council would be required for the Committee to be established. As it would not be appropriate for matters considered by a Standards Committee to be referred to Council for determination, the provisions of Standing Order 47 would not apply to it. The initial work of the Standards Committee would be to consider its procedures for dealing with investigations and how any sanctions would be applied.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) a Standards Committee be established comprising four Councillors (2:2) and two Independent Members;
- (ii) the terms of reference of the Standards Committee be as set out in Annex 2 to these minutes;
- (iii) Standing Order 47 not apply to meetings of the Standards Committee;
- (iv) officers approach potential Independent Members to serve on the Committee; and
- (v) the Standards Committee be requested to consider procedures for undertaking investigations and potential sanctions and to report back on these to the Council.

358. Regional Cultural Consortium – Member Nomination (Item 12)

The Committee considered a report on whether it wished to nominate a member to be considered for a position on the South East Regional Cultural Consortium, appointments to which might be made by the Thames Valley Cultural Forum.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) a Member of the Council be identified for selection to the South East Regional Cultural Consortium;

- (ii) if appropriate, the nomination be proposed through the Thames Valley Cultural Forum; and
- (iii) in the event of the Council's nominee being appointed, attendance at the meetings of the Consortium be classified as an approved duty for the purposes of the scheme of Members' allowances.

359. The New Owlsmoor Centre – Appointment of Representative (Item 13)

The Committee considered a report on the appointment of a representative to the Owlsmoor Community Association which had been reconstituted as the New Owlsmoor Centre.

RESOLVED that Councillor Worrall be appointed as the Borough Council's representative on the Management Committee of the New Owlsmoor Centre.

360. References from other Committees (Item 14)

The Committee considered and determined references from the Leisure Services Committee meeting held on 21 September 1999 as follows:

(1) Self Funded Capital Projects

RESOLVED that approval be given to the concept that self funding projects based upon the cost of capital; and the two schemes of Combined Heat and Power at Coral Reef and car parking improvements at Bracknell Sports & Leisure Centre be progressed as detailed in the report.

(2) Jubilee Gardens

RESOLVED that £25,193 from Section 106 Agreement Funds be released for expenditure on a work of art or works of art in Jubilee Gardens, Bracknell.

361. Items for Information

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

Urgent Action – Consultation on Regional Economic Strategy (Item 15)

Fundamental Review of legal Services – Progress Report (Item 16)

Air Track – Proposed Heathrow Airport South West Rail Link: Update Agreement Signed Between Railtrack, British Airports Authority and British Airways (Item 17)

362. **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 the following item which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:

(9) Terms proposed for a contract (Item 18)

363. **References from other Committees – Exempt (Item 18)**

The Committee considered and determined a reference from the Public & Environmental Services Committee meeting held on 12 October 1999 as follows:

Virement of Capital Allocation from Public & Environmental Services Committee, to Leisure Services Committee

RESOLVED that approval be given to the virement of capital funds referred to in the report, from the Public & Environmental Services Committee to the Leisure Services Committee Capital Programme 1999/2000.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and concluded at 11.05pm

CHAIRMAN

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES (ITEM 3)

		Allocated Funding	Committee
1.	Farley Wood Community Centre Grant towards Additional Tennis Courts	£3,000	Leisure Services
2.	Terrace Road, Binfield Traffic Management Scheme	£27,000	Planning & Transportation
3.	Cranbourne Church Rooms Grant towards Improvements	£5,000	Finance & Property Sub
4.	Temple Way, Binfield Traffic Calming	£20,000	Planning & Transportation
5.	College Town Sandhurst School Security Fencing	£15,000	Education
6.	Owlsmoor Community Centre Grant towards Internal Improvements	£13,000	Leisure Services
7.	Dukes Ride / New Wokingham Road Pedestrian Safety	£30,000	Planning & Transportation
8.	Upper Broadmoor Road/High Street Crowthorne Environmental Improvements	£20,000	Public & Environmental Services
9.	Greenway Project – Learning Centre For Scheme Development	£50,000	Education
10.	South Hill Park Play Group Grant towards New Building Services	£15,000	Finance & Property Sub
11.	Harmans Water Pool Improvements to Enhance Peripheral Activities	£65,000	Education
12.	St Mary's School Attention to Play Areas	£40,000	Education
13.	Garth School Community Art Provision	£40,000	Education
14.	Bullbrook After School Club Grant to Facilitate Parenting Use	£10,000	Education
15.	Sandhurst Day Centre Grant for Kitchen Improvements	£6,000	Finance & Property Sub
16.	The Look In Kitchen Improvements	£4,000	Social Services & Housing
17.	Residential Car Parking, Harmans Water To Facilitate Pilot Project	£10,000	Planning & Transportation
18.	Bagshot Road Project To Develop a Study Support Centre	£50,000	Education
19.	Community Television Aerials Contingency to Deal with Future Changes	£50,000	Social Services & Housing
20.	St Michael's School Playing Fields Grant to Facilitate Extended Use	£6,000	Education
21.	Traffic Lights in Beehive Road Rephasing for the Bus Route Enhancement	£10,000	Planning & Transportation
22.	Uplands School Grant for Community Improvements	£5,000	Education
23.	Female Patients Bathroom, Heatherwood Hospital Grant for Improvements	£5,000	Finance & Property Sub
	TOTAL	£499,000	

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE
DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE and CONSTITUTION**

- 1 to advise the Council on the adoption of appropriate codes of conduct and protocols governing the ethical standards of the Members and officers of the Council;
- 2 to conduct periodic reviews of the Council's code of conduct, making recommendations for revision where appropriate;
- 3 to receive regular reports on the operation of the codes of conduct, in particular the numbers of matters referred to the Monitoring Officer under the code and how these have been discharged;
- 4 to consider and determine allegations against Members of the Council of misconduct, meaning a breach of the National Code of Local Government Conduct or of any code or protocol established locally by the Council or by the committee on its behalf, and to determine any sanctions it deems appropriate in the event of finding misconduct, within the terms of any convention on sanctions or any sanctions policy which may be adopted by the Council from time to time. All such matters shall be determined without reference to the Council.
- 5 to be responsible for liaison between the Council and external agencies, in particular the External Auditor and the Local Government Ombudsman, in connection with any matter concerning the ethical standards of the Council and its Members.
- 6 To oversee the provision of training and guidance to members and officers on the operation of the Council's code of conduct and on other matters within the terms of reference of the Committee.

Membership

2 independent members, to be appointed by the Council (one of which shall be appointed as Chairman)
4 Councillors (2:2)
and 2 substitute Councillors

Delegated Powers

Authorised to determine all matters within its terms of reference, including the application of appropriate sanctions.