

**COUNCIL
27 MARCH 2002**

EXECUTIVE REPORT

Since the last Executive report to the Council on 27 February a number of important items have been discussed collectively by the Executive and the most significant of these are brought to the attention of the Council in this report.

MODERNISING HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE IN BRACKNELL FOREST

Joint work has been going on for many months to develop a strategic approach to commissioning social care services and health improvement through joint arrangements involving the Council, the new Primary Care Trust and other local organisations. This work acknowledges that the demands of modern health policy require an integrated approach across the Council and other agencies including the health services and the independent sector. This work has now come to a head and the Executive has approved proposals for establishing a formal partnership structure in a Health and Social Care Partnership Board bringing together representatives of the Council, NHS organisations and voluntary and community organisations. The new board will replace the current Local Joint Planning Group and will absorb the existing Health Improvement Project Group. A Joint Senior Managers Group has been established to bring forward implementation proposals.

In addition the Executive has agreed that the existing Health Panel should be reconvened as a Health Forum to provide the Council with an open opportunity for debate on health issues. The new forum will be chaired by Councillor Terry Mills and active participation by external organisations will be continued.

ADULTS ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

On 31 October 2001 the former Social Services and Housing Committee approved a draft of an eligibility policy for adult services provided by the Social Services and Housing Department. Since that time extensive consultation with stakeholders has been undertaken and a revised draft has now been adopted by the Executive for implementation from 1 April 2002. The vast majority of the criteria are based very closely on Department of Health Fair Access Guidance issued in July 2001 which introduced the key concept of eligibility for services based on the risks that would arise from failure to provide.

A MODEL FOR INTEGRATED OLD PEOPLES SERVICES IN BRACKNELL FOREST

As another significant step in improving services in both the local primary care system and in Social Services and Housing, officers from the Social Services and Housing Department and the Primary Care Trust have developed an outline model for integrated services for older people. The model involves the creation of two teams each under the overall management of a Joint Older Peoples Locality Manager. The first team will cover intermediate care and access and will be the single point of access for adult services. The second team will manage the longer term provision of care. These outline proposals have been approved by the Executive on the basis that both organisations will consult widely on the model and draw up a project plan for implementation. The proposed implementation date is April 2003. However the outcome of consultation and the project plan will be brought to the Executive and to the Primary Care Trust Board in June 2002.

THE STAFF COLLEGE, BRACKNELL – PLANNING AND DESIGN BRIEF

The Executive has now approved a draft planning and design brief for the ex Staff College site in Bracknell for the purposes of public consultation. The brief accords with the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan adopted on 30 January 2002 and contains housing development proposals of at least 680 (gross) new dwellings with the retention of about 18-19 hectares of open space of public value. The brief aims to create a flagship development of distinct identifiable design that fits within the neighbourhood of Harmanswater. The brief has therefore been based on the very latest best practice guidance examples and aims to promote environmentally friendly techniques to create a truly sustainable development. The Executive has approved specific arrangements for public consultation which will include a public exhibition at a central location within the immediate area.

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SERVICE DELIVERY

Following a review of the funding of community transport services, the Executive has approved proposals to introduce a service specification and contract for community transport in the Borough to replace the current arrangements for funding these services through the voluntary sector grant process. It is envisaged that this will provide a more cost effective method of service delivery. Tenders will be assessed against budget provision for grants and payments in next year's budget.

A POST-16 STRATEGY FOR BRACKNELL FOREST

Post-16 provision in the Borough has been under review to further improve standards and opportunities for students. The review was prompted in part by the change in the source of funding from DFES to the Learning and Skills Council reflecting the shared responsibilities for post-16 provision between the Council and Berkshire Learning and Skills Council. An opportunity had also arisen to consider the establishment of a joint post-16 centre on the Wick Hill site involving collaboration between Garth Hill School and Bracknell and Wokingham College.

The proposed strategy results from consultation on the paper on post-16 provision approved by the former Education Committee in January 2001. The draft strategy has been adopted by the Executive as a basis for further consultation with school and other partners including Bracknell and Wokingham College, the Berkshire Learning and Skills Council and Lifelong Learning Partnership. The proposal to establish a joint post-16 centre arose during the preparation of the strategy and was initiated in the first instance by Garth Hill School and Bracknell and Wokingham College. A consultancy report has identified that the proposed development will be more cost effective, offer a broader curriculum and opportunities to raise standards, and enable the school and college to develop joint approaches to the 14-19 curriculum. A detailed feasibility study will now be undertaken and a further report brought back to the Executive.

EDUCATION ASSET MANGEMENT PLAN LOCAL POLICY STATEMENT 2002

The Council is required to regularly review and update its Education Asset Management Plan Local Policy Statement in accordance with the guidance issued by DFES. This has now been concluded and a revised policy statement adopted. The revised statement includes amendments as a result of a consultation exercise with schools and the dioceses.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Following on from the decision of the former Strategy and Policy Committee in December 2000 when a strategy for replacing the Council's mainframe computer and operational systems was agreed, a major tendering exercise has taken place to select a replacement financial information and management system with effect from 1 April 2003. As a result of this exercise the Executive has now selected the most appropriate supplier and has authorised the Director of Corporate Services to finalise the contract. The anticipated costings represent a potential reduction in the Capital Programme provision for the replacement of the Council's mainframe and the Executive have agreed that this saving should be added to the Innovation fund to help fund the subsequent development and purchase of a Customer Resource Management and Personnel Information System. The new Financial Information and Management System will be implemented with effect from 1 April 2003.

LOOKING AHEAD

There are a number of very significant issues to be addressed by the Executive in the coming weeks, some of which are described below.

Public Service Agreement

Work is progressing on the development of a Local Public Service Agreement which is an agreement between the Borough Council and the Government, intended to improve key outcomes more quickly and / or to a higher level than would otherwise be the case. There are two major benefits of putting a local Public Service Agreement in place:

- **Additional Finance:** This is in two forms, the first is 'pump-priming' money to establish the schemes identified within the Local Public Service Agreement; and a 'Performance Reward Grant' equivalent to 2.5% of the authority's net budget requirement if the authority meets or exceeds all the performance targets within the Local Public Service Agreement.
- **Additional Freedoms and Flexibilities** open to negotiation between the local authority and the relevant Government departments to assist in meeting the targets set in the Public Service Agreement.

An initial meeting has taken place with DTLR, and the main negotiations will take place in May 2002. The Executive will consider the proposed target areas in April.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

The recent White Paper – Strong Local Government, Quality Public Services introduced 'Comprehensive Performance Assessment' (CPA) for local authorities. These annual assessments will build on existing audit, inspections and assessments as part of a performance framework for local government and will bring together performance indicator data, inspection data and a corporate governance assessment. From this a 'balanced scorecard' developed by the Audit Commission, will classify individual authorities as falling into one of four categories:

- High performing
- Striving
- Coasting
- Poor performing

High performing councils will receive freedoms and flexibilities over and above the deregulatory measures available to all councils. A diminishing level of similar freedoms and flexibilities will be available to other classifications.

The Audit Commission is aiming to complete the first comprehensive performance assessments for all upper tier authorities by late 2002. This Council has been placed in the first 'tranche' of assessments, i.e. during May 2002. However this may represent resourcing issues for the Council, as it is the same time-scale as the negotiation period for the Local Public Service Agreement and the timing issues have been raised with the Audit Commission.

Community Plan for Bracknell Forest 2002/05

A first draft of the Community Plan for Bracknell Forest entitled "Shaping Tomorrow Together" will be considered during April. The draft will set the scene for further consultation with key partners, the public and our own Select Committees. More detail will be reported to the next meeting of Council.

Policy and Performance Plan 2002/03

Another key strategic plan for the Council is the Policy and Performance Plan 2002/03 which is our Best Value Performance Plan. Again, this plan will be considered as a first draft shortly by the Executive and is a comprehensive assessment of performance of all the Council's services. This time we have worked hard to measure our performance in the context of the key policies of the Council, not simply the Government's performance indicator tables so that we hope it will be more meaningful for the Council and the public.

Cultural Strategy

At the April meeting, the Executive will be considering the first Cultural Strategy for the Borough. Although the Leisure Services Department has led the process, it is not a leisure services strategy or even a borough council strategy but rather one for the borough as a whole. It's development has been ongoing for about a year and it has been produced through a great deal of consultation with Members, the public, parish and town councils, other stakeholders and consistent representation by all departments reflecting the breadth of the subject matter. We look forward to seeing the collective work of all these partners in due course.