

**COUNCIL
29 MAY 2002**

EXECUTIVE REPORT

Since the report to the Council meeting earlier in the month the Executive met on 21 May to take Executive decisions. These are brought to the attention of the Council in this report.

1 CHILDREN'S SERVICES ACTION PLAN

All members of the Council were invited to a presentation on 18 April 2002 when the Social Services Lead Inspector introduced his report on the inspection of children's services undertaken during October 2001. This was an encouraging report overall, which showed considerable improvement since the Social Services Joint Review. Although there is no room for complacency, as reported to the last Council meeting, the Executive is totally committed to maintaining the substantial progress that has been made over the last year. A joint member/officer group, including three Directors was established to review the inspection report and bring forward a draft action plan. The action plan specifically addresses a number of areas for improvement which were included in the inspectorate's report and includes actions, responsibilities, timescales and performance measures in the following key areas:

- Consultation and participation
- Commissioning
- Assessment and care planning
- Child protection
- Looked after children
- Access governance
- Partnership working
- Organisational development

The plan is a vigorous programme of work which the Executive is confident will lead to still further improvements in the quality of services provided.

2 BRACKNELL FOREST VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMPACT

The Executive has previously reported that the Voluntary Sector Compact, comprising representatives of the voluntary and statutory sectors have been developing a series of codes of practice to guide voluntary activities in the Borough and relationships with the Council. The first two codes covering consultation and communication, and funding, respectively have been approved previously and the Executive has now approved the third code which deals with volunteering and community action. The code stresses the importance of volunteering and the contribution made by volunteers to the quality of life in Bracknell Forest, it offers guidance to partners in the voluntary sector in a flexible and non prescriptive way.

3 FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT PLAN 2002-2003

There is a statutory requirement under the Food Standards Act 1999 for the Council to produce a Food Law Enforcement Plan regulating the way that national priorities and standards in relation to food hygiene will be delivered effectively and consistently at a local level. The Executive has now approved the Food Law Enforcement Plan 2002-2003. The plan is one of the central policy framework documents which must be adopted by the full Council and will therefore be listed elsewhere on the agenda for the Council meeting.

4 LILY HILL PARK LOTTERY GRANT

The Council will be aware of the background which led up to the submission of a major application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the restoration of the landscaping of part of Lily Hill Park. A provisional award has been made and, following the formulation and costing of detailed design proposals and an extensive public consultation exercise, the Executive has approved proposals for proceeding to the second stage of the application.

This is a major project involving a significant financial commitment from the Council in both revenue and capital funding terms. However, if we are successful the project will protect and enhance an important part of the cultural heritage of the Borough and improve this important area of parkland beyond measure. In particular the release of £121,100 of Section 106 Funding held for recreational purposes is required. The release of this funding requires approval by the full Council and the Council is therefore requested to approve the necessary release.

RECOMMENDED: THAT THE COUNCIL APPROVE THE RELEASE OF £121,000 OF SECTION 106 FUNDS AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE COST OF LANDSCAPE RESTORATION AT LILY HILL PARK.

5 BRACKNELL FOREST COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY 2002-2005

There is a statutory requirement under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 for each Community Safety Partnership to prepare a Community Safety Strategy every three years. The Community Safety Strategy should focus on priority action by organisations working together to make a difference over and above what they already do as part of their normal responsibilities. The main partners in the Bracknell Forest Community Safety Partnership are the Thames Valley Police and the Borough Council. The Executive has now approved the Community Safety Strategy for 2002-2005. The strategy is also one of the central policy framework documents which must be adopted by the full Council and will therefore be listed elsewhere on the agenda for the Council meeting.

6 LOOKING AHEAD

Our Forward Plan which is always available for inspection at Easthampstead House shows that the coming month of June is likely to be extremely busy. As usual, I urge members who are not on the Executive to approach the appropriate Executive member or Director if they require further information about any items listed.

I have previously notified the Council that we expect negotiations on the Public Service Agreement to be concluded during the coming month. Present indications are that an additional special meeting of the Executive might be required to deal with this crucial topic towards the end of June. Following on from this, Members are reminded that the self assessment process to be undertaken as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment will be carried out during the coming month with onsite fieldwork by the Inspection Team arranged for 15-26 July.

Amongst the other important topics we will be dealing with during June, the Executive draws specific attention to the Housing Strategy, Policy and Performance Plan and Town Centre Masterplan. Each of these are topics which should be of considerable interest to the community inside and outside the Council Chamber.

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