

COUNCIL
25 SEPTEMBER 2002
(7.30p.m. to 9.30p.m.)

Present: Councillors Adams, Mrs Ballin, Beadsley, Bettison, Birch, Mrs Birch, Blatchford, Ms Brown, Browne, Edger, Fawcett, Finnie, Flood, Harrison, Ms Haydon, Mrs Hayes, Henfrey, Jones, Kendall, McCormack, McCracken, Mrs Mattick, Mills, North, Piasecki, Mrs Pile, Mrs Ryder, Sargeant, Mrs Shillcock, Simonds, Thompson, Turrell, Wade and Ward

Apologies for absence were received from:
Councillors Barnard, Egan, Glasson, Grayson and Worrall

41. Councillor Martin Wallace

It was with sadness that the Mayor reported on the untimely death of Councillor Martin Wallace on 10 September 2002. The Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition then paid tribute to Councillor Wallace, remembering his years of service to the community of Bracknell Forest through his membership of the Council and many local organisations.

The Council observed a one minute silence in memory of Councillor Wallace.

42. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council held 30 July 2002 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

43. Declaration of Interest (Item 4)

Councillor Fawcett declared a non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 8 (Statement of Accounts 2001/02) in his capacity as a Governor of Binfield Primary School.

44. Mayor's Announcements (Item 5)

(i) Environment Fair 2002

The Mayor expressed her thanks to all the staff who had organised and taken part in the very successful Environment Fair held on Sunday 22 September 2002. £177.91 had been raised for the Paul Bevan Hospice.

(ii) Golden Jubilee Celebrations Day

The Mayor thanked members of the Leisure Services Department who had organised the Golden Jubilee Celebrations Day for residents who had lived in the Borough for 50 years or more.

(iii) Christmas Lights

The Christmas Lights in Bracknell Town Centre would be switched on at 5.30 pm on Thursday 14 November 2002 by the Mayor and special guest, Frank Bruno.

(iv) Borough of Bracknell Forest (Electoral Changes) Order 2002

The Order giving effect to new electoral ward boundaries for the Borough had been made by Parliament and would be implemented for the Borough Council Elections in May 2003.

(v) Statement by the Chief Executive

The Mayor advised that later in the meeting the Chief Executive would make a statement concerning an incident at Enid Wood House on 19 September 2002.

45. **Executive Report (Item 6)**

The Leader of the Council reported on the main activities of the Executive since the meeting on 30 July 2002.

The Executive had met on 10 September 2002 and taken decisions on a range of matters, as detailed in the report. The Leader drew attention to the Local Public Service Agreement. Negotiations on the thirteen proposed service targets were nearing conclusion. The agreement would commit the Authority to specific performance improvements in return for which the Government would provide a Performance Reward Grant up to a potential £2.115 million.

The Executive had also spent time on the next phase of the Customer Contact Initiative. The Council's consultants, IMPOWER, were developing proposals for consideration by the Member Focus Group.

The coming weeks would be dominated by preparations for the 2003/04 budget which would be the subject of widespread consultation.

The Executive would consider the roll-forward of the ICT Strategy and Three-Year Plan in October 2002. The Leader outlined the results of a recent MORI Study for Bracknell Forest On-line, which indicated a high level of public access to the internet and other new technologies and an interest in using these for contacting the Council.

The Leader and relevant Executive Members responded to questions on the Executive Report. Councillor Ward then moved a recommendation made by the Executive in respect of in-year re-calculations of school budgets.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Ward, seconded by Councillor Birch, that the funding formula be amended to provide that

- (i) for the financial year 2002/03, if in-year school budget re-calculations show a net saving, any amount above £0.125 million be re-distributed to schools; and

- (ii) with effect from the financial 2003/04, where in-year school budget re-calculations show a net saving, all of the funds be re-distributed to schools.

46. **Budget and Policy Framework – Youth Justice Plan (Item 7)**

The Director of Social Services and Housing presented the Draft Youth Justice Plan 2002/03, comprising a review of activities in the past year and business plan for the current year. The Director, together with Councillor North, the Executive Member with responsibility for Community Safety issues, answered questions on the Youth Justice Plan.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor North, seconded by Councillor Birch that

- (i) the Youth Justice Plan be approved subject to no significant alterations being made by the Youth Justice Board to the plan as currently drafted.
- (ii) the Executive be authorised to make such minor amendments to the Plan and may be required to secure the approval of the Youth Justice Board.

47. **Statement of Accounts 2001/02 (Item 8)**

The draft Statement of Accounts for 2001/02 was submitted.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Statement of Accounts 2001/02 be approved;
- (ii) the out-turn expenditure for the year be noted and the provisions (£0.263m per section 4.2) and earmarked balances (£5.273m per section 4.3) be approved;
- (iii) the use of £0.070m from the Structural Changes Earmarked Reserve be approved for the Customer Contact Initiative (paragraph 4.3.4), as requested by the Executive.

48. **Appointments to Vacancies on Committees and External Organisations (Item 9)**

RESOLVED that consideration of appointments to the vacancies on committees and external organisations be deferred to a future meeting of the Council.

49. **Enid Wood House - Statement by the Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive circulated a press statement outlining the Council's position following a tragic incident at Enid Wood House on 19 September 2002 in which a tenant had died. The Council was advised that a coroner's inquiry was to be held and that an internal investigation had been initiated. It would not be appropriate to express any view on the incident before the conclusion of the inquiry and internal investigation.

50. **Annual Report of the Tenant's and Leaseholders Champion (Item 10)**

The Tenant's and Leaseholders Champion, Councillor Edger, presented his annual report and answered questions thereon.

The Mayor, on behalf of the Council, thanked Councillor Edger for his work during the year on strengthening the links between the Council and its tenants and leaseholders.

MAYOR