

**COUNCIL
30 OCTOBER 2002**

EXECUTIVE REPORT

Since the report made to the Council on 25 September 2002 one meeting of the Executive has been held on 15 October 2002. Executive decisions were taken at that meeting and these are brought to the attention of the Council in this report.

1 ICT STRATEGY AND THREE YEAR PLAN AND IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT STATEMENT

1.1 The Council's ICT Strategy sets the framework for future IT developments within the Council and has now been updated to cover the period 2002/03 to 2004/05. The updated strategy reflects the many recent and potential e-Government initiatives to enhance electronic service delivery by more effective use of ICT. In addition the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister requires all local authorities to produce an Implementing Electronic Government Statement and the Council's IEG Statement for 2002 has been produced as an annexe to the ICT Strategy and Three-Year Plan.

1.2 The Three-Year Plan contains the following elements:

- A progress report of achievements to date set against the Council's original strategy aims.
- Details of the Government's strategic approach to e-Government development, Council's targets and development programme, partnership working the communities, best value performance indicators for e-Government and funding opportunities.
- The ICT Strategy including key business and technical drivers, development/technical standards, strategic component areas and the potential application of developing technologies.
- Details of the development projects in progress and strategic areas which will be taken forward for feasibility assessment.

1.3 The Implementing Electronic Government Statement sets out:

- The Council's vision for implementing local e-Government.
- Priorities, outcomes and services.
- A self-assessment of transactions, access channels, enablers, e-business and organisational development.
- Resources and risk assessment.

1.4 The Best Value Performance Indicator 157 requires 100% of transactions to be electronically enabled 31 December 2005. Following a detailed audit assessment 58% of such transactions have been enabled electronically as at October 2002.

2 STAFF COLLEGE – PLANNING AND DESIGN BRIEF

- 2.1 The Council has been previously notified that consideration of the draft planning and design brief for the Staff College site was deferred at the September 2002 meeting of the Executive to permit further consideration of views received on the suggested amendments to the brief following public consultation. These matters have now been concluded and the Executive have approved the final version of the planning and design brief for this important site.
- 2.2 Given the significance of the site a very extensive consultation exercise was undertaken following publication of the draft brief. In addition to the major public consultation exercise the brief has been reviewed by the Environment Select Committee and Ward Members. Consultation has also taken place with Defence Estates as the landowner who had raised three fundamental objections to the consultation brief.
- 2.3 All responses have been carefully considered in detail and notified to the Executive. In approving the revised brief the Executive have expressed their determination to see a high quality successful and sustainable development take place on this key site.

3 BRACKNELL MARKET AND RE-DEVELOPMENT OF 3M TOWER

- 3.1 The Borough Council holds a 99-year lease of part of the ground floor of Winchester House in which Bracknell Market is located. The owners of Winchester House wish to re-develop the building and have put forward proposals for the Council to surrender its lease and for the market to be re-located. These proposals are in accordance with the Town Centre Master Plan approved by the Council and which show a new permanent market located in a square immediately south of the existing location.
- 3.2 The Executive have agreed to enter into negotiations with the owners of the building regarding:
- The temporary re-location of Bracknell Market to Market Street pending permanent re-location as shown on the Master Plan.
 - The surrender of the Borough Council's existing lease on terms to be agreed.
- 3.3 Surrender of the lease would be conditional on the temporary market being completed and operational to a design and specification agreed by the Council. Detailed terms of the proposed agreement will be brought to the Executive following negotiations.

4 BRACKNELL TOWN CENTRE RE-DEVELOPMENT – SUPPLEMENTARY REVENUE BUDGET APPROVAL

- 4.1 An earmarked reserve of £500,000 was set up in July last year to facilitate the Council's preparation of the Town Centre Re-development Plan leading up to publication of the Master Plan approved at the last meeting of the Council. Approximately £350,000 of this reserve has now been spent or committed in reaching this point and further funding is required to allow the Council to proceed to submission of an outline planning application and to resolve current property and delivery issues. It is anticipated that the outline planning application will be submitted

in early 2003 and in order to achieve this, additional funding of £283,000 is required in the current year. It is also at this stage possible to identify estimated costs over the years 2003/04 and 2004/05 of £271,000 and £136,000 respectively.

- 4.2 In order to maintain momentum on this project and secure implementation of the agreed Master Plan the Executive recommend as follows:

RECOMMENDATION

- (i) **That additional funding of £283,000 be transferred from General Reserves to the earmarked reserve for the Bracknell Town Centre (BTC) Project to allow further work to proceed in 2002/03.**
- (ii) **That the Commitment Budget for 2003/4 and 2004/5 includes funding of £407,000 (total) to cover expenses related to the BTC project and that these figures be reviewed annually in line with the Council's forward planning process.**

5 WASTE MANAGEMENT PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVE – PROCUREMENT PLAN

- 5.1 The Council has been working with Reading Borough and Wokingham District Councils in the development of an environmentally sustainable solution for the future management of waste. Confirmation has now been received that the joint bid for revenue support amounting to £37 million through the Government's Private Finance Initiative has been successful. This is the first waste PFI scheme to be approved for nearly two years and the level of award is well in excess of the Government's £25 million "Cap" for such projects. It will lead to a lengthy and complex procurement process working through the project structure and decision making process that has been put in place by the three authorities leading up to the award of a contract in July 2004.
- 5.2 The key objective of the project is to provide a sustainable long-term solution for the reception, treatment, recycling and disposal of municipal waste and will need to identify solutions which will:
- Minimise waste production.
 - Significantly increase levels of recycling, compost and recovery.
 - Significantly increase the diversion of waste from landfill.
 - Meet or exceed local best value standards and national performance objectives.

6 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PUBLICATION SCHEME

- 6.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2001 requires the Council to adopt a publication scheme which must be forwarded to the new Information Commissioner for approval. Following approval the publication scheme must be in place by February 2003.
- 6.2 The Act requires local authorities to be clear and proactive about the information they make available to the public. Publication schemes are intended to encourage organisations to publish more information and to develop a greater culture of openness.

- 6.3 Approval has now been given by the Executive to a draft scheme for submission to the Information Commissioner. As required under the Act, the draft scheme specifies the following matters:

- The classes of information which the Council publishes or intends to publish.
- The manner in which information of each class is, or is intended to be published.
- Whether the material is, or is intended to be, available to the public free of charge or on payment.

7 UNAUTHORISED TRAVELLER ENCAMPMENTS

- 7.1 At the request of the Executive, the Co-ordination Select Committee established a Policy Advisory Group on Unauthorised Traveller Encampments with the following Terms of Reference:

- To report on the scale of the problem and outline the effects of quality of life in the Borough.
- To investigate the causes of the problem and adequacy of current responses.
- To identify solutions and recommend actions to relevant parties.
- To provide a report to the Executive.

- 7.2 This task has now been completed and the report of the Policy Advisory Group was published in the agenda for the Executive on 15 October 2002. During the course of the review the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced a radical overhaul of policy on unauthorised traveller encampments to tackle public concern about nuisance and disorder, coupled with enhanced powers for the Police to move on unauthorised traveller encampments linked to local site provision. The Group took the view that it would not be prudent to continue with its work in the light of that announcement but has published a report containing its conclusions and recommendations to date. These have been considered and endorsed by the Executive. As a result the current statement of policy in relation to trespass has been confirmed as appropriate to local needs and in accordance with current Government advice Officers will now undertake a review of relevant planning policies as a matter of urgency. Further information on the Government's intention to review the legislative provisions and guidance is awaited.

8. LOOKING AHEAD

- 8.1 The next Executive Forward Plan will be published on 1 November 2002 and made available for inspection by the public at Easthampstead House. As might be expected the coming months will be dominated by consideration of next year's budget and the actions which will follow on from that.
- 8.2 Significant work is likely to be progressed on Bracknell Town Centre. The Council has been previously notified that the Leader intended to establish a Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee to take this work forward and to delegate his responsibilities for the re-generation of the Town Centre to that Committee. The Terms of Reference of this Executive Committee have now been agreed as set out below and will be listed in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution:

In so far as they are Executive Functions, the Leader delegates the following responsibilities to the Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee:

1. General responsibility for the oversight of matters relating to the approved Master Plan for the regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre.
2. Formulation of proposals for applications for planning permission for development in Bracknell Town Centre.
3. Formulation of the Council's property strategy within Bracknell Town Centre, including dealings with existing land owners, the process for seeking and obtaining a development partner or partners and any Compulsory Purchase Order.
4. Subject to the limitations contained in the general framework for delegations established by the Council and existing delegations to officers, approval of the terms of Development Agreements, other agreements with developers and those related to any CPO process, and other property agreements.
5. Determination of all matters which may be necessary to secure implementation of the approved Master Plan other than development or building control functions.

Note – the delegations set out above may be varied at any time at the discretion of the Leader.