

**COUNCIL  
5 FEBRUARY 2003**

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**EXECUTIVE REPORT**

Since the report made to the last meeting of the Council, one meeting of the Executive was held on 21 January 2003. The decisions taken at that meeting are brought to the attention of the Council in this report. A number of other matters will have been dealt with by individual Executive members since the last Council meeting. These are published on the Council's Intranet and can be inspected by the public at Easthampstead House.

**1 SCHOOL FINANCE**

1.1 A statutory consultation exercise has been undertaken with school governing bodies and other interested parties relating to possible changes to the existing LMS formula and other matters relevant to delegated budgets under the new arrangements for calculating the Education Standard Spending Assessment for schools and Local Education Authorities. Views were also requested on other areas of budget pressure and how these should be ranked.

1.2 The consultation exercise comprised the issue of questionnaires and response sheets to all governing bodies and other statutory consultees and meetings were held with Head Teachers, Chairs of Governors and finance officers. The process was reviewed by the Finance Task Group and the newly constituted Schools Forum was also involved. The Executive received a detailed report on the outcome of the consultation exercise and, as a result, a number of changes to the existing resource allocation formulae will be adopted. Furthermore no items of proposed central expenditure in the LEA block will be delegated at this time and the following items included in the schools block will be centrally managed by the LEA:

- School specific contingencies
- Licences/Subscriptions
- Provision for pupils with statements (where not already delegated)
- Specialist support: pupils with statements (where not already delegated)
- Specialist support: pupils without statements (where not already delegated)
- Promoting good practice/collaboration/integration
- Pupil Referral Units
- Behaviour support plans
- Education out of school
- Fees for pupils at independent special schools
- Administration of admissions and appeals and the Admissions Forum
- Milk provision
- Education for under 5's (except nursery classes attached to schools)
- Schools Forum
- Supply cover for maternity leave, union duties etc and recruitment and retention of staff in PRUs
- Part of funding for supporting school improvement subject to consultation with the Schools Forum

The Executive also noted the priority ranking of the budget pressures identified by schools.

## **2 SOUTH HILL PARK – ANNUAL REVENUE GRANT**

- 2.1 The Executive has approved an annual revenue grant to the South Hill Park Arts Centre for the coming year amounting to £403,360 based on the current grant plus the approved inflation increase of 1.6%. The Executive noted that the current performance by the Arts Centre had been good despite disruption from the building works which had produced excellent value for money and the Executive recorded its appreciation of the work of the Chairman of South Hill Park Arts Centre in this connection.

## **3. BEST VALUE REVIEW OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING**

- 3.1 A Best Value Review of Personnel and Training had taken place throughout 2002 with the key objectives of improving standards and quality of the service and the creation of a culture of continuous improvement. The Executive noted that the review had concluded that the vast majority of services provided by Personnel and Training were considered by users to be at least satisfactory and many were good. The Review had produced 18 clear recommendations which had been brought together as the basis for an improvement plan and that plan has now been approved by the Executive.

## **4. CORPORATE STATIONERY CONTRACT**

- 4.1 The introduction of the Agresso Financial Information System has allowed the development of e-procurement and it is proposed to introduce an e-procurement pilot on 1 April 2003 relating to the Council's stationery requirement. It would not be possible to meet this timescale using the full OJEC Procedures and the Executive has therefore agreed to utilise an existing Framework Agreement set up by Central Government for the benefit of public sector bodies generally. The pilot will enable significant savings to be achieved and the only holder of a contract under an existing framework arrangement that can meet the Council's criteria is Banner Business Supplies Ltd, the sole holder of the Office of Government Commerce contract for the provision of office stationery. In these circumstances the Executive has authorised a single tender action and has agreed that all office stationery should be obtained from Banner Business Supplies Ltd under the existing OJEC Contract for an initial period of 12 months from 1 February 2003.

## **5. LOOKING AHEAD**

- 5.1 As usual the Executive Forward Plan was published on the first of the month and is available for public inspection at Easthampstead House. Later in the month the Executive will be bringing forward its budget proposals for 2003/04 for consideration by the full Council.