

COUNCIL
26 MARCH 2003
(7.30pm – 10.00pm)

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

Apologies for absence were received from:
Councillors Ms Brown, Egan, Grayson, Sargeant and Worrall

88. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on [27 February 2003](#) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

89. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting.

90. Appointment of Chief Executive

(The Director of Corporate Services and the Borough Solicitor withdrew from the Council Chamber whilst this matter was under consideration.)

The Committee received the report of the Chief Executive Appointment Committee which had met on 22 January, 6 March and 18/19 March 2003 to deal with all aspects of the recruitment process for the Chief Executive including the interview of candidates.

The Leader of the Council moved acceptance of the Committee's recommendations and the motion was seconded by the Leader of the Minority Group. On being put to the Council, the Committee's recommendations were accepted.

RESOLVED that

- (i) Timothy Wheadon, currently Director of Corporate Services and Deputy Chief Executive of Bracknell Forest Borough Council be appointed Chief Executive with effect from 1 April 2003;
- (ii) Alexander Jack, Borough Solicitor, be appointed Monitoring Officer with effect from 1 April 2003

91. **Appointment of Director of Corporate Services**

(Notice had previously been given that the Mayor had agreed that this item should be dealt with as an urgent item of business.)

Consideration was given to a report recommending the appointment of a Committee authorised to deal with the recruitment and selection process and appointment to the vacant post of Director of Corporate Services.

RESOLVED that

- (i) a Committee of the Council be appointed with the following terms of reference: to act on behalf of the Council in relation to
 - (a) The interview arrangements for the recruitment of the Director of Corporate Services, including approval of the statement of particulars relating to the post, the assessment and agreement on the salary in accordance with the agreed Council formula, arrangements for advertising the post appropriately and making the statement of particulars available to interested persons.
 - (b) The interview and selection of candidates the Committee comprise 8 members (6:2) including at least one member of the Executive and appointed on the nomination of group leaders.
- (ii) the Committee comprise 8 Members (6:2) including at least one Member of the Executive and appointed on the nomination of Group Leaders.

92. **Mayors Announcements**

1. Charity Pancake Race

The Mayor advised the Council that the annual charity pancake race in Bracknell Town Centre had raised a total of £427.69 for the Paul Bevan Hospice. The Mayor was especially grateful to the Social Services Team who subsequently took up a collection in the Council's offices and Time Square.

2. Charity Golf Day

Members were reminded that the Mayor's charity golf day would take place on Monday 22 April.

3. Lily Hill Park

At the request of the Mayor, Councillor McCracken reported to the Council on the award of £964,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund in respect of the continuing restoration work at Lily Hill Park.

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

The Leader of the Council reported on the main activities undertaken by the Executive since the meeting held on 27 February.

The Executive had met on 11 March 2003 and had given further consideration to matters relating to the proposed post-16 centre to be established at Wick Hill under a partnership arrangement with Garth Hill College and Bracknell and Wokingham College. The Executive had now approved Heads of Terms relating to the development and future operation of the centre and the preparation of a masterplan for the site. Work on the masterplan was nearing conclusion and would be subject to a full consultation process.

The Business Plan 2003/04 taking forward the Youth Justice Plan for the coming year was in preparation and would be brought to the Council in the early summer following consultation with other stakeholders.

The Executive had approved proposals for developing a Race Equality Scheme to meet new statutory responsibilities under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and these proposals had been drawn up in consultation with the Reading Office of the Council for Racial Equality.

Following previous reports on the Comprehensive Performance Assessment undertaken by the Audit Commission and other inspectorates the Executive had approved a Draft Improvement Plan covering the period 2002/04 which had been circulated with the Council agenda and was recommended for adoption. The Leader then drew specific attention to the strengths which had been identified in the final report. The Improvement Plan submitted to the Council showed the actions which were either already underway or proposed to address the areas where scope for improvements had been identified.

Arising from the recommendations of the Best Value Review of Finance, the Executive had now adopted a policy statement covering risk management. The policy statement would be the cornerstone leading to the adoption of best practices and the development of a corporate approach to risk management across all activities.

Alongside the introduction of the Council's new financial information management system, work had been going on to develop a corporate procurement strategy and implementation plan and the Executive recommended adoption of the strategy and plan. This would result in a reduced supplier base, the exploitation of e-procurement and simplification of business processes whilst working from significantly improved market intelligence. Contract regulations had also been the subject of a review and proposed revisions were the subject of a separate report to the Council.

The Executive had also endorsed proposals for the transfer of the management of residential homes from the Berkshire Healthcare Trust to specialist independent providers.

The Executive would next meet on 10 April and would be reviewing draft Departmental Service Plans for the coming year, the action plan arising from the Inspection of Services to Older People and further development of the SmartCard project following the Select Committee Meeting to review progress.

The Council meeting on 24 April would be the final Council meeting prior to the elections and would deal specifically with the review of Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements and the proposed Planning Protocol.

At the request of the Leader, Councillor Mills then reported to the Council on the current position with regard to the Health Survey currently in progress. The 2003 Survey followed a similar survey undertaken at this time in 2000 and sought local people's views on health and well-being. The outcome would be used to inform the activities of the new Health Forum. Nearly 44,000 surveys had been issued to households and, to date, nearly 13,000 had been returned. The headline themes which had emerged so far included

- A significant number of households had used local health services including hospital facilities in the last 12 months
- Most hospital visits had been for an outpatient service
- The top 3 services identified as being most important were GP surgeries, outpatient clinics and treatment for minor injuries
- Transport to hospitals was an issue with most people using their own car
- The main barrier to people who wished to stop smoking was lack of willpower
- Significant numbers of people followed healthy eating habits
- The main barrier to taking more exercise was lack of time
- The desire for a local hospital figured in many responses

The likely cut-off date for return of the surveys was the weekend of 6 April and Councillor Mills urged those present to encourage maximum participation.

The Leader and other Executive Members then responded to questions on the reports made.

The recommendations contained within the Executive report were then put to the meeting.

RESOLVED that

- (i) The CPA Improvement Plan 2002/2004 circulated with the Council agenda be approved and adopted
- (ii) The Draft Procurement Strategy and Implementation Plan set out in the annexes to the report be adopted

94. **Review of Contract Regulations (Item 7)**

The Council received a report dealing with proposed amendments to existing contract regulations together with interim revisions proposed.

RESOLVED that the interim revisions to the Contract Regulations submitted to the meeting be adopted.

95. **Questions Submitted Under Council Procedure [Rule 10](#)**

By Councillor Adams to the Executive Member for Education

Could the Executive Member for Education please explain the Borough policy for recycling waste at each of the school sites in Bracknell?

Reply by Councillor Ward – Executive Member for Education

In replying Councillor Ward spoke about the commitment shown by schools to environmental issues generally. Councillor Ward went on to describe the Yanomamo production at Bracknell Sport and Leisure Centre involving nearly 900 children from Bracknell schools accompanied by the Youth Orchestra from the Berkshire Young Musicians Trust.

Councillor Ward then responded to a supplementary question by Councillor Adams.

By Councillor Glasson to the Executive Member for Social and Health Care Services and Housing

Regarding the Council's policy on the level of disregard of Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance applied to calculating charges for service users, can the Social Care Portfolio Holder confirm that he has abandoned his proposal to cut the disregard to 50% by 2005/06, and assure us that the level of disregard will be maintained at 80% over the whole of the next three years?

Reply by Councillor Barnard – Executive Member for Social and Health Care Services and Housing

Councillor Barnard confirmed that it was the intention of the current administration to maintain the disregard at 80% over the whole of the next 3 years. He commented that there had been an open and wide ranging debate at the Select Committee prior to the decision of the Executive.

Councillor Barnard then responded to a supplementary question by Councillor Glasson.

By Councillor Piasecki to the Leader of the Council

- a) *Could the Leader advise this Council of the income, currently confirmed, from the onward sales to other authorities, of our Smartcard technology, which we have developed at great public expense, with our partners British Telecom, and which front line services will benefit from this income?*
- b) *When will the Smartcard be the subject of a Best Value Review?*
- c) *From our consultations with the Public, regarding the Budget for 2003/4 can the Leader tell us how many residents have even the vaguest idea what the Smartcard is, what it has cost them so far, what it will cost them in the future, and which front line services reductions they are happy to accept in lieu of the Smartcard?*

Reply by Councillor Bettison – Leader of the Council

In his reply, Councillor Bettison reported that there was no additional income currently confirmed in respect of onward sales and this had been made quite clear at a recent Members SmartCard Seminar. However, there had been very recently confidential discussions at the highest level by the former Chief Executive with our partners BT Ignite Solutions regarding this potential and officers were anticipating a draft proposal from BT within the next 4 – 6 weeks, which would highlight the various mechanisms by which income should be achievable.

The Council was currently using money from the ACTVAR Project and the National SmartCard Project to support its own SmartCard. For example, between £120,000 and £200,000 ACTVAR money will supplement the SmartCard enabled Leisure Management Scheme and that would have either had to be funded more out of Bracknell Forest's own funds or focussed on only one facility if we were not able to use this external funding.

Councillor Bettison advised that the SmartCard did not form part of the Council's Best Value Review programme but the impact and value of SmartCards to the residents of this Borough would be included in the more strategic review of such e-government and service provision generally. However, following a request from the Corporate Services Select Committee a paper would be prepared for the Executive initially but would be available to the Select Committee. Councillor Bettison reminded Members that the Modernising Government White Paper of 1999 stated that one of the 10 drivers of information age government was to achieve wide scale take-up of multi-purpose SmartCards so that citizens can identify themselves, use services, safeguard their privacy and increasingly make and receive payments. Furthermore guidance issued to local authorities in the year 2000 stated the government regards employment of SmartCards including multifunction cards as a key enabler to the development of electronic commerce and recognised that government applications can act as a key driver towards critical mass.

Councillor Bettison considered that the budget consultation was transparent and the costs of the SmartCard programme were identified clearly in the Council's plans. As is normal within the Council's processes, services that had previously been approved by the Council were not identified specifically since it would be impractical to do so. The budget consultation highlighted developments being undertaken within services which were identified as pressures. All budgets were scrutinised by Select Committees. Moreover, the entire community had access to the budgets and could comment on them.

96. **Motions Submitted Under Council Procedure [Rule 11](#)**

Motion 2/2003

Motion 2/2003 was moved by Councillor McCormack and seconded by Councillor Glasson. An amendment in the terms of the resolution set out below was then moved by Councillor Barnard and duly seconded. The amendment was accepted by the mover and the seconder of the original motion and, on being put to the meeting, it was

RESOLVED that this Council notes the introduction of child tax credits as a contribution towards the Government's drive to end child poverty, and asks the Executive to consider measures:

- i.* to support in conjunction with local voluntary agencies and statutory services a benefits take up campaign drawing on the LGA's good practice guide and supporting material;
- ii.* to encourage Council employees to claim their entitlements;
- iii.* to apply the same principles to promote the launch of pension credits in Autumn 2003.

once the LGA has published its good practice guide and toolkit on 7 April and launched the initiative at its conference on 12 May 2003.

Motion 3/2003

Motion 3/2003 was moved by Councillor Beadsley and seconded by Councillor Piasecki. An amendment in the terms of the resolution set out below was then moved by Councillor McCracken and duly seconded. Following debate the amendment was put to the meeting and declared carried.

On being put to the meeting as a substantive motion, following debate the motion was declared carried and it was

RESOLVED that the Council requests that the Executive, within the next administrative term, seeks to provide, within the constraints of the Council's annual budget process, a staffed youth centre facility in South Bracknell for young people aged 13 to 19.

(For the purpose of this motion, South Bracknell is Great Hollands, Hanworth, Easthampstead, Wildridings, Crown Wood and Forest Park).

MAYOR