

**COUNCIL
3 MARCH 2004**

EXECUTIVE REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Since the Executive report to the Council meeting on 21 January 2004, the Executive has met once, on 17 February 2004.
- 1.2 The decisions have been summarised by reference to the relevant portfolio within which they fall.

2. COUNCIL STRATEGY

2.1 Budget Proposals 2004/05

- 2.1.1 The main business addressed by the Executive at this meeting was to review the budget proposals in the light of the consultation exercise which had followed the publication of the draft proposals in December.
- 2.1.2 The recommendations in respect of:
- a) Housing Revenue Account and Housing Improvement Programme 2004/05
 - b) Capital Programme 2004/05 – 2006/07
 - c) General Fund Revenue Budget 2004/05

are detailed in item 6 of this agenda.

2.2 National Smartcard Project

- 2.2.1 The National Smartcard Project is one of twenty four National Projects funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to support the development of e-Government. The project, which is due to complete at the end of March 2004, has been successfully led by Bracknell Forest Borough Council on behalf of a broad range of partner organisations
- 2.2.2 The Executive was invited to determine what role the Council should play in the next phase of the project having regard to our own progress towards e-Government and particularly our reputation in delivering service improvements through the use of smart card technology.
- 2.2.3 Having considered the implications of continuing to lead the project and noting that the benefits of doing so included:
- Continued close working with the ODPM over e-Government related issues which provides a better understanding for the authority of the direction and approach being taken by the Government;
 - Access to the learning and knowledge emanating from the National Smartcard Project, and other National Projects at an early stage;

- The ability to help shape the outcomes of the National Project and ensure that our local Smartcard schemes, either at a sub-regional level through our work with the ACTVaR partnership, or at a Borough level through our Edge Smartcard programme can benefit.

the Executive agreed that the Council should do so subject to the following conditions being met:

- That the role of lead authority is limited to acting as programme management for the National Smartcard Project;
- That the funding bid to the ODPM from the 1 April 2004 includes sufficient resources to ensure that the authority is fully reimbursed for project management costs, equipment, other staff resources and officer time. On this basis the lead authority role is 'cost neutral';
- That the Council is satisfied that it can secure the appropriate support of the other local authorities and other agencies who are required to ensure that the next phase of the National Smartcard Project is a success. This is particularly important in the support and future development of some of the software products which have been produced. Without appropriate arrangements for the support and management of these products, of which further discussions are taking place with the ODPM, the risks of ensuring a success of the project are increased;
- That a clear timeframe and set of deliverables are agreed for the next phase of the project together with relevant activity to ensure a smooth handover of the project to an appropriate vehicle for longer term management.

3 EDUCATION

3.1 Legal Agreement for Garth Hill College and Bracknell and Wokingham College Post 16 Centre

- 3.1.1 The Executive also agreed to authorise the signing of a legal agreement for establishing a post-16 centre at Wick Hill. Bracknell and Wokingham College and Garth Hill College (the School) will jointly manage this, though under the governance of Bracknell and Wokingham College. The legal agreement needs to be signed by each of the parties, the Council, the School Governing Body and the College Corporation to secure the development and operation of the post 16 centre and to further develop the plans for the future of the site in accordance with the agreed Masterplan.
- 3.1.2 The proposed changes are needed both to improve the facilities for students and to respond to changes in the post-16 curriculum and the opportunity for better collaboration.

4 SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND HOUSING

4.1 Approval to Dispose of Land at Freeborn Way

- 4.1.1 The Executive also agreed to dispose of a parcel of land off Freeborn Way to Warden Housing Association to enable them to develop 18 units of affordable housing subject to planning permission. As the land had previously been occupied by garage blocks, it was agreed that a proportion of the capital receipt should be allocated to the Residential Car Parking Solutions budget.

5 LOOKING AHEAD

- 5.1 The next Forward Plan will be published on 1 April 2004 and will be available for public inspection at Easthampstead House in the usual way and is also regularly updated online at www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk, where you can also find full details on decisions taken by individual portfolio holders.