

**COUNCIL  
23 JUNE 2004**

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**EXECUTIVE REPORT**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Since the Executive report to the Council meeting on 28 April 2004, the Executive has met twice, on 18 May and 15 June 2004.
- 1.2 The decisions taken on 18 May have been summarised by reference to the relevant portfolio within which they fall in this report. A supplementary report detailing decisions taken on 15 June 2004 will be issued as soon as possible.

**2. COUNCIL STRATEGY**

**2.1 Medium Term Objectives & Service Plan Key Actions 2004-05**

- 2.1.1 The Executive approved the key actions, extracted from the 2004/05 departmental service plans, mapped against the Council's Medium Term Objectives. An exercise had been carried out to ensure that departmental service plan actions had been developed to contribute towards delivering the Council's key medium term objectives.
- 2.1.2 The Executive noted that this was the first time such a mapping exercise had been conducted and represented a strengthening of the Council's performance management arrangement to ensure that resources were being allocated to meeting the Council's medium term objectives.

**2.2 Corporate Community Cohesion Strategy 2004/05 – 2007/08**

- 2.2.1 The Executive approved the Council's corporate Community Cohesion Strategy which had been amended to reflect issues raised during a public consultation exercise.
- 2.2.2 The Executive noted that the approval of the Strategy represented an important milestone in the process for delivering a key element of the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Improvement Plan.
- 2.2.3 The next steps are focused on delivering the Implementation Plan and include:
- Adopting the final version of the Strategy and promoting it through a comprehensive communications plan.
  - Progressing a partnership approach to the Strategy through the Local Strategic Partnership.
  - Stretching community cohesion performance through the second Local Public Service Agreement.
  - Ensuring the Strategy informs the priorities within the Council's emerging Joint Public Involvement Strategy and Community Development Strategy.

- Rolling out the community cohesion impact assessments throughout the Council. If the Council is to be successful at mainstreaming community cohesion it is important to assess whether our current strategies, structure, policies or processes are negatively impacting on our ability to achieve the community cohesion strategy. The requirement to carry out impact assessment is also a key part of the Council's statutory duty under the Race Relations Amendment Act. In order to ensure a thorough but proportionate approach to this process a number of workshops are being held for staff, Members, and partners. The workshops will be facilitated by Lord Ouseley former Chairman of the Commission for Race Equality
- Reviewing the targets set for the Council's basket of community cohesion indicators to identify priority areas in which the Council could seek to stretch performance.

### **3. CORPORATE SERVICES & RESOURCES**

#### **3.1 ICT Strategy And Three-Year Plan April 2004 – March 2007**

- 3.1.1 The Executive approved an update of the Council's ICT Strategy and three year plan to cover the period to March 2007. The revised strategy reflects the many recent and potential e-government initiatives to enhance electronic service delivery by more effective use of ICT.
- 3.1.2 The ICT Plan will set the framework for all investment in ICT over the next three years. As such, it is one of the Council's most important strategic documents. It has been drafted to reflect the objective of using Information and Communications Technology to help develop the Council's community leadership role, improve and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and to contribute to the achievement of each department's medium term policy objectives that are included in their service plans.
- 3.1.3 The proposals contained within the plan represent an ambitious work programme.

### **4. EDUCATION**

#### **4.1 Development Plan For Adult Learning 2004-7 )Policy Framework)**

- 4.1.1 The Executive approved the Development Plan for Adult Learning 2004-7 prior to submission to Council. The Plan will form the basis for receiving grant funding, from the Learning and Skills Council, for Adult and Community Learning.
- 4.1.2 The funding of the planning, provision, management and quality assurance of Adult and Community Learning in Bracknell Forest is by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) under a contract secured by the approval of a three year Development Plan for Adult Learning, together with a costed action plan for 2004-05.
- 4.1.3 The Executive noted that the Plan had been developed with the Berkshire Learning and Skills Council to agree indicative learner volumes and delivery costs as a basis for grant, although further refinement was likely prior to the commencement of the grant year.

4.1.4 This Plan builds upon the success of the current year's Adult Learning Plan; the vision and strategic direction of the Council was recognised by the Adult Learning Inspectorate in their Report following inspection in November 2002. This Plan is central to and integral with the work of the Bracknell Forest Lifelong Learning Partnership.

4.1.5 Accordingly, the Council is invited to approve the Plan/

## **5 ENVIRONMENT**

### **5.1 Western Road Planning Brief**

5.1.1 The Executive approved a proposal to produce a Western Road Planning Brief and authorised the Executive member for Planning and Transportation to agree the final version of the draft brief for public consultation. Details of the proposed consultation exercise were also submitted to and approved by the Executive.

5.1.2 The Brief sets out further planning guidance for the Western Industrial area centred along the Western Road. This brief is a response to the changing character of the area and the various development pressures for housing and retail development in this employment area. It will provide an appropriate planning framework to act as a catalyst for regeneration and enhancement of the area. Failure to pursue the Brief would mean the Borough Council would have less influence over future development in the area. By going through the public consultation exercise, the Council would be able to adopt the Brief as Supplementary Planning Guidance which would carry more weight and make it more likely that it would lead to the achievement of its stated objectives.

### **5.2 Amen Corner Local Plan Alteration**

5.2.1 The Executive approved a way forward for addressing the gap in the Council's planning policies in relation to Amen Corner, by approving a new consultation exercise on an alteration to the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan.

5.2.2 The proposals approved fell some way short of those developed for the consultation phase of the Planning Framework and proposed alteration to the Local Plan which envisaged a significant level of development at Amen Corner to help secure real environmental and transport improvements for the area. While it was clear that landowners and local residents most directly affected were generally supportive of the approach taken in the Planning Framework and proposed alteration, some major policy objections had been raised.

5.2.3 Given these significant policy objections and the need to establish a policy for the area, only a modest change in the settlement boundary is now proposed as a formal alteration to the Local Plan.

5.2.4 The Executive accepted that this revised course of action needed to be the subject of further consultation, particularly to try and identify ways of achieving the original objective. If this is not possible, a more detailed review of the entire area should be undertaken under the Local Development Framework as it emerges later in the year. In addition, the need for enforcement action to address unauthorised uses in the area was endorsed.

## **6 SOCIAL SERVICES & HOUSING**

### **6.1 Best Value Review Of Services To Vulnerable Children**

- 6.1.1 The Executive received and approved the report arising from the Best Value Review of Services to Vulnerable Children and endorsed the Improvement Plan arising there from.
- 6.1.2 The Executive noted that the Best Value Review had been a thematic cross-cutting review which had sought to consider the overall performance, efficiency and effectiveness of the wide range of services that impact on and support vulnerable children, rather than the specific performance of individual service provision.
- 6.1.3 The purpose of the review had been to review and evaluate the services available to 'vulnerable' children and their families within the Borough, to explore what action, if any, is needed to reduce the number of children placed out of the area by Education, Social Services and Health and to consider how services could be improved by increased collaboration between service providers.

## **7. LOOKING AHEAD**

- 7.1 The next Forward Plan will be published on 1 July 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](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk), where you can also find full details on decisions taken by individual portfolio holders.