

**COUNCIL  
27 APRIL 2005**

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**EXECUTIVE REPORT**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Since the Executive report to the Council meeting on 2 March 2005, the Executive has met twice on 15 March 2005 and 19 April 2005. This report covers the main decisions made at both meetings, summarised by reference to the relevant portfolio within which they fall.

**2. COUNCIL STRATEGY**

**2.1 Establishment of a Children's Services Department**

- 2.1.1 At its meeting on 15 February, the Executive received a report on the CPA Improvement process which recommended the establishment of a single new department to include all aspects of children's services and the appointment of a Director of Children's Services with effect from 1 May 2005. Since then further work, including a number of staff briefing workshops, has been undertaken to develop the proposals.
- 2.1.2 The reasons for bringing forward the creation of a Children's Services Department were threefold. Government guidance following the passage of the Children Act is encouraging authorities to move quickly. The requirement to have a new style Children and Young People's Plan in being by 1 April 2006 adds emphasis and will be easier to achieve with early organisational change. At the same time there are local issues of capacity. Bringing forward the creation of the new children's department will give greater focus to the integration work and, importantly, enable the other new department, covering housing, adult social services and community services to concentrate on the major tasks that it faces over the coming two years. The main criteria for success of the change programme will be the creation of two new viable departments with effective support structures leading to measurable improvements in outcomes for children and other clients.
- 2.1.3 The Executive on 19 April agreed the name for the new department, Department of Education, Children's Services and Libraries, its structure and the arrangements for the appointment of the new director.
- 2.1.4 From 1 May the new department will bring together three branches of the Education and Libraries Department with one from Social Services and Housing, with the existing four Assistant Directors reporting to the new Director of Education, Children's Services and Libraries. No other structural changes within the various branches are proposed before 1 May. Subsequent changes, in phases 2 and 3, including the reconfiguration of support services are likely to be accommodated within these four branches. The proposed new structure is as follows:

**Old name**

**New name**

Children and Families (SSH)

Children and Families: Social Care

Children, Young People and Families (Ed&L)	Children and Families: Access and Inclusion
Learning, Achievement and Libraries (Ed&L)	unchanged
Strategy, Planning and Resources (Ed&L)	Strategy, Support and Resources

2.1.6 The Appointment Committee will meet on 25 April to complete the interview and selection process for the new Director.

## **2.2 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA): Final Draft Improvement Plan 2005/6-2006/7**

2.2.1 The Council's draft CPA Improvement Plan was considered by the Executive on 15 February 2005 and approved as a basis for consultation. This has now been amended to focus exclusively on the key improvement priorities identified in last year's CPA. The Audit Commission supports this approach, believing that it mirrors the clear focus critical to the successful implementation of the Council's previous CPA Improvement Plan.

2.2.2 As the key CPA improvement priorities are also reflected in the Service Plans, the CPA Improvement Plan acts as a supplement to these by providing a focus through which progress against the CPA priorities can be readily identified by a range of audiences. The plan is available on BfNet.

## **2.3 Service Plans 2005/06**

2.3.1 The Executive has reviewed progress against the Council's 98 Action Points agreed in 2003 for the period to April 2007 and endorsed the key objectives contained in departmental service plans for the coming year.

2.3.2 Service Plans are an important element in the Council's performance management system. They support the preparation of the statutory annual Corporate Plan (previously the Best Value Performance Plan) and provide the basis for regular performance monitoring through quarterly operations reports. Individual service plans set out each department's key objectives for the year in the context of the Council's Medium Term Objectives and detailed actions that will be undertaken to achieve them.

2.3.3 The Executive noted that 23 of the 98 Action Points agreed in 2003 were expected to have been fully achieved by 31 March 2005, and that substantial progress was being made against most others.

2.3.4 Progress against the objectives is reported throughout the year in each department's quarterly operations reports and any significant issues will be highlighted in the Corporate Performance Overview Report.

## **2.4 Corporate Performance Overview Report**

2.4.1 The Executive received the latest Corporate Performance Overview Report covering the period October-December 2004 and endorsed the actions being taken in areas of emerging concern.

2.4.2 Overall the quarter saw continued good performance across the Council's services, with all major targets being broadly met.

### **3 PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION**

#### **3.1 South East Plan - Draft For Public Consultation**

3.1.1 The Executive has approved the representations to be made on behalf of the Council on the South East Plan. These have been submitted to the South East England Regional Assembly;

3.1.2 Under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the emerging Development Plan will comprise:

1. The Regional Spatial Strategy, i.e. The South East Plan;
2. The Bracknell Forest Borough Development Plan Documents (part of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Development Framework);
3. The Berkshire Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents

3.1.3 Under new planning legislation the Development Plan has been reinforced as a material consideration in determining planning applications. Therefore it is important to have an up-to-date development plan if reasoned, robust and defensible planning determinations are to be made.

3.1.4 All Development Plan Documents (i.e. documents we will produce in the Local Development Framework) will need to demonstrate their conformity with the South East Plan and therefore it is important that any concerns or other representations from Bracknell Forest Borough are submitted as part of the consultation process.

3.1.5 Copies of the Council's response are available from the Director of Environment & Leisure.

#### **3.2 Bracknell Forest Borough Local Development Framework - Statement Of Community Involvement**

3.2.1 One of the drivers behind the reform of the planning system is the desire to change the way people think and feel about planning. The Government hopes that this can be achieved in part by greater community involvement in planning decisions, with the local community able to contribute to shaping the places where they live, work and play, at a time when they can make a real difference.

3.2.2 To help achieve this, a statutory requirement to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This Statement sets out who will be consulted, how and when they can get involved, and the resources for carrying out that consultation, in relation to both Local Development Documents (LDDs) and planning applications.

3.2.3 The draft SCI sets the context for community involvement in planning, and provides a vision for achieving this involvement, supported by a series of objectives. It is a general statement that suggests how to identify **who** should be involved, sets out **when** people can be involved and proposes **how** they might partake in the process. In particular, it clarifies the statutory minimum requirements for consultation, and also explains how the Borough Council may go beyond this to secure genuine community involvement in planning.

3.2.4 The Executive has approved the Bracknell Forest Borough Statement of Community Involvement for consultation. The consultation is underway and comments received will be used to inform the version of the SCI that will be submitted to the Secretary of State in October 2005.

3.2.5 A copy of the document can be obtained from the Director of Environment & Leisure.

#### **4 PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION/PUBLIC & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

##### **4.1 Local Transport Plan Capital Works Programmes 2005-2006**

4.1.1 The Executive has approved the main Local Transport Plan (LTP) capital works programmes for the financial year 2005–2006, in line with the budget approved by the Council and the LTP objectives.

4.1.2 The Local Transport Settlement for 2005/06 is £2.479 million and comprises:

Maintenance	£0.709 million
Integrated Transport	£1.000 million
Supplementary Maintenance	£0.770 million

4.1.3 In addition to the LTP allocation the Council has chosen to top up the LTP funding with a further £750,000 and £130,000 for refurbishment of roads, footways and in terms of dealing with our new town inheritance. A further 750,000 of LTP related Section 106 funding is also proposed.

4.1.4 Having considered the current priorities, the following schemes are the Council's priorities in 2005/06.

<b><u>Supplementary Maintenance</u></b>  The A321 High Street, Sandhurst was put forward and has been accepted for funding in the LTP allocation.	£770,000
<b><u>Maintenance</u></b>  A programme of thin surfacing/surface treatment is now being finalised at £330,000.  Mill Lane footbridge is a priority for strengthening works £150,000  Other rolling programmes as a result of inspections and refurbishments £229,000.	£709,000

**Integrated Transport** £1,000,000

4.1.5 In line with the policies and priorities set out in the Local Transport Plan, the planned areas for investment are:

	<b>LTP</b>	<b>Section 106</b>
Highway Capacity and Road space allocation	40	115
Demand Management and Travel Choice	25	20
Parking	10	100
Traffic Management	150	70
Walking and Cycling	200	285
Bus and rail travel	150	160
Access issues	30	0
Travel to School	170	0
Freight	25	0
Safety	200	0
	<b>1000</b>	<b>750</b>

- 4.1.6 Additional investment to address the new town inheritance in a coordinated and prioritised manner suggest that the focus should be on the Harmans Water Road and adjoining Bullbrook Estate. The available resource of £880,000 will be allocated to this area wide initiative.

## **5 SOCIAL SERVICES & HOUSING**

### **5.1 Supporting People Five Year Strategy**

- 5.1.1 The Executive has approved the Supporting People Five Year Strategy which the Council was required to submit to the ODPM. The Strategy was formally approved by the Health & Social Care Partnership Board, acting as the Commissioning Body, at its meeting on 23 February 2005. The Strategy also required formal approval by the Council's Executive in its role as the Administering Authority and by the Boards of the Bracknell Forest PCT and Thames Valley Probation Service as the two key partners within the programme.

- 5.1.2 The Strategy has been developed in consultation with partners, providers and users over a period of time. A formal period of consultation also took place including two consultation events. The Strategy takes into account the comments received during the formal consultation period and has been developed in line with ODPM guidance.

- 5.1.3 A copy of the Strategy is available from the Director of Social Services & Housing.

### **5.2 Safer Communities Strategy 2005-08**

- 5.2.1 The Executive has approved the Safer Communities Strategy 2005–08. The document has been developed in consultation with the Bracknell Forest Safer Communities Strategic Partnership.

- 5.2.2 Section 5 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as amended by the Police Reform Act 2002 places a joint duty on both local authorities and police to work together to formulate a 3-year Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy. Other statutory agencies are Primary Care Trusts, Police Authorities and Fire Authorities.

- 5.2.3 The Act requires a crime and drug audit to inform the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy which must be consulted upon with the community. The strategy must be made available to the public and be reviewed tri-annually. It also allows for the

Home Secretary to call for a report on the work being undertaken locally. In addition, it requires all local authorities, police and other responsible authorities to consider crime and disorder while exercising all their duties.

5.2.4 The Strategy identifies the following priorities:

- 1 Reducing Crime
- 2 Drugs and Alcohol
- 3 Perceptions and Anti-Social Behaviour
- 4 Young People

## **6 CORPORATE SERVICES & RESOURCES**

### **6.1 Revised Procurement Strategy and Implementation Plan**

6.1.1 The Executive has approved an updated Procurement Strategy and Implementation Plan

6.1.2 Since the strategy was approved on 11 March 2003, a number of changes have taken place:

- several aspects of the Implementation Plan have been achieved, including the letting of the corporate contract for ICT equipment;
- the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has published a National Strategy for Local Government Procurement (October 2003) and announced the establishment of regional centres of procurement excellence.
- The corporate procurement team has been strengthened and has been set a revenue cashable savings target of £342,000 by 2007-8.

6.1.3 The main changes are that:

- The Leader of the Council has been designated Procurement Champion.
- The Strategy has been updated to reflect statutory responsibilities set out in the Race Relations Act and Disabilities Discrimination Act.

## **7 LOOKING AHEAD**

7.1 The next Forward Plan will be published on 1 May 2005 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.