

**EDUCATION TRANSITION COMMITTEE  
22 JANUARY 1998**

Present: Councillor Ward (Chairman), Councillors Barnard, Beadsley,  
Mrs Doyle, Fawcett, Good, Harrison, Mrs Hayes, Mrs Hirst,  
Mills, Mrs Shillcock, Thompson, Wheaton and Worrall

Also Present: County Councillor Dr L Murray; Mr G Anderson, Ms L Wales, Mr J Haig

An apology for absence was received from:  
Councillor Taylor

468. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 December 1997 were approved as a correct record.

469. **Education Quality Assurance Sub Committee**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Education Quality Assurance Sub Committee held on 14 January 1998 as set out in Appendix A hereto be received and the recommendations in Minute 12 (The Standards Fund) be adopted.

470. **Education Executive Sub Committee**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Sub Committee held on 14 January 1998 as set out in Appendix B hereto be adopted.

471. **Progress Report on Preparation for Unitary Status (Item 1)**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Education outlining progress made on a number of key areas since the last meeting of the Committee. A table detailing the latest recruitment situation in the Department was tabled.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

472. **Education Service Plan (Item 2)**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Education detailing the draft Education Service Plan. The Director reminded the Committee that it had already endorsed paragraphs A to E inclusive of the draft Service Plan at a previous meeting. This version of the report added targets for 1998/99 and for 2002. The Director informed the Committee that the Government was likely to require all LEAs to produce Education Development Plans with effect from March 1999. It was also noted that the report was to form the basis of consultation with schools during the remainder of the spring term. A further report to finalise the document would be brought forward to a future meeting of the Committee. Members of the Committee suggested the following additions to the document:-

- that the work of Bracknell Forest schools should be celebrated

- that the work of the Diocesan Councils should be mentioned
- that statistics about pre school special needs support should be included

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that the Director of Education be requested to consult schools on the detail of the Education Development Plan during the spring term 1998;
- (ii) that service and financial planning proceeds on the basis of the draft plan; and
- (iii) that a report be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee following the schools' consultation.

**473. Revenue Budget 1998/99 (Item 3)**

The Committee received a report jointly from the Director of Education and Director of Corporate Services detailing a draft budget for Education for the financial year 1998/99. The Education Transition Committee's proposals would be put forward to the Strategy and Policy Committee at its budget meeting to be held on 11 February 1998. The Director of Education informed the Committee that the document was based on the Government's provisional settlement from December 1997 together with the budget disaggregation from Berkshire County Council and various adjustments. Appendix D highlighted possible saving totalling £112,000 and it was likely that all of these reductions would need to be implemented. Concerns were expressed about the effect of the reduction in the discretionary awards budget and it was noted that this would not affect commitments to fund continuing students whose awards had been approved by Berkshire County Council. Increasingly, the LEA was having to fund occupational therapy for pupils with special needs as local Health Authorities were reducing their budgetary provision for this.

The Borough Council was not spending up to SSA this year however the expenditure was greater than the disaggregated figure from Berkshire County Council and there was some allowance for growth and inflation.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that the draft base budget as shown in paragraph 4.4.3 of the Directors' report totalling £35,737,000 be approved and recommended to the Strategy and Policy Committee in considering the Council's budget for 1998/99;
- (ii) that an allowance for inflation to the running expenses budget identified in Appendix B to the report submitted be recommended; and
- (iii) that the tables detailing potential service development/pressures and economies identified in Appendices C and D of the report submitted respectively be approved.

**474. Capital Programme 1998-2001 (Item 4)**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Education setting out a proposed capital programme for the Education Service area. A further appraisal of the building condition of the Borough's schools was being planned. Since the Borough Council was debt free, any capital loan approvals received would not actually be taken up. It was also likely

that the Government would require all LEAs to produce formal asset management plans in the format similar to the ones set out in the report in due course. It was noted that the funding for voluntary aided school minor works was on a 85:15% split, the larger amount being met by the Borough Council.

Recommendations 1 to 6 inclusive were moved and an amendment was proposed to recommendation 3 to the effect that the feasibility work on premises on the adaptation of premises for a secondary Pupil Referral Unit be referred back to the Education Transition Working Group for further consideration.

In debating the amendment, the Committee noted that the College Hall building had been identified as a possible site. College Hall was currently vested to the Social Services Transition and Housing Committee and was at present not being used. However, negotiations had been started with local Housing Associations with experience in dealing with young homeless persons for the future running of this establishment. There were concerns that the building was in an isolated location and would not be well suited to catering for the diverse needs of secondary aged pupils likely to attend the unit.

In a vote, the amendment was defeated.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) the Budget Sub Committee give further consideration to the draft capital programme and that it report back to the next meeting of the Committee;
- (ii) the inclusion of funding for schemes which were already committed and the contribution to the aided school project at Ranelagh School agreed by the DfEE for 1998 be agreed;
- (iii) feasibility work on the adaptation of premises for a secondary Pupil Referral Unit be carried out;
- (iv) the inclusion of funding for school security measures and ICT facilities which are matched by standards fund grant be approved;
- (v) feasibility work commencing on schemes to the value of £500,000 in the Borough's schools be carried out.

**RECOMMENDED** to Strategy and Policy Committee that resolutions (i) to (v) above be approved as matters of urgency.

475. **Early Years Development Plan (Item 5)**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Education setting out a final draft of the Borough Council's Early Years Development Plan which had to be submitted to the Secretary of State by 2 February 1998. The Early Years Forum had met on four occasions to advise on producing the plan. Although the Director of Education was satisfied with the quality of the submission, it had had to be produced under considerable time pressure and the opportunity to revisit it with the help of the Early Years Forum would be taken.

Members received further updated appendices to the plan tabled at the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that subject to final adjustment by the Director of Education in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee that the Early Years Development Plan set out in the Appendix to the report be approved for submission to the Secretary of State.

476. **Discretionary Awards Policy (Item 6)**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Education detailing a discretionary awards policy for major and minor awards. The Director of Education informed the Committee that the policy set out in the report was largely based on Berkshire County Council's existing policy. There was still discussion about the future administration of both mandatory and discretionary awards as the Government had expressed concern about unevenness of provision across different LEAs in the Country.

The Director of Education also reported that the Borough Council had approximately 60 to 70,000 computer files to be received when the Berkshire County Council system was disaggregated.

**RESOLVED** that the policy for discretionary awards as set out in appendix to the report be approved.

477. **Home to School Transport Policy (Item 7)**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Education setting out a draft policy for home to school transport. The Director of Education informed the Committee that parents had already begun to apply for school places on the basis of the existing Berkshire County Council policy. Accordingly, the draft policy was closely based on existing Berkshire practices which were themselves very close to the minimum legal requirements in this area. The two main discretionary areas were post 16 transport and denominational transport.

**RESOLVED** that the policy outlined in the Appendices to the report submitted be approved and adopted.

478. **Appeals Sub Committee (Item 8)**

The Committee received a report from the Borough Administrator setting out proposals for the future administration of awards cases and appeals and appeals for home to school transport. The Borough Administrator informed the Committee that the proposal was for the nine member Awards Sub Committee to be split into specialist panels for student awards cases and appeals and for home to school transport, with effect from 1 April 1998.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that with effect from 1 April 1998 that the Appeals Sub Committee be reformed as the Transport, Awards and Appeals Sub Committee; and
- (ii) that the Sub Committee be divided into two specialist panels responsible for determining student award cases and home to school transport appeals as set out in the report.

479. **Early Retirement Arrangements for Teachers (Item 9)**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Education setting out proposals to consult teachers' professional associations about establishing clear criteria for early retirement of teachers. The Council's proposals would be outlined in the consultation document, however the purpose of the exercise was to define more closely circumstances in which early retirement would be granted and to avoid cross-overs with ill-health, redundancy and disciplinary situations. The Director of Education explained the need for this review owing to revisions to funding introduced on 1 September 1997. A percentage of the lump sum and annual pension making up the cost of allowing a teacher aged 50 to 60 years to take early retirement will become the responsibility of the Local Education Authority, which had previously been borne by the Teachers' Pension Scheme. Individual schools would continue to be able to fund early retirement granted on a local basis.

On a point of personal explanation, the Chairman, Councillor Ward, stated that his departure from the teaching profession in July 1997 had not been an early retirement in any sense being discussed by the report.

**RESOLVED** that the Director of Education consult further with schools, Governing Bodies and Teachers' Professional Associations on the contents of the draft policy and bring back a final report to the March meeting of the Committee.

480. **Consultation with the Trade Unions (Item 10)**

The Committee received a joint report from the Director of Education and Borough Personnel Manager outlining proposals for formal employment consultation mechanisms for teaching staff. The report described the two options available, which were either to add teacher unions to the existing Local Joint Council or to establish a separate Teachers' Consultative Committee in addition to the Local Joint Committee. Although the diagram set out in Appendix A showed two discrete systems, it was emphasised that Personnel Sub Committee would not be relinquishing control of teachers as Borough Council employees. The Director of Education felt that it was in the interests of running an efficient authority to have a well informed consultation process with Teacher Associations. The report was also being considered by the Personnel Sub Committee at its meeting on 29 January 1998.

**RESOLVED** that the proposals outlined in the report be accepted as the basis for further discussion and negotiation:-

- (i) that a separate consultative forum for teaching unions be established on the basis of Appendix A to the report;
- (ii) that a facilities agreement set out in Appendix C be agreed, subject to detailed negotiations with Trade Union representatives;
- (iii) that the budget for funding Trade Union activities be agreed
- (iv) that the Borough Personnel Manager and appropriate Directors discuss with Trade Union representatives detailed constitutions to cover the range of activities of the consultative groups; and
- (v) addendum to minutes from Council: 26 February : *"in order to ensure consistency on personnel policy matters affecting all employees of the Council, the Borough Personnel Manager attend both teachers' and non-teachers' consultative committees and that the minutes of the Teachers Consultative Committee be reported to the Personnel sub-Committee"*

481. **Budget Carry Forwards 1997/98 (Item 11)**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Education outlining arrangements to permit schools an end of year carry forward on their delegated budgets under the local management of schools scheme of delegations.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) automatic carry forward on the devolved budget for Language and Literacy Centres and Adjustment Centres which are managed by schools be agreed;
- (ii) automatic carry forward for capital grants to schools be agreed; and
- (iii) Reading Borough Council as the designated authority be approached to ensure carry forwards on these headings are transferred to Bracknell Forest Borough Council in 1998/99.

482. **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

**RESOLVED** that pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- (1) Information relating to an individual employee (Item 12)

483. **Early Retirement at Edgbarrow School (Item 12)**

The Committee received a report containing exempt information from the Director of Education seeking authority for the early retirement of a member of the teaching staff at Edgbarrow School.

**RESOLVED** that the proposed early retirement set out in the report be agreed.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and concluded at 10.40pm.

**CHAIRMAN**