

**STRATEGY AND POLICY COMMITTEE
15 OCTOBER 1997**

Present: Councillors Adams, Angell, Mrs Ballin, Bayle, Birch,
Good, Jones, Mrs Keene, McCormack, Mills, North,
Sargeant, Wade, Ward and Wheaton

An Apology for Absence was received from:
Councillor Bettison

THE VICE CHAIRMAN, COUNCILLOR BIRCH, IN THE CHAIR

328 Corporate Management Team

On behalf of the Committee, Councillor Birch extended a welcome to all the newly appointed Directors and to the Head of Policy who were attending their first meeting of the Strategy and Policy Committee.

329 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 13 May, 20 May, 25 June and 16 July 1997 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

330 Urgent Action Taken Under Delegated Powers

The Committee noted urgent action taken under delegated powers in respect of the following matters:

- (i) Gas Supply Contract
- (ii) Electricity Supply Contract

331 Unitary Structures Sub Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Unitary Structures Sub Committee held on 28 August and 2 October 1997, as set out in Appendices A and B hereto, be received and noted.

332 Audit, Performance and Scrutiny Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Performance and Scrutiny Committee held on 10 September 1997, as set out in Appendix C hereto, be received and noted and that the recommendation of Minute 11 be adopted.

333 Strategy and Policy Executive Sub Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Strategy and Policy Executive Sub Committee held on 24 September 1997, as set in Appendix D hereto, be received and noted.

334 **Finance and Property Sub Committee**

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Property Sub Committee held on 7 October 1997. In connection with minute 14(ii) (Capital Grants to Town and Parish Councils) consideration was given to a report by the Director of Planning and Transportation enclosing further information received from Winkfield Parish Council, Crowthorne Parish Council and Warfield Parish Council in support of requests made for financial assistance towards capital projects submitted by those Councils.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the minutes of the meeting of Finance and Property Sub Committee held on 7 October 1997, as set out in Appendix E hereto, be received and noted;
- (ii) the projects submitted by Winkfield Parish Council, Crowthorne Parish Council and Warfield Parish Council for financial assistance from the Council's programme of Capital Grants to Town and Parish Councils be approved as now submitted and that grants be made as follows:-

Winkfield Parish Council - Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme	£22,550
Crowthorne Parish Council - Playground Equipment and Safety Surfacing at Morgan Recreation Ground	£10,021
Warfield Parish Council - Extension of Scheme for Hamlet and Parish Signs	£4,642

335 **Personnel Sub Committee**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Sub Committee held on 13 October 1997 be received and that the recommendation at Minute be adopted.

336 **Economic Development Strategy 1997/98 (Item 1)**

The Director of Planning and Transportation reported on the outcome of consultations on the draft Economic Development Strategy adopted by the former Policy and Resources Committee on 11 February 1997 (Minute 822) and on the modifications which had been made following such consultation. The revised strategy document was submitted to the Committee and discussed.

RESOLVED that the Economic Development Strategy for 1997/98 for the Borough of Bracknell Forest be adopted as submitted.

337 **Voluntary Sector Issues Focus Group. (Item 2)**

The Committee received the report of the Focus Group on Voluntary Sector Issues arising from the meeting held on 25 September 1997 in relation to voluntary sector grant aid matters.

RESOLVED that the Committee support the recommendations of the Focus Group as follows:

- (i) to assist efficient budget management for 1998/99, the Grants awarded in relation to annual revenue grants and miscellaneous Policy & Resources or Finance and Property Sub Committee grants be managed under a budget heading of "Annual Revenue Grants". This budget (currently in the sum of £301,495) to be managed by an Officer to be determined by the Chief Executive, with recommendations for 1998/99 to be reported to the Finance & Property Sub Committee on 27 January 1998;
- (ii) to assist efficient budget management, the Grants awarded under the heading of "Economic Development" be managed by the Borough's Economic Development Officer under a budget heading of "Economic Development Grants" with recommendations on individual grants made to the appropriate Committee;
- (iii) all records of grants made under the Community and Environmental Improvement Scheme, Leisure Capital Grants, and Sports and Arts Grants for Young People Schemes be recorded centrally as well as departmentally. This would help reduce the possibility of "double funding" organisations from various departments. A central information system (as reported) will help facilitate a co-ordinated grant process and the monitoring of grants given;
- (iv) Voluntary organisations and their funding be disaggregated to departments for the financial year 1999/2000 and a review of funding to voluntary organisations be undertaken by each department for awards to be made in 1999/2000;
- (v) a single contact point to administer grant maintained applications be established and to determine the location of the contact point at the appropriate time.
- (vi) a post of Borough Grants Officer be established to co-ordinate the grants processes in the unitary authority. The postholder will work with voluntary organisations on seeking additional funding sources eg. lottery applications, as a means of leveraging additional resources into the Borough.
- (vii) a central information system for grants be established to be administered by the Borough Grants Officer and used as a central resource for the authority.
- (viii) each unitary department identify an appropriate Grants Officer(s) who would liaise with organisations receiving grant aid. That officer would conduct the necessary monitoring and evaluation of grants and establish service agreements with organisations receiving grants;
- (ix) a set of service standards for grant aid be adopted to ensure a common application process is implemented;
- (x) for an initial period of one year, an inter-departmental Grants Officers Group be established and meet quarterly to make recommendations on applications received;
- (xi) a common application form be used by all departments as the basis of determining grant applications;
- (xii) the Borough Community Development Officer produce a guide to grant aid for distribution to grant applicants;

- (xiii) approval be given with the details of the "A", "B", "C", and "F" lists and the administrative arrangements detailed in the report;
- (xiv) a review of "B" list of organisations be undertaken in 1999/2000 by the Borough Grants Officer, or an officer nominated by the Chief Executive;
- (xv) Members adopt a two year transitional arrangement for Bracknell Forest County funded organisations, subject to a review of future funding in the year 1999/2000. Funding to remain at the 1997/98 County Council level, subject to inflationary increases as appropriate;
- (xvi) the transitional scheme grants (detailed in report no. 6) be disaggregated as recommended to Borough departments and their nominated departmental "Grants" officer(s) conduct an appropriate review of all organisations named in the report prior to the end of the two year funding period;
- (xvii) pending an evaluation of the Berkshire wide scheme used for service level agreements, approval be given to the adoption of a two year service level agreement for Bracknell Council for Voluntary Service and Bracknell Citizens Advice Bureau; and
- (xviii) the following areas be examined prior to further consideration at future meetings of the Focus Group:
 - (a) allocations of the six grant categories and budgets;
 - (b) responsibility for the community grants scheme;
 - (c) terms of reference for the Voluntary Grants Panel;
 - (d) any amendments to the Community Grants Schemes;
 - (e) the grants criteria;
 - (f) grants monitoring and evaluation; and
 - (g) notice of withdrawal or reduction of grants.

338 **U.K. & Ireland Corporate Games 1998 - Strategic Issues. (Item 3)**

The Chief Executive referred to the Council's earlier decision to enter into an agreement to host the 1998 U.K. & Ireland Corporate Games which would be held in various locations across the Borough over the period 12-14 June 1998. The Chief Executive submitted a report outlining financial and other potential benefits that could be realised as a result of hosting the event.

RESOLVED that the progress outlined in the report submitted be noted and that the following recommendations be endorsed:

- (i) that the Council adopts the general aims as outlined, to achieve strategic benefits for Bracknell Forest Borough Council;
- (ii) the Council adopts the marketing aims as outlined so as to raise the profile of Bracknell Forest as an area;

- (iii) the Council endorses that recommendations for the Business and Voluntary sector;
- (iv) that a follow up study be undertaken six months after the games to evaluate the impact of the UK and Ireland Corporate Games in Bracknell Forest.

339 **Weatherwatch. (Item 4 and Item 15)**

Following a request from Members, Councillor Birch agreed that Items 4 and 15 should be considered together in the presence of the public and press.

The Committee received a report dealing with the current status of the Weatherwatch project and a request received from the Millennium Commission for a progress report. It was noted that the original programme which provided for Weatherwatch to be opened to the public before July 2000 would not now be achieved and that there was currently a shortfall of around £1.6 million in capital funding after taking account of a 50% grant from the Millennium Commission and other available funding. In these circumstances Officers requested authority to approach the Millennium Commission with a formal request for the original agreement to be extended by a period of six months and further recommended that a consultant be commissioned to secure the necessary additional funding.

The terms of a draft letter to the Millennium Commission in relation to the progress being made and seeking the required revision to the programme were submitted for consideration.

During the course of debate, Members discussed the terms of the draft letter and, in order to facilitate agreement, it was

RESOLVED that the meeting be now adjourned at 9.38pm.

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee reconvened at 9.55pm and consideration was given to revisions to the proposed letter to be sent to the Millennium Commission.

RESOLVED that

- (i) a revised letter in the terms set out in Appendix G hereto be sent to the Millennium Commission providing an update on the Weatherwatch project and requesting an amendment to the terms of the Council's agreement so as to enable an extension of time for completion;
- (ii) subject to the Millennium Commission approving the necessary time extension, David Robertson of Technology Response Limited be appointed to undertake further fund raising for the project on terms to be agreed by Officers subject to consultation with the Chairman.

340 **Committee Structure and Delegations to Officers. (Item 5)**

The Director of Corporate Services reported on the progress being made by Focus Groups established by each main Service Committee in defining their terms of reference in the unitary authority, and the structure and terms of reference of proposed Sub Committees. Other work

was either in progress or to be undertaken in relation to matters to be delegated direct to Officers on an operational basis and in preparing a scheme of Core Management responsibilities. In accordance with decisions taken at the annual meeting of the Council, the Committee was recommended to appoint a Focus Group comprising five members with appropriate Officers from each department, to review the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation for the authority.

A number of issues had also arisen during the current meetings cycle which required implementation during the current year and these were identified in the report submitted.

RESOLVED that

- (i) five members (to be nominated by Group Leaders) be appointed to serve on a Focus Group with appropriate Officers from each department to review the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation for the unitary authority;
- (ii) the terms of reference proposed for the following meetings as submitted to the Committee be confirmed:-

Planning Control Sub Committee
Highways Sub Committee
Housing Sub Committee
Education Consultation Panel
Joint Advisory Panel on Children's Services
- (iii) the arrangements made by Committees for the appointment of Executive Sub Committees be confirmed;
- (iv) the Borough Administrator be authorised to appoint three members to serve on each Housing Benefits Review Board as necessary from amongst the members of the Housing Sub Committee;
- (v) the Director of Planning and Transportation be authorised to act as appointing Officer for the purposes of Section 10(8) of the Party Wall Act 1996;
- (vi) all existing Officer delegations be reassigned to the appropriate Director for the remainder of the period ending 31 March 1998 with the exception of delegations relating to Planning Control which are to remain with the Borough Planning Officer.

341 **Appointment to the Shadow Thames Valley Police Authority. (Item 6)**

Councillor Birch advised the Committee that this matter had now been actioned in accordance with authority delegated by the Public and Environmental Services Committee and had accordingly been withdrawn from the agenda.

342 **Local Government Reorganisation - Arrangements for Valuation Tribunals. (Item 7)**

The Borough Administrator reported that the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions had issued a consultation document dealing with proposals for changes to the arrangements for the appointment of Valuation Tribunals as a result of Local Government Reorganisation. The proposal was to establish a county-wide Valuation Tribunal of 30

members with the new unitary authorities making appointments on the basis of population and number of hereditaments but weighted to potential to reflect potential workload.

RESOLVED that the Committee agree to the proposed appointing arrangements outlined in the consultation paper with the name of the tribunal remaining “Berkshire Valuation Tribunal” and that the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions be advised accordingly.

343 **Berkshire Probation Service. (Item 8)**

The Chief Executive reported on discussions with the Senior Probation Officer arising from which it was anticipated that each of the new unitary authorities would be invited to nominate a member to attend meetings of the Probation Committee.

RECOMMENDED that Councillor North be nominated to attend meetings of the Probation Committee as the Council’s representative.

344 **Council Meeting - February 1998. (Item 9)**

The Committee noted that the meeting of the Council at which the Council Tax Level for 1998/99 would be decided had been scheduled for 18 February 1998. However it was now known that the Thames Valley Police Authority would not meet to fix its precept for that year until 20 February 1998. In these circumstances it would be necessary to reschedule the Council meeting to ensure that the Police Authority precept was known in advance of setting Council Tax levels.

RECOMMENDED that the February meeting of the Council be changed to Thursday 26 February 1998 and that an alternative date be selected for the scheduled meeting of the Leisure Services Committee.

345 **CCT Functional Work - Annual Reports. (Item 10)**

The Committee received the Annual Reports and Trading Accounts for the year 1996/97 in respect of the Landscape Maintenance, Leisure Management and Building Works Direct Service Organisations.

RESOLVED that the Annual Reports and Statement of Accounts for Landscape Maintenance, Leisure Management and Building Works Direct Service Organisations for the year 1996/97 be adopted and submitted to the Secretary of State and to the Council’s Auditor.

346 **References from Other Committees. (Item 11)**

The Committee received details of references from other Committees as follows:

(i) All Committees

It was noted that the recommendations of Committees as set out in Minute Nos. 222, 245, 277, 294 and 324 would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee following consideration by the Strategy and Policy Focus Group (see Minute 340).

(ii) Public and Environmental Services Committee

The Committee received Minute 239 and approved the release of the necessary funding as identified.

347 **Developing Corporate Identity. (Item 12)**

The Committee received the report of the Corporate Identity Focus Group which had met on three occasions to consider the development of a Corporate Identity and, in particular, the development of a new logo for Bracknell Forest Borough Council as a unitary authority.

Consideration had been given by the Focus Group to weaknesses which had been identified with the Council's present logo, the need for a Corporate Identity Manual to be developed by the Council's Management Team, and the need for the development of a positive Corporate Identity amongst staff. It was further recommended that an attitude survey should be taken among local businesses and other organisations to ascertain their perceptions of the Council. Display panels illustrating the use of the preferred logo designs and styles proposed by the Focus Group were submitted and the Chief Executive advised that a further report would be made with costed proposals following the proposed consultation period.

RESOLVED that the following recommendations of the Focus Group be adopted:

- (i) the Committee note that the Corporate Management Team will be progressing the following matters:
 - the development of a corporate identity among staff;
 - the development of a corporate identity manual, embracing such matters as house style, letterheads, compliment slips, the use of the Council's logo with other logos,
 - the need for an emphasis on 'Bracknell Forest', as opposed to 'Bracknell' in all communications; and
 - an attitude survey of local businesses and other organisations to ascertain their perceptions of the Council;
- (ii) two logo designs, together with 'break out' designs, be made subject to a public consultation exercise, with the results of the exercise being reported to a further meeting of the Corporate Identity Focus Group; and
- (iii) resources be allocated to ensure the achievement of (i) and (ii) above.

348 **Local Government Reorganisation - High Level Transition Plan. (Item 13)**

The Committee received the agreed Local Government Reorganisation High Level Transition Plans for the period April 1997 to March 1998 and noted the progress made with all activities currently on target.

349 **Exclusion of 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 Item 14 which

involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:

(9) Expenditure or Terms proposed under a contract

350 **Urgent Action under Delegated Powers. (Item 14)**

The Committee noted urgent action taken under delegated powers in relation to the commissioning of a replacement Air Handling Unit at Coral Reef.

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

CHAIRMAN