

COUNCIL
21 JULY 1997

Present: Councillors Adams, Angell, Mrs Ballin, Barnard, Bayle, Beadsley, Bettison, Birch, Blatchford, Mrs Clifford, Mrs Doyle, Egan, Finnie, Flood, Good, Grayson, Harrison, Miss Haydon, Mrs Hayes, Mrs Hirst, Jones, Mrs Keene, McCormack, Mills, North, Mrs Pile, Sargeant, Simonds, Mrs Sutcliffe, Taylor, Thompson, Veakins, Wade, Wheaton and Worrall

Apologies for absence were received from:
Councillors Fawcett, Onions, Ryan, Mrs Shillcock and Ward

THE MAYOR, COUNCILLOR JAMES G FINNIE IN THE CHAIR

188. **Minutes.**

The minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 13 May 1997 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

189. **Mayor's Announcements**

(i) Mr Gordon Mitchell

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor extended a welcome to Mr Gordon Mitchell who had taken up his new appointment as Chief Executive of the Council with effect from 1 June 1997 and was attending his first meeting of the Council in that capacity.

(ii) Freedom of the Borough - Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

The Mayor thanked those Members and Officers who had attended or otherwise participated in the ceremony to mark the granting of the Freedom of the Borough to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst which had taken place on Sunday 13 July 1997 and had been a most enjoyable and successful occasion.

(iii) Civic Service

The Mayor thanked the Members of the Council and Officers who had attended the Civic Service on 20 July 1997.

(iv) Mayor's Charity 1997/98

The Mayor advised the Council that he had selected the local Multiple Sclerosis Resource Centre Project as his official charity for the current municipal year. The project aimed to develop a Resource Centre in the Bracknell Forest area which would enable M.S. patients to receive physiotherapy in a group environment and would operate under the auspices of the Bracknell and District branch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society. Regular, long term physiotherapy tailored to the requirements of individual patients had been demonstrated as being beneficial in improving the quality of life of M.S. patients and, although a scheme did operate and treated over 50 patients in their own homes and at local Centres, greater benefits would arise within a group setting.

(v) Engagements

The Mayor circulated a list of the engagements which he, or the Deputy Mayor on his behalf, had attended since the annual meeting. He further drew attention to the international flavour of many of his engagements by referring specifically to an impending visit by Japanese students, attendance at the Family Fun Day organised by the Indian Community Association of Bracknell on 27 July and a visit by a party from Norway currently being arranged.

190. **All Standing Committees and Sub Committees**

The minutes of the meetings of all standing Committees and Sub Committees held on 13 May 1997 were submitted.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Bettison, seconded by Councillor Birch, that the reports be received.

191. **Unitary 98 Interview Committee.**

The report of the meeting of the Unitary 98 Interview Committee held on 14 May 1997 was submitted.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Bettison, duly seconded, that the report be received.

192. **Special Planning & Transportation Committee.**

The report of the special meeting of the Planning & Transportation Committee held on 19 May 1997 was submitted.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Mrs Ballin, seconded by Councillor Sargeant, that the report be received.

193. **Strategy & Policy Committee.**

The report of the special meeting of the Strategy & Policy Committee held on 20 May 1997 was submitted and the Chairman indicated that he would deal with a question from Councillor Good later in the meeting (see Minute 209(i)).

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Bettison, seconded by Councillor Birch, that subject to the amendment of the final word in the preamble to Minute 56 to read "adopted" the report be received.

194. **Unitary 98 Interview Committee.**

The report of the meeting of the Unitary 98 Interview Committee held on 22 May 1997 was submitted.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Bettison, duly seconded, that the report be received.

195. **Unitary 98 Interview Committee.**

The report of the meeting of the Unitary 98 Interview Committee held on 23 May 1997 was submitted.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Bettison, duly seconded, that the report be received.

196. **Unitary 98 Interview Committee.**

The report of the meeting of the Unitary 98 Interview Committee held on 3 June 1997 was submitted.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Bettison, duly seconded, that the report be received.

197. **Unitary 98 Interview Committee.**

The report of the meeting of the Unitary 98 Interview Committee held on 10 June 1997 was submitted.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Bettison, duly seconded, that the report be received.

198. **Unitary 98 Interview Committee.**

The report of the meeting of the Unitary 98 Interview Committee held on 12 June 1997 was submitted.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Bettison, duly seconded, that the report be received.

199. **Unitary 98 Interview Committee.**

The report of the meeting of the Unitary 98 Interview Committee held on 17 June 1997 was submitted.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Bettison, duly seconded, that the report be received.

200. **Social Services Transition and Housing Committee.**

The report of the meeting of the Social Services Transition and Housing Committee held on 17 June 1997 was submitted and the Chairman answered questions thereon.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Angell, seconded by Councillor Worrall, that the report be received.

201. **Unitary 98 Interview Committee.**

The report of the meeting of the Unitary 98 Interview Committee held on 19 June 1997 was submitted.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Birch, duly seconded, that the report be received.

202. **Public & Environmental Services Committee.**

The report of the meeting of the Public & Environmental Services Committee held on 19 June 1997 was submitted.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Mills, seconded by Councillor Egan, that the report be received.

203. **Unitary 98 Interview Committee.**

The report of the meeting of the Unitary 98 Interview Committee held on 24 June 1997 was submitted.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Mrs Ballin, duly seconded, that the report be received.

204. **Leisure Services Committee.**

The report of the meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held on 24 June 1997 was submitted.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor North, seconded by Councillor Flood, that the report be received.

205. **Strategy & Policy Committee.**

The report of the meeting of the Strategy & Policy Committee held on 25 June 1997 was submitted.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Bettison, seconded by Councillor Birch, that the report be received.

206. **Planning & Transportation Committee.**

The report of the meeting of the Planning & Transportation Committee held on 26 June 1997 was submitted and the Chairman answered questions thereon.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Mrs Ballin, seconded by Councillor Sargeant, that subject to the addition of the following words to the conclusion of the pre-amble to Minute 143 the report be received:-

Integrated Transport:

Would need to be controlled by Unitary Authorities to suit individual policies of each Council. Major Transportation aspects relating to regional data collection and modelling to stay with Babtie for the duration of the contract.

207. **Education Transition Committee.**

The report of the meeting of the Education Transition Committee held on 3 July 1997 was submitted and, in the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman answered questions thereon.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Barnard, duly seconded, that the report be received.

208. **Strategy & Policy Committee.**

The report of the meeting of the Strategy & Policy Committee held on 16 July 1997 was submitted and the Chairman answered questions thereon.

RESOLVED on the proposition of Councillor Bettison, seconded by Councillor Mrs Ballin that the report be received.

209. **Questions - Standing Order 9.**

- (i) Question to the Chairman of Strategy and Policy Committee (Councillor Bettison) from Councillor Mrs Keene

“Can the Chairman confirm the total value of Special Responsibility Allowance now claimable and the value of Special Responsibility Allowance claimed in the 1996/97 administrative year?”

Reply by Councillor Bettison

Councillor Bettison replied that the total value of Special Responsibility Allowance allocated in the current municipal year under the revised scheme was £35,750. The Special Responsibility Allowance element in 1996/97 under the scheme prior to revision was £13,449. He further advised that Special Responsibility Allowance was not claimable but was normally paid automatically to the designated recipients.

Councillor Bettison then responded to a supplementary question from Councillor Mrs Keene.

- (ii) Question to the Chairman of Strategy and Policy Committee (Councillor Bettison) from Councillor Harrison

“What effect will the change in advance corporation tax arrangements for Pension Funds have on the Council (as a unitary authority)?”

Reply by Councillor Bettison

Councillor Bettison advised the Council that following revaluation of the fund the abolition of advance corporation tax relief for pension funds was likely to require an increased contribution from the Council from 2.8% to 5.8% of average pay and this represented an increased burden of £500,000 per annum falling on Council tax payers.

Councillor Bettison then responded to a supplementary question from Councillor Harrison.

(iii) Question to the Chairman of Strategy and Policy Committee (Councillor Bettison) from Councillor McCormack

“Can the Leader confirm that all the members of the Conservative Group are members of the local Conservative Association?”

Reply by Councillor Bettison

In replying Councillor Bettison indicated that not all members of the Conservative Group were members of the local Conservative Association: Four members of the Conservative Group were members of the Windsor Conservative Association.

(iv) Question to the Chairman of Planning & Transportation Committee (Councillor Mrs Ballin) from Councillor Jones

“There have been two proposals for development of the Peacock Lane site, one for 1250 housing units and the other for half as many. Could the Chairman inform the Council as to whether the proposed development will be, in terms of numbers, closer to the larger figure?”

Reply by Councillor Mrs Ballin

Councillor Mrs Ballin reminded the Council that the majority party had been elected with a manifesto commitment to stop development at Winkfield Triangle and reduce the amount of housing proposed at the Staff College site in Bracknell. The local plan was currently being reviewed accordingly. In order to meet the structure plan housing requirements, it was possible that the review may result in a scheme closer to the larger figure although work on the review was still underway. Councillor Mrs Ballin expressed her regret at the delay to the local plan caused by the change in the Council’s policy brought about in 1995.

(v) Question to the Chairman of Planning Control Sub Committee (Councillor Mrs Doyle) from Councillor Jones

“In view of the large-scale changes to the infrastructure involved in putting a substantial number of houses on the Peacock Lane site, has the Chairman considered

how long the delay is likely to be before the first house is built on the site, and how this is likely to affect our five-year housing supply?”

Reply by Councillor Mrs Doyle

Councillor Mrs Doyle indicated that until the local plan review was complete, it would be premature to suggest when construction would begin. However, given the scale of housing land already committed in the Borough there was unlikely to be a significant negative effect on the Council’s five year housing land supply but this would be monitored in the future.

(vi) Question to the Chairman of Planning & Transportation Committee (Councillor Mrs Ballin) from Councillor Jones

“In view of the widespread traffic problems caused by the recent closure of Peacock Lane, does the Chairman at this stage have any idea of the possible length of the complete or partial closure of Peacock Lane that would be caused by the infrastructure changes attendant on the Peacock Lane site? Can she say whether this would be closer to a month, six months or a year?”

Reply by Councillor Mrs Ballin

Councillor Mrs Ballin replied that the infrastructure arrangements associated with the development of Peacock Farm are currently being looked at as part of the local plan review. Until the review was complete it would be misleading to estimate if, or even how long, any road might be closed or restricted. However the Council, in its capacity as Highway Authority at that time, would be seeking to minimise disruptions.

Councillor Mrs Ballin then replied to a supplementary question from Councillor Jones.

(vii) Question to the Chairman of Planning Control Sub Committee (Councillor Mrs Doyle) from Councillor Jones

“This Council is currently engaged in enforcement proceedings and litigation involving sites to the west of Bracknell. There are other related enforcements in different areas (for example, a recent decision to enforce against the parking of military vehicles on a property in Sandhurst - the reason being that the owner was not allowed by us to retain them in their original site to the west of Bracknell). In all these cases the main issue has been the effect of the sites on the gap between Bracknell and Wokingham. In view of the fact that the Council is now about to promote development within this gap, is this Council prepared to withdraw from all current enforcement actions and appeals involving sites in this area?”

Reply by Councillor Mrs Doyle

Councillor Mrs Doyle indicated that the Council would not be prepared to withdraw all current enforcement actions and appeals involving sites in the area referred to and then responded to a supplementary question from Councillor Jones.

(viii) Question to the Chairman of Social Services Transition & Housing Committee (Councillor Angell) from Councillor Mrs Hirst on behalf of Councillor Mrs Shillcock

“(a) Why was the decision to exclude the representative of the Council Tenants Panel from speaking at the Housing Sub Committee not made at Committee level?”

(b) How does this decision reflect those corporate values of openness and listening endorsed by this Council?”

Reply by Councillor Angell

In his reply Councillor Angell advised that this was a procedural issue arising from the discontinuance of the former Housing Committee and that the matter would be considered by the Focus Group appointed to review the Terms of Reference of the main Committee and its Sub Committees. Such a procedural issue did not impact on any of the Council’s corporate values.

Councillor Angell then responded to a supplementary question from Councillor Mrs Hirst.

(ix) Question to Chairman of Strategy & Policy Committee (Councillor Bettison) from Councillor McCormack

“How will the Leader ensure that the Conservative’s Manifesto commitment to reduce Council Tax be achieved?”

Reply by Councillor Bettison

Councillor Bettison advised that the Council’s first priority should be to achieve a seamless transition to unitary status and that it was unrealistic therefore to seek a reduction in Council tax in the first year when expenditure would be maintained at the level necessary to secure the successful transition. Looking further ahead, it had been common ground that there were savings which could be achieved overall through operating as a single authority responsible for all main local government services in the Borough.

Councillor Bettison then responded to a supplementary question from Councillor McCormack.

(x) Question to the Chairman of Education Transition Committee (Councillor Ward) from Councillor Wheaton

“Why was a letter sent by the Chairman to Heads and Chairman of Governors re teacher representation without consultation with the Committee?”

Reply by Councillor Barnard on behalf of Councillor Ward

Councillor Barnard advised the Council that the letter referred to had been sent following the appointment of the new Director of Education and consultations with Trade Unions regarding Teacher representation. The primary purposes of the letter had been to assure Chairmen of Governors and Governing Bodies generally that they too would be brought into the consultation processes as well as advising of the new appointment and the arrangements proposed for Teacher representation. It had been felt appropriate to provide this information at the earliest opportunity.

(xi) Question to the Chairman of Social Services Transition & Housing Committee (Councillor Angell) from Councillor Bayle

- “(a) The previous administration decided the new Unitary Council should start with separate Social Services and Housing Departments/Committees mainly because it was felt common clients did not usually present housing and social services need at the same time. It was also felt that amalgamation would prejudice smooth transition and detract from closer links with education. Could the Chairman explain the rationale behind the decision to amalgamate these two departments and give some indication of the degree of amalgamation that is envisaged?
- (b) Will the Social Services Committee consider co-opting additional County Councillors with relevant experience?”

Reply by Councillor Angell

Councillor Angell stressed that the overriding priority was to achieve a smooth transition and that the integration of the Social Services and Housing Departments and Committees had been carefully considered and would not have been agreed if there had been any threat to that priority. He went on to remind the Council of the earlier reports by Consultants which had stressed the synergies between Social Services and Housing Services and had led to the proposal that the need for separate departments should be reviewed in two to three years. It was now considered that the possibility of a further review within such a short space of time would be unsettling for staff and that integration should be achieved from the outset enabling both services to be located together in the Council’s new offices at Time Square.

Councillor Angell further indicated that the Committee would not consider the co-option of additional County Councillors.

Councillor Angell then responded to a supplementary question from Councillor Bayle.

(xii) Question to the Chairman of Strategy and Policy Committee (Councillor Bettison) from Councillor McCormack

- “(a) How many County Councillors have been co-opted on the service committees over and above the one mandatory (3 for education consultation) in line with Strategy & Policy Committee?
- (b) What advice does the Unitary Structures Sub Committee plan to take from Service Committees on the strategic and technical issues raised in the consultation on staffing structures?”

Reply by Councillor Bettison

In replying Councillor Bettison reported that there were no "mandatory" co-options to the Council's current Committee structure but that in addition to the five County Councillors on the Highways Sub Committee, one County Councillor had been appointed to each of the Council's main Service Policy Committees and three County Councillors had been appointed to the Education Consultation Panel. Councillor Bettison further indicated that the unitary Structures Sub Committee would be willing to consider any advice offered by Service Policy Committees through appropriate channels.

Councillor Bettison then responded to a supplementary question from Councillor McCormack.

210. Reports by Members of the Council and other Representatives.

The Council received reports by Members on meetings of Outside Bodies as indicated below:-

Blackwater Valley Network	Councillor North
ACTVaR	Councillor Mrs Ballin
SERPLAN	Councillor Mrs Ballin
Thames Valley European Forum	Councillor Mrs Ballin

The Council also received a report by Mrs J Angell on the meeting of the Community Forum for Great Hollands, Birch Hill and Hanworth held on 24 June 1997.

Councillor Mrs Clifford advised the Council that a full report on the development of Bracknell Forest Neighbourhood Mediation Service would be made to the Strategy & Policy Committee on 15 October.

211. Local Government Reorganisation - Appointments of Directors and Retirement of Chief Officers.

The Council considered a report by the Chief Executive setting out the agreed start dates for the new Directors appointed by the Unitary 98 Interview Committee and drawing attention to the arrangements for the retirement of a number of Chief Officers prior to reorganisation.

The Mayor reminded the Council of many of the successful achievements of the retiring Chief Officers and, on behalf of all Members, expressed the Council's warm appreciation of the able and effective way in which those Chief Officers had carried out their duties over many

years. The Mayor, on behalf of the Council then proposed a vote of thanks to the Officers concerned.

RESOLVED that the Council place on record its appreciation of the valued services of the undermentioned Officers and the contribution those Officers have made to the Borough Council and residents of Bracknell Forest.

Mr A J Targett	Chief Executive
Mr R Holden	Borough Housing Officer
Mr I Mihell	Head of Corporate Services (formerly Borough Treasurer)
Mr A Stanton	Borough Environmental Services Officer
Mr N Rogers	Borough Leisure Officer

212. **Membership of the Council.**

The Council was advised that Councillor Mrs Jean Sutcliffe was to be admitted for hospital treatment over the recess and that it would be appropriate for consideration to be given to granting Councillor Mrs Sutcliffe leave of absence for the duration of her treatment and recuperation.

RESOLVED

- (i) that Councillor Mrs Jean Sutcliffe be granted leave of absence from Council duties until the next ordinary meeting of the Council scheduled to be held on 29 October 1997;
- (ii) that the following substitute appointments to Committees, Sub Committees etc be made for that period;

Social Services Transition and Housing Committee - Councillor Barnard
Education Transition Committee - Councillor Egan
Access Committee - Councillor Angell
Voluntary Grants Panel - Councillor Mrs Pile
Social Services Transition Sub Committee - Councillor Mills
Education Consultation Panel - Councillor Egan
Education Quality Assurance Sub Committee - Councillor Egan
Christmas Festivities and Millennium Sub Committee - Councillor Birch

Outside Bodies

Crime Reduction Steering Group - Councillor Mrs Pile
Harmans Water Community Association - Councillor Mrs Pile
Bracknell Age Concern - Councillor Miss Haydon

- (iii) that a further report be made to the next meeting.

213. **East Berkshire Community Health Council.**

It was reported that Councillor Mrs Doyle had been unable to attend meetings of the East Berkshire Community Health Council as the meetings held so far in the municipal year had

clashed with meetings of the Planning Control Sub Committee. Councillor Mrs Doyle therefore wished to resign as one of the Council's representatives on this Body and Councillor Thompson had been nominated in her place. Reference was also made to the nomination of Councillor Thompson for consideration by Berkshire County Council as a County nominated representative on the East Berkshire Community Health Council (Minute 171 refers) and it was reported that in these circumstances, on advice from the Leader, Councillor Mrs Sutcliffe had been nominated in place of Councillor Thompson to the vacancy for a County representative.

RESOLVED that

- (i) Councillor Thompson be nominated to represent the Borough Council on the East Berkshire Community Health Council in place of Councillor Mrs Doyle; and
- (ii) the action taken in nominating Councillor Mrs Sutcliffe to the vacancy for a County representative in place of Councillor Thompson be confirmed.

214. **Date of Next Meeting.**

It was reported that several Members had indicated that they would not be available to attend the next ordinary meeting of the Council scheduled for Wednesday 29 October 1997.

RESOLVED that the next ordinary meeting of the Council be held on Thursday 23 October 1997.

215. **Motions - Standing Order 6.**

Motion 4/97

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Mrs Clifford and seconded by Councillor Jones:

This Council urges the Secretary of State for Environment and Transport to extend the 'Zero Tolerance' approach to irresponsible motorists who threaten the safety of other road users.

In particular we ask him to negotiate with the Home Secretary/Police a policy of:

- (a) using all available technological aids to detect violations of speed limits and
- (b) charging or levying fixed penalties upon all motorists found to be driving at speeds 10% or more above the speed limit.

We believe that such a policy would make roads safer for pedestrians and cyclists and this would encourage more people who currently use cars for short journeys to walk or cycle instead.

Following debate the following amendment was moved by Councillor Bettison and seconded by Councillor Birch:

- (i) that in sub paragraph (a) the word “using” be deleted and the words “fully funding from Central Government the use of” be substituted;
- (ii) that in sub paragraph (b) the word “motorist” be deleted and the words “drivers of vehicles” be substituted.

Following further debate the amendment was put to the meeting and declared carried.

The amended Motion was then moved by Councillor Bettison and seconded by Councillor Birch and, following further debate was put to the meeting and declared carried.

RESOLVED that

This Council urges the Secretary of State for Environment and Transport to extend the ‘Zero Tolerance’ approach to irresponsible motorists who threaten the safety of other road users.

In particular we ask him to negotiate with the Home Secretary/Police a policy of:

- (a) fully funding from Central Government the use of all available technological aids to detect violations of speed limits; and
- (b) charging or levying fixed penalties upon all drivers of vehicles found to be driving at speeds 10% or more above the speed limit.

We believe that such a policy would make roads safer for pedestrians and cyclists and this would encourage more people who currently use cars for short journeys to walk or cycle instead.

Motion 5/97

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Mills and seconded by Councillor Birch.

In view of the importance to Bracknell, its residents and our community of the land occupied by the RAF Staff College this Council resolves to:-

- (a) request the Government to transfer to Bracknell Forest Borough Council, at no charge, the land presently occupied by the RAF Staff College when it becomes surplus to Government requirements under the current review.
- (b) instruct our Officers to consider preparing plans for the conversion of this land to public open space and other appropriate recreational use.

During the course of debate a request was made for voting to be recorded in pursuance of Standing Order 20 and, on being put to be meeting, voting was as follows:

For - Councillors Angell, Mrs Ballin, Barnard, Bettison, Birch, Blatchford, Mrs Doyle, Egan, Finnie, Flood, Harrison, Miss Haydon, Mrs Hayes, Mills, North, Mrs Pile, Sargeant, Simonds, Mrs Sutcliffe, Thompson, Wade and Worrall (22)

Against - Nil

Abstain - Councillors Adams, Bayle, Beadsley, Mrs Clifford, Good, Grayson, Mrs Hirst, Jones, Mrs Keene, McCormack, Taylor, Veakins and Wheaton (13)

Motion 5/97 was accordingly declared carried and it was **RESOLVED** accordingly.

Motion 6/97

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Mrs Keene and seconded by Councillor Bayle:

This Council deploras candidates standing for election using bogus party names with the intention to deliberately deceive the electorate.

We will support this Government in any measures it introduces to prevent such a deception happening again.

A motion "that the question be now put" was then moved and seconded and, on being put to the meeting, was declared to have been carried.

Motion 6/97 was then put to the meeting and a request was made for voting to be recorded in pursuance of Standing Order 20. Voting was as follows:-

For - Councillors Adams, Bayle, Beadsley, Mrs Clifford, Good, Grayson, Mrs Hirst, Jones, Mrs Keene, McCormack, Taylor, Veakins and Wheaton (13)

Against - Councillors Angell, Mrs Ballin, Barnard, Bettison, Birch, Blatchford, Mrs Doyle, Egan, Finnie, Flood, Harrison, Miss Haydon, Mrs Hayes, Mills, North, Mrs Pile, Sargeant, Simonds, Mrs Sutcliffe, Thompson, Wade and Worrall (22)

Abstain - Nil

Accordingly Motion 6/97 was declared not carried.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and concluded at 10.05pm.

MAYOR