

SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSITION AND HOUSING COMMITTEE (SPECIAL)

30 SEPTEMBER 1997

Present: Councillor Angell (Chairman), Councillors Barnard, Bayle, Egan, Grayson, Harrison, Miss Haydon, Mrs Hirst, Jones, McCormack, Mrs Pile, Ryan, Mrs Shillcock, Simonds, and Worrall

Also in attendance: County Councillor Mrs Williams

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Hayes

306. Exclusion of Public and Press

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 items which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- (1) Information relating to employees of the Council

307. Social Services and Housing Department - Proposed Structure

In a detailed report containing exempt information the Director of Social Services submitted the proposed initial structure for Social Services and Housing Department on 1 April 1998 and answered members questions thereon.

There were many issues addressed by the proposed structure, including the structure of the children and family team, adult services, housing services, strategy and support services, financial services, information technology, personnel and training, planning development and administrative support. Numerous questions were raised on the above issues, in particular the fact that, unlike many of the other new unitary authorities in Berkshire, there would only be two second tier posts as opposed to three elsewhere. It was noted that, at present, the structure proposed would support the services required and that a third second tier post was not, at this stage, an option that would be appropriate to Bracknell Forest.

In response to questions from members, the Director of Social Services and Housing stated that there were three areas that would require careful monitoring, namely the child protection co-ordination and review function, the planning quality assurance function and the finance function, and these areas would be kept under review.

The Director of Social Services and Housing also identified an additional post in the section dealing with I.T. Services. On the advice of the Corporate Head of I.T. Services, an additional Application Support Officer had been identified which had been omitted from the structure. This was now to be included.

RESOLVED that the proposed structure for the Social Services and Housing Department, as reported, be supported in principle and recommended for acceptance to the Unitary Structures Sub Committee at its meeting on 2 October 1997.

308. **New Posts (additional item to the agenda)**

In a detailed report the Director of Social Services and Housing reported that the Housing Department had identified a need for four new posts to strengthen the existing teams and to ensure that required service and performance standards were met. The need for the posts had been justified during the last budget and provision had been made in contingencies, although at that time it had been agreed that the posts should only be actioned within the context of the decisions to be made in relation to the new unitary structures. The four posts were Senior Benefit Assessors (2), Visiting Benefits Officer and a Senior Housing Officer (estates).

Further to questions from members and the Director of Social Services and Housing responding thereto it was

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the permanent post of Senior Housing Officer (estates) be supported;
- (ii) the posts of two Senior Benefit Assessors and a Benefits Visiting Officer be supported for a temporary contract of one year; and
- (iii) the above recommendations be referred to the Personnel Sub Committee for approval.

309. **Office Accommodation Update**

In an exempt report for information the Director of Social Services and Housing updated members on the current situation with regard to the office accommodation from Seymour House to Times Square and answered members questions thereon.

In response to a question from a member it was agreed that the Director of Social Services and Housing and the Senior Committee Administrator would arrange a visit to Time Square for members of the Committee.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm
and concluded at 9.35 pm

CHAIRMAN