

STRATEGY AND POLICY COMMITTEE
21 OCTOBER 1997

Present: Councillor Bettison (Chairman), Councillors Adams, Angell,
Mrs Ballin, Birch, Good, Jones, Mrs Keene, McCormack,
Mills, North, Sargeant, Wade, Ward and Wheaton

Also Present: Councillor Flood

Apologies for Absence were received from:
Councillor Bayle

351. Town Centre Sub Committee. (Item 2)

The Committee received and noted the minutes of the meeting of the Town Centre Sub Committee held on 22 September 1997.

352. Office Automation Strategy. (Item 3)

The Committee considered a detailed report which outlined previous decisions regarding the Council's information and communication technology strategy and proposed further development by the introduction of a comprehensive office automation strategy building upon systems already in place.

Consultants had undertaken a business study of the need for and the likely shape of an office automation strategy and, in their interim report, had recommended the replacement of the Council's existing ICL Officepower system with a new single system incorporating Microsoft Office applications and providing new "groupware" functionality. The study further addressed the need to replace the current County-wide public information system "Infobox" with a more modern Internet solution. The report submitted provided further details of the costing of the project and the phasing thereof matched to the probable availability of resources.

RESOLVED that

- (i) Novell Groupwise be adopted as the Council's standard office automation system;
- (ii) an Internet service be implemented as the Council's public information system in the unitary authority;
- (iii) the Council's office automation strategy be implemented on a phased basis as outlined in the report submitted; and
- (iv) approval be given to expenditure of £202,000 in the current year to implement phase 1 of the strategy as outlined in the report subject to funds being available within the transition budget, and that consideration be given to further revenue funding in respect of phase 2 within the Council's budget for 1998/9.

353. Office Accommodation. (Item 4)

Consideration was given to proposed alteration works to Fitzwilliam House, Seymour House and Easthampstead House necessary to meet the requirements of the proposed user of each of those buildings in the unitary authority.

The Committee noted the relocations and works proposed together with details of the anticipated costings and programming. It was further noted that the Council would continue to press Berkshire County Council to undertake essential planned improvements at Fitzwilliam House before the end of the current financial year.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the proposed alteration works to Fitzwilliam House, Seymour House and Easthampstead House be approved at cost of £561,000 for the alteration works and £218,000 for I.T. and moving costs, subject to funds being available in the transition budget; and
- (ii) for orders above delegated limits, the Borough Surveyor and the Borough I.T. Services Manager, as appropriate, be authorised in consultation with the Chairman, to accept the lowest tenders for building work and I.T. and telecommunications work.

354. **Transition Costs Budget. (Item 5)**

The Director of Corporate Services reported on the arrangements for financing costs directly related to Local Government Reorganisation and submitted details of variations to the Transition Costs Budget approved by the Committee on 16 July based on more up-to-date information. Whilst some reductions had become known, the overall effect of the variations was to increase anticipated expenditure by £397,000.

RECOMMENDED that approval be given to additional expenditure of £397,000 to be financed from capital receipts for the transition budget to a revised total of £15,259,000 as set out Appendix A hereto.

355. **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 Items 7(a) and 7(b) which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following categories of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- (7) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of another party
- (9) Terms to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods and services
- (10) Identity of persons offering tenders for a contract for the supply of goods or services
- (12) Advice received in connection with the determination of a matter affecting the authority

356. **Bracknell Town Centre Redevelopment: Terms for a Development Agreement. (Item 7(a))**

Representatives from the Council's Consultant Property Advisers, Healey and Baker, and Consultant Solicitors Berwin Leighton, attended the meeting for the consideration of this item.

Further to minute 12 of the meeting of the Town Centre Sub Committee held on 22 September 1997, the Committee received a summary report from Healey and Baker regarding the proposed redevelopment scheme and financial terms submitted by Legal and General Assurance Society Limited together with a report by Berwin Leighton regarding the proposed development and sale agreement. The representatives of those firms made a detailed presentation on the contents of their reports.

The Committee also noted the need for further advice in respect of part of the Council's land-holding within the proposed development site.

Members were reminded by the Council's consultant advisers and the Chairman that the Committee would be taking decisions for the Council in its capacity as landowner of sites in the town centre and that there should be a clear separation of that function from the Council's responsibilities as local planning authority and local highway authority. It was noted that members of the Committee should not participate in consideration of relevant planning applications or disclose the terms of the proposed agreement to members of the Planning Sub Committee.

Although the Borough Surveyor advised that he had received a preliminary highways assessment, the Committee accepted that a decision of the adequacy of any highways proposals would need to be determined by the Council in its roles as local planning authority and local highway authority.

RECOMMENDED that

- (i) subject to:-
 - (a) the deletion of the proposed extension of the list of potential anchor store tenants, and
 - (b) further negotiations with a view to securing agreement of the car parking management strategy within 6 months from the granting of planning permission,

the Council enter into a Development and Sale Agreement with Legal and General Assurance Society Limited in accordance with terms contained in the reports from Healey and Baker and Berwin Leighton and that the Borough Surveyor be authorised to conclude any outstanding matters of detail in consultation with the Chairman; and

- (ii) the Borough Surveyor be authorised to instruct Healey and Baker to advise in connection with other matters concerning the Council's land-holdings as referred to in the report submitted.

The representatives of Healey and Baker left the meeting at 10.15pm.

357. Bracknell Town Centre Redevelopment - Letting Agents. (Item 7(b))

The Committee were advised that, under the terms of the proposed Development Agreement with Legal and General Assurance Society Limited, the Council was entitled to nominate a joint letting agent for the development.

RESOLVED that Healey and Baker be nominated as the Council's choice for joint letting agent.

The meeting commenced at 7.45pm and concluded at 10.20 pm

CHAIRMAN

APPENDIX A
as referred to in Minute 354

Detailed Estimates	Approved by S&P 16 July	Revised	Variations
Employee Related			
Redundancies	603	485	-118
Additional Temporary Staff	757	757	0
Additional payments existing Staff	149	149	0
Recruitment	86	86	0
	1,595	1,477	-118
Consultants			
Structures	20	0	-20
Service Specific	40	6	-34
Recruitment, Training	140	137	-3
Financial Systems, IT, Other	130	134	4
	330	277	-53
Information Technology			
Data Conversion	50	50	0
Hardware - Capital	1,915	1,915	0
Hardware - Revenue	110	312	202
	2,075	2,277	202
Office Accommodation			
Purchase	8,360	8,360	0
Rates, Heating ,etc.	264	264	0
Fitting out costs	385	946	561
	9,009	9,570	561
Other Costs			
Democracy – Elections/Expenses	90	77	-13
Publicity, Stationery, etc.	50	50	0
Designated Authority	5	5	0
Contingency	500	298	-202
Set up Joint/Custodian Authority	30	30	0
	675	460	-215
Interest	1,178	1,198	20
Total	14,862	15,259	397