

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2000 IN THE IRELAND ROOM, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY COMMENCING AT 10.30 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 1.05 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr D A C Shakespeare in the Chair;

Mr M C Appleyard, Mrs C M Aston, Mr M E Brand, Mr R H StG Carey, Mr W J Y Chapple, Mrs P M Crawford, Mrs P M A Dewar, Mr T J Fowler, Mr M J Greenburgh, Mr C Jones, Mr P M Lawrence, Mrs E M Lay, Mrs S J Lee, Mr R Lingham-Wood, Mr M B Oram, Mr J H McB Page, Mr C F Robinson OBE, Mr K I Ross, Mr R S Royston, Dr B R Stenner and Mr M W Taylor.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies for absence were received from Mr I S Bates, Mrs A R Bainbridge and Mr R J Worrall who were replaced for this meeting by Dr B R Stenner, Mr P M Lawrence and Mr R H StG Carey respectively.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Brand declared an interest in Agenda Item 6, Report of the Community Relations Forum – Ethnic Music Provision in Schools.

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 September 2000 were confirmed.

2 REPORT OF THE MEMBERS' SERVICES AND PROCEDURES PANEL

The report of the Members' Services and Procedures Panel was received.

Members' Special Responsibility Allowances

The Committee received the report of the Members' Services and Procedures Panel on Members' Special Responsibility Allowances. In presenting the report, the Chairman of the Panel emphasised that the recommendations would not affect the Minority Group Allowances or the payment to the Chairman of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority.

RESOLVED

- 1 That the Special Responsibility Allowances shown against the posts set out in Appendix 1 to the report of the Panel be approved for the period of the interim pilot arrangements;**
- 2 That authority be delegated to the Chief Officer of the Council, in consultation with the Leader of the Council when appointed, the authority to appoint spokesmen for each Policy Advisory Group with a Special Responsibility Allowance of up to £2,000 per annum in each case (these payments to be maintained up until the new Council in May 2001, when the matter will be reviewed and reconsidered);**
- 3 That authority to establish an independent panel on Members' Allowances be delegated to the Chief Officer of the Council with Terms of Reference to accord with Department of the Environment in consultation with the Leader; Transport and the Regions' published guidance;**
- 4 That the independent panel, when appointed, be asked to consider the payment of honoraria to members holding posts which attract a Special Responsibility Allowance, to reflect the additional responsibilities carried out during the period of the interim pilot arrangement.**

Access to Members Car Park

The Committee discussed the report of the Panel detailing the options being discussed and the proposed actions to deal with the continuing problem of access to the members' car park.

The Committee noted that the Panel supported the line being taken with the owners of the site and Aylesbury Vale District Council to alleviate the obstruction and danger caused by unauthorised traffic.

Piloting New Electoral Arrangements

The Committee considered the report of the Panel on the Home Office's approach to all local authorities with local government elections in May 2001 inviting applications to run pilot schemes of electoral arrangements.

RESOLVED

That the Panel's decision to decline the invitation to run a pilot scheme for the County Council elections in May 2001, be confirmed.

Vending Machine in the Members' Lounge

The Committee received the report from the Panel on the outcome of the trial of the beverages vending machine installed in the members' lounge.

RESOLVED

That a formal contract be entered into for the continued supply of beverages in the members' lounge.

3 REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PANEL

The report of the Economic Development Panel was received.

Buckinghamshire Economic Assessment 1999/2000

The Economic Development Panel had considered the main findings of the Buckinghamshire Economic Assessment 1999/2000 and the implications this would have for the forthcoming Structure Plan Review.

RESOLVED

That a further study be undertaken into the concepts of "Spaceless Growth" and "Jobless Growth".

SEEDA Accountability Plan

The Panel had received and reconsidered the report on SEEDA's Draft Accountability Plan and had discussed the opportunities for joint working with SEEDA via the Buckinghamshire Economic Partnership.

RESOLVED

That the response to SEEDA's Accountability Plan be agreed.

Report on Information Source Changes

The Panel had received and noted a report on forthcoming changes to the provision of economic research and information and had assessed the potential implications of these changes for the provision of information in New Bucks and the wider Thames Valley.

RESOLVED

- 1 That the continued use of limited in-house resources to maintain current levels of analysis of the local economy be supported;**
- 2 That relevant government and other organisations be lobbied, with District Councils, to ensure that the new support services continue to deliver the type and quality of information required in order to establish an accurate picture of the Buckinghamshire economy.**

Thames Valley Economic Partnership

The Committee noted the report of the Panel on the latest activities of the Thames Valley Economic Partnership.

RESOLVED

That the Council work with District Councils and the Thames Valley Economic Partnership to address the issues identified in the recent Reinvestment Aftercare Survey.

Chiltern Railways Franchise

The Economic Development Panel had reported that M40 Trains had been chosen as the preferred bidder for a new 20 year franchise to develop rail services in Buckinghamshire. The Panel had noted particularly the significance of M40 Trains Investment Plan for Buckinghamshire.

RESOLVED

That an early meeting be sought with representatives of M40 Trains to identify ways in which the County Council can assist the delivery of rail improvements.

Oxford/Cambridge Arc

The Committee received a report regarding the Oxford/Cambridge Arc Project which was to identify the distinctive features of the corridor and the cluster of universities and high technology industries between Oxford and Cambridge and to identify the constraints and develop the supply chains across the Arc.

RESOLVED

That the development of the Oxford/Cambridge Arc be supported.

Sector/Enterprise Hub Development

The Committee received the report of the Panel on the links being established with SEEDA and actions being undertaken to support them in the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy.

RESOLVED

That the actions being undertaken by the Economic Development Team and the Buckinghamshire Economic Partnership be supported to develop the economy of Buckinghamshire in line with actions contained in the Regional Economic Strategy.

Leader + European Rural Development Funding Update on Buckinghamshire Bid

The Panel reported on the outcome of the recent MAFF consultation process for implementation of the Leader + Rural Development European Community Initiative in England and the development of a Buckinghamshire bid to the programme.

RESOLVED

That the development of a Buckinghamshire Partnership bid to the Leader + Programme in 2001 be supported.

4 COMMUNITY RELATIONS FORUM

The report of the Community Relations Forum was received.

Equal Opportunities Policy – Implementation Arrangement (including training)

The Committee received the report from the Community Relations Forum on the Equal Opportunities Policy.

RESOLVED

That the provision of regular update training sessions be investigated and joint training with District Councils and voluntary organisations be explored.

Ethnic Music Provision in Schools

The Committee considered the report of the Community Relations Forum on ethnic music provision in schools.

RESOLVED

- 1 That the Music Service should engage in discussion with interested parties in the field of ethnic music provision to ensure that future planning is appropriate;**
- 2 That the Music Service should establish connections with representatives of specific communities in order that ethnic music developments are properly located and are complementary to other opportunities provided.**

5 REPORT OF THE BEST VALUE WORKING GROUP

The report of the Best Value Working Group was received and noted.

6 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 – THE INTERIM STRUCTURE

The Chief Officer of the Council submitted a report on behalf of the Modernising Working Group. The report outlined progress made and provided more detail on officer structures as well as setting out recommendations to the County Council on the introduction of a Interim Structure. The Committee wished to place on record their thanks to Mrs J A Relfe, Head of Legal Services, and to Mr G Batchelor, Head of Select Committee Support, and Mr N Fane, Head of Cabinet Support, for their work in producing the draft Constitution. Members commented on the report and were asked to submit any further comments to the Head of Legal Services so that they could be incorporated in the document that is presented to the full Council.

RESOLVED

- 1 That the preliminary costings for the modernised process be noted and that further work be undertaken during the pilot period to refine them;**
- 2 That the report on the consultation process be received and that it be noted that some further work might be required when the DETR guidance has been received and evaluated;**
- 3 That the County Council be recommended to pass a resolution pursuant to Section 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to make alternative arrangements for the appointment of members to the proposed Cabinet, and permitting it to consist of only one political party;**
- 4 That if the County Council does not agree to 3 above, it be recommended to create a Strategy Committee with the terms of reference as shown in Appendix B to the Report and that the Cabinet be created in shadow form with the purpose of making appropriate recommendations on all executive matters to the Strategy Committee;**
- 5 That the County Council be recommended to adopt the Draft Constitution comprising the following to enable the pilot scheme for a modernised County Council to commence:-**
 - Standing Orders**
 - Terms of Reference for Committees**
 - Protocol for Decision Making**
 - Protocol for Select Committees**
 - Scheme of Delegation to Officers**
 - Draft Scheme of Delegation to Lead and Cabinet Members**
 - Financial Regulations**
 - Standing Orders as to Contracts**
- 6 That authority be delegated to the Head of Legal Services in consultation with the Group Leaders and the Chairman of the Committee to agree any changes to the above documents before presentation to the County Council;**
- 7 That the suggested evaluation criteria against which progress can be determined be agreed;**
- 8 That the proposed action to brief prospective candidates prior to next year's County Council elections be agreed.**

7 DEVELOPING THE CORPORATE CULTURE

The Committee received the report of the Chief Officer of the Council on work undertaken to develop the IDEA's recommendations in relation to the culture of the County Council at the corporate level.

It was agreed that the report should be noted and passed to the Leader and Chief Officer (Designate) including the request of the Working Group to discuss its findings.

8 THE END OF TERM REPORT

The Committee received and noted the report of the Chief Officer of the Council on work undertaken since 1997 and which provided a handover statement for the Leader, Cabinet and the new Chief Officer of the Council. The Chief Officer of the Council (Designate) gave a presentation as to how the modernising and best value agendas can be implemented. It was agreed to pass the Report to the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet and the Chief Officer (Designate).

9 REVIEW OF YOUTH JUSTICE ISSUES

The Committee received the report of the Chief Officer of the Council setting out the current position of work related to Community Safety, the Youth Offender Team and the Drug Action Team. The report was noted.

10 THE POLICY AGENDA

The Committee received and noted the report of the Chairman of the Committee on the Policy Agenda.

11 COMPLAINTS TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE 1999/2000

The Committee received and noted the report of the Head of Legal Services and Head of Administration on complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman and Chief Executive 1999/2000.

12 CAPITAL APPROVALS

The report of the Head of Finance on Capital Approvals was submitted.

RESOLVED

- 1 That the following project be approved:**

Title of the Project	Increase to Capital Programme	Increase in 2000/01 Capital Cash Limit	Commitment in Later Years
Schools Access Initiative	£000	£000	£000
	280	280	0

- 2 That the Sir Henry Floyd Coach Bay Scheme be deferred to be considered in the normal way, with the rest of the bids for the forthcoming year.**

CHAIRMAN

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