

This Council supports the 'Defend London' charter of the Association of London Authorities which demands:

THE PROVISION of all the local services required for a decent standard of life;

A POLICE FORCE accountable to the community it serves;

THAT DECISIONS on the levels of these services be made by locally-elected representatives on Borough Councils and the Greater London Council;

AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORT system, under full democratic control through the GLC, with the lowest fares possible;

AN END to all Government interference in local democracy and penalties on local spending;

A GOOD EDUCATION service provided by the Inner London Education Authority and the Outer London Boroughs, with no cuts in spending; and

A FAIR SHARE of national resources so that rates can be kept down;

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY for all Londoners, regardless of sex, race, colour, belief or handicap."

A GOOD HOME and a job for everyone;

GOOD HEALTH CARE and an end to cuts in the National Health Service;

#### Recommendation

The Committee's instructions are requested.

#### 15. COUNCIL MEETINGS - RECORDING OF PROCEEDINGS:

##### (a) Proposal/Request

To consider a suggestion by Councillor J.D. Rawles that, in future, the proceedings at Council meetings be fully recorded. The proposal has been put forward following comments made by Councillor Spigel at the Council meeting on 20th September during the debate on the subject of the Council's property development policy.

##### (b) Relevant Previous Decisions

Not applicable.

(c) Justification/Officers' Comments

A verbatim note is not kept of Council debates. It would be possible to record debates at Council meetings either by mechanical means, or by a shorthand writer.

The Council Chamber amplification equipment is provided with an output socket for a tape recorder. It would be possible to buy a suitable reel to reel recorder for approximately £150 or a cassette for less. The equipment could be operated by the officer on duty for the amplification system. It would probably be necessary to introduce a new procedure at Council meetings whereby each speaker announced his name at the commencement of his speech.

It would also be necessary to consider whether the proceedings should be left on tape for record purposes, or whether a typed manuscript would be required of each meeting. If a type manuscript is to be produced, considerable additional work would be involved in transcribing the proceedings lasting up to 3 hours plus and an agency typist might be required for this work. The equipment required in this event would be different from that quoted above to allow play-back for typing and would cost in the region of £600 for two suitable cassette recording machines. In addition, the agency cost allowing for 10 hours transcribing would be £45 each meeting.

The alternative to mechanical recording would be to utilise a shorthand writer. I doubt, however, whether any of the staff currently in my Department who write shorthand are sufficiently competent to take a verbatim note of a meeting lasting approximately 3 hours. From enquiries which I have made, it appears that a bureau would charge a standard attendance fee of £60 plus £65 per hour of sitting. Therefore the cost of a 3 hour sitting would be £255. This includes the provision of a typed manuscript.

There is no legal obligation on a local authority to keep a verbatim record of its proceedings. The Local Government Act 1972 merely provides that "minutes of the proceedings of a local authority shall ..... be drawn up and entered in a book kept for that purpose and shall be signed at the same or the next following meeting of the authority by the person presiding thereat."

On the other hand, it would seem that there is no legal objection to a local authority making a verbatim record of its own proceedings, if it so wishes. The Courts have held that a tape recording is admissible as evidence in legal proceedings, but that any such evidence should be regarded with caution and assessed in the light of all the circumstances of each case.

(d) Cost/Financial Effect

There is no provision in the current estimates for the purchase of recording equipment or engaging agency staff as indicated.

(e) Recommendation

The Committee's instructions are requested.

16. ACTION TAKEN UNDER EXECUTIVE POWERS:

Since the last meeting of the Committee the Chief Officers have taken the following action in pursuance of their executive powers:-

Chief Executive and Town Clerk

- (i) Granted fifty new registrations under the Explosives Act, 1875-1976.
- (ii) Approved a nomination from the Royal Town Planning Institute for representation on the Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservation Area Advisory Committee for the period ending May, 1984.
- (iii) Prosecuted the under-mentioned persons:-
  - (a) United Dairies Ltd. at Unigate House, Western Avenue, W.3. for the sale of a bottle of milk which had been delivered to 29 Clitterhouse Crescent, N.W.2. and was discovered to have contained a piece of paper with ink writing on it which constituted an offence under Section 2(i) of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955. The Defendant was found guilty and fined £75 and the Council were awarded £50 costs.
  - (b) Texas Homecare Ltd. at The Hyde, Hendon, N.W.9. for failing to close their premises on a Sunday on two occasions which constituted offences under Section 47 of the Shops Act, 1950. The Defendant was found guilty and fined £50 on each offence and the Council were awarded £50 costs.
- (iv) Approved a request from the Barnet Borough Voluntary Service Council and Barnet Volunteer Bureau for permission to erect a noticeboard in front of their offices at 275 Regents Park Road N3 which they lease from the Council subject to the lessees obtaining permission.