

## **ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee**

**At a meeting held on 1 February 2000. Present:** Cllr C R Morgan - (Chairman), Cllr R Adams, Cllr R Adams, Cllr D E Barnes, Cllr T G Cutmore, Cllr D F Flack, Cllr G Fox, Cllr Mrs J M Giles, Cllr Mrs H LA Glynn, Cllr D R Helson, Cllr Mrs J Helson, Cllr V D Hutchings, Cllr V H Leach, Cllr Mrs SJ Lemon, Cllr T Livings, Cllr G A Mockford, Cllr Mrs W M Stevenson, Cllr R E Vingoe, Cllr P F A Webster, Cllr DA Weir and Cllr Mrs M A Weir

#### **38 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 1999 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **39 MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

The interests recorded in the Minutes to be received and considered were taken as read.

- (1) Councillor D E Barnes declared a non-pecuniary interest in Corporate Resources Sub-Committee Minute 305 (Grant Applications) by virtue of his role as Chairman of Rayleigh Age Concern and did not take any part in the consideration thereof.
- (2) Councillor G Fox declared a non-pecuniary but clear interest in the item on telecommunication costs by virtue of being related to an employee of Telewest and left the Meeting during consideration thereof.
- (3) Councillor Mrs J M Giles declared a non-pecuniary interest in Corporate Resources Sub-Committee Minute 305 and the item on telecommunication costs by virtue of her involvement with Rayleigh Age Concern and her son's employment in the Mobile Phone industry respectively.
- (4) Councillor D R Helson declared a non-pecuniary interest in Corporate Resources Sub-Committee Minute 305 by virtue of being a Member of Rochford Sports Council.
- (5) Councillor Mrs H L A Glynn declared in a non-pecuniary interest in Corporate Resources Sub-Committee Minute 305 by virtue of her involvement with the Royal Association of the Deaf.
- (6) Councillor C R Morgan declared a non-pecuniary interest in Corporate Resources Sub-Committee Minute 305 by virtue of being Chairman of the Hullbridge Senior Citizens Welfare Committee.
- (7) Councillor Mrs M A Weir declared a non-pecuniary interest in Corporate Resources Sub-Committee Minute 305 by virtue of

her role as Chairman of Rochford Old Peoples Welfare Committee.

#### **40 OUTSTANDING ISSUES**

The Committee was satisfied that all necessary action had been taken.

#### **41 RECOMMENDATIONS OF PARENT COMMITTEES**

The Committee considered the recommendations of the Parent Committees.

##### **Transportation and Environmental Services Committee - 21 December 1999**

##### **Minute 501 - Waste Contract Strategy Options**

The Chief Executive confirmed that Officers would investigate the progress of Castle Point Borough Council in introducing green recycling.

Councillor V H Leach, Chairman of the Transportation and Environmental Services Committee, indicated that the original intention had been for Rayleigh to be included in the of recycling trial, subject to a successful bid to the County Council for financial assistance. Whilst a bid had not been successful, it was still hoped that Rayleigh could be involved in the future.

##### **Resolved**

- (1) that option 2 which contains a provision enabling the Council to require alternate weekly collections of organic material and residual refuse in any specified part, or all, of the District forms the basis of the collection contract for a period of seven years commencing on 1 April 2001. The specification should also contain an option for the Contractor to collect dry recyclable material, which could be implemented if resources allow.
- (2) that consideration of the extension of the Hawkwell trial beyond 31 March 2001 be deferred, pending examination by the Member Budget Monitoring Working Group of the likely budgetary implications.
- (3) that the contract for collection of paper from 1100 litre banks be tendered separately for the period 1 April 2000 to 31 October 2004.
- (4) that the specification includes the Best Value principals outlined in the Report.
- (5) that the contract requires the use of low emission vehicles and livery which reflects the Council's prevailing role.
- (6) that consideration be given to the use of consultants to assist in the evaluation of the tenders and appointment of a contractor. (HHHC)

#### **42 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

The Committee received the Minutes of the following Sub-Committees and considered the recommendations contained therein (the

recommendations of the Member Budget Monitoring Group had already been dealt with by Pull Council):-

**(i) Local Review Board - 30 November 1999**

It was noted that Councillor P F A Webster had not attended this meeting in view of his knowing the appellant.

**(ii) Compulsory Competitive Tendering Panel - 2 December 1999**

**(iii) Member Budget Monitoring Working Group - 2 December 1999(adjourned)**

**(iv) Member Budget Monitoring Working Group - 9 December 1999(adjourned)**

**(v) Member Budget Monitoring Working Group - 22 December 1999 (adjourned)**

**(vi) Member Budget Monitoring Working Group - 4 January 2000**

**(vii) Corporate Resources Sub-Committee -19 January 2000**

It was noted that Councillor C R Morgan had chaired the meeting for its whole duration.

**Minute 304 - Application for waiver of Public Entertainment Licence Fees, Village Fair, Great Wakering**

**Resolved**

That the fee due for a Public Entertainment Licence for the Great Wakering Village Fair, if granted, be waived in full, (HHHCC)

**Minute 305 - Grants to Outside Bodies**

The Committee agreed a Motion moved by Councillor Mrs J Kelson and seconded by Councillor Mrs H LA Glynn that, subject to monies being available within the budget, an additional £1,000 should be allocated to Hullbridge Senior Citizens Welfare Council and Rayleigh Age Concern to bring them in line with the other applicants.

**Resolved**

- (1) That a Service Level Agreement be prepared for the Southend the services provided. Centre for the Homeless and the Southend Action Group to operate from 2001 onwards, under which the Council would pay for the services provided.

- (2) That grants to the Old Peoples Welfare Groups be allocated as follows:
- Hockley and Hawkwell Old Peoples Welfare Committee - £3,000  
Hullbridge Senior Citizens Welfare Council - £3,000  
Rayleigh Age Concern - £3,000  
Rochford and District Old Peoples Welfare Committee - £3,183
- (3) That a grant of £1,500 be awarded to the Business Enterprise Agency.
- (4) That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Sub-committee outlining alternative, more appropriate, budgetary sources of financial support for the Business Centre Enterprise Agency.
- (5) That a grant of £100 be awarded to the South East Essex Advocacy for Old People.
- (6) That no consideration be given to grant applications received after the advertised deadline for submission.
- (7) That a grant of £600 be awarded to the Essex Racial Equality Council in 2000/01.
- (8) That, in future years, payment to the Essex Racial Equality Council be met from the subscriptions budget.
- (9) That the remaining grant applications be determined as follows:-

| <u>Organisation</u>                   | <u>Grant</u> |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| <u>Existing Applications</u>          |              |
| Ashingdon GAP Club                    | 100          |
| Barling Evergreen Club                | 105          |
| Citizens Advice Bureaux               | 27,950       |
| Rayleigh CAB                          | 27,300       |
| Rochford CAB                          | 4,000        |
| Rayleigh Home Visiting                |              |
| Great Wakering OAP                    | 100          |
| Hockley over 60s                      | 100          |
| Hullbridge Pensioners Fellowship      | 125          |
| Mayday Mobile                         | 1,025        |
| Rochford & District Access Committee  | 100          |
| Rochford Pre School Learning Alliance | 390          |
| Rochford Sports Council               | 2,175        |
| Royal Association for the Deaf        | 500          |
| Southend Action Group –Homeless       | 1,630        |
| Southend Centre for Homeless          | 3,260        |

### Concessionary Rate Hall Hire

|                                          |       |
|------------------------------------------|-------|
| Rayleigh Good Fellowship                 | 1,000 |
| Rayleigh Friends of Southend Cancer Unit | 110   |
| Rayleigh Physically Handicapped Club     | 850   |
| Rayleigh No. 1 Club                      | 800   |
| Rayleigh No 2 Club                       | 440   |
| Multiple Sclerosis Society -             | 1,000 |

### New Applications

|                                                            |          |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Grove Nursery Group                                        | No award |
| Hockley Public Hall                                        | No award |
| Main Road pre school playgroup                             | No award |
| Maplin Scout Association                                   | No award |
| RAVS                                                       | 1,500    |
| Rayleigh Open Door                                         | No award |
| Rochford Hard of Hearing Fund from Best Value consultation |          |
| St Michael's and All Angels                                | No award |
| Winged Fellowship                                          | No award |
| WORLD project                                              | No award |

### **Minute 306 - Asset Review**

The Committee agreed that the recommendations under Minute 306 would be dealt with later in the meeting following exclusion of the public and press.

(viii) Local Review Board - 20 January 2000

It was noted that Councillor P FA Webster had not attended this meeting in view of his knowing the applicant.

(ix) Partnership Sub-Committee (Essex Links) - 25 January 2000

(ix) Corporate Resources Sub Committee - 25 January 2000

As the meeting of 25 January had been adjourned, the Minutes would be reported to a forthcoming meeting.

### **43 AGGREGATE CREDIT LIMIT AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) detailing proposals for the Council's aggregate credit limit and treasury management policies.

#### **Resolved**

(1) That the aggregate credit limit for 2000/2001 be £19M and the temporary borrowing limit be £6M and that the limit for variable rate loans is £2M.

- (2) That the existing policies regarding treasury management continue for 2000/2001. (CD(F&ES))

#### **44 ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DESPATCH OF COMMITTEE PAPERS**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Administrative and Member Services outlining options and proposals for two despatches to Members each week and associated changes to the publication of agenda and reports.

During debate a Member commented on the value of remaining cognisant of the potential future value of electronic distribution of Committee Agenda. Members also expressed their gratitude for the sterling work of the Officer who had been involved in the delivery of Committee papers over recent years.

Responding to Member questions relating to the proposal to appoint a courier for delivery, the Head of Administrative and Member Services advised that:-

- A courier would be prepared to deliver envelopes without obtaining signed receipt at locations where a Member may not be present.
- In general the contents of envelopes were likely to be less once twice weekly despatches are introduced.
- All envelopes delivered by a courier would be sealed, with the courier instructed not to break the seal.
- Councillors would have the option to arrange for the collection of Agenda papers from the Council Offices.
- Officers would monitor the service provided and consult Members on its effectiveness.
- There was no requirement for a courier to be contracted for a specific one year period.

#### **Resolved**

That with effect from the next cycle of meetings:-

- (1) The current arrangements for despatch of Committee Agenda and mail to Members and Town and Parish Councils be changed to a hand delivery of mail on a Monday and Thursday afternoon each week as detailed in the report to the Head of Administrative and Member Services.
- (2) That Anglia Courier Express be employed at a fee of £73.00plus VAT per despatch to undertake the deliveries, the cost to be met from within existing budgetary provision. (HAMS)

#### **45 TELECOMMUNICATION COSTS**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Administrative and Member Services detailing action being taken to reduce the Councils telecommunication costs.

In presenting the report the Head of Administrative and Member Services advised that agreement had now been reached with one existing telephone supplier to reduce its costs and that further meetings were scheduled with other suppliers. Given that direct negotiation was proving successful there would be value in retaining the possibility of approaching consultants as a fall back position at this stage. During debate reference was made to earlier observations of the Member Budget Monitoring Working Group on telecommunication costs and to the value of identifying a complete picture of potential savings in advance of a final decision.

Responding to Member questions, officers advised that:-

- direct negotiation with suppliers did not involve the sharing of any savings with other parties.
- over the longer period expenditure on telecommunications had been relatively consistent. In terms of present annual costs, £10,000 of the £40,000 budget figure was for mobile phones. Of the £30,000 for land lines, £21,000 was actual call charges, the remaining £9,000 being line rental. There was currently one mobile phone provider, although a switch has recently been made to a supplier offering more competitive terms.
- Officers were currently reviewing possibilities with regard to pre-paid phones.

On a motion moved by Councillor P F A Webster and seconded by Councillor T G Cutmore it was:-

### **Resolved**

That the report be referred to the Member Budget Monitoring Group to provide officers with an opportunity to provide further information on savings. (HAMS)

## **46 APPOINTMENT OF ADVISORS TO THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Administrative and Member Services detailing an offer by the Secretary of the Rayleigh and Rawreth Tenants Association to serve as an advisor to the Community Services Committee.

The Committee felt that the Council's previous decision with regard to advisors should remain and on a motion moved by Councillor D E Barnes and seconded by Councillor P F A Webster it was:-

## **Resolved**

That the Secretary of the Rayleigh and Rawreth Tenants Association be advised that the Council would not wish to see adjustment to current policy with regard to advisors but would welcome his continued involvement with the Housing Management Sub-Committee in its dealing with housing matters (HAMS).

### **47 BENEFIT COUNCIL TAX NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC RATES AND SUNDRY DEBTORS - WRITE OFFS**

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) on cases of Benefit, Council Tax , National Non Domestic Rates and Sundry Debtor Write Offs.

## **Resolved**

- (1) that the items written off under the Corporate Directors' delegated authority be noted.
- (2) that the items shown in appendix B of the report (attached to the signed copy of these Minutes) be now written off in the accounts of the authority (HRHM/HFS).

## **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**Resolved** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining business on the grounds that it involves exempt information as defined in paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **48 MINUTE 306 OF CORPORATE RESOURCES SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2000 - ASSET REVIEW**

Note Councillor T G Cutmore declared an interest in this item by virtue of his role as Chairman of Ashingdon Parish Council,

The Committee considered the confidential recommendations under Minute 306, which sought approval to proposed actions for a number of the Council's non leisure sites which had been identified as being potentially surplus to requirements.

In referring to site proposals a Member expressed concern at the inclusion of two parcels of land in the Great Waking Area. Reference was made to previous decisions relating to the two sites and to the value of retaining current arrangements. Some Members were in favour of retaining areas which were currently Playspace. Other Members felt that decisions on Playspace provision should be made following formulation of a strategic plan and that, at this stage, the recommendations of the Sub-Committee should be supported. The Chief Executive referred to recent observations by the external Auditor relating to asset management.



A motion, moved by Councillor G Fox and seconded by Councillor D F Flack, that the two Great Wakering sites detailed in the Sub-Committee's confidential recommendations and set out in the exempt appendix to these Minutes be not included for the purposes of disposal was lost on a show of hands.

The Chief Executive advised that, wherever possible, officers would endeavour to bring forward any future proposals relating to the sites as a package. Whilst endorsing proposals the Committee agreed that, any final disposal proposals should be submitted to Full Council for determination.

**Resolved**

That, subject to all final proposed disposals being submitted to Full Council for determination, the action proposed in respect of the non leisure sites as set out in the exempt appendix to the Sub-Committee Minutes and attached to the signed copy of these Minutes be endorsed (HMS).

The Meeting closed at 9.13pm

Chairman

Date