

Council – 28 January 2003

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **28 January 2003** when there were present:

Cllr R S Allen (Chairman)
Cllr R A Amner (Vice-Chairman)

Mrs L Barber	Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr C I Black	Cllr Mrs M D McCarthy
Cllr Mrs R Brown	Cllr G A Mockford
Cllr P A Capon	Cllr C R Morgan
Cllr Mrs T J Capon	Cllr R A Oatham
Cllr R G S Choppen	Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr D F L Flack	Cllr P K Savill
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn	Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr T E Goodwin	Cllr S P Smith
Cllr J E Grey	Cllr Mrs M A Starke
Cllr A J Humphries	Cllr M G B Starke
Cllr C A Hungate	Cllr J Thomass
Cllr Mrs L Hungate	Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr C C Langlands	Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr C J Lumley	Cllr P F A Webster
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley	Cllr Mrs M A Weir
Cllr Mrs E Marlow	Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs T G Cutmore and T Livings

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	-	Chief Executive
J Honey	-	Corporate Director (Law, Planning and Administration)
R Crofts	-	Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
D Deeks	-	Head of Financial Services
S Fowler	-	Head of Administrative and Member Services

35 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2002 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

36 BUDGET STRATEGY 2003/04 – 2005/06

Council considered the report of the Head of Financial Services on the Revenue budget, Council Tax, Capital Programme and fees and charges for 2003/04. The report also contained details of the broad strategy for 2004/05 and 2005/06 and asked the Council to consider the rents and charges in respect of the Housing Revenue Account. Members had also received three supplementary papers that were to

be taken in conjunction with the report of the Head of Financial Services.

Members were advised that there were three amendments to the report. The first amendment was to insert a charge of £10 in 2003/04 for the Ancient Woodland of England book by Oliver Rackam. The second amendment was to the charges for Sex Establishment Licences, where it was proposed that the fees in 2003/04 should be a £5,000 non-refundable fee application, £5,000 fee for issue of licence (if granted) and £5,000 non-refundable annual renewal of licence fee. Members were also requested to amend the current year's charges to this level with immediate effect. The third amendment was to reinstate charges of £1.50 each in 2003/04 for the Origins of Rochford and Rayleigh books.

Council was informed that the Hackney Carriage charges were to be considered by the Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee. Having received the views of the business community at the Finance & Procedures Overview and Scrutiny Committees on 22 October and 12 December 2002, a detailed response on the budget would also be provided to the business community.

Following this meeting, the Council on 18 February 2003 would set the total Council Tax from Rochford after receiving notification of the requirements of Essex County Council, Essex Police, Rayleigh Town Council and the Parishes within the District. The proposals in respect of Rochford District Council were based in the context of a budget strategy of a 9% increase in Council Tax for 2003/04 and for the following two years of the strategy. This was in accordance with the Corporate Plan objective to move to a balanced budget.

Councillor P F A Webster moved and Councillor M B G Starke seconded the motion set out below.

Councillor C I Black moved and Councillor C J Lumley seconded an amendment that-

- budget provision for sand bags should be increased by £2,000 to £4,000, to be funded by a reduction in the provision for office accommodation at Rochford by £2,000 to £43,200.
- budget provision for sewers and ditch clearance should be increased by £10,000 to £35,000, to be funded by a £10,000 reduction in the computer contract payments budget to £550,000.

- the 25p charge period for car parking be extended from half hour to one hour, the estimated cost of £38,300 to be covered by balances.

In favour of the amendment, reference was made to the fact that these items had been requested by residents. Industrial sand bags purchased by local people are often too heavy to carry, there were numerous problems with ditches and sewers, and in respect of car park charges, it was not possible to achieve anything in only 30 minutes because of the busy nature of the local town centres.

Against the amendment, reference was made that the costs of the proposal for car parking charges would add 1% extra to the Council Tax and that, in respect of sewers and ditches, there were also responsibilities falling to Parish Councils and private landowners. The amendment was lost on a show of hands.

A second amendment was moved by Councillor R A Oatham and seconded by Councillor Mrs J R Lumley as follows:

- the proposed increase in charges for sports pitches be cancelled and charges be retained at the present level.
- that the proposed increase in charges for playgroups be cancelled and the charges be retained at the present level.
- the provision of £20,000 for air conditioning in the Council Chamber at the Civic Suite, Rayleigh be removed from the budget.

In favour of the amendment, reference was made to the need to keep sports and playgroup charges at their current levels and that the proposed air conditioning in the Council Chamber was an unnecessary item which would have an impact on the Council Tax level.

Against the amendment, reference was made to the fact that the charges were a contractual issue and would need to be discussed with the contractor. In respect of the air conditioning in the Council Chamber, this venue had been used over 100 times in the previous year and would benefit Members, staff and the public, for example those who attended Planning Committee Meetings. Reference was also made to the conditions in the civic buildings at other local Councils. The amendment was lost on a show of hands.

In respect of the original motion moved by Councillor P F A Webster and seconded by Councillor M G B Starke, it was:

Resolved

- (1) That the revised estimates for 2002/03 be approved.
- (2) That any profit share from the leisure contractor in respect of 2002/03 be placed in the Park Sports Centre Reserve.
- (3) That the estimates for 2003/04 be approved, together with the supplementary bids for resources received from the Community and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committees be approved as follows:-
 - (a) Pooles Lane fencing £2,300
 - (b) Additional collection at Golden Cross £4,000
 - (c) Chewing gum removal £8,000.
- (4) That the Council Tax for 2003/04 be approved.
- (5) That the Budget Strategy for 2003/04 – 2005/06 be approved.
- (6) That the Schedule of Fees and Charges, including the amendments, be approved.
- (7) That the Capital Programme for 2003/04 be approved.
- (8) That the Capital Programme Strategy for 2003/04 – 2005/06 be approved.
- (9) That the Housing Revenue Account Fees and Charges be approved as follows:
 - (a) The rent increase to be in line with Government announcements.
 - (b) Garage rents to be increased to £6.20 per week.
 - (c) The basic charge in respect of wardens to be £22.00 per week.
 - (d) An additional landlords charge in respect of wardens be set at £2.50 per week.
 - (e) The heating and lighting charge be set at £8.00 per week. (HFS)

The meeting closed at 8.27pm.

Chairman

Date