

ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Corporate Resources Sub-Committee

At a Meeting held on 19 January 2000 Present: Councillors D E Barnes (Chairman) (from 7,00pm) R Adams, Mrs J M Giles, Mrs J Helson, C R Morgan, V H Leach, R E Vingoe, P F A Webster, D A Weir and Mrs M A Weir.

Apologies: Councillors G Fox and T Livings.

301 CHAIRMANSHIP OF MEETING

Owing to the absence of the Chairman at the beginning of the Meeting, it was

RESOLVED

That Councillor C R Morgan be appointed Chairman for this Meeting only. Councillor Morgan then took the Chair.

302 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 November 1999 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

303 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The following non pecuniary interests were declared in the item concerning Grants to Outside Bodies (Minute 305), as follows:-

Councillor D E Barnes as Chairman of Rayleigh Age Concern.

Councillor Mrs J M Giles as the Council's representative on Rayleigh Age Concern.

Councillor C R Morgan as the Council's representative on the Hullbridge Senior Citizens Welfare Council.

Councillor Mrs M S Vince as the Council's representative on the Rochford and District Old People's Welfare Committee.

Councillor Mrs M A Weir as Chairman of Rochford and District Old People's Welfare Committee.

304 APPLICATION FOR WAIVER OF PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT LICENCE FEES, VILLAGE FAIR, GREAT WAKERING

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care concerning an application for the waiver of public

entertainment licence fees for a village fair to be held at Great Wakering recreation ground on 28 August 2000.

The application had been submitted by the Clerk to Great Wakering Parish Council and a letter giving further information about the proposed event, together with a statement of the Parish Council's accounts, was appended to the report. It was noted that it was hoped to reinstate the Village Fair as a Millennium celebration and to provide a day's entertainment for local people, with any profits to be used for village projects.

In reply to a Member question, Officers advised that the recreation ground was owned by the Council, and it would be a condition of hire that the Parish Council possessed the necessary public liability insurance. A public entertainment licence was required as the Fair involved musical events.

On a motion by Councillor Mrs M A Weir and seconded by Councillor R E Vingoe, it was

RECOMMENDED

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

305 GRANTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

NOTE: The Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item by virtue of being the Council's representative on the Business Enterprise Agency.

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Financial Services concerning grants to outside bodies, to which was appended a list of grant applications from new applicants (including those arising from an advertisement in Rochford District Matters), applications from existing or previous recipients, and applications for concessionary rate hall hire. An updated copy of the appendices, together with a schedule of proposals for the award of grants, was circulated at the Meeting.

Also outlined were details of the draft estimates for the next financial year in respect of grants and community support, for which a sum of £27,900 had been allocated. Members were reminded of the criteria for considering grant applications, which had been agreed by Finance and General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 30 November 1999.

The Head of Financial Services explained, by way of introduction to the proposals for the allocation of grants, that the figures shown represented either the request for funding that had been submitted by the organisation, or an increase of 2 ½% over the allocation awarded in 1999/2000, whichever was the lower. It was also pointed out that the revised appendices showed details of applications that had been received since the initial preparation of the report.

The Sub-Committee was informed of additions to the details shown in the appendices relating to the Rayleigh Association of Voluntary Services and the Royal Association for the Deaf: the former offered help to homeless families; whilst the activities of the latter covered the Rochford District even though its offices were located in Southend.

In reply to a Member question, it was confirmed that the necessary financial information and accounts had been received from all applicants. Not all were registered charities, and it was considered that, in future, this designation should be clarified in applications to be considered by Members.

The Sub-Committee then considered the individual applications, together with Officers' recommendations in each case, and discussed a number of the requests in some depth. Details are given below of those instances where Members put forward motions and agreed specific recommendations:

i) Existing Grant Recipients

- a). Southend Centre for the Homeless/Southend Action Group for the Homeless.

It was considered that, whilst the services provided by these organisations were integral to the Council's activities, it would not in future be appropriate to fund them by means of grants. Instead, it was suggested that payments should be related to the actual services provided to the Council and, on a motion by Councillor Mrs J Helson and seconded by Councillor Mrs J M Giles it was

RECOMMENDED

That a Service Level Agreement be prepared for both organisations, to operate from 2001 onwards, under which the Council would pay for the services provided. (HFS)

The Head of Service provided, at Members' request, details of the finances held by the Southend Action Group for the Homeless.

- b). Old People's Welfare Groups

In discussing the applications from the four Old People's Welfare Organisations, a number of Members considered that they should, wherever possible, be treated equally and receive similar levels of grant aid. To work towards achieving consistency, it would therefore be necessary to freeze the grant to some, whilst increasing the grant to others, over and above that proposed in the report.

The suggested increases could be contained within estimates.

On a motion by Councillor Mrs J Helson and seconded by Councillor V H Leach

it was

RECOMMENDED

That grants to the Old People's Welfare Groups be allocated as follows:-

Hockley and Hawkwell Old People's Welfare Committee	-	£3,000
Hullbridge Senior Citizens Welfare Council	-	£2,000
Rayleigh Age Concern	-	£2,000
Rochford and District Old People's Welfare Committee		£3,183

c). **Business Enterprise Agency**

Some Members drew attention, during discussion of this application, to the healthy state of the Agency's finances and, in view of the likelihood of Central Government funding also being forthcoming, questioned the principle of the Council awarding any grant. Others referred to the Agency's valuable role in supporting local businesses and assisting in the Council's efforts to promote economic regeneration but expressed doubt as to whether the grants budget was an appropriate source of financial assistance for what was essentially a commercially – orientated organisation. Officers were therefore requested to report back to the Sub Committee concerning possible alternative ways of providing financial assistance to the Agency. A motion by Councillor P F A Webster and seconded by Councillor G A Mockford to defer consideration of the application until this additional information was available was, following a vote, declared lost.

RECOMMENDED

1. That a grant of £1,500 be awarded to the Business Enterprise Agency.
2. That a report be submitted to a future Meeting of the Sub Committee outlining alternative, more appropriate, budgetary sources of financial support for the Agency. (HFS)

d). **South Essex Advocacy for Older People**

In reply to a Member question, the Head of Service indicated that this organisation received a wide range of external funding, but that their activities did complement the Council's services, thereby meeting the criteria for receiving grant aid. Some Members considered that any support should, in view of the Advocacy's healthy financial position, be pitched at a nominal level, but a motion by Councillor P F A Webster and seconded by Councillor G A Mockford to award a grant of £10 was, following a vote, defeated. Members who favoured a larger award did, however, point to the need to review the policy guiding consideration of this particular application.

RECOMMENDED

That a grant of £100 be awarded to the South East Essex Advocacy for Older People. (HFS)

ii). Outstanding Applications

The Sub Committee was informed of three organisations from which applications had not been submitted: Stepping Out; Rochford and District Swimming Club; and Rayleigh Operatic and Dramatic Society. It was noted that the application from the Rayleigh Talking Newspaper for the Blind would be funded from the sum set aside for consultations relating to Best Value.

RECOMMENDED

That no consideration be given to grant applications received after the advertised deadline for submission. (HFS)

iii). New Applications

a). Essex Racial Equality Council

Members noted that it was proposed to allocate a grant of £600 to this organisation in 2000/01 but thereafter to include it within the budget identified for the payment of subscriptions. A number of Members referred to the need for the Council to obtain specialist advice from this body concerning racial equality issues since there was no relevant "in house" experience available, and were therefore supportive of offering financial assistance. Others, however, considered that it was inappropriate to make a contribution to what was regarded as a national body, arguing instead that it should be funded from Central Government sources. A motion by Councillor P F A Webster and seconded by Councillor G A Mockford to refuse the application was, following a vote, defeated.

RECOMMENDED

1. That a grant of £600 be awarded to the Essex Racial Equality Council in 2000/01.

2. That, in future years, payment to this organisation be met from the subscriptions budget. (HFS)

Details of the remaining grant applications which were agreed unanimously by the Sub Committee are given below:

RECOMMENDED

That the following grant applications be determined as follows. (HFS)

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Grant</u>
<u>Existing Applications</u>	
Ashington OAP Club	100
Barling Evergreen Club	105
<u>Citizens Advice Bureaux</u>	
Rayleigh CAB	27,950
Rochford CAB	27,300
Rayleigh Home Visiting	4,000
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
<u>Concessionary Rate Hall Hire</u>	
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

Regarding concessionary rate hall hire the Head of Service explained that, for 2000/01, any financial assistance would, as previously agreed by Members, be awarded to the organisation direct in order that they could then choose which halls they wished to use. In future years, these requests would be treated in the same way as other grant applications.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

Resolved

That the public and the press be excluded from the Meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of Exempt Information as defined in Paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

306 ASSET REVIEW

The Sub-Committee considered the confidential report of the Head of Legal Services, which sought approval to the disposal of a number of the Council's non-leisure sites which had been identified as being potentially surplus to requirements.

Members were reminded that the future of a number of properties had been considered by the Member Budget Monitoring Working Group in Autumn 1999, as part of the asset review. It had been agreed by Finance and General Purposes Committee on 12 October 1999 that some of these sites should be sold on the open market, whilst others had been visited in November by the Working Group, the recommendations arising from which were appended to the Head of Services' report for the Sub-Committee's consideration. The views of the Ward Members concerning the proposed disposal options for these properties had been sought, and were reported to the Sub-Committee. The recommended course of action for each of the sites is given in the exempt appendix to these Minutes.

RECOMMENDED

That the action in respect of the sites as listed in the exempt appendix to these Minutes be endorsed.

The Meeting opened at 6.00pm and closed at 7.50pm.

Chairman

Date