

ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL**Minutes of the Member Budget Monitoring Group**

At a Reconvened Meeting held on 9 December 1999. Present:
Councillors D E Barnes (Chairman), C R Morgan, R E Vingoe and
P F A Webster.

Apologies: Councillor V H Leach.

Substitutes: Councillor Mrs J Helson.

Visiting: Councillor V D Hutchings.

68. MATTERS ARISING FROM ADJOURNED MEETING**Leisure Contract**

The Chief Executive advised Members that it was the intention for a working plan to be drawn up in respect of the Leisure Contract. The matter would then be subject of an open advertisement similar to that used in relation to the Information Technology Contract. The CCT Panel would then need to convene to consider the matter in the New Year.

Mill Hall Complex

The Working Group was advised that further to the Council's decision on this matter, a planning application would be submitted proposing the change of use of the Sports and Social Club site to car parking area at the earliest opportunity. In addition, an application for Conservation Area Consent to demolish the building would also be submitted.

Further to Members' questions relating to the planning application, the Chief Executive advised that the detail relating to the demolition had yet to be worked through; however, it was likely that such concerns as the lorry movements could be addressed as part of any contract.

Blatches Farm

Further to the debate on this matter at Full Council the Working Group noted that the matter would need to be progressed through the budget process and then be reported back to Committee for decision.

69. BUDGET STRATEGY

With the aid of viewfoils the Head of Financial Services presented to Members information projecting the financial situation of the Authority from 1999/2000 through to 2000/2003 and those known factors which could have both a positive or negative impact on the Authority's budget.

It was noted that the target savings estimated for the year 1999/2000 might not be achieved and therefore that the projected deficit might require an additional draw down from budget strategy reserves. The proposed target saving included both income and expenditure for the financial year up to March 2000, and at this stage there was still a degree of uncertainty as to the final budgetary out turn. Mindful of this situation Members discussed the possibilities of achieving additional savings in order to reduce the deficit if required; these might include the following matters:-

- a review of income sources
- investigation of budgets line by line to achieve savings
- time expired posts and replacement/recruitment of staff
- a review of planned income versus actual committed costs.

The Working Group considered that, given the Authority's financial position, for the present time, no job vacancies should be filled without prior consent from the Chief Executive. It was considered appropriate for further information to be brought back relating to Time Expired Posts and possibilities relating thereto. It was further considered appropriate for those items not currently included within the budget, as detailed in the papers tabled by the Head of Financial Services, to be investigated further to see what further possible savings might be made.

70. FURTHER MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

Freight House

Members were advised of the possible interest by a major brewery in the Freight House, Rochford. The Working Group considered that the Chief Executive should be authorised to speak to the Company to clarify their interest in the site.

Land at Purdeys Industrial Estate, Rochford

Members were advised by the Corporate Director (Law, Planning & Administration) of an offer in respect of land held by this Authority under covenant at the above site. In noting the offer made in relation to the land, Members considered that Officers should attempt to negotiate further with Rochehall, the owners of the Purdeys Industrial Estate site, in an attempt to secure release from the covenant restricting the land use to that of waste management site only.

The Meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Chairman

Date