

Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee

– 16 September 2004

Minutes of the meeting of the **Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **16 September 2004** when there were present:-

Cllr P F A Webster (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs S A Harper (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr P A Capon
Cllr K A Gibbs
Cllr J E Grey

Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Cllr D Merrick

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr T Livings

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr Mrs T J Capon

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	- Chief Executive
R J Honey	- Corporate Director (Law, Planning and Administration)
S Clarkson	- Head of Revenue and Housing Management
D Deeks	- Head of Financial Services
Y Woodward	- Accountancy Manager
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

399 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

400 COMMUNITY TRANSPORT – REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management on a request for additional funding from Rayleigh and Rochford Association for Voluntary Services in order to continue to run the Community Transport facility for this year.

Officers advised that the County Council had agreed to extend its funding of the community transport service for an additional year, to 2006. It was further noted that the scheme had been successful in securing additional income from the STAR Partnership for the transportation of a toy library around the District. This would generate income of £3,000 in year one and £3,500 in the following year, which was in addition to the income identified in the report.

Responding to a concern raised relating to expenditure on salaries, officers confirmed that, due to the high level of commitment required in terms of time, it had not been possible to secure volunteer drivers for the scheme and it had therefore been necessary to recruit vocational drivers. In addition, it was important to note that this was the first year of operation of the scheme and, as such, there had been some initial start-up costs, which would not be ongoing.

In response to an enquiry relating to whether funding might be better directed at the taxi voucher scheme, officers stressed that the taxi voucher and community transport schemes had completely different users and that the community transport service provided transport for many elderly people with mobility problems.

During debate Members, while recognising the merits of the community transport service, were nevertheless concerned about the gap that existed between income and expenditure and there was a consensus that this issue should be properly examined by the Committee.

Members concurred that funding of up to £15,500 should be made available in this financial year to the community transport scheme from the Essex County Council grant, but that the Committee should look at community transport provision in great detail before the end of this financial year to determine whether funds were being correctly targeted and whether the community transport scheme could become more economically viable in order that it might be transferred to a trust.

Recommended to the Policy and Finance Committee

- (1) That funding of up to £15,500 be made available during this financial year to the Community Transport Scheme from the Essex County Council community transport grant.
- (2) That a detailed examination of community transport provision be conducted over the next 6 months by this Committee, to be concluded by March 2005. (HRHM)

401 ASSET MANAGEMENT

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Law, Planning and Administration) inviting Members to endorse the Asset Management Plan 2004.

Resolved

That the Asset Management Plan 2004 be endorsed. (CD(LPA))

402 CLOSURE OF ACCOUNTS 2003/2004

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Financial Services on some of the detail regarding the Statement of Accounts submitted to Council on 29 July.

Recommended to Council

- (1) That the budget amendments identified in this report be agreed.
- (2) That the amendments to the accounts identified within this report be agreed. (HFS)

403 CAPITAL STRATEGY

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Financial Services presenting the Draft Capital Strategy for approval.

Recommended to Council

That the Capital Strategy be agreed. (HFS)

404 A MODERN APPROACH TO INSPECTING SERVICES: A CONSULTATION BY THE AUDIT COMMISSION

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive outlining the Audit Commission's proposals for inspecting local public services in England from 1 April 2005 and seeking feedback on a number of specific issues.

Resolved

That the responses detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be submitted. (CE)

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

Chairman

Date