

Policy & Finance Committee – 11 June 2002

Minutes of the meeting of the **Policy & Finance Committee** held on **11 June 2002** when there were present:

Cllr P F A Webster (Chairman)
Cllr J E Grey (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr A J Humphries
Cllr C A Hungate
Cllr C C Langlands
Cllr C J Lumley

Cllr C R Morgan
Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr P K Savill
Cllr S P Smith

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs R S Allen and Mrs M A Starke.

VISITING

Cllr Mrs M S Vince

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren – Chief Executive
D Deeks – Head of Financial Services
Ms S Fowler – Head of Administrative & Member Services
Mrs H Drye – Corporate Policy Manager
Ms S Worthington – Committee Administrator

230 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2002 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

231 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr C J Lumley declared a personal interest in item 11 of the agenda by virtue of being a Rayleigh Town Councillor and a member of the Rayleigh Mount Committee.

232 GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER ON THE REGIONS – “YOUR REGION, YOUR CHOICE – REVITALISING THE ENGLISH REGIONS”

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive setting out the content of the Government White Paper on the Regions.

During debate, it was the general consensus that the proposals could result in the residents of this District being less well represented.

On a motion moved by Cllr A J Humphries and seconded by Cllr S P Smith, it was:-

Resolved

That, subject to the following Member comments, the Officer comments in the report form the basis of the Council's response to the Government White Paper:-

- It is a matter of some concern that the proposals could result in residents being less well represented at a local level.
- There are many disparities between the counties of the proposed Eastern Region.
- It appears likely that the proposals would not devolve power from the centre to the regions, but that power would be transferred upwards.
- The White Paper appears to address the needs of the north and northeast of the country rather than other areas. (CEx)

233 ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION PAPER – “SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ESSEX: CHALLENGES AND VISION

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive on the Essex County Council Community Strategy as part of the partner consultation. Community consultation on the Strategy would take place in September 2002.

On a motion moved by the Chairman, it was:-

Resolved

That the County's vision document be noted and that the Officer comments as contained in the report be sent to the County. (CEx)

234 PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE – FEEDBACK FROM RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive updating Members on the latest information received from the Town Council in respect of the Environmental Centre.

During debate particular concern was expressed that, despite the lease transferring the land to the Town Council being signed in January 2001, no progress has been made with the project. Members were concerned that the site, if left vacant for a considerable period of time,

could attract problems associated with Crime and Disorder. Members considered that the Town Council should confirm a specific timescale for completion of the project and should discuss with this Council future plans with respect to the site.

On a motion moved by the Chairman, it was:-

Resolved

That the Council publicly records its continuing concern over the Town Council's lack of progress on this project. (CEx)

235 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES 2002 PAY CLAIM

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive updating Members on the possibility of industrial action by the Public Sector Unions as a result of the non-settlement of the Local Government Services 2002 Pay Claim.

Should the ballot for industrial action prove successful, initial industrial action would take place on 17 July. This Council was taking measures to ensure that service cover would be provided in the event of industrial action. Members would be kept informed of progress via the Members' Bulletin.

On a motion moved by the Chairman, it was:-

Resolved

That the actions already taken by the Chief Executive in the context of the possible strike action be endorsed and, should industrial action proceed, that the Chief Executive keeps the Council updated on a regular basis. (CEx)

236 NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC RATING – APPLICATIONS FOR DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue & Housing Management referring to four applications for Discretionary Rate Relief in accordance with Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

Resolved

- (1) That 20% Discretionary 'top-up' Rate Relief be granted to the St. Michael's Playgroup and Fairview Under-5's Playgroup with effect from 1 April 2001.
- (2) That 25% Discretionary Rate Relief be granted to the Hullbridge

Sports & Social Club with effect from 1 April 2002.

- (3) That 50% Discretionary Rate Relief be granted to the Kent Elms Tennis Club with effect from 1 April 2002. (HRHM)

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 exempt information as defined in paragraphs 5 and 11 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 would be disclosed.

237 VILLAGE SHOP RATE RELIEF FOR BUSINESSES IN RURAL AREAS

The Committee considered the exempt report of the Head of Revenue & Housing Management referring to four applications for Rate Relief received in accordance with the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.

Resolved

- (1) That 50% Discretionary Rural Rate Relief be granted to the Thymes Nursery, The Cottages Guest House, Davesave Stores with effect from 1 April 2001.
- (2) That it be noted that 50% Mandatory Rural Rate Relief has been granted to Davesave Stores with effect from 1 April 2001.
- (3) That the application from Kaz Studio be refused as detailed in this report. (HRHM)

238 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S APPRAISAL

The Committee considered the exempt note of the Chief Executive's appraisal dated 29 April 2002.

Resolved

That the following dates be agreed for the next Chief Executive's Appraisal Interviews:

- 23 October 2002
- 9 April 2003 (CEX)

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm

Chairman

Date