
Minutes of the meeting of the **Member Budget Monitoring Working Group** held on **27 July 2000** when there were present:

Cllr G Fox - Chairman

Cllr Mrs J Helson
Cllr C R Morgan

Cllr R E Vingoe
Cllr P F A Webster

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	Chief Executive
R J Honey	Corporate Director (Law, Planning and Administration)
D Deeks	Head of Financial Services
A Smith	Head of Administrative and Member Services
G Brazendale	Committee Administrator

90 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 JULY 2000 AND OF THE RECONVENED MEETING ON 11 JULY 2000

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 July 2000 and of the Reconvened Meeting of 11 July 2000 were approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

91 MATTERS ARISING

There were two matters arising, as outlined below:

Minute 87 – Asset Review: Land at Highfield Crescent, Rayleigh

The Working Group was advised that Officers had made contact with the resident, and that a response was awaited.

Minute 89 – Final Accounts 1999/2000 and Budgets 2000-2002

Responding to a Member question, the Head of Financial Services indicated that further information was awaited on the Government's proposals relating to concessionary fares, which would enable the impact upon the District to be assessed.

92 CAPITAL PROGRAMME & CAPITAL STRATEGY

The Working Group considered the report of the Head of Financial Services which outlined the current position on the Capital Programme. It also drew attention to the new requirements for Local Authorities to submit Capital Strategy Statements.

The revised Capital Programme for 2000/2001 through to 2002/3, and a suggested Capital Strategy Statement for 2000/01 were appended to

the report. The key elements of the programme were highlighted, during consideration of which the following main points arose:

- Recycling (Note 3)
The Chief Executive informed Members that tender submissions for the recycling contract were due on 5 September 2000, the results of which would be reported to the Working Group's Meeting in October.
- Purchase of land at Great Wakering from MOD (Note 7)
The Group was informed that Officers were urgently seeking confirmation that the MOD held the legal title to the land that the Council wished to purchase. The progress of consultations concerning the establishment of the playspaces, for which the land was required, would be reported to Members in the Autumn cycle.
- Mill Hall Improvements (Note 11)
Concern was expressed about the progress of the project and, in particular, the provision of the cinema screen. The Chief Executive indicated that a meeting was soon to be held with Leisure Connection concerning the screen, and that Officers would seek to resolve the matter urgently.
- Vehicles (2001/02) (Note 14)
The Group agreed that the provision of the civic car/chauffeur service, and the associated staffing issues, should be examined as part of the current year's budget cycle. A report to the next Meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee, identifying possible options, was requested.
- IT Requirements Non Contract (2001/02) (Note 20)
The Head of Administrative and Member Services informed the Group that the Council's new IT contractor, Securicor Information Systems Ltd, would need to carry out a full site survey to identify the cost of re-wiring the corporate network, which was necessary to ensure the full operation of the system. The cost implications would be included within the IS/IT Strategy, which would be considered by Members in the second part of the Autumn Cycle, and it was suggested that a presentation by Securicor at that time concerning the main issues to be addressed by the strategy would be helpful. Additionally, the Association of Essex Authorities was currently examining the issue of E – Government and implications for Councils. For the future, it was suggested that the Council's IT structure should retain sufficient flexibility to respond to further changes in legislation, and partnership/joint working arrangements to achieve Government targets for the electronic delivery of many of the Council's services could be examined.
- Public Conveniences (Note 24)

In response to a Member question, the Chief Executive advised that the improvements to the conveniences at Crown Hill, Rayleigh, were on schedule for completion in October, as set out in the timetable included in the specification. It was suggested that, in future, Members should receive details of both the cost and proposed duration of contracted projects.

- Community Initiative – St Mark’s Hall (Note 26)
The Group agreed that the Chief Executive should contact senior personnel at Springboard Housing Association to hasten progress with negotiations.
- Mill Hall, Rayleigh – Sports and Social Club (Note 27)
Members were advised that this scheme involved two distinct elements, demolition of the existing buildings and construction of the car park. Tenders had been submitted for the former, and the closing date for the latter was 4 August 2000.
- Town Centre Development (Notes 30-32)
Members referred to the mechanism that had been considered by the Structural and Procedural Review Working Group for the town centre Working Groups to report on progress, and it was agreed that Transportation and Environmental Services Committee should, in the Autumn cycle, agree a timetable for the Working Groups’ Meetings and seek nominations for co-optees.
- Upgrade Street Cleansing in Town Centres (Note 37)
The Group concurred with the view of a Member that the unused residue of the budgetary allocation should continue to be held against this heading, should it prove necessary in future to provide additional cleaning. Monitoring of the new service would determine whether such an enhancement was required.

The Group then examined the revised Capital Programme, appended to the report. It was agreed that, wherever possible, the purpose and content of particular projects should be included in the presentation of estimate figures, together with an indication of any external sources of funding. In response to a Member question, the Chief Executive confirmed that the possibility of making budgetary provision to upgrade the Council’s sheltered accommodation would be examined as part of the Best Value process during the forthcoming budget cycle.

It was noted that the revised sum in 2000/01 for town centre regeneration reserve (item 65) was £662,590 rather than £607,500 as stated.

The Group considered and agreed the appended Capital Strategy Statement for 2000/01 which would be submitted to the DETR.

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the revised capital programme (a copy of which is attached to these Minutes) be agreed.
- (2) That the draft Capital Strategy Statement be noted. (HFS)

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

Resolved

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, 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 Act.

93 MICROSOFT OFFICE 97

The Working Group considered the confidential report of the Corporate Director (Law, Planning and Administration) which advised Members of a dispute concerning the validity of the Council's Microsoft Office 97 Licences.

Members discussed a range of possible sources of information and assistance which could be sought.

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the Council's position be maintained until further information is received from both the manufacturer and supplier.
- (2) That the Member Budget Monitoring Working Group be kept informed of developments. (CD(LPA))

The Meeting opened at 5.30pm and closed at 7.20pm

Chairman

Date