

Council – 27 February 2001

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **23 January 2001** when there were present:

Cllr Mrs W M Stevenson
Cllr Mrs S J Lemon

Chairman
Vice-Chairman

Cllr R Adams
Cllr R S Allen
Cllr R A Amner
Cllr Mrs R Brown
Cllr P A Capon
Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr D F Flack
Cllr D M Ford
Cllr Mrs J E Ford
Cllr G Fox
Cllr K A Gibbs
Cllr Mrs J M Giles
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn
Cllr J E Grey
Cllr Mrs J Hall
Cllr D R Helson
Cllr Mrs J Helson
Cllr A Hosking
Cllr Mrs L Hungate
Cllr C C Langlands

Cllr V H Leach
Cllr Mrs S J Lemon
Cllr T Livings
Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr G A Mockford
Cllr C R Morgan
Cllr P J Morgan
Cllr R A Pearson
Cllr Mrs L I V Phillips
Cllr R F Powell
Cllr S P Smith
Cllr M G B Starke
Cllr P D Stebbing
Mrs W M Stevenson
Cllr R E Vingoe
Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr P F A Webster
Cllr D A Weir
Cllr Mrs M A Weir

13 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 December 2000 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

14 HOUSING MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minute 117 – Rent and Charges

Resolved

- (1) That rents be increased by an average of 3.5%.
- (2) That the rents for Finchfield Trust bungalows and the Dutch Cottage be increased by 3.5%.
- (3) That there be no increase in the charges in respect of sheltered accommodation.
- (4) That garage rents be set at £5.80 per week.

- (5) That the summary of estimated income and expenditure for the Housing Revenue Account as attached to the Housing Management Sub-Committee Minutes be agreed. (CD(F&ES))

15 2001/2002 Budget Strategy

The Council received a presentation from Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) on the 2001/2002 Budget Strategy. The presentation covered all revenue aspects, detailing the current position and the possible situations for 2002/3 and 2003/4.

On the matter of Council Tax increase, Members were advised that for the next financial year, Government had indicated an increase of 6% (more than the standard 4½% due to increased SSA) was acceptable for the Authority. Noting this, Members were further advised of the financial models which included,

- 8 / 4½ / 4½ %
- 7 / 4½ / 4½ %
- 6 / 4½ / 4½ %
- 6 / 6 / 6 %
- 6¼ / 6¼ / 6¼ / %,

and their subsequent impact on the budget strategy reserve at the end of the 3 year period.

Considering the level of Council Tax, it was moved by Councillor G Fox that Council Tax should be increased by 6% for the financial year 2001/2002. In moving this Motion, Councillor Fox referred to the discussions which he had held with some of the other Groups present and a general consensus in favour of the 6% / 6% / 6% model over the 3 year period. Pursuant to Standing Order 24(2) voting on an amendment put by Councillor P F A Webster and seconded by Councillor T G Cutmore (as detailed below) was recorded as follows:

“Council agrees that the District Council Tax be set at 8% for the financial year 2001/2002. If the present survey results in the rejection of collecting and recycling domestic waste, then the increased Council Tax be reduced from 8% to 6% as recommended by senior officers.

Council also recommends that for the financial years 2002/3 and 2003/4 the District's Council Tax be set at 4½% as outlined in the officers strategy.”

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For the Motion
(19) Councillors R Adams, R Amner, Mrs R Brown,
P A Capon, T G Cutmore, K A Gibbs, J E Gray,
Mrs L Hungate, C C Langlands, T Livings,
G A Mockford, P J Morgan, R A Pearson,
Mrs L I V Phillips, R F Powell, S P Smith,
M G B Starke, Mrs M Webster and P F A Webster

Against (20) Councillors R S Allen, D F Flack, D M Ford,
Mrs J E Ford, G Fox, Mrs J M Giles,
Mrs H L A Glynn, Mrs J Hall, D Helson,
Mrs J Helson, A Hosking, V H Leach,
Mrs S J Lemon, J R F Mason, C R Morgan,
P D Stebbing, Mrs W M Stevenson, R E Vingoe,
D A Weir and Mrs M A Weir

The amendment was declared **lost**.

Whilst considering the Motion, it was noted that the compound effect of the two proposals resulted in a total increase of Council Tax over the 3 year period of

- 6% / 6% / 6% = 19% increase
- 8% / 4½% / 4½% = 17.9% increase

(It was further noted that neither of the above figures took into account inflation and that the 8% scenario generated a greater level of Council Tax income over the three year period)

Furthermore it was requested that officers provide Members with details of Members' allowance claims for the past year.

Resolved

That the level of Council Tax for 2001/2002 be set at 6%. At the same time £25,000 be added to the possible savings to be made on the Leisure Contract. In addition, that the item "Leisure Support £20,000" be removed from the Revenue Budget as a specific item, but be funded from the overall salary budget provision in both 2000/2001 and 2001/2002.

Members then went on to consider the revenue budget for 2001/02. During debate Members considered four proposals which had been put forward by the Liberal Democrat Group. Noting the proposals and how they were intended to be funded it was

Resolved

- (1) That £20,000 be put into the Crime and Disorder Budget for further CCTV with the Mill Hall being the top priority.
- (2) That a provision be made of £5,000 to help solve the problem of pigeon mess in the Town Centres.
- (3) That CCTV cameras be installed at all Rochford District Council sheltered housing complexes, this to be funded from the Housing Revenue Account.
- (4) That the £2,000 for taxi driver training be removed as this is seen unnecessary as the County Council provide this service free of charge.

It was further

Resolved

- (1) That the virements in respect of 2000/2001, as outlined in the report of the Head of Financial Services, be agreed.
- (2) That the Fees and charges in respect of the General Fund, be agreed.
- (3) That the Housing Revenue Account fees and charges, be agreed.

The Council then went on to consider the General Fund Capital Programme.

Members had before them details of proposals from both the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups in relation to the Capital Programme for the forthcoming year. During debate, Members raised a number of issues including the need to not commit the Authority to a project prior to its consideration at a Service Committee. Bearing this in mind, it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the Capital Programme (General Fund) be agreed subject to
 - (i) any further Capital Receipts received by the Authority to be used to support the development of the Private Sector Renewal Grant and Local Authority Social Housing Grant programmes. At this stage it is proposed that the first £150,000 of usable capital receipt be utilised in this way to support such an initiative with the Community Services Committee determining the priorities.

- (ii) an amount of £17,500 to be set aside in the Capital Programme to provide, in principle, a five aside football pitch on Hullbridge Recreation Ground, in conjunction with Hullbridge Parish Council and other interested Parties.
- (iii) In principle, every household in the District being supplied with a composter free of charge subject to satisfactory reports through relevant Service Committees and Council.
- (iv) provision to be made, from the underspend on the mechanical sweeper (line 45), for the following items
 - (a) In principle, basketball/five aside football at Fairview Playing Fields subject to satisfactory reports through Community Services Committee and in consultation with local residents.
 - (b) The joint funding with Hawkwell Parish Council of a teen village in Magnolia Park, subject to the agreement of the Parish Council, residents and potential users of the scheme
- (2) That a report be brought back to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for Members consideration, detailing the principle of setting up some capital fund arrangement, of say £20,000 per annum, which would allow for Parish Council's to make bids for projects within their areas which deal with Crime and Disorder issues such as youth nuisance, vandalism etc.

It was further **Resolved**

That the Housing Capital Programme be agreed.

16 SUB COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Council received the minutes of the Member Budget Monitoring Sub Committee and the Corporate Resources Sub-Committee considered any recommendations contained therein.

Member Budget Monitoring Sub-Committee – 16 January 2001

Minute 122 - Budget Strategy (1) Concessionary Fares

Resolved

That subject to advice received from the Council's Consultants, Officers liaise with the Government with a view to new concessionary fare scheme commencing in 1 April 2001. (HFS)

Minute 124 – Private Section Renewal Grants

Resolved

- (1) That the Service Level Agreement with Springboard Housing Association be amended to cover the payments of the approved Capital Budget to them and subsequent arrangements to protect the Authority in the payment of grants.
- (1) That a three year commitment to Springboard at a rate of £7,500 per year from 2001/02 be agreed.
- (2) That the Council request for match funding from Essex County Council in the sum of £5,000 be agreed with funding for 2001/02 to be met from existing provisions in relation to this service. (HFS)

Minute 125 – Community Hall – St Marks Field, Rochford

Resolved

That subject to suitable representation from Rochford District Council on the future Management Committee, a sum of £60,000 from the existing provision from within the Capital Programme be offered to the Rochford Parish Council for the purposes of funding fixtures and fittings and facilitating initial revenue support in respect of the Community Hall at St Mark's Field, Rochford.

Minute 126 – Supporting People

Resolved

- (1) That Officers be authorised to progress the joint appointment of a supporting People Officer with Castle Point Borough Council; to be funded from the Supporting People Implementation Grant.
- (3) That if agreement cannot be reached from a joint appointment, arrangements be made with Essex County Council for the employment of a Supporting People Officer to work in this District, the cost to be met from the Supporting People Implementation Grant. (HHHCC)

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- (4) That future draft budget documentation include reference to the net contribution which the Authority has to make to Supporting People Initiative. (HFS)

The Meeting closed at 10.10pm.

Chairman

Date