



**Rochford District
Council**

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1989

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Y.T.S.

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655,664



**Rochford District
Council**

ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL MINUTES

1989

December (Part 1)

ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 5TH DECEMBER 1989

MINUTES OF THE STAFFING SUB-COMMITTEE

At a Meeting held on 31st October 1989. Present: Councillors A.J. Harvey (Chairman), R.H. Boyd, Mrs. S.J. Lemon, Miss B.G.J. Lovett, and D.C. Wood.

Apologies: Councillors T. Fawell, D.R. Helson and J.A. Sheaf.

309. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meetings held on 11th, 12th, 13th and 21st September and 2nd, 9th and 16th October 1989 were approved as a correct record.

310. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Resolved that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 11 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

311. CHIEF OFFICERS APPRAISALS

The Sub-Committee concluded their appraisal of all Chief Officers with their interview of the Chief Executive & Director of Finance. They confirmed as required by the conditions of the term contracts that the performance of all Chief Officers was satisfactory although they suggested additional training in some instances. The Chairman was authorised to endorse the appraisal forms on the Sub-Committee's behalf and it was noted that following the Council's decision to proceed with the Corporate Plan priorities which did not involve any commitment to expenditure in 1990/91, these had since been added to the targets set for Chief Officers.

312. STAFFING STRATEGY

The Sub-Committee were mindful that recently a number of separate staffing proposals had been considered in isolation and felt that it was time to look urgently at the overall strategy. They asked for a report to be made to them as soon as possible and agreed to review the question of low pay in that connection.

313. DEFERRED REPORTS

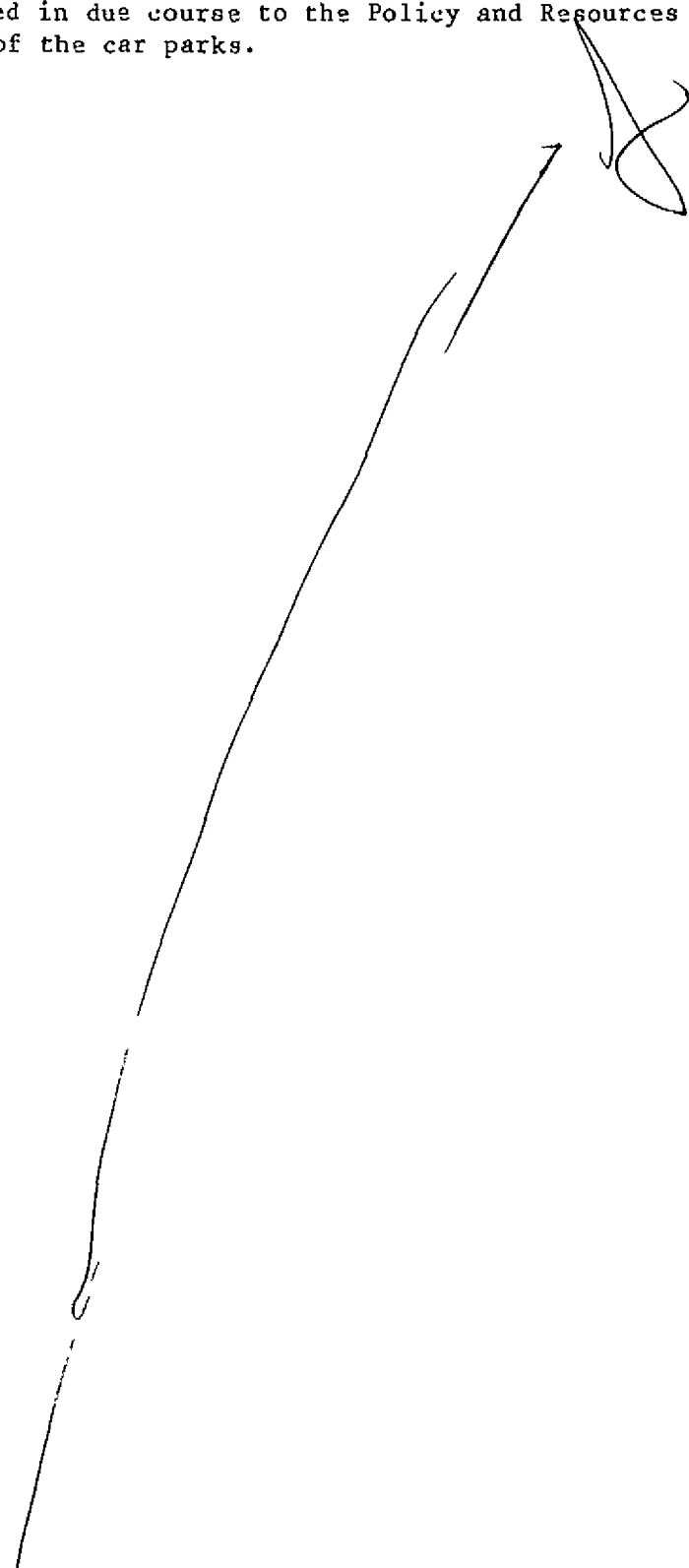
Time did not permit the Sub-Committee to consider the review of term contracts, the relocation and benefits package including mortgage subsidy and attendance at evening Meetings, staff retention or the interim report on the review of the Development Directorate and job descriptions of senior staff in that Department. The Sub-Committee agreed to meet on 20th, 22nd and 27th November 1989 to consider these matters and the subject dealt with in the previous Minute.

314. OTHER STAFFING MATTERS

The Sub-Committee noted that in order to avoid losing staff to other Authorities the Chief Executive & Director of Finance had used his powers

under Standing Order 18 to bring forward the regrading of a post in the Housing Benefits Section of the Treasurer's Department and agreed that similar action should be taken with five other members of the Section. They also agreed that the review of the staffing strategy should make allowances for changes in market forces.

The Sub-Committee also approved self-financing proposals of the Treasurer for an additional part-time Car Park Patrol Officer and asked that a report be submitted in due course to the Policy and Resources Committee on the level of use of the car parks.



ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 5TH DECEMBER 1989

MINUTES OF THE CHAIRMAN'S PANEL

At a Meeting held on 9th November 1989

Present: Councillors A.J. Harvey (Chairman), W.H. Budge, Mrs. P. Cooke, T. Fawell, J.A. Gibson, Mrs. E.M. Hart, Miss B.G.J. Lovett, J.A. Sheaf, P.F.A. Webster and D.C. Wood.

Apologies: Councillors R.S. Allen and R.A. Pearson.

69. COUNCIL CYCLE ENDING 12TH DECEMBER 1989

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Date</u>
1. Health & Housing Services	14th November 1989
2. Planning Services	16th November 1989
3. Leisure Services	21st November 1989
(i) Hambro Hill, Rayleigh (SEC)	
(ii) Leisure Bus (ACE)	
4. Development Services	23rd November 1989
5. Policy & Resources	5th December 1989
(i) 1990/91 Estimates - Building Maintenance Repairs and Special Items & Equipment, Tools and Materials (CE)	
(ii) Community Charge - Rayleigh Area (T)	
(iii) Standard Community Charge - Multipliers (T)	
(iv) National Non-Domestic Rate - Charitable Rate Relief (T)	
(v) Authorisation of Prosecuting Officers (T)	
(vi) Community Charge 1990/91 (T)	
6. Council	12th December 1989

70. HAMBRO HILL, RAYLEIGH

Arising out of the foregoing, the Panel considered that there was a need for urgent action to be taken to secure an access to the Council land at Hambro Hill without delay and it was

RECOMMENDED That the Chief Executive & Director of Finance be authorised to pursue negotiations to that end.

71. COMMUNITY CHARGE

The Chairman said initial advice from the DoE regarding the level of Standard Spending Assessment for Rochford indicated that it would be inadequate to meet the needs of the District and that unless services were cut the level of Community Charge required would exceed the recently published guidelines. He was accordingly lobbying the Government, the DoE and the local M.P. to bring to their attention the inadequacy of the grant level proposed.

72. FORTHCOMING COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Members noted that the Civic Remembrance Day Service was being held on the coming Sunday.

ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 5TH DECEMBER 1989

MINUTES OF THE STAFFING SUB-COMMITTEE

At Meetings held on 20th & 27th November 1989. Present: Councillors A.J. Harvey (Chairman), R.H. Boyd, T.Fawell*, D.R. Helson, Mrs. S.J. Lemon, Miss B.G.J. Lovett, J.A. Sheaf and D.C. Wood. (*Not present on 27th November 1989)

315. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 31st October 1989 were approved as a correct record.

316. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

At the commencement of the proceedings on each evening, it was

Resolved that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 11 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

317. STAFFING STRATEGY (Minute 312)

Pursuant to the Sub-Committee's request for an urgent review of the Council's overall staffing strategy the Chief Executive & Director of Finance and Secretary to the Council reported that the Sub-Committee in recent years had presided over an almost continuous review of the establishment through the process of contractorisation, restructurings, staff appraisal and review of term contracts. Until the current financial year the Council had successfully pursued a policy that no staffing proposal would be considered unless it was self-financing. Most of the proposals still came before the Sub-Committee on that basis. However exceptions to this policy had occurred in response to higher service aspirations by Members and Officers which required additional staffing resources (e.g. Enforcements), increases in caseloads (e.g. Planning) and new responsibilities (e.g. Community Charge).

Even more recently the Council had found it necessary to follow the market in areas of skills shortage where other Authorities, and in some instances the private sector as well, were in competition with one another (e.g. Planning and Revenues). The Council had to ensure that its manpower policies were directed towards maintaining a staff capable of delivering quality services both effectively and efficiently and it must respond quickly to changes in the market if it was not to be a casualty of these situations.

Whilst therefore the self-financing policy would remain as the overall objective, there would continue to be occasions when the Council would have to act outside of this constraint.

The Sub-Committee accepted this necessity and noted that there were a number of areas at the moment where additional financial resources were needed to resolve current staffing problems for which estimate provision

would need to be made. The Director of Development was examining the effects of the recent regradings on the hierarchy of his Department. The review of the operation of the Council's cleaning contracts had demonstrated a requirement for additional supervision which was currently being assessed. Implementation of the Environmental Health Services Plan would require extra staff. The Treasurer had to take short term action to avoid losing staff because of peaks in the labour market and there was a need to extend the term contracts system to other key personnel. The Sub-Committee received a forecast of the total expenditure involved except in relation to the Development Directorate which they would consider at their next Meeting.

Having received details of the establishment the Sub-Committee were satisfied that action on the foregoing matters would resolve all the outstanding issues and that no further staffing proposals would need to be considered for a period of 12 months unless they were in accord with the overall self-financing objective or required by legislation.

The Chief Executive & Director of Finance reminded the Sub-Committee that as head of the paid service he would be required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to report to the Council on staffing levels he considered necessary to discharge the Council's duties and that subject to the improvements already mentioned he would not be requesting any further additions to the establishment although the need for any "political" appointments would be a matter for Members.


RECOMMENDED That provision be made in the draft revenue budget for the staffing proposals outlined above and that subject thereto no further staffing proposals be considered for a period of 12 months unless they are self financing or required by legislation. (T)

318. LOW PAY (Minute 439/89)

As part of the local settlement the Council decided in July to offer to review low pay as it was a major factor in the national salary award negotiation. In the event, the national settlement was weighted in favour of the lower grades and it transpired from an analysis of staff on the lower grades at Rochford that most individuals had been regraded or promoted in recent years. In the light of the national settlement weighting and the results of the analysis the Sub-Committee did not consider that any further action was necessary by the Council subject to any views which the Staff Side might wish to express. An opportunity for them to do so would be given at the commencement of the Meeting on 27th November 1989. The Sub-Committee were aware however that the many minor restructurings which the self-financing policy had encouraged had provided opportunities to increase the responsibilities and remuneration of many lower graded posts.

319. RELOCATION PACKAGE AND ATTENDANCES AT EVENING MEETINGS

The Sub-Committee at their Meeting in September had agreed to look again at the use of mortgage subsidy as an aid to recruitment. They considered that there might be exceptional circumstances where this benefit would have to be offered to secure a key appointment but saw no reason to alter the relocation package in this respect provided the Sub-Committee was authorised to make the offer on the foregoing basis.



Increasingly authorities were making payments to officers for attendances at evening Meetings. The Council had always taken the view that the requirement for such attendances at Rochford had been accounted for in setting the salary level for the job. The Sub-Committee did not wish to vary established practice.

RECOMMENDED That the Council be asked to accept that, in exceptional circumstances, a mortgage subsidy might need to be offered to secure suitably qualified personnel for a key appointment and that the Sub-Committee be authorised to approve the specific circumstances and determine the most appropriate arrangements should that requirement arise. (SEC,T)

320. STAFF RETENTION

The Sub-Committee noted a report of the Chief Executive & Director of Finance on the responses received from former members of the Council's staff as to their reasons for leaving the Authority. Some had identified the need for better training which was being addressed. Others had mentioned the advantages of flexi-time and the Sub-Committee agreed to consider a further report on the matter stressing that they had previously expressed themselves to be against the concept in public service and that they would need to be convinced of the changes in circumstances which would now justify its introduction.

321. REVIEW OF TERM CONTRACTS

The Sub-Committee pursuant to their delegated authority approved the conditions under which offers of term contract were to be made to those key personnel whose term contracts were due to expire in 1990.

322. EARLY RETIREMENT

The Sub-Committee noted that the Chief Executive & Director of Finance had approved an application for premature retirement on grounds of ill health from a Clerical Assistant in the Assistant Chief Executive's Office.

323. STAFFING STATISTICS

The Sub-Committee noted the quarterly Manpower Statement and statistical reports on sickness levels, variations to establishment and staff turnover.

324. CANCELLATION OF MEETING

The Sub-Committee agreed to cancel their Meeting to be held on 22nd November 1989.

(NOTE: At 9.40 p.m. the Meeting adjourned and reconvened at 7.30 p.m. on 27th November 1989).

325. MEETING WITH THE STAFF SIDE

The Chairman welcomed Mr. O.M. Scoging, Chairman of the local branch of NALGO and Mrs. L. Gowers, Mr. E. Monk and Mr. J. Whittam of the Staff Side and invited their reaction to recent decisions on staffing policy. Mr. Scoging mentioned that staff had been pleased with the revision of the car leasing scheme but some had reservations over the limit on enhancement. Members explained that there was nothing arbitrary about the limit but that the Sub-Committee would be prepared to consider special

cases. The Sub-Committee raised no objection to a proposal from the Staff Side that they examine the establishment in terms of low pay and report to them in the new year on any individuals they felt required further consideration.


The Staff Side noted that the Sub-Committee would later in the Meeting look at the establishment of the Development Directorate and that the outcome would be advised to the staff concerned. With their consideration of the Development Directorate the Sub-Committee would have completed their review of the Council's overall staffing strategy.

The Staff Side asked that the Council bear in mind the difficulties some staff had encountered in maintaining services during the recent building alterations at the Council Offices and advised that they would be making recommendations to the Chief Executive & Director of Finance in connection with the Council's Reward Scheme.

The Chairman of the Staff Side sought some insight into the Council's present direction. The Chairman of the Sub-Committee confirmed that the contractorisation programme had been achieved and that no major proposals affecting the staff were in prospect. The Council were, however, determined to identify the means by which it could achieve a supply of housing for rent in the District and this was the most important policy issue facing the Council at the present time.

The Staff Side representatives then left the Meeting.

326. DEPARTMENTAL STAFFING MATTERS

- (a) The Sub-Committee approved an application from the Senior Administrative Assistant in the Environmental Services Department under the Council's Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme.
 - (b) They noted that the contractorisation of the building maintenance D.L.O. had been achieved in accordance with Council policy and agreed that the two remaining posts of carpenter and handyman should be retained and transferred to the salaried staff in order to maintain the Council's ability to deal with emergencies.
 - (c) The Treasurer explained the staffing implications of dealing with the complexities of Community Charge Transitional Relief and the Sub-Committee agreed proposals to advance the appointment of Recovery and Cashier/Reception staff to January 1990 with flexibility over full and part-time employment in the latter respect in order to provide the cover required. The additional cost would be partly or wholly funded from Government Grants.
 - (d) The Sub-Committee also endorsed measures proposed by the Treasurer to offer an incentive in order to retain the Council's Revenues staff against competition for their services from neighbouring authorities for as long as there was a requirement so to do. Costs in the current year could be financed from the existing salaries provision but specific allowance would need to be made in the draft revenue estimates for 1990/91 (See Minute 317 above).
- 

- (e) The Sub-Committee approved recommendations of the Director of Development adjusting the gradings of certain senior staff consequent upon the decision of the Sub-Committee to create a new post of Chief Assistant and to regrade two vacant Senior Assistant posts. The additional cost in the current year could be met from savings in the departmental salaries vote but provision would need to be made for 1990/91. The Sub-Committee also approved proposals for the offer of term contracts to key personnel and the redesignation of the Chief Building Control Officer and the Assistant Chief Building Control Officer as Building Control Manager and Assistant Building Control Manager respectively. Whilst this change in nomenclature would not carry with it any change in status or conditions, the Sub-Committee accepted that the seniority of the posts would be more easily understood by the public.

RECOMMENDED That provision be made in the draft revenue budget for 1990/91 for the staffing proposals outlined above. (T)

327. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING ACT 1989 - POLITICAL RESTRICTIONS ON CERTAIN LOCAL AUTHORITY OFFICERS

The Chief Executive & Director of Finance and Secretary to the Council reported jointly on these requirements of the Act which received the Royal Assent on 16th November 1989 and on a consultation paper dealing with proposals of the Secretary of State for the Regulations which the new statutory provisions authorised.

Under the Act certain senior officers of local authorities would be disqualified from holding an elected office in local Government (with the exception of Parishes) and the House of Commons and the European Parliament. In addition these officers would be precluded from

- (a) candidature for one of the offices mentioned above;
- (b) holding office in a political party;
- (c) canvassing at elections;
- (d) speaking or writing publicly on matters of party political controversy.

The Council must maintain a list of the politically restricted posts and the list must be in place by 29th January 1990.

There were three categories of politically restricted post. Chief officers and deputies and officers to whom the Council had delegated any of its powers, officers who earned more than a specific annual salary and other officers earning less but whose duties were considered by the authority to be politically sensitive. In the latter two respects there was a right of appeal to a Government Adjudicator by the individual concerned for the removal of the post from the list.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the Chief Executive & Director of Finance should be the Proper Officer for the purpose of compiling the list and that in view of the timescale they should be given delegated authority to approve the list. They asked the Chief Executive & Director of Finance to prepare a report recommending the posts to be excluded from political activity for submission to a Special Meeting of the Sub-Committee to be held on 9th January 1990.


Turning to the consultation paper, it was being suggested that specific mention might be made in the Regulations precluding the appointment of excluded officers as election agents but as it was already proposed that they should not hold any office in a political party, the Sub-Committee did not feel it was necessary to specifically identify the office "election agent".

As to the embargo on excluded officers speaking or writing in public on party political matters, the Sub-Committee could see a point of conflict between the proposed Regulations and local government practice in that there was a requirement on Committee advisors to explain Council policy in public session. The Sub-Committee asked that these comments be made in response to the consultation paper.

RECOMMENDED (1) That the Chief Executive & Director of Finance be appointed the Proper Officer for the purpose of compiling the list of politically sensitive posts.

(2) That in view of the statutory timetable the Staffing Sub-Committee be given delegated authority to approve the list on the Council's behalf.

(3) That the foregoing views on the consultation paper be conveyed to the Department of the Environment. (CE,SEC)



ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 5TH DECEMBER 1989

MINUTES OF THE HOUSING STRATEGY PANEL

At a Meeting held on 29th November 1989

Present: Councillors B.A. Crick, T. Fawell, Mrs E.M. Hart, A.J. Harvey, Miss B.G.J. Lovett, J.A. Sheaf, C. Stephenson and D.C. Wood.

Visiting: Councillor R.H. Boyd

20. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Resolved that Councillor A.J. Harvey be appointed Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

21. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of 16th March 1989 were agreed as a correct record.

22. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Resolved that under the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

23. COUNCILLOR R.H. BOYD

The Panel endorsed the action taken by the Chief Executive & Director of Finance in supplying to Councillor R.H. Boyd at his request a copy of the exempt report the subject of Agenda Item 5 and the Chairman exercised his authority under Standing Orders to enable Councillor Boyd to remain present throughout the Meeting. In response to a question from a Member he advised that there had been no other request for information or to attend.

24. FUTURE HOUSING STRATEGY

NOTE: Councillors Mrs. E.M. Hart, A.J. Harvey, Miss B.G.J. Lovett, J.A. Sheaf and D.C. Wood declared a non-pecuniary interest as members of the Abbeyfield Rochford and District Society Limited insofar as there was a possibility of that body being involved and remained in the Meeting and participated in the discussion and voting thereon.

The Management Team had reported in confidence at the last Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on the inability of North to proceed with the Doggetts site and on the implications for the Council's Housing Strategy which matter had been referred to the Housing Strategy Panel for further consideration. The Housing Strategy Chief Officers Group had since been involved in a series of meetings with developers to identify the options for the Doggetts site and other Council land holdings. At the suggestion of the Chairman it was agreed that the earlier report should be considered in conjunction with the outcome of those negotiations.

The Housing Strategy Chief Officers Group then reported in confidence on the discussions which had taken place to ensure that the Council's housing land could continue to be developed, to identify the housing association best able to carry that programme forward and to enable the Council to discharge its statutory duty of housing the homeless.

The Secretary to the Council reminded Members that the Council had seen it as desirable to develop the Doggetts site in three phases so as to ensure that the supply of new housing for rent broadly matched the incidence of priority cases but had been unable to achieve a viable scheme. One of the reasons why North had been selected was because of their access to private finance which it had been assumed meant that their scheme stood a better prospect of realisation than one involving HAG funding. Had North been able to develop the site however it would have been over a shorter timescale and could therefore have involved letting to lower priority cases to the detriment of the housing waiting list in the longer term.

In the event neither the Council nor North had been able to produce a viable scheme of 2 and 3 bed units on the Doggetts site. It had therefore been essential to find a way of developing the site at affordable rent levels and at the same time to seek to secure a comprehensive programme for the remainder of the Council's land bank including the 2-acre site at Stambridge. Five developers with substantial land holdings in the District had been approached on the following basis:

- (i) If the Council was to make the Doggetts site available at nil cost, how many units for rent could the developer provide for a Housing Association in return for Council nomination rights,
- (ii) what, if any, land could they give in exchange for the Council's 2-acre site at Great Stambridge, which might yet support a North private-finance scheme and thereby leave the Council's overall strategy intact?

Four had responded but only MBC had displayed interest in an exchange of land for the latter site. In that connection Members' attention was drawn to the reasons why no action had been taken at this stage to pursue with housing associations the development of the Stambridge site for rented housing because it was not considered that the land was suitable for the high density necessary to achieve an economically viable scheme.

Referring to the 6-acre Doggetts site, the Secretary reminded Members that this was the largest area of land for residential development owned by the Council and that a partnership scheme approach whilst promising an early solution to the problems of development had to be approached with caution as it would produce less units for rent to assist the housing waiting list.

The Panel then considered the offers that had been made, details of which were on display, as follows:

Springboard Housing Association

The Secretary said it had become apparent that the Springboard Housing Association in conjunction with their contractors MBC could produce twice the number of houses for rent that North had proposed bearing in mind that the latter Association had never made any commitment beyond the Doggetts site. Springboard considered that by building three blocks of flats in those parts of the site where ground conditions were worst and 2 and 3-bed

units on the remainder they could so reduce the requirement for piling that the whole 6-acre site would be viable for a rented development. An indicative layout was displayed which provided for a total of 114 units for rent, 56 in three blocks of 1 and 2 bed flats and 58 2 and 3 bed houses. Their proposals if accepted would assist also in providing accommodation for the homeless, thereby releasing Grested Court and Hatfield House and reducing the high level of expenditure currently being incurred in providing bed and breakfast accommodation. Another important consideration was that Springboard had been awarded the status of a tariff association by the Housing Corporation. This enabled them to obtain a commitment from that Corporation for finance for a three year programme. They were therefore in a more favourable position for funding than associations who did not enjoy the tariff status. They were currently in the process of submitting their bid for the 3 year period beginning April 1990 and needed to be advised as soon as possible whether they were to be selected as the Council's chosen Housing Association so as to enable the Rochford Housing Programme which would include other Council sites as well as Doggetts and Millview to be incorporated in their bid. The Housing Corporation would be announcing their allocation to Springboard in February.

Whilst on the subject of financing the scheme, the Secretary advised Members of a recent announcement by the DoE making available the sum of £112m for homelessness in the South East and it was agreed that a bid should be entered for that element of the Doggetts scheme as a possible alternative to Housing Corporation funding.

Reference was then made to the proposal from MBC in their own right to provide, in exchange for the 2-acre site at Stambridge, land in their ownership at Millview Meadows. This would provide further opportunity for development for rent by Springboard with 51 1 and 2 bed flats. The exchange would also enable a safer access to the rear of the Council Offices than the archway entrance off South Street. Such a transaction would however need to be completed prior to 31st March 1990, after which new restraints would take effect.

Fairview New Homes PLC

This developer expressed no interest in an exchange of land. They proposed a development of 202 units on the 6-acre Doggetts site, and envisaged a start six months after the granting of planning permission. They were not reliant on Housing Corporation funds and would be working with the Metropolitan Housing Association. The private element would total 141 units and there could be 61 2-bed units for rent, or a combination of 55 2 and 3-bed units or 70 flatted units. The scheme would generate a capital receipt to the Council of £700,000. It had to be borne in mind, however, that the local planning authority would not normally accept a proposal of that density and the Director of Development considered that there would be insurmountable problems with this scheme over the access to the site which was insufficient to support the traffic which would be generated in consequence.

Wimpey Homes

They were proposing a total development of 132 units with a minimum of 40 units for rent which might be increased subject to the outcome of their soil investigations. The scheme would rely on private finance.

The rented element would be 2 and 3 bed units with the remainder of the site flatted and terraced. They would be working in conjunction with the Sanctuary Housing Association which Members would be aware already operated within the area. Wimpey had no site in the District which they wished to exchange with the Council.

Beazer Homes (East)


They proposed to provide a total of 122 semi-detached units on the site in a split of 40/60 between rent and sale. That would not be dependent on Housing Corporation funding and would produce a total of 49 units for rent and 73 for sale. They would be working with the Abbey Housing Association which was based in Bletchley and did not propose any local management presence within the area.

In considering the merits of the various proposals Members were advised that in the discussions with Springboard they had drawn to attention the fact that the Council in its earlier process of selecting its chosen Housing Association had indicated the desire to work with them as well as North and, as the Council could not now pursue any special relationship with North, they had urged that they should now assume the mantle of the Council's chosen Housing Association for the delivery of its Housing Strategy. A further factor in a partnership with Springboard involving HAG funding was that the Council would receive capital receipts for the land to be developed by them. As it was not now anticipated that capital resources from the sale of The Grange and the Council's land at Plumberow would be available in 1990/91 the resources released by the Springboard schemes would increase the Council's ability to spend on the provision of further rented housing.

The Panel agreed to recommend that Springboard be substituted for North as the Council's chosen Housing Association and were in favour of accepting the proposals Springboard had submitted in preference to those offered by the other developers. A Member expressed reservations about the flatted element of the Springboard proposals for the Doggetts development but the Panel were mindful that the 2 and 3-bed homes schemes produced both by the Council and by North had shown the site to be incapable of development economically wholly for that purpose. The Member felt that there were management problems associated with flatted development, but the Panel were satisfied that Springboard had sufficient experience to avoid these difficulties which often arose through bad design.

It was noted that the bids for tariff funding had to be submitted to the Housing Corporation by 11th December and the Officers would need to work quickly with Springboard in order that an application could be submitted to that timetable. A Member thought that the submission of the bid should await Council approval but the Panel agreed that the Officers should agree the programme and bid with Springboard forthwith and the the Chief Executive & Director of Finance should use his powers under Standing Order 18 in this connection. Members envisaged that Springboard's bid would include other Council sites in addition to Doggetts and Millview Meadows.

Finally Members noted that the Treasurer had identified £2m worth of notional capital receipts which could be used through a sponsored scheme with Springboard to acquire approximately 33 properties on the open market prior to 31st March 1990 - which need not necessarily be former Council properties. Clarification was also given regarding the manner in which it



was proposed to exchange the 2-acre site at Stambridge for prestige development. Whilst Members had reacted enthusiastically about the possibility of using Hatfield House as an Abbeyfield Scheme the Chief Executive & Director of Finance advised that as so many Members had declared a non-pecuniary interest through membership of that Society it would not be appropriate for the Panel to submit a recommendation in this respect, rather that they should ask for the matter to be dealt with by the parent Committee.

RECOMMENDED (1) That North Housing be advised that the Council is not in a position to provide an alternative site for a private finance scheme and that the proposals for them to be the Council's nominated housing association for the delivery of the Council's strategy must, therefore, be aborted.

(2) That the Council now select Springboard Housing Association, in place of North, as its nominated Housing Association for the purposes of the Council's housing strategy and that the Housing Corporation be so advised.

(3) That the Council support Springboard's application for a 3 year tariff programme agreement commencing in the financial year 1990/91 and that the Officers be authorised to include as many projects from the Council's programme as possible.

(4) That the principle of a phased transfer of the Doggetts site for development by Springboard Housing Association be approved on terms to be agreed by the District Valuer and the Secretary to the Council.

(5) That the Council do agree to an equality of exchange of its 2-acre site at Stambridge with a site at Millview Meadows, Rochford on terms to be agreed by the District Valuer and the Secretary to the Council and that the transaction be completed prior to 31st March 1990.

(6) That the Officers negotiate an agreement with Springboard Housing Association for 100% nomination rights for the temporary housing of the homeless.

(7) That subject thereto and to the provision by Springboard of alternative accommodation for the homeless, the Officers be authorised to negotiate with them for the disposal of Grested Court, Rochford for use as an elderly persons unit.

(8) That Policy and Resources Committee be asked to authorise the Officers to pursue the possibility of utilising Hatfield House for an Abbeyfield project or similar extra care scheme.

(9) That the Officers be authorised to submit an application to the Housing Corporation for approval to a local authority sponsored Housing Association grant scheme for Springboard to acquire individual vacant properties for rent.

(10) That the Officers be authorised to submit an application to the DoE for funding of that element of the Doggetts site intended as housing for the homeless as an alternative to Housing Corporation funding. (881)(COG)

NOTE: The Chief Executive & Director of Finance exercised his authority under Standing Order 18 to give immediate effect to recommendation (3) above.

ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 5TH DECEMBER 1989

MINUTES OF THE EMERGENCY PANEL

At a Meeting Held on 30th November 1989

Present: Councillors Mrs. P. Cooke (Chairman), R.A. Amner, T. Fawell, C. Stephenson and Mrs. L. Walker.

Also In Attendance Were: Councillor S. Jarvis.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors B.A. Crick, J.A. Gibson and A.J. Harvey.

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Resolved that Councillor Mrs. P. Cooke be appointed Chairman of the Panel for the ensuing year.

2. MINUTES

Resolved that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 22nd February 1989 be approved as a correct record.

3. PRESENTATION BY COUNTY EMERGENCY PLANNING OFFICER

The County Emergency Planning Officer, Mr. M. Sibson, welcomed Members to the County Emergency Planning Centre and gave a short presentation on civil protection.

Mr. Sibson highlighted the relationship between the County and District Authorities both for the purposes of civil defence and for civil emergencies. The "All Hazards" approach to emergency planning, preparing an emergency procedure which could be adapted for use in both a conflict or peacetime emergency situation and which could be applied to either manmade or natural disasters. In preparing a plan on a County-wide level it was necessary to first identify and assess all possible hazards and to apply risk levels, or levels of probability. Once established detailed planning could then be applied, highest priorities being hazards with the highest levels of probability.

Following Mr. Sibson's presentation Members raised a number of points of general interest.

The Chairman expressed the appreciation of Members of the Panel for Mr. Sibson's presentation and for the arrangements made to allow the Emergency Panel Meeting to be held at the County Headquarters.

4. EXERCISE IVY - REGIONAL EXERCISE

The County Emergency Planning Officer reported upon this regional exercise which had been held from 21st to 23rd November involving a number of Essex Authorities including Southend and Braintree. Rochford was not directly involved in the exercise, which simulated a period of increasing international tension and the local effects and repercussions of this.

De-briefing would take place over the next few months following which a summary report would be issued to Local Authorities. Mr. Sibson indicated that there were, arising from the exercise, areas which had already been identified as worthy of further consideration and review and these would be included in the de-briefing report.

5. PLANNED PROGRAMME OF IMPLEMENTATION

The Panel were advised that as part of the final requirements of the planned programme of implementation (PPI) a draft plan had been submitted to this District for completion on emergency shelters.

Returns had already been completed on behalf of Rochford to the Home Office together with the completed grant aid forms in respect of the proposed Emergency Centre.

On the latter, the Assistant Chief Executive reminded members of the Panel that when Council had approved the principle of the scheme it had been subject to regular progress reports being submitted to the Emergency Panel. Progress to-date had included consultations with representatives of the Hockley Parish Council and the Roach Valley Conservation Zone.


Consultations had also been held with appropriate Officers of the County Emergency Planning Team with regard to the communication aspects of the Centre and the aerial transmission requirements. It was suggested that it might be possible to provide satisfactory radio relay and transmission facilities without the necessity of a permanent aerial sited adjacent to the Centre. The County officers would be carrying out tests with portable telescopic aerial units within the next week to ten days and, subject to satisfactory results being obtained, the planning application would then be completed for submission to an early Meeting of the Planning Services Committee.

6. RIVER WATCH SCHEME

The Emergency Planning Officer reported upon the Rochford River Watch Scheme, the aim of which was to monitor exceptionally high tides to assist the Anglian Water Authority in assessing risk levels of surge tides. Volunteers were based at the Hockley Dome Country Park, South Fambridge, Paglesham, Barling and Foulness island.

It was stressed that the volunteers had no responsibility for warning the public of the likelihood of flooding, although they could of course assist in the event of an emergency but the statutory responsibility lay with the Police for both warning and the possible evacuation of residents.

Arising from this discussion particular reference was made to the lack of information in respect of Wallasea Island, which in view of its location, and the availability of staff, either by Coast Guards or through



Baltic Wharf, ought to be able to provide a River Watch arrangement with little difficulty. Reference was also made to the need to clarify responsibilities with the emergency services with regard to warning and evacuation.

The Assistant Chief Executive expressed a similar concern for a regular contact with the emergency services at local level. Whilst this existed on a County wide basis there was no regular arrangement for meeting and consulting with emergency services on a local basis and it was felt it would be useful to meet officers of the relevant services in order to identify and refresh memories on particular areas of concern within the District.

RECOMMENDED (1) That arrangements be made for consultation between the Council and representatives of the Emergency Services to discuss on a regular basis the civil emergency arrangements within the Rochford District.

(2) That the arrangements for River Watch facilities in the area of Wallasea Island be reviewed and a further report be submitted to the next Meeting of the Emergency Panel.

7. FLOOD ARRANGEMENTS FOR FOULNESS ISLAND

The Panel were advised of a recent meeting with representatives of the Roach Group Parish Council to discuss flood arrangements at which a revised "plan" for the Island was agreed in principle. Communications were also discussed at that meeting and it was agreed that Roach Group would provide a Cellnet telephone facility of their own, which it was felt would be more flexible than a radio unit, which would give only limited means of communication in an emergency. In addition a number of private Cellnet owners within the Parish were also identified who could be called upon in the event of emergency.

Following the meeting with the Roach Group Parish Council discussions were held with Major Barratt of the Proof and Experimental Establishment, the Flood Precautions Officer in order to co-ordinate arrangements between the civilian and military population of the Island.

8. EMERGENCY TELEPHONE - SECURICOR

The Assistant Chief Executive referred to two incidents which occurred over the last twelve months where there had been some difficulty in contacting the Council's emergency telephone number.

Members were reminded that this was only two incidents in the past eight years during which the services of Securicor had been used for this purpose but, nevertheless, as it was the Council's first line of communication in an emergency it was imperative to ensure that the service was available at all times. Consequently the Assistant Chief Executive visited the Company's Emergency Headquarters at Chelmsford where the 24 hour arrangements were demonstrated, including back-up facilities and arrangements for daily monitoring of telephone lines, which had been the cause of at least one of the Rochford problems.

The Company had also agreed that in future the second or "Back-up" line for the Council's 24 hour service would be the Company's main office number (0245-257295/8) and not the Maidstone number which had been previously notified. The revised arrangements would be brought to attention in all future publications.

9. CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR BAD WEATHER

The Assistant Chief Executive reminded Members that during the winter of 1987/88 when the South East corner of Essex experienced the exceptionally severe snow fall, there had arisen during that time ad-hoc arrangements for staff who were unable to travel to the office from isolated communities within the District, to establish area emergency centres. In this way the staff were able to establish a direct link with the main offices and provide a means of communication and assistance between the Council and local residents requiring assistance.

Building upon this the arrangements were formalised and last year five such area offices were identified as follows:-

1. Council Offices, South Street, Rochford
2. Civic Suite, Rayleigh
3. The Bell House, High Street, Gt. Wakering
4. Spa Court, Hockley
5. Hullbridge Senior Citizens Day Centre, Windermere Avenue, Hullbridge.

These centres were each equipped with an "Emergency Box" containing appropriate supplies, stationery, registers etc., to enable Council staff to set up a centre and through local knowledge identify residents who might be considered to be at risk in an emergency situation and establish a contact between them and the Local Authority. Radio facilities could be made available through Raynet and appropriate aerials and plug-in facilities had been provided for this purpose.

The facilities were checked annually, at the commencement of each Winter and this operation has already been carried out over the last month. In doing so the need for a similar arrangement at Canewdon had now been identified and the Assistant Chief Executive reported that the matter had been raised with the Canewdon Community Association in order that similar provision could be made within the Community Centre in the village.

10. TABLETOP EXERCISE

The Assistant Chief Executive reported that a "Table Top Exercise" was proposed to test the Council's Peacetime Plan and response. The scenario would be finalised and an invitation extended to all Members of the Emergency Panel to attend to view the exercise.

Further details would be circulated in due course.

11. EMERGENCY PLANNING COLLEGE, EASINGWOLD

The Emergency Planning Officer reported that the next elected Members' course would be held at Easingwold from 25th to 29th March and District Authorities were invited to submit nominations to the County Emergency Planning Officer by 8th January 1990.

RECOMMENDED That Councillor R.A. Amner be nominated to attend the Members Seminar from 25th to 29th March 1990.

12. CIVIL EMERGENCIES

The Emergency Planning officer¹ reported that over the past year the Home Office has carried out a review of the handling of civil emergencies. This was divided into two distinct phases - a consultative exercise and a senior level seminar held in November. The review had been completed and the Home Secretary's conclusions published. A copy of the Home Secretary's announcement and accompanying documents were circulated to Members of the Panel for information.

13. FIRE PROTECTION ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN THE ROCHFORD DISTRICT


Reference was made to the recent proposals of the Essex County Council to close down the retained fire service facility at Rochford Fire Station.

Members were advised that when the proposals had been submitted for consideration to the appropriate Committee of the County Council a number of significant factors had been omitted from the equation and it was felt that these should be identified and County members requested to review their decision in the light of these.

Particular reference was made to the presence of the airport which was increasing in use and the potential problems which could arise both as a result of the generated traffic and the hazards which must always be present in the operation of an airport facility. Similarly within Rochford the Hospital is an area of extremely high residential occupancy, with persons who, in an emergency would be particularly vulnerable because of their restrictions on mobility and as such this was a factor which should merit special consideration. It had been proposed that with the closure of Rochford Fire Station that adequate cover could be provided from Sutton Road, Southend. However what was not made clear at that time was the fact that the Sutton Road facility would also be closed and that a new station would be provided in the Bournes Green/Shoebury area, a considerable distance further away from Rochford which rendered the alternative cover unacceptable. Much of the Rochford area was zoned within "Category D" which required a response time of not more than twenty minutes, a doubtful time allowance for a journey from Bournes Green, Southend to any of the spread of hamlets within the District e.g., Canewdon, Paglesham, Wallasea.

On the west side of the District the second cover for Rayleigh would be provided by Hadleigh Fire Station but as the revised arrangements also include the reduction of service at Hadleigh Station, which also provided cover for Canvey island was seen to be totally impractical and unsafe. The situation in this area was also exacerbated by the commencement of the recent works to the Rayleigh Weir Underpass and the very considerable effects which this would have upon traffic flows and access to the Rayleigh part of the District.

RECOMMENDED That the Policy & Resources Committee be requested to make the strongest possible representations to the County Council requesting that Authority to reconsider the arrangements for fire cover within the Rochford District, in the light of the circumstances referred to above.


001608

AGENDA ITEM 7

ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 5TH DECEMBER 1989

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE & DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

1990/91 ESTIMATES - BUILDING MAINTENANCE REPAIRS AND
SPECIAL ITEMS & EQUIPMENT, TOOLS & MATERIALS.

- (1) In recent years the Council has subjected most of its service areas to detailed review. The contractorisation process involved the preparation of comprehensive specifications itemising the various service requirements and standards of performance for refuse collection, street cleansing, grounds maintenance, cleaning of buildings, leisure management and computing facilities management. These contracts are now themselves subject to continuing review. In total the financial value of the contracts amounts to some £1.8 million. Staffing levels, which are being continually reassessed by the Staffing Sub-Committee have reduced from around 700 in the early 80's to 220 at the current time, both as a consequence of contractorisation and the Council's manpower policies. These changes were made in pursuit of higher standards of service in terms of effectiveness and efficiency as measured independently by the performance indicators used by the Government and the Audit Commission. In-house performance is underpinned by the appraisal system and future needs are being addressed through the Corporate Planning Process. Staffing costs amount to approximately £2.8 million.

Members will therefore appreciate that in considering the budget a major part of the expenditure has already been subjected to the most detailed examination.

- (2) Another area of major expenditure is in relation to the Council's building maintenance, alterations and improvements programmes with the exception of housing repairs and improvements which are separately funded through HIPS and the Housing Revenue Account. The Chief Officers' Group have in the past considered bids for works to be included in the estimates of other committees on the basis that each proposal is classified as being essential, necessary or desirable. In practice only essential items are carried into the budget but the Chief Officers felt that each service committee should now approve the works to the buildings under their control which have been identified as essential for

1990/91. These are set out in Appendix I with the above classifications added to which the essential items have been further categorised with descriptions of "statutory", "contracted", "security" and "legal, safety or hygiene" etc.


Subject to the Committee's views the essential items will be included in the draft budget.

- (3) One obvious conclusion about the success of contractorisation must be the fact that the Council does not need to provide services directly and it begs the question as to whether or not the Council actually needs to retain ownership of its buildings and continue to be responsible for the heavy costs of maintenance. Chief Officers believe that the Council should now explore the possibility of disposing of some General Rate Fund Property assets in a way that will free and create additional resources. Whilst the use of the Council's assets is in the final event, a matter for the Policy & Resources Committee, this Committee are requested to consider the need to retain ownership of buildings. Nothing in this suggestion affects the Council's agreed housing strategy, levels of service nor the future of Council owned open space or recreation land. The Chief Officers wish to emphasise that without freeing additional resources or increasing the level of Community Charge, there will be very limited scope for the service enhancements identified in the Corporate Plan.
- (4) Requests for funds for Equipment Tools & Materials have been dealt with in a similar way and are set out in Appendix II for the Committee's approval.

RECOMMENDED : (1) That the essential building works set out in Appendix I be approved for inclusion in the draft revenue estimates for 1990/91 subject to recommendation 2 below.

(2) That the Chief Officers report further on the possibilities which might exist to free and create additional resources by the disposal of Council buildings.

(3) That the estimates for essential Equipment Tools & Materials as set out in Appendix II be approved for inclusion in the draft revenue estimates for 1990/91.



POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - BUILDING MAINTENANCE REPAIRS AND SPECIAL ITEMS

SPECIAL ITEM CATEGORIES:

CONT. = CONTRACTED
 ALT & IMP = ALTERATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS
 L, S & H = LEGAL, SAFETY & HYGIENE
 SECURITY = SECURITY REQUIREMENT

< ESSENTIAL ITEMS > : < NON - ESSENTIAL ITEMS >

	TOTAL COST	SPECIAL ITEM INDICATOR:	NECESSARY	DESIRABLE
LAND AND ESTATE MANAGEMENT				
Repairs and Maintenance				

Service contracts:-				
Heating	100			
Day to day repairs:-				
Electrical	800			
Mechanical	100			
Building	1,800			
	2,800	0	0	0
Special Items				

81/83 Southend Road:-				
UPVC double glazed units	6,000 L, S & H			
Rewiring	2,000 L, S & H			
9 Highfield Crescent:-				
Land drainage to garden				3,000
	8,000	0	0	3,000
TOTAL LAND AND ESTATE MANAGEMENT	10,800	0	0	3,000
DUTCH COTTAGE				
Repairs and Maintenance				

Service contracts:-				
Heating	50			
Day to day repairs:-				
Electrical	150			
Mechanical	50			
Building	150			
	400	0	0	0
TOTAL DUTCH COTTAGE	400	0	0	0

	< ESSENTIAL ITEMS > < NON - ESSENTIAL ITEMS >			
	TOTAL	SPECIAL	NECESSARY	DESIRABLE
	COST	ITEM		
	INDICATOR:			
ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS				
Repairs and Maintenance				
Service Contracts:-				
Heating	5,000			
Fire	1,000			
Emergency Lighting	1,000			
Burglar Alarms	1,500			
Lightning Conductor	300			
Day to day repairs:-				
Electrical	5,000			
Mechanical	4,000			
Building	6,000			
Programmed external decoration - Civic Suite	3,000			
Programmed internal decoration - various	5,800			
	32,600	0	0	0
Special Items				
Acacia House:-				
Removal of internal walls	4,000	ALT & IMP:		
Rebuild boundary wall	6,000	L, S & H :		
Remove flower beds from car parking area	2,500	ALT & IMP:		
Install fire resisting door panels	300	L, S & H :		
Removal of floor tracks - filing room	1,700	ALT & IMP:		
Provide code access doors	600	SECURITY :		
Box in pipes Y.T.S. office	500	ALT & IMP:		
Store room racking - room 28	700	ALT & IMP:		
Opening Between - rooms 34/35	1,200	ALT & IMP:		
Carpet replacement - various offices	3,600	L, S & H :		
Closed circuit T.V. system - 7 South St.	1,000	SECURITY :		
Car park resurfacing - Civic Suite	12,000	L, S & H :		
Re-roof over members lounge/Chairmans office			3,700	
New inground car park barriers - Civic Suite			18,500	
Provision of fixed fans - room 33			500	
Skylights - Typingpool			3,000	
Carpet Replacement - Civic suite			2,600	
Carpet replacement - various offices			3,300	
Additional internal decoration - various			1,500	
Provision of covered way - 3-15 South Street			10,000	
Erection of shelves - room 14			500	
	34,100	0	43,600	0
TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS	66,700	0	43,600	0

< ESSENTIAL ITEMS > : < NON - ESSENTIAL ITEMS >

	TOTAL COST	SPECIAL ITEM INDICATOR:	NECESSARY	DESIRABLE
DEPOT OFFICES		:		
Repairs and Maintenance		:		
-----		:		
Service contracts:-		:		
Heating	300	:		
Fire	100	:		
Day to day repairs:-		:		
Electrical	500	:		
Mechanical	300	:		
Building	800	:		
	2,000	0 :	0	0
TOTAL DEPOT OFFICES	2,000	0 :	0	0
	=====	=====	=====	=====
CAR PARKS		:		
Repairs and Maintenance		:		
-----		:		
Programmed lighting renewals	10,000	:		
Ad hoc repairs	6,500	:		
	16,500	0 :	0	0
TOTAL CAR PARKS	16,500	0 :	0	0
	=====	=====	=====	=====

001613

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

EQUIPMENT, TOOLS AND MATERIALS 1990/91

	ESSENTIAL ITEMS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND FINANCE DIRECTORATE INCORPORATING TREASURER	
Rolling replacement of office furniture	2,000
Upgrade of software	1,500
Tape streamer	1,000
Replacement and additional printers	2,000
Consumables	3,400

	9,900
	=====
COMPUTER SERVICES AND AUDIT	
Disc storage boxes	100
Publications	100
Consumables	1,100

	1,300
	=====
LEGAL & LICENSING INCLUDING SOLICITORS	
Books	2,900
Computer equipment	700
Equipment maintenance	1,100
Consumables	400

	5,100
	=====
SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL	
Books	1,100
Computer software and consumables	400
Cassette recorder	100
Typewriter maintenance	100
Consumables	200

	1,900
	=====
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE	
Typing equipment	12,700
Vending equipment	1,200
Filing equipment	1,500
Sanitary equipment	300
Newspapers	200
Furniture replacement	1,000
Consumables	2,800

	19,700
	=====

001614

	ESSENTIAL ITEMS
EMERGENCY PLANNING	
Consumables	2,000

	2,000
	=====
CAR PARKS	
Consumables	1,300

	1,300
	=====
COMMUNITY CHARGE BUSINESS ACCOUNT	
Acoustic hoods / stands	4,000
Lockable cupboards	900
Consumables	200

	5,100
	=====
HOUSING BENEFITS	
Lockable cabinets	600
Desks	300

	900
	=====
DEPOT	
Small tools	200
Equipment hire	300
Road pins and cones	300
Consumables	200
Hire of photocopier	300

	1,300
	=====



ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 5TH DECEMBER 1989

MINUTES OF A MEMBERS' TEACH-IN HELD ON 6TH NOVEMBER 1989

Present: Councillors A.J. Harvey (Chairman), P.A. Beckers, C.K. Bellman, R.H. Boyd, Mrs. R. Brown, W.H. Budge, Mrs. P. Cooke, B.A. Crick, J.A. Gibson, I.R. Godfrey, Mrs. P. Godsell, Mrs. V. Grigg, M.J. Handford, N. Harris, Mrs. E.M. Hart, D.R. Helson, Mrs. M. Hunnable, S.N. Jarvis, Mrs. S.J. Lemon, Miss B.G.J. Lovett, Mrs. E. Marlow, J.M. Roden, S.H. Silva, S.A. Skinner, Mrs. L. Walker, P.F.A. Webster and D.C. Wood.

Apologies: Councillors C.J.B. Faherty and R.A. Pearson.

The Chairman welcomed all those present including representatives of Hawkwell, Hockley, Rochford and Great Wakering Parish Councils, the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Rayleigh and Rawreth Tenants Association and introduced the three speakers namely the Treasurer Mr. R. Crofts, the Revenues Manager Mr. S. Clarkson and the District Valuer Mr. A. Pryke.

Mr. Crofts advised the Meeting that there was a lot of information to impart, which would give an update on the situation reported at the previous Teach-in on Community Charge and that some of the matters touched upon would be by way of a preview of forthcoming reports on those subjects to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Mr. Clarkson referred Members to the information pack which had been supplied which included a copy of a booklet on the new Business Rate and the Non-Domestic Rate Enquiry Form which were currently being sent out to local businesses.

Leaving that aside he reminded those present of the three types of Community Charge involved; personal, standard and collective and of their different applications. There had been considerable effort involved in constituting the Register which currently comprised 56,584 potential chargepayers plus a further 2,348 persons who were either exempt or between the ages of 16 and 18. In addition a total of 771 properties had been identified as liable to the standard charge, but the situation was complicated because there were 9 different categories, details of which were given, and 20 separate charging bands. A report would be made to the Policy and Resources Committee in December on the need to set the standard charge multipliers and Members were advised of the various considerations involved.

Turning to payment methods he reminded his audience that Rochford was a market leader in efficiency of payment with 62% of ratepayers using the direct debit method and the aim was to achieve a similar proportion in respect of Community Charge. The previous week Notifications of Entry had been despatched together with payment slips and details of the variety of methods of payment available. Finally Mr. Clarkson outlined the method of recovery in respect of non-payment and the new powers available by way of a Liability Order.

Mr. Crofts stressed that because no benefit was available to a standard

charge payer there was a need for caution in setting the level of multiplier so as to avoid causing hardship. The District Council also needed to decide whether to levy an additional rate for the non-parished area of Rayleigh to reflect the cost of providing services which elsewhere were paid for out of the Parish Precepts but that was still an open question. Mr. Crofts then outlined the transitional arrangements for cushioning the effect of Community Charge on occupiers of property of low rateable value and on those pensioners and disabled persons who had not previously been liable for rates. It would fall to the Council to calculate the rebates involved and to liaise thereon with the Housing Benefits Section. The Council would receive grant in that respect but there would be a considerable additional workload involved in order to achieve that requirement within the timescale.

Mr. Pryke outlined the basis of the old rating system, the reasons why that had become outdated and the steps which had been taken to re-value non-domestic properties in connection with which the existing appeals machinery had been revised. The new draft list which comprised some 1,800 hereditaments in Rochford would be supplied to charging authorities as the basis for levying the new National Non-Domestic Rate.

Mr. Clarkson gave details of the method by which the Government proposed to smooth out the transition for businesses, the effect of which was to target a higher level of relief to small business and to cushion the regional variations that were foreseen particularly by comparison between the North and the South East. Changes were also proposed to the existing system whereby 50% of the mandatory relief and 50% discretionary relief were available to charitable organisations. In particular revised criteria had been introduced to widen eligibility and mandatory relief for charitable organisations had been increased from 50% to 80%. However, the cost of discretionary relief would fall to be borne by the chargepayers of the District in addition to 50% of the mandatory relief and it would therefore be preferable to invite some organisations to apply in order to gauge the costs involved before deciding how the discretionary system should operate in future. That would therefore be the subject of a report to the next Policy and Resources Committee.

Finally Mr. Crofts advised Members of the very strict rules that would apply to the administration of the collection fund, the method and purpose of the proposed safety net system and the way in which the standard spending assessment (SSA) was intended to replace the former grant related expenditure assessment (GREX). By means of worked examples he indicated how the new system could affect different types of authority and how the spending levels of County would have a far more significant effect than that of Districts upon the Community Charge level produced.

A number of questions were then answered including:-

- the multiplier for empty property
- the irrelevance of location or disturbance factors on the personal charge
- the effect of Community Charge on occupiers of agricultural dwellings and the continuing exemption of agriculture
- the new rules on Parish expenditure under the old Section 132 dispensation

- the different method of treatment of interest on the collection account
- the effect on chargepayers of loss of collection and of mandatory rate relief
- the new powers of financial enquiry
- the progressive basis on which certain of the standard charge multipliers would operate and the effect on empty properties
- the basis on which mixed hereditaments would be assessed for non-domestic rate purposes
- the maximum benefit available and the reason for cessation of disabled persons' rate relief
- the basis of calculation of the Parish Precept the services provided and the effect thereon of the loss of the non-domestic rate element
- the uncertainty about the period and phasing out of the transitional arrangements
- the new method of assessment of water rates.

The Chairman thanked the speakers concerned for once again illuminating a highly technical subject and all those who had attended and contributed towards the success of the event.



ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 5 DECEMBER 1989

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND TREASURER

COMMUNITY CHARGE 1990/91

At the time that the rate was set for 1989/90, it was recognised that expenditure levels needed to be controlled in order to be able to levy an acceptable Community Charge for 1990/91. In response to the consultation exercise, it was also agreed to utilise £940,000 of balances in order to restrict the rate increase to 4%.

With the advent of Community Charge, the new bill, which is to be sent to all individual chargepayers, will bear a direct comparison of the District expenditure to that decided by the Government for a standard level of service. The figure produced by the Government is known as the Standard Spending Assessment (SSA), which is comparable to Grant Related Expenditure Assessment (GREa) under the old system.

A consultative document on Standard Spending Assessments has now been released by the Government, although it is understood that the methods of calculation of the new assessment will not be changed. The SSA for Rochford is £68.89 per head of relevant population, which equates to a total revenue spending figure of £3.911m. This is the second lowest assessment per head of relevant population in the whole of Essex, as can be seen at Appendix 1 of this report.

Rochford has always fared badly as regards the Government assessment of spending levels applicable to Rochford. When the existing block grant system was introduced, the GREa for Rochford for 1981/82 was assessed at £3.028m. The SSA, which is comparable to GREa, represents a total increase of only 29% over the 9-year period, whereas RPI has increased by 66%. This is shown in graph form at Appendix 5 of this report.

The Council's budgeted expenditure for 1989/90 is £4.4m., £409,000 more than the Government target for 1990/91. If the Council wishes to carry on providing services at the current level, it must accept that the Community Charge will be considerably more than that proposed by the Government.

In order to maintain the level of services currently provided, the anticipated expenditure for next year, as shown at Appendix 2 of this report, amounts to £5.639m. If the top priority item in the corporate plan is adopted, i.e., increase in environmental health services, the overall sum is increased to £5.704m. This equates to a District spend of £100.56 per head of relevant population, as compared to the Government figure of £68.89.

It must be stressed that, at this stage, the estimates are provisional and the detailed compilation of the budget will be subject to a critical appraisal of all items. It is envisaged that Management Team should be able to reduce the provisional figures.



Appendix 3 of this report shows some illustrative Community Charges at varying spending levels, assuming that the County contains their expenditure within the Government assessment. Also shown is the level of rate charge had Community Charge not been introduced. As can be seen, the average household within the District will still benefit under the new system.

All of the above projections take no account of the use of balances. As previously mentioned, £940,000 was used this year in support of rate. As Members will appreciate, this action was a "one-off" and cannot be repeated. For 1990/91, it may be possible to reduce the Community Charge to a very limited extent by utilising £200,000 of balances, but this would only reduce the charge by £3.52 for the year.

To put into context the scope of the problem, Appendix 4 details a list of items in the current budget which are discretionary. This is not an exhaustive list, but gives an indication of the magnitude of budget cuts that would be required in order to achieve a spending level of £3.911m. Clearly, action of this kind would impoverish the District of services and would probably be unacceptable. It is, nevertheless, apparent that there is a need to make a radical evaluation as to the methods by which the Council delivers its services.

It is improbable that any action can be taken within such a short timescale to implement any review mentioned above, and the prospect of accepting a Community Charge higher than the Government target should be considered.

As the figures shown in Appendix 2 are provisional, it is suggested that Management team be instructed to identify savings in order to produce a net Committee expenditure of £5.3m.

RECOMMENDED that Management Team report to the February 1990 Policy and Resources Committee, setting out spending proposals for each Committee within an overall spending limit of £5.3m.



APPENDIX 1

Community Charge Statistics for Essex

<u>Authority</u>	<u>Amounts per Community Charge Payer</u>	
	<u>Standard Spending</u>	<u>Safety Net</u>
	<u>Assessment</u> (SSA) £ p	£
Basildon	81.66	40
Braintree	80.28	38
Brentwood	67.83	16
Castle Point	72.56	53
Chelmsford	76.32	73
Colchester	84.95	33
Epping Forest	75.66	75
Harlow	105.22	17
Maldon	74.85	47
ROCHFORD	68.89	60
Southend	107.36	53
Tendring	78.38	26
Thurrock	88.36	30
Uttlesford	76.39	68

APPENDIX 2

Provisional Estimate of Net Expenditure 1990/91

	<u>£000</u>
Estimated net expenditure 1989/90	4,400
Inflation @ 8%	352
Additional staffing costs above 8% (including 1989/90 pay award, full cost of Community Charge Collection staff, additional resources in Development and contract monitoring)	309
Additional computer costs above 8% (including revenue costs of replacement systems outside main computer contract)	112
NNDR additional cost of rates on Council buildings following revaluation	18
Additional building works as proposed to spending Committees	40
Revenue contribution in support of capital	200
Deletion of HRA contribution	200
Miscellaneous items - net increase	<u>8</u>
Sub total	5,639
Corporate Plan priority - Environmental Health	<u>65</u>
TOTAL	<u>5,704</u> =====

APPENDIX 3

Illustrative Community Charge (rounded to Nearest £)

	<u>SSA</u>	<u>Spending Level</u>		
		<u>£m.</u> <u>5.300</u>	<u>£m.</u> <u>5.639</u>	<u>£m.</u> <u>5.704</u>
	£	£	£	£
ECC	657	657	657	657
RDC	69	93	99	100
Parish	<u>-</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>
	726	758	764	765
NNDR	292	292	292	292
Grant	<u>156</u>	<u>156</u>	<u>156</u>	<u>156</u>
	278	310	316	317
Safety Net	<u>60</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>60</u>
Community Charge	<u>338</u>	<u>370</u>	<u>376</u>	<u>377</u>
<u>Probable Rate Level</u>		p	p	p
ECC		267.0	267.0	267.0
RDC		49.5	52.7	53.3
Parish		2.0	2.0	2.0
<u>Average Domestic Rate Bill</u>		<u>£780</u>	<u>£788</u>	<u>£790</u>




APPENDIX 4

1. Comparison of Estimate to SSA

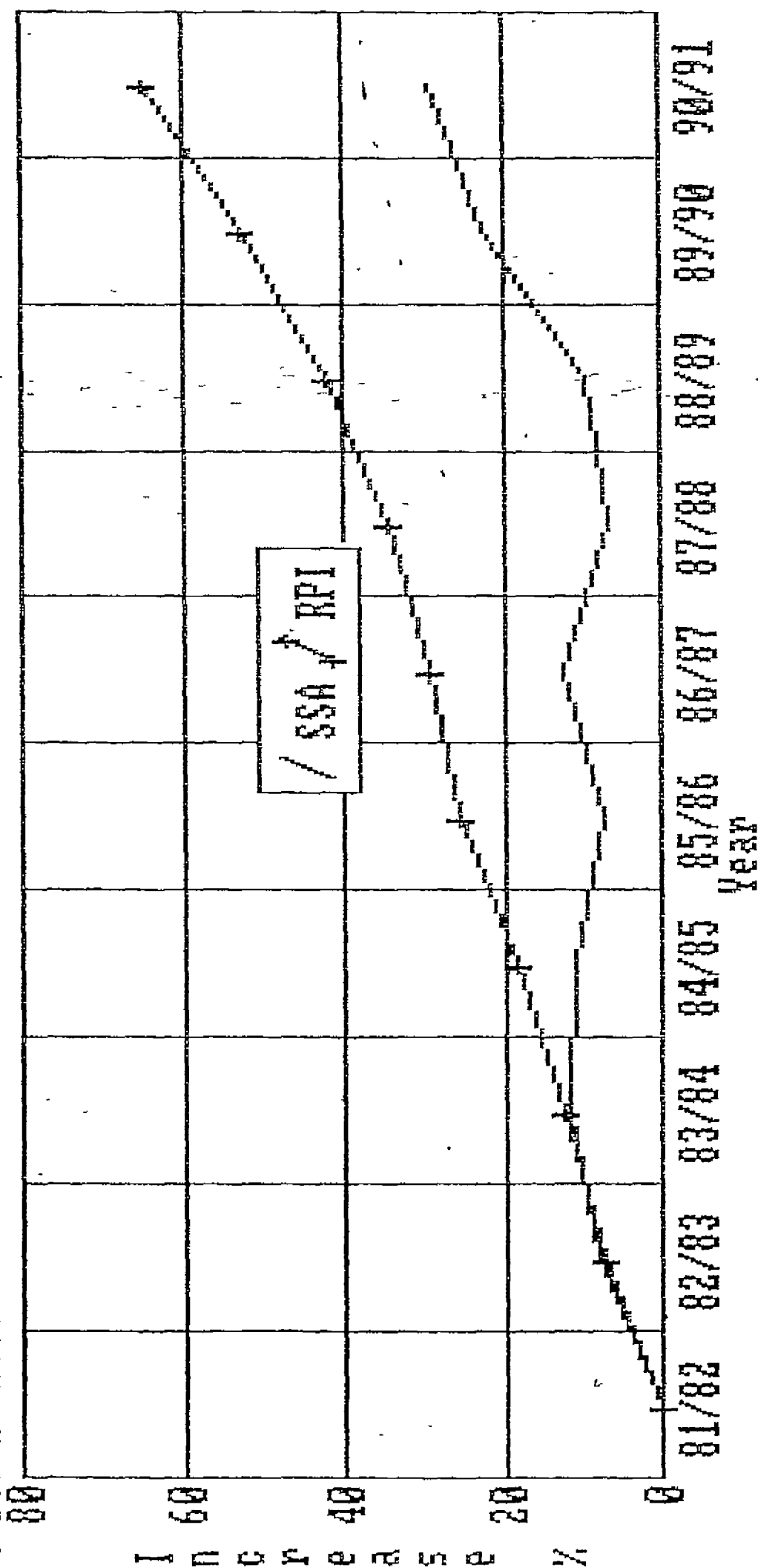
SSA	<u>£3,911,000</u>
Budget 1989/90	£4,400,000
Management Team	£5,300,000
Target	
Required Saving	£1,389,000

2. Non Statutory Services

<u>Service</u>	<u>Estimate</u> <u>1989/90</u> <u>£</u>
Woodlands	91,300
Highways	84,100
Public Relations	120,900
S.137	23,600
Grants	24,200
Meals on Wheels	8,000
Concessionary Fares	43,000
Subscriptions	7,900
Estuary Training	15,300
YTS	16,800
Public Conveniences	35,100
Pest Control	14,200
Drainage	11,400
All Leisure Services	<u>979,300</u>
	1,475,100
Inflation	<u>117,900</u>
	<u>1,593,000</u>
	=====



ROCHFORD D.C. - COMPARISON OF GREH/SSA TO RPI



001625

ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 5TH DECEMBER 1989

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

STANDARD COMMUNITY CHARGE - MULTIPLIERS

Members will recall from earlier Teach-Ins that charging authorities need to fix levels for the Standard Community Charge (SCC) which will apply to dwellings that are not anybody's sole or main residence. SCC is fixed as a multiplier of the Personal Community Charge which is payable by almost all adults in the District.

Under existing rating legislation Rates are payable on dwellings whilst they contain personal effects or furniture even if nobody actually lives there. Once these furnishings and effects are removed no Rate is payable unless the Empty Rate provisions have been adopted, when up to 100% rate liability can accrue. However, in Rochford the Council have decided not to adopt these provisions.

Standard Community Charge, by definition, includes holiday homes, holiday caravans and chalets, second homes and dwellings which are empty for a variety of reasons. The multipliers which will apply to the different categories of property can range between 0 and 2 with some being set, by statute, as maxima. Multipliers must be selected from the range 0, $\frac{1}{2}$, 1, $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 times the Personal Community Charge and a person can only fall to be liable for SCC if they have a freehold or relevant leasehold interest in the property. The definitions of "persons" having an "interest" is contained within Ministerial Regulations and can include companies and partnerships.

The Local Government Finance Act 1988 does not define sole or main residence. In the first instance the Community Charge Registration Officer (CCRO) will decide whether a property constitutes somebody's sole or main residence or whether it falls liable for SCC. An individual has the right to appeal against the CCRO's decision on this point, initially to a Valuation and Community Charge Tribunal.

General Considerations and Special Circumstances

Caravans: There should be very few SCC cases affecting caravans as the Act provides that the owner of a caravan will be subject to SCC only if it is stationed on a protected site and not used as a sole or main residence.

Community Charge Benefits: Standard Community Chargepayers are not eligible to apply for Community Charge Benefit on the SCC property.

Charge Setting: Charging authorities must set the multipliers for each class of property for the forthcoming financial year by 1st March. This will become part of the annual charge setting process. The multipliers must then remain in force for the full financial year and may not be varied or waived. There are no grounds for appeal by Chargepayers.



- Transition: Properties which are empty at 31st March 1990 will be liable for SCC immediately if they satisfy the criteria and have been empty for three months or more.
- Recovery: The same recovery procedures apply to SCC as to Personal Community Charge.
- Income Loss: Failure to secure adequate return from SCC properties would result in a correspondingly higher level of Personal Community Charge and potential loss of income because of low or zero multipliers which may include cases where rates are currently payable.
- Housing Incentive: Setting maximum charges in some cases may provide incentives to owners or agents either to sell or let their properties without delay so going some way to alleviating the national housing shortage.
- Hardship: Care should be taken on certain categories so as not to inflict undue hardship on people in difficult situations such as long term hospital patients.
- Enjoyment of Services: It should be remembered that although a property may be empty the owner still enjoys some of the services provided in our District even though they may live hundreds of miles away, e.g. police and fire protection, public health and highway access.

Financial Implications


At the time of drafting this report the Treasurer is unable to provide the Committee with the number of Standard Community Charge properties in the District and the categories into which they fall. The Register will not be fully constructed until 1st December 1989 and even then it may still be difficult to gather the information required because of the late delivery of computer software relating to statistical information retrieval. However, the Treasurer hopes to be able to report verbally at the Meeting on this point.

The SCC multipliers are at the complete discretion of the Charging Authority except where Government maxima have been specified and our Grant is unaffected by any decision. However, revenue raised by SCC can be offset against losses on collection when administering the Collection Fund.

Classifications

The Council has to make a specific decision on each category of SCC even if it wishes to set a zero multiplier. As mentioned earlier, the multipliers will have to remain unaltered for the duration of 1990/91 so Members will want to give very careful consideration to the setting of individual multipliers.

There is a broad inter-relationship between the categories and this issue has been approached on the basis described below and reflected in the suggested multipliers set out on the attached appendix.



(a) Long Term Patients

It could be argued that where a person is in this position after a period of 12 months something should be done about disposal of the property. However, experience has shown on Rate collection and Housing Benefit administration that many complications can exist in such cases where property disposal 'over the head' of the patient is concerned; not least the appointment of a trustee through the Court of Protection. As mentioned above, the owner does enjoy the protection of the property by the police and fire services and the facilities provided by Environmental Health and possibly Planning Departments, so it is considered that a minimum level of contribution ought to be made.


(b) Uninhabitable, New, Structurally Altered, Personal Representatives and Other Empty Properties

In such cases and in a fluid economic market it seems probable that the property could be let or sold within a reasonable period of time. It is therefore suggested that where permitted, a progressively increasing multiplier be charged up to a period of 6 months when the maxima be applied.

Conclusion

In recommending the multipliers set out in the appendix the Treasurer believes them to be fair and equitable both to the Standard Community Chargepayers and to Personal Community Chargepayers who would ultimately have to make good any shortfall in revenue if insufficient monies were raised through the mechanism of the Standard Charges.

RECOMMENDED That the multipliers for Standard Community Charge classifications as set out in the appendix to this report be adopted.



STANDARD COMMUNITY CHARGE MULITPLIERS

This schedule outlines the categories for Standard Community Charge; the statutory classification letters contained in the Community Charges (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1989 (SI 438/1989) (which are included for Officer reference only); the maximum multipliers which can apply and the Treasurer's recommended multiplier for the District of Rochford.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Statutory Maximum</u>	<u>Recommended Multiplier</u>
	<u>Chargepayer resident in NHS hospital, care home or hostel and exempt from Personal Community Charge</u>		
D	For less than 12 months from the date of exemption	0	0
I	After 12 months from the date of exemption	2	$\frac{1}{2}$
	<u>Properties not Occupied</u>		
C	Unoccupied for less than 3 months	0	0
M	From 3 months to less than 6 months	2	1
N	From 6 months to less than 12 months	2	2
O	Over 12 months	2	2
	<u>Properties newly constructed or Structurally Altered</u>		
B	Until construction/alteration substantially complete and for a period of less than 6 months thereafter	0	0
N	From 6 months to less than 12 months after completion	2	2
O	From 12 months after completion	2	2
	<u>Uninhabitable Properties</u>		
A	Required structural alterations to make habitable and for a period of less than 6 months from the time the alterations are substantially complete	0	0
N	From 6 months to less than 12 months after substantial completion	2	2
O	From 12 months after substantial completion	2	2

Personal Representatives

E	Where a person is a Chargepayer in his capacity as a personal representative and no probate or letters of administration have been granted and for a period of less than 3 months from grant	0	0
J	From 3 months to less than 6 months	2	1
K	From 6 months to less than 12 months	2	2
L	From 12 months onwards	2	2

Occupation Prohibited by Law

F	Property empty by reason of action taken by any local or public authority or the Crown	0	0
---	--	---	---

Residential Caravans

G	Where not included in Classes A to F above	1	1
---	--	---	---

Restricted Seasonal Occupation

H	Properties not included in Classes A to G above which are not permitted to be occupied all the year as a result of conditions imposed by grant of planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1971	1	1
---	--	---	---

Second Homes and Other Properties

P	Any dwelling not included in the Classes listed above	2	2
---	---	---	---

Property is unoccupied at any time -

- (a) For the purposes of Classes D to F and I to L, if at the time no-one lives there; and
- (b) for the purposes of Classes A to C and M to O, if at the time no-one lives there and the property is substantially unfurnished.

NOTE: It is rumoured that the Government intend to specify other Classes, e.g. empty parsonage houses and houses kept for a person's retirement where they live in tied accommodation, but at the time of drafting this report there is no legislation to uphold this speculation.



STANDARD COMMUNITY CHARGE MULTIPLIERS

At the time of drafting the report the Treasurer was unable to identify the numbers of Standard Community Charge properties within the District. This exercise has now been carried out and some guidance can be given as to the financial effects of the recommendations. Members will, of course, appreciate that the situation fluctuates on a daily basis, and the information presented tonight will be out of date tomorrow but a broad indication of the potential level of revenue raised through Standard Community Charge can be established from the following statistics.

The calculation is based on the Treasurer's estimate set out on the concurrent report dealing with the Community Charge level for 1990/91 assuming a personal charge of £370. It has also been assumed that the statutory "free" periods have been expended and that liability will exist for the full year. Individual charge periods are now shown as inter-related classes have been grouped together.

£

Long Term Patients

21	cases	@	£370	x ½ =	3,885
----	-------	---	------	-------	-------

Standard Empty

621	cases	@	£370	x 2 =	229,770
-----	-------	---	------	-------	---------

Structurally Repaired

3	cases	@	£370	x 2 =	2,220
---	-------	---	------	-------	-------

Uninhabitable

NIL	cases	@	£370	x 2 =	-
-----	-------	---	------	-------	---

Personal Representatives

83	cases	@	£370	x 2 =	61,420
----	-------	---	------	-------	--------

Prohibited by Law

1	case	@	£370	x 0 =	-
---	------	---	------	-------	---

Caravans

14	cases	@	£370	x 1 =	5,180
----	-------	---	------	-------	-------

Seasonal Occupation

NIL	cases	@	£370	x 1 =	-
-----	-------	---	------	-------	---

Holiday or Second Homes

42	cases	@	£370	x 2 =	31,080
----	-------	---	------	-------	--------

Estimated total revenue raised by the
levy of Standard Community Charge given
the criteria set out above.

£ 333,555
=====

CHAIRMAN

DATE

23/1/90

001631

ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council

At a Meeting held on 12th December 1989. Present: Councillors
Mrs. E.M. Hart (Vice-Chairman in the Chair), R.S. Allen, C.K. Bellman,
C.I. Black, R.H. Boyd, Mrs. R. Brown, W.H. Budge, B.A. Crick,
C.J.B. Faherty, Mrs. J. Fawell, T. Fawell, D.F. Flack, J.A. Gibson,
I.R. Godfrey, Mrs. V. Grigg, M.J. Handford, Mrs. E.M. Hart, A.J. Harvey,
D.R. Helson, Mrs. M. Hunnabale, S.N. Jarvis, Mrs. S.J. Lemon,
Miss B.G.J. Lovett, Mrs. E. Marlow, C.R. Morgan, R.A. Pearson, J.M. Roden,
J.A. Sheaf, S.H. Silva, S.A. Skinner, C. Stephenson, Mrs. L. Walker,
P.F.A. Webster, D.A. Weir, D.C. Wood and C. Wren.

Apologies: Councillors P.A. Beckers, Mrs. P. Cooke, Mrs. P. Godsell and
N. Harris.

661. MINUTES

Resolved that the Minutes of the Meeting of 7th November 1989 be approved
as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

662. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Vice-Chairman of the Council referred to the fact that the Chairman
was ill with influenza. A Member mentioned that Councillor
Mrs. M. Hutton, Chairman of the County Education Committee, was receiving
treatment in Oldchurch Hospital. Council asked that best wishes be
conveyed to them both for their speedy recovery. (ACE)

663. ERNIE ADCOCK TROPHY (Minute 528/89)

The Chairman presented the Ernie Adcock Trophy for 1989 to
Mrs. J.M. Murison in recognition of her outstanding dedication to sport
and her involvement over a long period in the participation of the
District of Rochford in the Essex Games.

664. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

At the request of the Chairman, the Leader of the Council drew to the
attention of Members that the decision of the Policy & Resources Committee
under Minute 632 relating to the 1990/91 Estimates to take no further
action on the possibility of creating additional resources by the disposal
of Council buildings superseded recommendations made earlier in the cycle
by the service Committees and would be referred to when those Minutes were
dealt with.

Resolved (1) that the Minutes of Committees be received and the
recommendations contained therein as amended be adopted.

(2) that the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to any
documents necessary to give effect to decisions taken or approved by
Council in these Minutes.

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Minute Nos.</u>
Health & Housing Services	14th November 1989	573 - 590

pe.

Council

Minute 585: 1990/91 Estimates - Building Maintenance Repairs and Special Items & Equipment, Tools and Materials

The Chairman of the Committee asked Members to note that recommendation (2) was cross-referenced with Minute 632 of the Policy & Resources Committee.

Planning Services 16th November 1989 591 - 598

Minute 598 - New Closed Circuit Television System

In response to a question from a Member the Chairman advised that attention had been given to the teething problems experienced on the first evening of operation of the new system and it was hoped that they had been overcome.

Leisure Services 21st November 1989 599 - 609

Minute 601: 1990/91 Estimates - Building Maintenance Repairs and Special Items & Equipment, Tools and Materials

The Chairman of the Committee asked Members to note that recommendation (2) was cross-referenced with Minute 632 of the Policy & Resources Committee.

Minute 602: Best Kept Village Competition

A Member advised that Hullbridge Parish Council had been a prime mover in endeavouring to stage this local competition and the Chairman of the Committee accepted that this fact should be formally recorded.

Minute 603: Betts Wood Play Area

The Chairman of the Committee advised that following a recent site visit, the constitution of which was clarified at a Member's request, a report would be made to the next Meeting of the Committee and Council noted suggestions that if the existing equipment was to be removed it be relocated either in Downhall Ward or at Plumberow Mount.

Minute 604: Open Spaces Development Programme

Council was pleased to note advice from the Chairman of the Committee that the transfer of the Turret House Farm Open Space to the National Playing Fields Association had been completed.

A Member referred to para.(iv) of the Minute (Hambro Hill, Rayleigh) and suggested, subject to the report back on the outcome of the negotiations with Devenish, that regard would need to be paid to setting of conditions and a termination date for the tipping and monitoring those activities and to the potential of the Council's right of way lower down the hill as an access.

QC

001633

Council

Minute 608: Leisure Bus

Some Members suggested that since the purpose of this free service was to transport customers to and from Clements Hall endeavours should be made for the cost to be met by CIRCA Leisure as the benefactors failing which Members should be more involved in determining the timetable and routes involved, some of which were circuitous. The Chairman of the Committee asked that those aspects be dealt with when the matter was reviewed in conjunction with next year's estimate preparation.

Resolved that arrangements be made accordingly. (ACE)

Development Services

23rd November 1989

610 - 626

Minute 612: Anglian Water Matters

In response to questions Members were advised that the works in Ferry Road, Hullbridge would commence in March 1990 and that the highway authority had effected an improvement in respect of surface water on Hambro Hill.

Minute 615: Street Lighting

The Chairman of the Committee recalled he had given an undertaking that a meeting would be arranged at an appropriate juncture with the County Council and the Hullbridge Parish Council to discuss the particular problems in that area and agreed the request of a Member that Ward Members should be included. Mention was again made of the reference to Western Drive which should be shown as Western Road.

Minute 621: 1990/91 Estimates - Building Maintenance Repairs and Special Items & Equipment, Tools and Materials

The Chairman of the Committee asked Members to note that recommendation (2) was cross-referenced with Minute 632 of the Policy & Resources Committee.

Policy & Resources

5th December 1989

627 - 660

Minute 630(C): Staffing Sub-Committee Minutes

Council accepted the request of a Member that the recommendation under Minute 319 relating to the relocation package should be amended so as to authorise the Sub-Committee to approve both the specific circumstances and the detailed costs involved.

Resolved that the following words be substituted for the recommendation in Minute 630(C)(2):

"That the Council be asked to accept that, in exceptional circumstances, a mortgage subsidy might need to be offered to secure suitably qualified personnel for a key appointment and that the Staffing Sub-Committee be authorised to approve both the specific circumstances and detailed costs and determine the most appropriate arrangements should requirements arise".

P.C

Council

Minute 630(D): Housing Strategy Panel Minutes

It was moved by Councillor R.H. Boyd and seconded by Councillor D.F. Flack:

'That recommendation (4) be amended by the addition of the words -

"...and that the design and layout of the Doggetts scheme be taken forward in full consultation with a Panel of Members proportionately representative of Council".

A further motion regarding the purchase of properties on the open market was not pursued in the light of advice from the Chairman of the Committee that this was already Council policy and that such acquisitions were proceeding.

In support of the amendment it was argued that the proposal was analogous to the Panel of Members constituted in the case of Downhall 4 which ensured that when that planning application came forward for consideration any matters which might otherwise give cause for concern had been successfully anticipated. Furthermore since the initiative would impinge on the terms of reference of the Development Services, Health & Housing Services and Planning Services Committees the concept of a Panel of Members if accepted would also serve to ensure that all of those concerns were dealt with adequately.

In response the Chairman of the Committee said it would be the intention that the design and layout of the Doggetts scheme should be a matter for consideration by the Health & Housing Services Committee and he would argue that this was the correct forum. However as it was being suggested that other Committees were involved as well he reminded Council that it was the function of his Committee to determine how best to deal with the matter. At his suggestion it was accordingly

Resolved that the foregoing proposition be referred to the Policy & Resources Committee for consideration. (SEC)

Minute 630(E): Emergency Panel Minutes

It was suggested by a Member that the Policy & Resources Committee be asked to consider the status of the Emergency Panel so that it could proceed with delegated powers in partnership with the Audit Panel to secure the rapid implementation of the Emergency Centre. The Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee undertook to bring the matter before his Committee for consideration.

Minute 634: Notice of Motion Received Pursuant to Standing Order 5

It was moved by Councillor C.I. Black and seconded by Councillor S.A. Skinner:

'That the final sentence of the motion be amended to read -

"This Council therefore urges the County Council to fix a reasonable level of Poll Tax for 1990/91 without selling off school playing fields, damaging our fire service and further lowering school cleaning standards".

Council

In support of that amendment it was argued that to urge the County to budget for 1990/91 in accordance with the Government Standard Spending Assessment would merely be to invite further unwelcome economies. It would also conflict with the ability to resist reductions in services which impinged upon the District as in the concurrent Review of Standards of Fire Cover dealt with under Minute 631. Since the crux of the problem was that the Government Standard Spending Assessment was inadequate it would be more realistic to ask for a judgement to be made between the maintenance of essential services and the level of Community Charge to be adopted. Indeed it would be hypocrisy to expect the County to do otherwise when this Council was engaged on a similar exercise and could not formulate a budget within the Government target. The view was expressed that the original motion failed to address that problem and that the Council would be better advised to protest to the Government at the basis on which the estimates had been calculated.

The Leader of the Council reminded Members that he had already acted as in previous years by writing to the Prime Minister to register dissatisfaction at the assessment of Rochford's needs and to demonstrate by comparison with other local authorities the arbitrary nature of the exercise. The purpose of his original motion had been to ask the County Council to act with caution in formulating their budget for the reasons previously expressed, namely that it would account for nine-tenths of the revenue raised by the Community Charge and that any additional spending by them would have a proportionately greater effect on the level of that charge than would be the case with the District. He accepted that the amendment might have been designed with the best of intentions but was ill-conceived because its effect could well be to shift economies from one essential service to another whereas the original motion was quite unequivocal.

On a requisition pursuant to Standing Order 14 voting on the amendment was recorded as follows:-

For the amendment (16) Councillors C.K. Bellman, C.I. Black, R.H. Boyd, B.A. Crick, D.F. Flack, M.J. Handford, D.R. Helson, Mrs. M. Hunnable, S.N. Jarvis, Mrs. S.J. Lemon, C.R. Morgan, S.H. Silva, S.A. Skinner, C. Stephenson, D.A. Weir and C. Wren.

Against the amendment (18) Councillors R.S. Allen, Mrs. R. Brown, W.H. Budge, Mrs. J. Fawell, T. Fawell, J.A. Gibson, I.R. Godfrey, Mrs. V. Grigg, Mrs. E.M. Hart, A.J. Harvey, Miss B.G.J. Lovett, Mrs. E. Marlow, R.A. Pearson, J.M. Roden, J.A. Sheaf, Mrs. L. Walker, P.F.A. Webster and D.C. Wood.

Abstaining (1) Councillor C.J.B. Faherty.

The amendment was declared LOST.

pc.

001636

Council

It was moved by Councillor D.F. Flack and seconded by Council C.R. Morgan:

'That the first sentence of the motion be amended by the addition of the words -

"but recognises that this is too little too late".

and that the second and third sentences be deleted and replaced by the following -

"This Council deplores the Government's inadequate funding and urges it to provide adequate levels of grant to local government so that all tax can be reduced to a level which is within the ability of people to pay".

It was argued that it was essential to ensure that criticism of the Community Charge system was directed at the proper target and that unless local authorities were to stand up for the maintenance of proper funding for essential services there was a danger that they would gradually be eroded leading to deprivation. The Government had argued that there should be local accountability but were pursuing a policy of centralisation. It was therefore illogical to withdraw adequate Exchequer funding for local government services in order to reduce income tax, that being the only tax which was based upon the ability to pay.

Against that it was argued that there had been no attempt on the part of those attacking the Community Charge to identify the amount of extra funding required and how it should be raised. It had to be borne in mind in considering that matter that chargepayers in Rochford would be required to pay an additional £60 in the first year to cushion the impact of the transition on high spending boroughs. Another factor which should not be overlooked was that had the Council's original housing strategy been successful it could have achieved sufficient of a capital receipt from the sale of Council houses to have reduced significantly the level of Community Charge now required.

On a requisition pursuant to Standing Order 14 voting on the amendment was recorded as follows:-

For the amendment (17) Councillors C.K. Bellman, C.I. Black, R.H. Boyd, B.A. Crick, C.J.B. Faherty, D.F. Flack, M.J. Handford, D.R. Helson, Mrs. M. Hunnable, S.N. Jarvis, Mrs. S.J. Lemon, C.R. Morgan, S.H. Silva, S.A. Skinner, C. Stephenson, D.A. Weir and C. Wren.

Against the amendment (18) Councillors R.S. Allen, Mrs. R. Brown, W.H. Budge, Mrs. J. Fawell, T. Fawell, J.A. Gibson, I.R. Godfrey, Mrs. V. Grigg, Mrs. E.M. Hart, A.J. Harvey, Miss B.G.J. Lovett, Mrs. E. Marlow, R.A. Pearson, J.M. Roden, J.A. Sheaf, Mrs. L. Walker, P.F.A. Webster and D.C. Wood.

The amendment was declared LOST.

Council

On a requisition pursuant to Standing Order 14 voting on the substantive Motion was recorded as follows:-

- | | | |
|--------------------|------|--|
| For the Motion | (18) | Councillors R.S. Allen, Mrs. R. Brown, W.H. Budge, Mrs. J. Fawell, T. Fawell, J.A. Gibson, I.R. Godfrey, Mrs. V. Grigg, Mrs. E.M. Hart, A.J. Harvey, Miss B.G.J. Lovett, Mrs. E. Marlow, R.A. Pearson, J.M. Roden, J.A. Sheaf, Mrs. L. Walker, P.F.A. Webster and D.C. Wood. |
| Against the Motion | (6) | Councillors C.K. Bellman, D.F. Flack, C.R. Morgan, S.H. Silva, C. Stephenson and D.A. Weir. |
| Abstaining | (11) | Councillors C.I. Black, R.H. Boyd, B.A. Crick, C.J.B. Faherty, M.J. Handford, D.R. Helson, Mrs. M. Hunnable, S.N. Jarvis, Mrs. S.J. Lemon, S.A. Skinner and C. Wren. |

The Motion was declared CARRIED and Minute 634 was adopted.

Minute 636: Community Charge 1990/91

In moving adoption of the Minute the Chairman said he believed it would be of benefit if the Council were to produce a factsheet to explain in advance to potential chargepayers in the District why the proposed spend would be above the Government assessment level.

In concurring with that suggestion Members expressed concern that the estimates produced by the Government of the level of Community Charge had been increasing progressively and that there were grounds for supposing that the actual amount would be higher than currently indicated.

Resolved that the Officers be authorised to make the necessary arrangements for the production and circulation of a factsheet to all potential Community Chargepayers in the District. (T)

Minute 643: Charitable Rate Lettings - Lions Club of Rayleigh

NOTE: Councillor J.A. Gibson declared a non-pecuniary interest in this matter by virtue of Membership of the organisation concerned but remained in the Meeting.

Minute 650: Housing Rents and Housing Repairs

During the course of consideration of this item Council adopted a Motion moved by Councillor J.A. Sheaf and seconded by Councillor R.A. Pearson that the question be now put and Minute 650 was adopted.

Minute 651: Local Authority AIDS Education Officer

A Member advised for the purpose of clarification that the term "AIDS" was an acronym and should be printed as such.

f.c.

Council

Resolved that Minute 651 be amended accordingly.

Minute 655 - Rochford Youth Training Scheme Consortium

NOTE: Councillor R.A. Pearson declared a pecuniary interest in this matter by virtue of employment by another Youth Training Scheme and with the concurrence of Members remained in the Meeting since its adoption did not give rise to discussion.

Minute 656 - Rayleigh Weir Liaison Meeting

The Chairman of the Development Services Committee advised Council that he had attended the meeting that afternoon and that a report would be made thereon to Members.

NOTE: During discussion of Minute 646 (Cash Office Opening Hours) it was

Resolved that Standing Order 1.8 be suspended to enable transaction of the remaining business.

CHAIRMAN

W. Hyatt Cook

DATE

30.1.1990