

## **Policy & Finance Committee – 11 March 2003**

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Policy & Finance Committee** held on **11 March 2003** when there were present:

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

Cllr A J Humphries  
Cllr C A Hungate  
Cllr C C Langlands  
Cllr C R Morgan

Cllr J M Pullen  
Cllr P K Savill  
Cllr S P Smith  
Cllr Mrs M A Starke

### **Apologies for Absence**

Cllr C J Lumley

### **Substitutes**

Cllr C I Black

### **Officers Present**

P Warren	Chief Executive
R Crofts	Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
A Bugeja	Head of Legal Services
S Clarkson	Head of Revenue & Housing Management
D Deeks	Head of Financial Services
S Fowler	Head of Administrative & Member Services
G Woolhouse	Head of Health, Housing & Community Care
S Logan	Revenue & Benefits Manager
S Worthington	Committee Administrator

## **112 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2003 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

## **113 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr C R Morgan declared a personal interest in the item on the Licensing Bill 2002 by virtue of being the holder of a public entertainment licence and a drinks licence.

### **114 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND AGGREGATE CREDIT LIMIT**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Financial Services which gave details of the Treasury function in the forthcoming financial year (2003/2004).

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That the aggregate credit limit for 2003/2004 be £18M and that the temporary borrowing limit be £6M and that the limit for variable rate loans is £2M.
- (2) That the Treasury Management Strategy be noted. (HFS)

### **115 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT BEST VALUE REVIEW**

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which advised Members of progress with respect to the soft market testing exercise agreed by this Committee on 14 January.

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That soft market tests should not proceed.
- (2) That the concept of partnership working be agreed where appropriate.
- (3) That a small number of authorities be sought out for benchmarking purposes. (CD(F&ES))

### **116 HOUSING BENEFIT ADMINISTRATION – TAX AND PENSION CREDITS**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management on the introduction of Tax and Pension Credits and the associated staffing implications.

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That the introduction of the new tax and pension credits regime be noted and that it be included in the Action Plan.
- (2) That the following posts be created from 1 April 2003:-  
2 x Benefit Assessors (Scale 2-4)

1 x Overpayment Officer (Scale 4-5)

1 x Liaison Officer (Scale 4-5)

- (3) That progress on the Performance Standards be reported in July 2003.  
(HRHM)

### 117 LICENSING BILL 2002

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care which outlined the main provisions of the Licensing Bill, the likely implications for the Council and current information about the implementation timetable.

Members noted that the Bill would lead to tougher regulation for premises permanently licensed compared to premises where temporary events take place.

Members noted that the Government would produce statutory guidance for local authorities on determining licensing policy. However, this was currently in draft form.

Officers believed that there would be commonality between local authorities in licensing administration and software which would aid processes and potentially lead to savings.

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That the content of the Licensing Bill and its implications for Rochford District Council be considered.
- (2) That any early observations be made which can be considered within the context of the Best Value Review of Public Regulation, Inspection and Protection.
- (3) That the Local Government Association be supported in seeking changes to the Bill in terms of both its content and implementation and to advise both local MPs accordingly. (HHHCC)

### 118 REVIEW OF DOCUMENT PRODUCTION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Administrative and Member Services on the results of the review of the Document Production Unit and the review of data management in the Authority.

Members were pleased that the Council was making developments in structured document production.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the review and re-organisation of the document production service be approved as set out in paragraph 3 of the report.
- (2) That Corporate Management Board keeps the opportunities for revised working practices under review in the light of the Council's move towards electronic service delivery.
- (3) That the post of Temporary Database Assistant be established as a permanent post, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003, as outlined in paragraph 4 of the report. (HAMS)

## **119 GRANTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Financial Services on grant applications received from outside bodies.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the grant proposals for 2003/2004 as set out in Appendix 3 to the report be awarded.
- (2) That a grant of £250.00 be awarded to the Canewdon Community Association.

## **120 HOCKLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE – REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which appraised Members of the response received from Hockley Parish Council.

On a motion moved by the Chairman it was:-

### **Resolved**

That the previous decision that a grant of £3,000.00 be paid to the Hockley

Community Centre Association in respect of costs incurred by the Association following the occupation of land by travellers be reaffirmed, subject to Hockley Parish Council agreeing to a contribution of £1,500.00. (CD(F&ES))

### **121 RAYLEIGH MARKET LICENCE**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal Services on the review and renewal of the Rayleigh Market Licence.

Members believed that the market was a great asset to Rayleigh. It was therefore appropriate to investigate the feasibility of relocating the market or of extending it.

#### **Resolved**

That the Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee investigates the feasibility of relocation of the market within the High Street and in the interim the existing licence is extended on the same terms for a period of twelve months pending the completion of the review. (HLS)

### **122 STREET TRADING CONSENT FEE WAIVER APPLICATION**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Health, Housing & Community Care which requested Members to determine the fee due if Street Trading Consent was granted for a second hand book stall to be sited outside 89 High Street, Rayleigh between 8.30 am and 4.00 pm on Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2003.

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That the fee due in respect of this application be waived.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care to determine applications for the waiver of licence/consent fees up to £1,000. (HHHCC)

### **Exclusion Of The Press And Public**

#### **Resolved**

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That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining business on the grounds that exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed

### 123 STAFFING MATTERS – CORPORATE POLICY UNIT

The Committee considered the exempt report of the Chief Executive which sought Members' agreement to the short term replacement of the Corporate Policy Manager once she commences maternity leave in May.

#### **Resolved**

That the replacement of the Corporate Policy Manager as outlined in the report on a short-term basis be agreed. (C Ex)

The meeting closed at 7.58 pm

Chairman .....

Date .....