

Review Committee – 9 March 2010

Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **9 March 2010** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Vice-Chairman: Cllr M Maddocks

Cllr T Livings
Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill

Cllr M J Steptoe

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs P R Robinson and J Thomass.

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Gowers - Overview and Scrutiny Officer
M Power - Committee Administrator

58 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

59 REVIEW OF AREA COMMITTEE BUDGETS

The Committee considered the final report of the project team on the Review of Area Committee Budgets.

During discussion, the following was noted:-

- The Community Safety Reserve of £15,000, that had been identified by the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management as being a possible source of funding that could be reallocated to the Area Committees, was not earmarked for use by the Council in any other area. The Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management had indicated that there were likely to be other opportunities within the budget process in respect of funding of Area Committee budgets in 2011/12 and onwards.
- In respect of Recommendation no 7 below, Members felt that imposing a £500 limit to the amount that could be allocated to each item could be too restrictive. Although it was recognised that the purpose of setting a limit had been to foster partnership working and to encourage smaller projects, it was felt that an increased amount of £750 would be more useful.

Recommended to the Executive:-

- (1) That Area Committee budgets are allocated for a trial period of 2 years with effect from the 2010/11 municipal year, subject to provision that the

Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management can return to the Executive earlier if the costs of administration prove onerous.

- (2) That the Community Safety Reserve of £15,000 be reallocated to the Area Committees.
- (3) That if recommendation No 2 is agreed then the budget of £15,000 be split equally between the three Area Committees.
- (4) That there should be minimal administrative arrangements so that funds can be allocated at minimum cost.
- (5) That any expenditure by the Area Committees is only made if there is no apparent other source of funding and is applied to issues identified during the course of a meeting that could provide a 'quick win'.
- (6) That Area Committees can allocate monies for the purpose of pump priming if considered appropriate and if it will attract additional funds from other sources.
- (7) That there be a limit of £750 to each item that the Area Committee allocates funds to.
- (8) That the Area Committees should not allocate funding to projects that would involve the District Council in ongoing maintenance costs.
- (9) That any proposed expenditure made by the Area Committees is signed off by the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management as the S151 Officer to ensure that it conforms to the Council's aims and objectives, is legal and meets probity requirements.
- (10) That a funding schedule identifying the situation with regard to spend to date and remaining monies available is produced for each Area meeting, allied to Area Committee updates.
- (11) That: any funds allocated by an Area Committee but not drawn down, can be carried over to the next municipal year but must be spent within 6 months and that a maximum of £2,500 of an Area Committee's unallocated budget can be carried over to the following year.

60 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee reviewed the Forward Plan and noted its contents.

07/10 Rochford Reception and office improvements

Plans for the Rochford Reception and office improvements would be available early in May. The Review Committee Chairman would meet with the Council's Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services and Asset Manager at this time.

11/10 Annual Efficiency Statement

Further to a query raised at the Review Committee meeting on 9 February, Members were advised that National Indicator 179 (N179) is a measure of how much a local authority makes in efficiency savings on a periodic basis. The Council reports twice a year on this figure, with a calculation made in June of the actual efficiency saving made in the previous financial year, and then in October an estimate is produced of what efficiency savings can be expected in the forthcoming year.

61 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee reviewed a list of topics that had been suggested as suitable future subjects for review.

Following Member discussion, it was decided that the following topics would be considered for review:-

- Member role on outside bodies/benefit to the Council/outside body.
- Role, responsibilities and resources available to the Local Parish Councils. Members requested that an invitation be extended to the Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils to attend a meeting of the Review Committee early in the 2010/11 municipal year.
- Annual Review of key partnership arrangements.
- Provision of facilities and services for children and young people in the District. It was likely that this would include a review of the recommendations of the previous review undertaken by the Committee.
- Area Committees.

It was noted that an invitation should be extended each year to the Leader to report to the first meeting of the Review Committee in each Municipal Year on the Council's priorities/performance.

Any further suggestions for items to be reviewed could be brought before the Committee for consideration.

The meeting closed at 9.16 pm.

Chairman

Date

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