

## **Member Budget Monitoring Sub-Committee**

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Member Budget Monitoring Sub-Committee** on **16 January 2001** when there were present:

Cllr G Fox (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs J Helson

Cllr R E Vingoe  
Cllr P F A Webster

### **VISITING MEMBER**

Cllr J E Grey

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr C R Morgan

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

P Warren – Chief Executive  
R Crofts – Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)  
R J Honey – Corporate Director (Law, Planning & Administration)  
D Deeks – Head of Financial Services  
J Bostock – Principal Committee Administrator

### **121 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 January 2001 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **122 BUDGET STRATEGY**

The Sub-Committee received a verbal report from the Head of Financial Services providing a round up of budget issues prior to the Council's Budget Meeting on 23 January.

#### **(1) Concessionary Fares**

The Government had indicated that commencement of the new concessionary fares scheme could be delayed until July. However, given that monies were available from the start of the next Financial Year, it would be possible to commence the scheme within the District with effect from 1 April. Should the Council proceed on this basis, Officers would undertake appropriate consultation with the Government. Advice would also be sought from the Council's Consultants.

### **RECOMMENDED**

That, subject to advice received from the Council's Consultants, officers liaise with the Government with a view to the new Concessionary Fares Scheme commencing on 1 April 2001 (HFS).

### **(2) Recycling**

In terms of timescale, should the outcome of public consultation on recycling result in a decision that recycling be extended to 5,000 properties, appropriate lead in times would need to be established. The outcome of the consultation process would be reported to the tax setting meeting of Full Council scheduled for 20 February. Whilst Officers were in discussions to facilitate maintenance of recycling at the 1,500 trial properties, there would need to be a period of more than five weeks to introduce satisfactory recycling arrangements at a further 3,500 properties. Trial arrangements had established that, for any scheme to be effective, it was important to ensure the public acquired a level of knowledge about recycling in advance of scheme introduction. Effective public relations would be key.

In terms of finance, it was anticipated that the Council would consider two budget options at its meeting on 23 January. One on the basis that recycling is introduced and another on the basis that it is not.

In noting the position it was agreed that, should further recycling be agreed, it would be important to establish a timetable for full introduction as soon as practicable during the forthcoming year.

### **(2) Member Allowances**

Officers would be submitting a report on Member allowances for the forthcoming financial year to the next meeting of the Corporate Resources Sub-Committee. Whilst further guidance had yet to be received, the Council would be required to follow the requirements of the Modernising Agenda (involving a pay review body) after the next financial year.

## **123 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS OF BEST VALUE REVIEWS**

The Sub-Committee received and noted the report of the Head of Financial Services on the resource implications of Best Value Reviews and the costs of compliance with the publication of Performance Indicators.

It was noted that provision for Best Value had been included within the estimates and that best Value brings together many elements of the existing management of the authority as well as new requirements.

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Members were advised on the impact on the senior staff of the authority and the potential for some effect on services during major reviews.

### 124 PRIVATE SECTOR RENEWAL GRANTS

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Financial Services on Private Sector Renewal Grants authorised in the current financial year/the implications for next year and funding support provided to the Springboard Housing Association.

Responding to Member questions, Officers advised that:-

- Applications for renewal grants are at various stages. Once the Capital Budget for 2001/02 has been agreed, Officers would submit a detailed report to the Community Services Committee which would include proposals for the management of grants within the budget agreed.
- It was likely that there would be further changes to arrangements against a backdrop of strategic review activity, Best Value and future Government Green Papers.
- It was likely that an increase of funding to Springboard of £5,000 would help secure the future of the Home Repairs Agency as this would trigger associated increased funding from both the County Council and the Department of Environment Transport and the Regions.
- Funding for 2001/02 could be met from existing provisions in relation to this service.

### RECOMMENDED

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

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### **125 COMMUNITY HALL - ST MARKS FIELD, ROCHFORD**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of Head of Housing Health and Community Care providing current information on proposals for a Community Hall at St Marks Field, Rochford and seeking approval for a package of financial support to Rochford Parish Council.

During debate it was agreed that it would be preferable to offer financial assistance as a one off payment at scheme commencement.

Responding to Member questions, Officers advised that:-

- A sum of money could be made available which the Parish could choose to apply for both Capital and Revenue purposes. This would be the Parish Council's preferred option. This sum could be met from existing provision within the Capital Programme
- It would be reasonable for the Authority to have some representation on the Community Centre Management Committee once it had been established.

On a motion moved by Councillor Mrs J Helson and seconded by Councillor R E Vingoe it was:-

#### **RECOMMENDED**

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

### **126 SUPPORTING PEOPLE**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing Health and Community Care which provided a brief update of progress with the Supporting People initiative and set out proposals for the appointment of a Supporting People Officer.

Responding to Member questions, officers advised that-

- Should appointment principles be accepted, there would need to be further reports on the detailed working arrangements.
- All indications were that the Supporting People Initiative and associated inter-agency working was likely to develop rapidly in the near future and attract associated funding.

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The Sub-Committee concurred that the view of a Member that it would be appropriate to include reference in future draft budget documentation to net contributions which the Authority is having to make to the Supporting People Initiative.

### RECOMMENDED

- (1) That officers be authorised to progress the joint appointment of a Supporting People Officer with Castle Point Borough Council; to be funded from the Supporting People implementation grant.
- (2) That, if agreement cannot be reached on a joint appointment, arrangements be made with Essex County Council for the employment of Supporting People Officer to work in this District, the cost to be met from the Supporting People Implementation grant. (HHHCC)
- (3) That future draft budget documentation include reference to the net contribution which the authority has to make to the Supporting People Initiative (HFS).

### Exclusion of the Press and Public

#### Resolved

That the Press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining business on the grounds that exempt information as defined in paragraph 9 of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

## 127 MICROSOFT OFFICE 97

The Sub-Committee received and noted a verbal report from the Corporate Director (Law, Planning & Administration) relating to the current position on the dispute concerning the validity of the Council's Microsoft Office 97 licences.

Members noted the contents of recent correspondence between the parties and possible options at this stage. The Council's external auditors had been advised of the position and consultation would be undertaken with other bodies as necessary. Further reports would be submitted to the Sub-Committee as appropriate.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_