
Minutes of the meeting of the **Member Budget Monitoring Sub-Committee**
on **26 June 2001** when there were present:

Cllr Mrs J Helson – Chairman

Cllr D R Helson
Cllr R E Vingoe

Cllr P F A Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. G Fox

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren – Chief Executive
R J Honey – Corporate Director (Law Planning & Administration)
D Deeks - Head of Financial Services
G Woolhouse – Head of Housing Health and Community Care
J Bostock – Principal Committee Administrator

136 OUTSTANDING ISSUES

The Sub-Committee received the Schedule relating to decisions since May 2000. Outstanding Issues would be carried forward.

137 CAPITAL STRATEGY STATEMENT

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Financial Services which set out a draft Capital Strategy Statement 2001/02.

It was noted that this was an annual document.

RECOMMENDED

That the draft Capital Strategy Document and consultation process, as appended to these Minutes be approved. (HFS)

138 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 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

139 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Sub-Committee considered the exempt report of the Head of Financial Services on options relating to an anticipated capital receipt.

The Head of Financial Services indicated adjustments which would be required to elements of the report given that the receipt was likely to be £100,000 lower than originally anticipated. The revised report is appended to these Minutes.

During debate, the Sub-Committee agreed that there was a need for the Political Groups to be given further opportunity to consider the details of the document. It would be of value to clarify elements of the report during the Meeting, with a view to Groups submitting their observations to the next Meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee (to which the latest revised figure work could be reported by Officers).

Responding to Member questions, Officers advised that:-

- Given that negotiations associated with the capital receipt had concluded, future consideration of the programme could be in public session.
- The number of persons in Bed and Breakfast accommodation could vary from day to day and that, in almost all cases, the use of such accommodation was not suitable for homeless people. There was a need to increase the number of self contained properties to which the Council could have access to house homeless people, and that a previous proposal to look into the disposal of an existing property in High Road, Rayleigh would exacerbate the problems.
- Further information had just been received from the County Council's Agents on the County's position in respect of the Blatches Farm/Park School sites, including development possibilities. In giving further consideration to this matter, it would be important for the Council to remain mindful of connections between the sites (not treating them in isolation).

In terms of the Blatches Farm/Park School sites, Members felt there would be value in seeking an early Meeting with local County Councillors. The District could be represented by Members of this Sub-Committee together with the Chairman of the Cherry Orchard Park Working Group and the Chairman of the Park School Working Group. Given timescales, it was agreed that, should it be possible to convene a meeting in advance of the next Finance & General Purposes

Committee, the Chief Executive should make arrangements utilising the urgent business procedure.

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That an early meeting be arranged between County Councillors, Members of the Member Budget Monitoring Sub-Committee and Chairmen of the Cherry Orchard Park and Park School Working Groups with a view to progressing discussion of the Blatches Farm/Park School sites. The County Council Members to be provided with a background briefing note in advance of the Meeting. (Note: The Chief Executive will utilise urgent business procedure with a view to commencing meeting arrangements in advance of the next Finance & General Purposes Committee).
- (2) That a revised report on Capital Programme possibilities be submitted to the next Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee (the Political Groups to give detailed consideration to proposals in the interim) with the intention of reporting into Full Council for decision. (HFS)

140 SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION

The Sub-Committee considered the exempt report of the Head of Financial Services on responses received from registered social landlords following a request for expressions of interest in the Council's sheltered housing unit at Hardwick House and the adjoining site. Members noted that none of the submissions identified a future for the existing property as sheltered accommodation.

Responding to Member questions, Officers advised that:-

- The submissions from the Housing Associations should, at this stage, be seen as fairly broad, in principle, proposals. There was no guarantee the Housing Corporation would make funds available
- It would be possible to identify a sale valuation for the property.
- The housing needs survey had identified the requirement for 20 units of rented accommodation each year, as well as frail elderly accommodation
- There was a covenant relating to the site which provided that the Council could repurchase the land adjoining the sheltered scheme at cost.

In terms of progressing this matter, the Sub-Committee agreed that it would be appropriate to include disposal possibilities within deliberation

on the future of this site. Associated with this, it was also felt that budget considerations should include the establishment of plans to undertake conversion work to bathroom areas at other sheltered accommodation within the District so as to provide individual bathroom facilities.

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL

- (1) That the Council enters detailed discussions with Swan Housing Association and the Housing Corporation.
- (2) That when these discussions are concluded, a detailed report be submitted back to Full Council.
- (3) That, in the interim, special meetings are held for tenant representatives, existing tenants and staff to keep them informed of discussions.
- (4) That consideration be given to site disposal possibilities.
- (5) That, future budget considerations include plans to undertake conversion work to bathroom areas at other sheltered accommodation within the District so as to provide individual bathroom facilities.
- (6) That 0.77 acres of land adjacent to Hardwick House, Rayleigh be reconveyed to the Council by Springboard Housing Association at cost in accordance with an Agreement dated 14 September 1993. (HFS/HLS)

141 CONSULTANCY ADVICE – DEVELOPMENT AT WEBSTERS WAY, RAYLEIGH

Note: The Chairman admitted this item of business as urgent in view of the need for early appointment of consultants.

The Chairman referred to the Meeting of the Rayleigh Town Centre Working Group held earlier in the day. The Working Group had now identified a preferred consultant to provide advice to on the possible redevelopment of Websters Way, Rayleigh. Whilst there was a need for early appointment, the Working Group had recognised further consideration may need to be given to identifying funding given that the consultancy fee would be approximately £4000 above original estimates.

It was noted that the Chief Executive would utilise urgency arrangements on this matter if appropriate.

142 STAFFING ISSUES/WORK PROGRAMME

Note: All officers with the exception of the Chief Executive and the Corporate Director (Law, Planning & Administration) left the meeting for this item.

The Sub-Committee considered a report in confidence from the Chief Executive outlining the effect on the authority at the present time of staffing vacancies and long term absences.

Although problems existed in specific areas, difficulties had a consequential effect across the authority and Members agreed that some matters would be delayed or deferred as a result. It was confirmed that no policy decision had been taken to hold posts vacant but that some jobs had proved difficult to fill and a number had been readvertised. The Advertising Budget, which had been reduced by 50% from last year, was now exhausted and required a virement.

Whilst agreeing that the matters raised by the Chief Executive should be kept under review and an update reported to Corporate Resources Sub-Committee together with a review of Job Evaluation in the autumn cycle, the Sub-Committee felt that a more detailed report, including a breakdown of the current work programme, should be submitted to Full Council in the meantime.

Members also noted that when considering the outcome of Job Evaluation, the Council would need to take into account market rates in assessing posts.

Recommended

- (1) That a further detailed report be submitted to Full Council outlining the impact of staff vacancies and sickness absence on the Council's current work programme.
- (2) That a virement of £20,000 from the post vacant savings be made to the Staff Advertising Budget. (CEX)

The Meeting closed at 10.30 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Rochford District Council -Capital Strategy Statement

The capital strategy bring together all the needs and priorities within the District of Rochford that have an influence on the capital investment plans for the Authority. The main influences on the capital strategy are,

- **The Corporate plan and strategies of the Council** – which identifies in detail the service priorities of the Council
- **The Best Value Performance Plan** – which deals with service performance and improvement
- **The Asset Management Plan** – which looks in detail at the condition and use of the Council's assets
- **The Housing Investment Programme** – which identifies the priorities for Housing within the District
- **The IS/ICT strategy** – which looks at the requirements and developments of new technologies, used to deliver services and progress towards e-government.

In addition **the community strategy** will bring together the views of local communities, the requirements of the Council and it's partner bodies. Here the Authority is developing a long-term vision and an action plan to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the area and its inhabitants. The strategy will take account of what is special about Rochford, who we work with and what resources are available. These all have an influence on the capital strategy.

What is special about Rochford

- Rochford is a small District Council with limited budgets. Major policies may involve us in influencing other larger bodies and Central Government in order to get these policies introduced
- The District is fully parished, this ensures full coverage by Local Councils for Parish schemes and local partnerships
- Privately owned properties account for 92 % of the housing stock within the District. This reduces the need for direct support from the Council
- There is a healthy number of voluntary, community and religious groups within the District- Village and Community Halls tend to be locally funded.
- The Council does not have any direct labour organisations and discharges the majority of its major functions through external contractors. These contracts reduce the need for Capital Expenditure in the delivery of these services.
- The Council is the owner of Housing and General Fund properties and has landlord and owner responsibilities in relation to them

Who do we work with

- The District has strong links with the Essex County Council in many areas including road and traffic management for local roads, streets and footpaths, crime and disorder with particular attention on the youth service, waste management with developments towards a countywide approach to waste management and supported housing projects. They have been consulted on the capital strategy and we will try to ensure that Rochford views are included within their strategy.
- The Council has partnership arrangements and partnership agreements with the Town and Parish Councils throughout the district. They have been specifically consulted on the preparation of this strategy.
- The Council supports a number of voluntary and community organisations – Usually small scale revenue support with organisations providing and maintaining their own premises
- The Council regularly consults with tenant representatives regarding Council housing.
- The Council consults with the local Chambers of Trade and other organisations promoting economic activity. The Council is now a partner authority in the recently extended Thames Gateway to include

south Essex and with other local partners and the private sector is developing an economic strategy for the District.

- The Council has partnership arrangements with a number of Registered Social Landlords. Here the Council is involved in both the strategic issues and individual schemes. The Council regularly consults with them on their future plans.
- The Council has partnership arrangements with all relevant statutory bodies. All will be consulted on the community strategy, which feeds into this capital strategy. Where applicable the Council will try to ensure that our policies are incorporated within their strategies.
- The Council works with Rochford Primary Care Group to identify and address issues that give rise to ill health and health inequalities in the District, and participates in the production of the Local Health Plan. A number of joint funded projects have been undertaken.
- The Council works with the Local Police and other relevant agencies on crime and disorder issues.

What resources are available

To undertake capital expenditure the Council relies on permissions to spend from the Government receipts from the sale of assets and grants from the Government

There has been a severe limitation of available resources in recent years to undertake capital expenditure other than statutory functions and landlord responsibilities. The Government has for the financial year 2001/02 allocated the Council £ 125,000 for all of its services. The Council has money received from the sale of assets however; they are currently programmed to be used over the next three years. At the start of 2001/02 these receipts stood at around £ 1m. The programme anticipates further receipts over the life of the programme. Government grant is estimated at around £ 66,000 per year towards Disabled adaptations. The Council also has a reserve of £663,000.

As a result of the limitation on resources in both the revenue account and capital programme the Council is unable to undertake all the required improvements to services. The current targets on recycling are a good example where significant investment is required. The Council has introduced recycling to an initial 5,500 properties in the District and would like to respond to the recycling objectives set by the Government.

Asset Management Plan

The Council is currently preparing its asset management plan. The Council will work systematically through its assets to verify the current usage and ensure that options on the future of those assets are identified. Where surplus assets are sold they will produce capital receipts. These will be made available for the Capital Strategy. Capital requirements from the asset management plan will be built into the capital strategy. From the work undertaken to date, which includes a public consultation exercise, the key issues have been identified as

- More investment in the condition of public open spaces
- The need to bring together asset management issues with the re-tendering of the leisure contract
- The future needs of public buildings
- Issues that flow from the Council's best value programme.
- The review of assets following developments in new technologies

Corporate Plan

The current corporate plan shows the key objectives of the Council as

- To provide quality, cost effective services
- To work towards a safer and more caring community
- To promote a green and sustainable environment
- To encourage a thriving local economy
- To improve the quality of life for people in our District

- To maintain and enhance our local heritage and culture

The Corporate plan has been the subject of consultation, primarily with organised groups and partnership organisations.

The main issues from the Corporate Plan are as follows.

- The implementation of a new political structure for Rochford
- The implementation of the Council's IS/ICT strategy and E-Government strategy
- The introduction of the new concessionary fares scheme and the review of the Dial-a-Ride scheme
- The Best Value Review of key services
- The renewal of the Leisure Services Contract
- The review and adoption of the Council's Local District Plan
- The implementation of the town centre enhancement programmes for Hockley, Rochford and Hullbridge
- The implementation and expansion of the Council's recycling initiatives
- The production of a revised Crime and Disorder strategy
- The development of a Community Strategy
- The refurbishment of the run down properties in West Street, Rochford
- The development of the Hardwick House site in Rayleigh and the upgrading of other sheltered housing schemes

Housing Investment Plan

The Housing Investment plan for 2002/03 is under preparation.

For 2001/02 onwards the majority of expenditure in respect of Council housing will be met from revenue funds made available from the Government. These are concentrated on bringing council housing up to modern standards and undertaking large scale repairs and improvements.

For private housing within the district the Council will continue with its policy of making available grants for essential improvements and repairs for owners who qualify for financial help. The adaptation of homes for the disabled will also continue. The Council has undertaken many partnerships with Housing Associations and will consider providing assistance for future schemes where resources allow.

Control and Monitoring Process for the Capital Strategy Statement

The Council needs to ensure that the capital investment, required to achieve the Council's objectives, is properly identified, members will agree the prioritised capital programme covering a three-year period matching priorities with resources available. All capital expenditure comes under the requirements of contract standing orders and financial regulations. The Council has already set up an officer working party to monitor the implementation of the capital programme. Members have also set up a Member Budget Monitoring Sub Committee and within the terms of reference is the monitoring of the capital programme.

Prioritisation of Capital Investment

In the light of the above Members have to decide on priorities and balance the competing demands of services and the community. Members will look at not only what is required but also what is achievable within a programme. The Council has therefore set the following key priorities and targets together with the resultant programme for the three year programme.

- **Investment in statutory and priority services** to ensure the continuation of essential services and value for money
- **Ensure that landlord and owner responsibilities are undertaken** including priority items identified through the asset management plan

- **Improve infrastructure** that has an influence on economic activity and the well being of the Authority. This mainly relates to the improvement of town and village centres.
- **Priority items flowing from key strategy documents** Including the Corporate Plan and Community Plan

The current capital programme for 2001/02 – 2003/04

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
Investment in statutory and priority services			
Working with our private sector contractor to maintain computer systems and to develop systems to extend the delivery of services	241,000	30,000	30,000
Replacement of vehicles and equipment in support of essential services	149,000	159,500	49,000
Landlord and owner responsibilities			
Major repairs required to operational buildings	382,100	125,000	100,000
Provisions to deal with access for the disabled		125,000	125,000
Improvements to Infrastructure			
Working with the Parish Council, the County Council and business groups to improve town and village centres.	350,000		
Working with local trusts to bring back into use derelict buildings in West Street, Rochford.	101,700		
Priority items flowing from key strategy documents			
Working with the Parish Councils, the County Council and Police to deal with crime and disorder and safety issues	206,000	20,000	20,000
Introduction of recycling	70,000		
Development and improvement of open spaces and play facilities	115,000	50,000	50,000
Working with the Parish Council and Housing Association to provide a community hall.	60,000		
Housing Investment Plan			
Grants for house renovation and disabled adaptations	250,000	170,000	170,000
Partnership schemes with Housing Associations	70,000		
Total Investment proposed	1,994,800	679,500	544,000

If you have any comments regarding this strategy document or wish to obtain more information please contact us by writing to

**Rochford District Council, Council Offices, Rochford Essex, SS4 1 BW
quoting reference DD/capital strategy**

Or telephone 01702 546366 x 3100

Or e-mail to dave.deeks@rochford.gov.uk

The following items are to provide more information to readers of this document to gain a better understanding of Rochford District Council and the area.

- The District Council is within the County of Essex and has an area of 17,094 hectares and a population of 78,300.
- Police services are provided by Essex Police and the Health Services are provided by South Essex Health Authority
- Within the District there are 13 Parish Councils and 1 Town Council. These cover the whole District
- As at March 2000 the Council had
 - 1,945 Council dwellings
 - 3 Administration centres
 - 5 Leisure Buildings
 - 7 Public Conveniences
 - 7 Fee paying car parks
 - 280 acres of open spaces
 - 28 Playgrounds
 - 30 Football pitches
 - And numerous other smaller buildings.
- As at March 2000 the fixed assets of the Council were valued at just under £ 65 m with Housing included at £ 49 m.
- The Council discharges its main functions through external contractors and does not have responsibility for Highways. This remains with Essex County Council
- The Council employs approximately 200 whole time equivalent staff for services other than housing and 40 in respect of Council Housing.
- Except for sheltered housing the Council has no significant backlog of works outstanding to its buildings which cannot be contained in the on-going programme. In sheltered housing the Council has a significant volume of work outstanding with regards the improvement of stock and the removal of shared facilities.
- The Council has significant problems in relation to its revenue account. Continuous pressure has been mounted on the Government to seek better grant support for Rochford. We currently receive the lowest grant per head of population in Essex and the 11th lowest in England. One implication of this is that

capital schemes that have significant revenue implications are extremely difficult to include within the programme.

- Other than through its service contracts the Council has to date not been successful in attracting other capital resources to the District
- The Council is unlikely to enter into any private finance initiatives due to the size of the Authority and the revenue implications

CAPITAL PROGRAMME – REVISED REPORT

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report looks at the options relating to the anticipated capital receipt outlined in the report to this Sub-Committee on 4 April 2001.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Members agreed to bring together proposals for the anticipated capital receipt by inviting submissions from the Political Groups together with other outstanding relating to the capital programme.
- 2.2 Apart from the Conservative group, the parties have been silent on the recommendation by officers that £200,000 be used to reduce the overspend on the capital programme. Therefore schemes have been presented on the basis of option 1 (£200,000 being used to reduce the overdrawn capital programme) and option 2 with full usage.
- 2.3 Where on-going revenue schemes are proposed they have been costed on the basis of the remainder of this current financial year and for 3 full years of support. Beyond this period the revenue cost will have to be included within the budget strategy.
- 2.4 The final determination of schemes by Members may include all or parts of a number of these schemes. The overall package would therefore need to be assessed as a whole.
- 2.5 The original report was prepared on the assumption of a net capital receipt of £700,000. The preferred bidder withdrew from the sale and therefore the original bid of £625,000 has been accepted. The net capital receipt will therefore be in the region of £600,000.

3. LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP

- Extension to recycling across the District
- Green Waste Recycling Initiative.

4. RECYCLING

- 4.1 The Council has agreed to implement the first stage of recycling involving 5,800 properties. In order to meet the Government requirements, additional properties need to be introduced. The estimated cost per 5000 properties is: -

MEMBER BUDGET MONITORING SUB-COMMITTEE
26 June 2001

Capital	£70,000
Net Revenue Cost Per Annum	£96,300 (rounded to £100,000 in this report)

- 4.2 On a pro rata basis option 1 would enable around 5,050 additional properties to be introduced (£400,000) and option 2 7,550 (£600,000). As stated above, revenue costs will continue year on year and future costs would have to be built into the budget strategy when the above special contribution to the budget strategy reserve has been exhausted.
- 4.3 In total option 1 would deliver around 10,850 properties within the scheme and option 2 around 13,350 properties. Based on current rates of recycling, under option 1 the Council could assume to reach 14 % recycling by the end of 2003/04, whilst under option 2 it would be 17 % of recycling by the end of 2003/04.
- 4.4 At the moment work is in hand to implement the first stage of the new scheme. Any additional properties will have to be programmed to spread the implementation process. The costings assume that any additional properties will be introduced early in 2002.

5 GREEN WASTE RECYCLING INITIATIVE

- 5.1. The proposal is to introduce a fortnightly green waste collection for six months of the year to those properties not on the kerbside recycling scheme. It is estimated that such a scheme would add 11 % to the recycling rate of the Authority.
- 5.2. In order to achieve this, officers would recommend that a sack system be introduced as used by Castle Point Borough Council. The estimates costs of such a system are shown below:-

	£
Collection costs	150,000
Sack costs – purchase and distribution	<u>50,000</u>
Total costs	200,000
Less: Composting credit	<u>25,000</u>
Net cost	175,000
 The three year revenue cost is	 525,000

6 CONSERVATIVE GROUP

MEMBER BUDGET MONITORING SUB-COMMITTEE

26 June 2001

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- That, as recommended by Officers, £ 200,000 be allocated to reduce the current overdrawn capital programme.
 - That, if Cherry Orchard Country Park (Blatches Farm) be secured from Essex County Council, then an additional £ 125,000 be spent to accelerate the development of this land as a public open space/country park.
 - That if funds are not available from the Major Repairs Allowance, £125,000 be used to start the programme of modernisation; i.e. to provide individual bathroom/lavatory facilities for each unit of sheltered housing.
 - That £ 250,000 be used to pump prime a reduction in car parking charges to (a) encourage trade and visitors to principal shopping areas throughout the District and (b) to continue to control commuter parking in town centre car parks.
 - The prime objective of the Conservative Group is to make all Council car parks free in the afternoon – starting sometime between noon and 2 pm.
 - Ancillary to this objective is the simplification of car parking tariffs with the aim of achieving, say, two charge bands only. Additionally, both season and weekly charges to be re-assessed.
 - These measures, especially free car parking in the afternoon, to be brought into effect from Monday, October 1 st if operationally possible.
 - These policies will exclude the Approach Car Park in Rayleigh and possibly (depending on Officers views) the Council Car Park nearest to Rochford Station.
 - In the event of all or part of the monies allocated to Cherry Orchard Country park and/or sheltered housing modernisation not being required, this money will be added to the £ 250,000 allocated to abolish/reduce car parking charges for a longer period.
 - The Conservative Group recognises that ultimately the shortage in car park revenue will have to be met from additional savings in net revenue expenditure, an increase in Council Tax or a combination of these two sources.

7. REDUCTION OF OVERDRAWN BALANCE

See paragraph 14

8 CHERRY ORCHARD/ BLATCHES FARM

The site is still in the ownership of Essex County Council.

- 8.1. Provision currently exists within the Capital Programme of £65,000 as the net cost of Phase 1 for this project. The original committee report in March 2000 showed the total estimated capital cost of £313,200 being funded broadly by $\frac{2}{3}$ for Rochford District Council and $\frac{1}{3}$ by way of external funding. These costs do not cover the possibility that the Authority may have to purchase the site.
- 8.2 The Council has been safeguarding its position and to date the Woodlands officer has identified potential funding well in excess of the $\frac{1}{3}$ funding required. This includes an approval from the Forestry Authority for funding of £ 107,000. However some or all of this funding could be lost due to the delays in implementing the scheme through not having control of the site. We would need to confirm the use of these funds before the planting season, which would be around October 2001.
- 8.3 Additional capital programme funding towards the project would ensure that following control of the site; the whole scheme could be planned and implemented. In view of the potential funding available for this scheme an additional £125,000 could be allocated, however this may have to be adjusted due to the potential loss of funding as mentioned above.
- 8.4 As regards the revenue costs of this project, a provision of £6,500 is included in the current estimates. With the capital development of the scheme, it is not expected that there will be a significant increase in revenue costs until the scheme is settled and open for visitors. The revenue costs will increase with any possible lease/rent payable on the site.
- 8.5 An update will be given at the meeting on progress with the negotiations with Essex County Council relating to this site and the Park School site.

9. SHELTERED HOUSING

- 9.1 There is a private and confidential report on this agenda relating to Hardwick House. This report carries a recommendation for capital resources of £400,000.

10 CAR PARKING

- 10.1 Car Park charges are a significant tool in the management of the Councils car park. With a limited number of spaces there has to be a

MEMBER BUDGET MONITORING SUB-COMMITTEE

26 June 2001

turnover of spaces. Charges assist this process as during free periods motorists tend to park for longer periods and make different judgements about the need to drive and park.

- 10.2 Under the Audit Commission guidelines Local Authorities should define how their charging structures match their corporate objectives. The case that free parking would benefit the Town Centres would need to be shown.
- 10.3 As stated above, revenue costs will continue year on year and future costs will have to be built into the budget strategy when the above special contribution to the budget strategy reserve has been exhausted.
- 10.4 The financial effect of this proposal is difficult to estimate owing to the expected change to parking patterns. However for the purposes of this report free parking from the 1st October starting at 2 pm could result in a loss of income of around £55,000 for 2001/02 and £110,000 in a full year. This is based on the existing income and takes no account of the transfer of trade from mornings to afternoon. The actual loss of income is expected to be higher than the straight loss of income. For the purposes of this report a "guesstimate" has been made of 130 % of the income currently received. The financial effect is therefore estimated at £71,000 for 2001/02 and £ 143,000 per year for the 3 years following. The total cost is therefore £ 500,000.
- 10.5 With free parking in the afternoon management of the car parks would need to be adjusted however resources would still be required to enforce disabled parking and parking in bays etc.
- 10.6 With this proposal it would be sensible to adjust the tariff that applies to the remaining paid period and introduce a simplified tariff.
- 10.7 The car park at Approach Road deals with different customers and requires a pricing structure which takes account of the British Rail car park.
- 10.8 Officers would need to look at the options for the control of commuting parking following any change of tariff.

11 LABOUR GROUP

- Accommodation for the Homeless
- Blatches Farm

12. ACCOMMODATION FOR THE HOMELESS

MEMBER BUDGET MONITORING SUB-COMMITTEE
26 June 2001

12.1 Members are aware that at the moment use has to be made of bed and breakfast accommodation in order to provide a service for the homeless. The proposal is that this Council considers the purchase of appropriate accommodation to be used to try to minimise the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. For the Financial Year 2000/01, the Authority spent around £50,000 on this type of accommodation. Members are also aware this type of accommodation is difficult to obtain at the moment owing to high occupancy within the Southend area.

12.2 The Council currently has the following properties available for the homeless:-

Description	Number
Hatfield House	10 Bedsits
High Road, Rayleigh	4 Units
Other Properties	10 Units

12.3 It should be noted that Members have considered the possible disposal of the property in the High Road. The valuation obtained suggests that the sale would not attract sufficient resources to replace the four units.

12.4 During 2000/01 the occupancy rate of these properties was nearly 98%.

12.5. Members will be aware that the Council had the use of Grested Court, Rochford through an arrangement with Springboard Housing Association. The Council withdrew from the arrangement, as the facility needed to be modernised and building defects corrected. The cost of the work would have been passed to this Council over a short period. The property provided 17 units of accommodation and because of the high fixed costs was not economic below a high level of occupancy.

12.6 Looking at the likely resources available, it is suggested that either 4 or 6 units could be purchased. A broad estimate for 4 units would be up to £ 375,000 (option 1) and for 6 units £562,500 (option 2).

12.7 If Members agreed this proposal it would be preferable for the Council to make available Local Authority Social Housing Grant to enable a Housing Association to purchase the units. Using this method the Council retains the cash but surrenders the ability to spend within the Capital Programme. With the purchase of properties Housing

MEMBER BUDGET MONITORING SUB-COMMITTEE
26 June 2001

Associations often provide some of the funds. This has not been included, as the scheme will have high running costs. The actual cost will be determined following detailed discussions with the appointed Housing Association.

- 12.8 This accommodation would only provide a central core of support as bed and breakfast accommodation would still be required at various times throughout the year to deal with peaks in requirements.
- 12.9 One of the key factors in the use of any temporary accommodation is the access to either Council stock or those available under nomination rights to the Council from Housing Associations. During 2000/01 18 % of total housing lettings (10 units) and 31 % of Housing Association nominations (21 units) were for the homeless. These figures exclude all units for the elderly.
- 12.10 This proposal is to consider the acquisition of 4 or 6 properties for the use of homeless families. Following previous decisions of the Council it is assumed that these will be ex-Council stock.
- 12.11 Given the problems of homeless accommodation it should be noted that to sell the properties in High Road Rayleigh currently being used for the homeless will increase existing problems.
- 12.12 It is estimated that the net revenue effect would be a saving of around £10,000 p.a. if costed against the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation, based on 4 units. As with the capital cost, the actual revenue implications will be determined following detailed discussions with the appointed Housing Association.

13. CHERRY ORCHARD/BLATCHES FARM

- 13.1 See paragraph 8

14. OTHER OUTSTANDING ISSUES FOR THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Adjustment to Estimated Overdrawn Balance

- 14.1 The estimated Capital Programme is shown as overdrawn by £400,000 at the end of 2003/4 and overdrawn by £200,000 by end of £2002/3.
- 14.2 In future years, the receipt of approvals from the Government cannot be guaranteed and therefore the programme will be dependent solely on our own resources.
- 14.3 Whilst accepting that existing schemes could be removed or deferred and new Capital Receipts be identified, it is still recommended that

MEMBER BUDGET MONITORING SUB-COMMITTEE
26 June 2001

£200,000 be retained to remove the projected overspend for the next financial year.

15. IS/ICT STRATEGY

15.1. Members will recall recent reports outlining the strategy for the Council. Many of the items will be deemed essential to the maintenance and development of core Council services. Funding is being sought from Central Government however; there will still be a requirement for Rochford to fund parts of the strategy. At this stage, on the basis of receiving Government grant, it is suggested that £100,000 per year be made available for the three financial year's 2002/03 to 2004/05.

16 COMPOST BINS

16.1. Members agreed to consider the introduction of compost bins to all properties within Rochford where there is a garden and not in receipt of a recycling round. Rough estimates suggest that the cost of introducing this policy will be in the region of £330,000 inclusive of delivery.

16.2 There are two significant points to note in relation to this policy.

- There are no recycling credits available for the use of compost bins.
- The volume of waste diverted into compost bins does not count towards our re-cycling targets.

16.3 Apart from delivery costs, there would be promotional and guidance costs but no other recurring revenue costs. There would be no reduction in the refuse collection costs.

16.4. Although the widespread use of compost bins will remove volume from the refuse collection process it would not help in the achievement of Government targets.

17 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

17.1 In view of the structure of the existing capital programme the £600,000 could be used for revenue purposes.

17.2 Where schemes are for the support of ongoing revenue the sum set aside should be sufficient to deal with the revenue implications for at least the current financial year and the three years following. Although there will be on going revenue implications beyond this period it is not possible to take these longer terms issues into account.

17.3 A summary of the proposals is as follows

	£
Reduce overdrawn balance	200,000
Recycling – 5,050 properties	400,000
Recycling – 7,550 properties	600,000
Green Waste recycling	525,000
Blatches Farm	125,000
Car Parking -	500,000
Hardwick House	400,000
Accommodation for the homeless – 4 units	375,000
Accommodation for the homeless – 6 units	562,500
IT strategy	300,000
Compost Bins	330,000

18. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

18.1 The proposals regarding Blatches require this Council to have control of the site. Amendments to car parking tariffs will require an amendment to the car parking order. Extension to recycling will require an alteration to the existing contract but within the tender framework. The scheme to provide accommodation for the homeless will require an agreement between this Council and the chosen Housing Association.

19. PARISH IMPLICATIONS

19.1 Blatches farm, recycling and car parking will have an impact on the parishes concerned.

20. RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Sub-Committee considers this report and makes recommendations to Council.

Dave Deeks

Head Of Financial Services

MEMBER BUDGET MONITORING SUB-COMMITTEE
26 June 2001

Background Papers:

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