

## **Council – 29 June 2004**

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Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **29 June 2004** when there were present:-

Cllr Mrs R Brown (Chairman)  
Cllr P F A Webster (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr R A Amner	Cllr J R Mason
Cllr Mrs L A Butcher	Cllr D Merrick
Cllr P A Capon	Cllr G A Mockford
Cllr Mrs T J Capon	Cllr R A Oatham
Cllr T G Cutmore	Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr K A Gibbs	Cllr P R Robinson
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn	Cllr P K Savill
Cllr K J Gordon	Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr J E Grey	Cllr S P Smith
Cllr Mrs S A Harper	Cllr D G Stansby
Cllr K H Hudson	Cllr Mrs M A Starke
Cllr A J Humphries	Cllr M G B Starke
Cllr C A Hungate	Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr Mrs L Hungate	Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr T Livings	Cllr Mrs C A Weston
Cllr C J Lumley	Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley	

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs C I Black, R G S Choppen and T E Goodwin.

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

P Warren	- Chief Executive
R J Honey	- Corporate Director (Law, Planning and Administration)
R Crofts	- Corporate Director (Finance and External Services)
C Paget	- Audit and Process Review Manager
B Colman	- Performance Improvement Officer
J Bostock	- Principal Committee Administrator

### **269 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 22 June 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**270 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman had attended four official engagements since Annual Council, including the launch of the Council's Community Strategy and the FitzWimarc School Concert.

**271 NOP BEST VALUE GENERAL SATISFACTION SURVEY 2003**

Council welcomed Tim Buchanan, Associate Director NOP Social and Political, who was in attendance to present the findings of the Rochford District Council BVPI General Satisfaction Survey 2003.

The presentation covered background, methodology and key findings. It was of note that, in terms of overall net satisfaction, Rochford District was highly placed (second) when compared to other Essex Authorities. It could not be certain that there had been any fall in overall satisfaction since 2000 as different survey methodologies had been used this time. Any fall in overall satisfaction may also reflect factors such as dissatisfaction with public services generally.

Council observed that it was pleasing for the District to be rated so highly by customers through an independent survey, particularly given its record for maintaining low spending. It was noted that survey conclusions reflected a number of the key themes identified by the Council in helping to develop the Community Strategy and that these would be incorporated into the plans of the Authority.

Responding to questions, Mr Buchanan advised that:-

- The presentation specifically highlighted areas where it was considered there could be improvement. A number of areas had not been included.
- In terms of methodology, NOP asked questions of 2000 individuals within each Authority area. The Government had determined that 1100 responses would provide a statistic that was within plus or minus 1 – 3% of that which would be achieved if the whole population of an area is surveyed. It could be observed that, given that authorities had varying responsibilities and structures, some comparisons would be inappropriate.
- There are a variety of reasons why it would be inappropriate to compare this survey with the 2000 survey. One aspect was that the 2000 survey had involved the register of electors. This was no longer possible, so household samples are used and weighting given to numbers in each household. The latest survey had also involved the use of weighting mechanisms introduced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. In 2000, there had not been a central system of weighting for use nationally.

- Demographic profiles were identified through census information. Whilst residents within unitary areas were asked additional questions reflecting additional services provided, all services were weighted in the same way.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the survey was a statutory requirement and advised that he would provide Members in due course with details on the survey costs that had been apportioned to Rochford District by the County Council. In interpreting the detail, it was important for the Council to concentrate on overall satisfaction levels and subjects that are key to the Authority's work. Aspects of the results could be fairly clearly associated with Council activity. For example, it was likely that satisfaction with recycling would increase as the new recycling programme is rolled out across the District.

Officers would be reviewing the situation with regard to the complaint handling statistic and what may be behind it. The Authority already monitored and sample surveyed the views of complainants on how they felt their complaint had been handled. It could be that one factor is different treatment of how the term "complaint" is defined.

The Chairman thanked Mr Buchanan for presenting the results to Council.

## **272 CORPORATE PLAN/BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN**

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive on the Corporate Plan/Best Value Performance Plan.

Responding to questions, the Chief Executive advised that:-

- The document was a reflection of decisions already taken by the Authority. Some of the Council's projects were capital intensive and could take time when involving aspects such as land assembly. The forthcoming budget process would include provision for consideration to be given to the introduction of new projects.
- There would be further Committee reports on the introduction of a local service agreement for highways. There would need to be a precise clarification on lines of responsibility and the use/flow of resources in this area.
- Notwithstanding due process, the Authority would continue to do all it could to progress the new sports/leisure centre on the former Park School site with a view to it being opened as early as possible.
- In terms of publicity, the contents of the plan would be précised in Rochford District Matters. Forthcoming editions would headline what the Council is doing and what it plans to do. Press releases would also

be issued and the document would appear on the Council's website over the next few days. Colour could be introduced to the bar chart on page 7.16 to assist appearance on the web.

- Performance Indicator information relating to crime had been supplied by Essex Police. Part of the development of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy involved a review of statistics to achieve optimum resource allocation. The proposed strategy would be coming before Members for approval later this year/early in 2005.
- Officers would review the phraseology used in respect of BV 74 as part of a final review to correct any factual errors.

**Resolved**

That the Corporate Plan/Best Value Performance Plan be approved, with authority delegated to the Chief Executive to correct any factual errors identified during a final check of the performance information. (CE)

The meeting closed at 8.58pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....