

Council - 27 February 2001

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **20 February 2001** when there were present:

Cllr G Fox

Chairman

Cllr R Adams

Cllr V H Leach

Cllr R S Allen

Cllr Mrs S J Lemon

Cllr R A Amner

Cllr T Livings

Cllr C I Black

Cllr J R F Mason

Cllr Mrs R Brown

Cllr G A Mockford

Cllr P A Capon

Cllr C R Morgan

Cllr T G Cutmore

Cllr P J Morgan

Cllr D M Ford

Cllr R A Pearson

Cllr Mrs J E Ford

Cllr Mrs L I V Phillips

Cllr K A Gibbs

Cllr S P Smith

Cllr Mrs J M Giles

Cllr M G B Starke

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn

Cllr P D Stebbing

Cllr J E Grey

Mrs W M Stevenson

Cllr Mrs J Hall

Cllr R E Vingoe

Cllr D R Helson

Cllr Mrs M J Webster

Cllr Mrs J Helson

Cllr P F A Webster

Cllr A Hosking

Cllr D A Weir

Cllr Mrs L Hungate

Cllr Mrs M A Weir

Cllr C C Langlands

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R F Powell.

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren - Chief Executive

J Honey - Corporate Director (Law, Planning & Administration)

R Crofts - Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)

G Woolhouse - Head of Housing, Health & Community Care

D Deeks - Head of Financial Services

A Smith - Head of Administrative and Member Services

J Bostock - Principal Committee Administrator

79 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 January 2001 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

80 RECYCLING SURVEY

Council considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) on the results of the recycling survey recently carried out.

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Mrs J Helson and seconded by Councillor V H Leach:-

“In view of the recycling survey results which show 64.9% of residents supporting recycling, with 42.8% wanting a District wide collection arrangement:-

1. Alternate fortnightly collections of recyclable waste and other refuse is introduced for all households across the District based on the Hawkwell scheme.
2. Such a Scheme is introduced over a 3 year period from 2001/2002.
3. This is funded by raising a supplementary charge through the Council Tax for the year 2001/2002 by an additional £18.07 (per band ‘D’ properties) in order to fund both revenue and capital costs”.

In support of the Motion, Members of the Liberal Democrat Group indicated that it should be borne in mind that Rochford had been a responsible Council by firstly trialing a scheme which is considered by other Essex Authorities as an example of best practice and, secondly, by successfully campaigning against an incinerator in the District. Whilst recognising that the proposals could result in the District being capped, it was believed that this would be a justifiable risk and the proposal would enable the Council to achieve the Government’s recycling targets whilst not putting an unbearable strain on the rest of the capital programme and other Council services.

Responding to Member questions, Officers indicated that:-

- If introduced, the supplementary charge could expose the Authority to a risk of capping. Whilst the Government had yet to cap an authority, its approach to an increase in tax of this magnitude (which represented a 22% rise in Council Tax) was unknown. Any capping would be retrospective and mean a rebilling (with associated significant costs).
- Whilst details on the reasons for a supplementary charge could not be put in a tax bill, they could be included in an explanatory leaflet.

During debate those Members in support of the Motion referred to the need to find ways to supplement the poor level of Government funding highlighted during the recent Parliamentary debate on Rochford’s funding position. The Council had a statutory responsibility to introduce appropriate recycling and those involved with the recycling trial needed to know when the trial process would end. Reference was

also made to the levels of recycling undertaken by other Authorities and to other high level costs faced by the Council, such as those associated with lost planning appeals. During a past presentation to the Council an expert in recycling had indicated that, unlike incineration, costs for recycling may reduce in the longer term as the economy adapts.

Those Members not in support of the Motion felt that it would represent an irresponsible move. From a financial perspective, the introduction of recycling for up to 5,000 properties would be more sensible and affordable. It was also important for the Authority to give sufficient time to consider all factors associated with such an important subject.. There was no question that the Council preferred recycling to any suggestion of incineration. In terms of Government funding, it could be seen that the issue was one of achieving an improved Standard Spending Assessment.

The Motion was lost on a show of hands.

A Motion that the Authority proceeds with recycling arrangements for 5,000 households within the District, in line with the previously agreed budget and including the pilot scheme at Hawkwell, was moved by Councillor G Fox and seconded by Councillor D M Ford.

An amendment was moved by Councillor C I Black and seconded by Councillor DR Helson to increase Council Tax by 10% for the financial years 2001/02 and 2002/03. This would allow for the introduction of an additional 10,000 properties with the possibility of another 5,000 properties in 2003. The proposal would enable 10,000 properties to be introduced without demands on the capital programme. In total it could lead to approximately 60% of the District within the recycling scheme.

In support of the amendment, comment was made on the need for the Council to be much more pro-active in pressing on with recycling, otherwise effective introduction could take many years even affecting the next generation. Reference was also made to the survey results, which gave a clear indication of the public's expectations.

Those against the amendment referred to previous Council debates during which preference had been given to the option of introducing recycling to 5000 households. Whilst having to consider different options, Members had always placed high importance on recycling. The amendment could be seen as particularly inappropriate and untimely given the balanced nature of the Authority. The need for consensus over the last year had been paramount.

Responding to Member Questions, Officers indicated that:-

- The current recycling rate across the district was approximately 4½% (this included 1 - 1½% relating to the Hawkwell trial). It would

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only be possible to give a precise definition of the performance target being set by Best Value when the Government's Statutory Instrument had been received.

- In terms of the Waste Strategy, there was likely to be a doubling of the recycling target for authorities such as Rochford to a minimum of approximately 10%.
- Whilst it was not possible to be specific, there may be a slight risk of capping with a tax increase of 10%.

On a requisition pursuant to Standing Order 24(2), a recorded vote was taken on the amendment as follows:-

For (9)	Councillors C I Black, Mrs J M Giles, Mrs H L A Glynn, Mrs J Hall, D R Helson, Mrs J Helson, A Hosking, V H Leach, Mrs S J Lemon
Against (29)	Councillors R Adams, R S Allen, R A Amner, Mrs R Brown, P A Capon, T G Cutmore, D M Ford, Mrs J E Ford, G Fox, K A Gibbs, J E Grey, Mrs L Hungate, C C Langlands, T Livings, J R F Mason, G A Mockford, C R Morgan, P J Morgan, R A Pearson, Mrs L I V Phillips, S P Smith, M G B Starke, P D Stebbing, Mrs W M Stevenson, R E Vingoe, Mrs M J Webster, P F A Webster, D A Weir, Mrs M A Weir

Abstentions (0)

The amendment was declared lost.

The substantive Motion was won on a show of hands and it was:-

Resolved

That the District Council proceed with recycling arrangements for 5,000 households across the District, in line with previously agreed budget and including the existing pilot scheme at Hawkwell. (CD(F&ES))

81 SETTING THE LEVEL OF COUNCIL TAX 2001/2002

Note Councillor G Fox declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item by virtue of being a Member of the County Council (not on the controlling Group).

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Council considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) which sought agreement to the level of Council Tax for 2001/2002.

The Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee made the following statement:-

“CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS, MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS,

We agreed our budget at the Council meeting on the 23rd January. As I said at that meeting, we are a minority administration and this budget could not be put forward without the support of other Groups within the Council.

It is a compromise, but I believe a good one.

We are all aware of the tight financial constraints within which we work, but we will still be bringing forward new initiatives in the year ahead. These include the following:-

- To introduce the new free concessionary fares scheme as required by Government
- To introduce kerbside recycling on a phased basis – this will ensure we achieve the targets set by the Government
- Further implementation of the Benefits Verification Framework – this will ensure that Housing Benefit is only paid to genuine claimants by deterring fraud
- To improve our homeless advice service
- To carry out a housing condition survey in order to improve our bid for resources from Government
- Further investment in the provision of more CCTV throughout the District and in sheltered housing schemes
- To provide funds to assist Parish Councils to provide facilities within their areas.

Our Standard Spending Assessment has increased this year by just over 5%, which has resulted in the Council receiving additional financial support of £140,000.

I do accept that this sum of money is insufficient to cover all of the additional duties imposed by Government, but this is the best increase we have received over many years. Let us hope that by our efforts and our involvement with TACFIG we will be able to secure a much fairer level of funding for Rochford in the future. We do have a justifiable criticism of the funding we are allocated as we still receive the worst settlement in Essex and the eleventh worst in the country.

We have decided to increase council tax by 6% in accordance with Government guidelines.

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This means that Rochford's council tax on a Band D property will rise from £111.87 to £118.62, an increase of only 13 pence per week.

In conclusion, the council tax for a Band D property will be:-

Essex County Council	£699.48
Police Authority	£71.01
Rochford	£118.62

Depending where you live in the District, the council tax for a Band D property will range between £899.93 and £922.02, following the addition of the Parish and Town Council precepts.

Both Rochford and the Police Authority have kept their increase to within Government guidelines. The County tax increase is 7.94% which accounts for the largest element of the council tax bill. We do need to ensure that residents fully understand the breakdown of the council tax bill.”

At the close of his speech, the Chairman further emphasised activity which had been undertaken during the year to achieve consensus amongst the Groups, together with some of the associated difficulties.

Council agreed that, given the tight financial constraints, it was pleasing to have provided funding for a number of projects.

On a motion moved by Councillor G Fox and seconded by Councillor D Ford it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the total for economic development is estimated at £20,000
- (2) That the total for gross expenditure of the District together with the Parish precepts be £22,749,473
- (3) That the total of income for the District Council be £15,103,900.
- (4) That the total net expenditure of the District Council together with the Parishes be £7,645,573.
- (5) That the total of the sums payable into the general fund in respect of redistributed non domestic rates, revenue support grant, central support protection grant, together with adjustments from the collection fund be £3,445,737. There is no sum payable by the District Council in respect of reductions to Council Tax Benefit subsidy.
- (6) That the budget requirement for the year of £7,645,573 less the net income receivable of £3,445,737 which, divided by the tax

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base of 30,142.98 is equal to £139.33, which is the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

- (7) That the total of Parish precepts included within the above is £624,273.
- (8) That the Council Tax relating to the District Council without Parish precepts is £118.62.
- (9) That the total tax for both District and Parishes be as set out in Appendix B of the report schedule. These sums are calculated as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.
- (10) The sums given above for Band D but now shown in the particular valuations bands A-H be as set out in Appendix C of the report schedule..
- (11) The precepts issued to the Council in respect of Essex County Council and Essex Police Authority for each valuation band A-H as set out in Appendix D of the report schedule.
- (12) The total Council Tax for the area for each valuation band A-H be as set out in Appendix E of the report schedule and appended to these Minutes. These are the amounts set as Council Tax for the year 2001/02.

The meeting closed 8.50 pm.

Chairman

Date _____

	Band D Equivalents	Parish Precept	Parish Charge	District Charge	County Charge	Police Charge	Total Charge	BAND A 6/9	BAND B 7/9	BAND C 8/9	BAND D 1	BAND E 11/9	BAND F 13/9	BAND G 15/9	BAND H 2
Ashington	1,172.28	18,524	15.80	118.62	699.48	71.01	904.91	603.27	703.82	804.36	904.91	1,106.00	1,307.09	1,508.18	1,809.82
Berling	619.09	15,000	24.23	118.62	699.48	71.01	913.34	608.89	710.38	811.86	913.34	1,116.30	1,319.27	1,522.23	1,826.68
Canswdon	552.48	10,500	19.01	118.62	699.48	71.01	908.12	605.41	706.32	807.22	908.12	1,109.92	1,311.73	1,513.53	1,816.24
Foulness Island	67.51	2,200	32.59	118.62	699.48	71.01	921.70	614.47	716.88	819.29	921.70	1,126.52	1,331.34	1,536.17	1,843.40
Great Wakering	1,967.26	50,000	25.42	118.62	699.48	71.01	914.53	609.69	711.30	812.92	914.53	1,117.76	1,320.99	1,524.22	1,829.06
Hawkwell	4,406.70	84,180	19.10	118.62	699.48	71.01	908.21	605.47	706.39	807.30	908.21	1,110.03	1,311.86	1,513.68	1,816.42
Hockley	3,677.32	97,380	26.48	118.62	699.48	71.01	915.59	610.39	712.13	813.86	915.59	1,119.05	1,322.52	1,525.98	1,831.18
Hullbridge	2,334.22	63,628	27.26	118.62	699.48	71.01	916.37	610.91	712.73	814.55	916.37	1,120.01	1,323.65	1,527.28	1,832.74
Paglesham	103.76	1,750	16.87	118.62	699.48	71.01	905.98	603.99	704.65	805.32	905.98	1,107.31	1,308.64	1,509.97	1,811.96
Rawreth	428.37	4,634	10.82	118.62	699.48	71.01	899.93	599.95	699.95	799.94	899.93	1,099.91	1,299.90	1,499.88	1,799.86
Rayleigh	11,815.35	210,005	17.77	118.62	699.48	71.01	906.88	604.59	705.35	806.12	906.88	1,108.41	1,309.94	1,511.47	1,813.76
Rochford	2,714.98	58,942	21.71	118.62	699.48	71.01	910.82	607.21	708.42	809.62	910.82	1,113.22	1,315.63	1,518.03	1,821.64
Stambridge	231.09	5,800	25.10	118.62	699.48	71.01	914.21	609.47	711.05	812.63	914.21	1,117.37	1,320.53	1,523.68	1,828.42
Sutton	52.57	1,730	32.91	118.62	699.48	71.01	922.02	614.68	717.13	819.57	922.02	1,126.91	1,331.81	1,536.70	1,844.04

30,142.98 624,273

Appendix E