

Minutes of the meeting of the **Corporate Resources Sub-Committee** held on **6 February 2001** when there were present:

Cllr C R Morgan - Chairman

Cllr R Adams  
Cllr R A Amner  
Cllr Mrs J M Giles  
Cllr Mrs J Helson  
Cllr Mrs S J Lemon

Cllr T Livings  
Cllr P Morgan  
Cllr P F A Webster  
Cllr D A Weir  
Cllr Mrs M A Weir

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr T G Cutmore

### **SUBSTITUTE**

Cllr M G B Starke

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

P Warren	Chief Executive
R Crofts	Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
J Honey	Corporate Director (Law, Planning and Administration)
D Deeks	Head of Financial Services
S Scrutton	Head of Planning Services
K Blackburn	Economic Development Officer
G Brazendale	Committee Administrator

### **387 MINUTES**

As proposed at Council on 23 January 2001, a copy of the written answers given by the Head of Financial Services to questions concerning budget proposals for 2001/02 raised at the Sub-Committee's last Meeting by the Chambers of Trade were tabled for Members' questions, and are appended to these Minutes.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2001 were then approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**388 MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

The following non pecuniary interests were declared in the report regarding Grants to Outside Bodies (Minute 390) by virtue of Members' association with the organisations shown:-

Cllr Mrs J M Giles	Council's representative on Rayleigh Age Concern
Cllr Mrs J Helson	Rayleigh Association of Voluntary Services
Cllr C R Morgan	Hullbridge Senior Citizens Welfare Council
Cllr Mrs M A Weir	Rochford Old People's Welfare Committee

**389 ACCESS AT REAR OF 5-9 PRENTICE CLOSE, ROCHFORD**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal Services concerning a request from the owner of No. 4 Malting Villas Road, Rochford for the grant of a right of way over the access owned by the Council at the rear of numbers 5-9 Prentice Close, Rochford. The proposal also included the marking out of parking bays to be allocated for use by residents of 5-9 Prentice Close. A plan of the site was appended to the report.

The report had been deferred from the Sub-Committee's Meeting on 28 November 2000 pending a site visit, which had taken place on 30 January 2001. Members who had attended the site visit were of the view that whilst the marking out of bays would be acceptable, there was suitable off-street parking at the front of the property, an easement could exacerbate parking difficulties for other residents and the grant of a right of way could establish a precedent for similar requests. On a motion by Councillor Mrs S J Lemon and seconded by Councillor Mrs J Helson, it was agreed that the latter request be refused; the marking out of parking bays would be referred to Housing Management Sub-Committee for consideration.

**RECOMMENDED**

- (1) That the request for a right of way to allow vehicular access to the rear of No. 4 Malting Villas Road be refused.
- (2) That the request for parking bays to be marked out and allocated to Nos 5-9 Prentice Close to provide two parking spaces convenient to each of the properties be referred to Housing Management Sub-Committee. (HRHM)

**390 GRANTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) concerning grants to outside bodies, to which was appended a list of new grant applications and applications from existing or previous recipients. Within the appendix, it was noted that the funds held by Barling Evergreen Club should have been shown as £10,080 rather than £104,230. A schedule of proposals for the allocation of grants was circulated at the Meeting, within which the grant awarded in 2000/01 for the Citizens Advice Bureaux should have been £67,750 rather than £65,250 as stated.

Also outlined were details of the draft estimates for the next financial year in respect of grants and community support, for which a sum of £26,000 had been allocated. A submission by the Rochford and Rayleigh Citizens Advice Bureau giving details of developments since the merger of the former Rochford and Rayleigh bureaux, together with 2001/02 funding requirements under arrangements previously agreed by the Sub-Committee was appended.

At a Member's request it was agreed that, in future years, the financial information provided with this report should indicate the receipt by voluntary organisations of funding from Parish Councils.

On a motion by Councillor D A Weir and seconded by Councillor Mrs J Helson, the proposals for the award of grants as circulated was agreed.

On a motion by Councillor Mrs J Helson and seconded by Councillor Mrs J M Giles, it was also agreed that Officers should identify a source of funding from which the Rayleigh Antiquarian Society's request for a grant of £160 could be met, in recognition of the effect of the building work at the Mill Hall Complex upon Windmill visitor numbers.

**RECOMMENDED**

- (1) That grants be awarded in 2001/02 to the following organisations as shown:-

**CAB**

Rayleigh CAB	
Rochford CAB	
Additional funding	61,800
Home Visiting	4,200
Outreach Service	1,600
Mediation	<u>1,000</u>
	<u>68,600</u>

Barling Evergreen Club	105
Essex Racial Equality Council	600
Great Wakering OAP Club	100
Hockley & Hawkwell Old Peoples Welfare	3,200
Hockley over 60's	100
Hullbridge Pensioners fellowship	105
Hullbridge Senior Citizens Welfare Council	3,200
Mayday Mobile	1,060
RAVS	1,500
Rayleigh Age Concern	3,200
Rayleigh Friends of Southend Cancer Unit	110
Rayleigh Good Fellowship	750
Rayleigh No.1 Club	600
Rayleigh No. 2 Club	330
Rayleigh Physically Handicapped Club	880
Rochford & District Access Committee	100
Rochford & District Old Peoples Welfare	3,200
Rochford Pre School Learning Alliance	400
Rochford Sports Council	2,175
Royal Association for the Deaf	520

- (2) That Rayleigh Antiquarian Society's request for a grant of £160 be agreed, with Officers to identify a suitable source of funding. (CD(F&ES))

**391 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2001/02**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services), which sought agreement to the level of Members' Allowances to be paid for the financial year 2001/02. Proposals for the establishment of a panel to determine a new system

of Members' Allowances in order to comply with the requirements of the new political structure were also outlined.

Members were reminded that the existing system comprised special responsibility allowances, basic allowances and attendance allowances. Current figures for these categories, together with an increase of 3% for 2001/02 were outlined, as shown below:-

<b>Allowance</b>	<b>2000/01</b>	<b>2001/02</b>
	£ p per month	£ p per month
Special Responsibility Allowances:		
Group Leaders	36.43	37.52
Per additional Party Member	2.12	2.18
Committee Chairmen	44.61	45.95
Basic Allowance	54.65	56.29
Attendance Allowance	12.89 per meeting	13.27 per meeting

From the commencement of the new political structure, only responsibility and basic allowances would be paid. Authorities would also be required to set up an independent review body in order to determine an appropriate level of payment.

The Sub-Committee also examined a proposal to move towards the new system now, with proposed figures for the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance being provided. Members considered however that there would be little merit in changing the allowance system for 2001/02 only twelve months before a further revision, to meet the requirements of the Local Government Act, would be required.

On a motion by Councillor Mrs J M Giles and seconded by Councillor Mrs J Helson, it was therefore

**RECOMMENDED**

- (1) That, for 2001/02, Members' allowances be calculated on the basis of the existing system, with an increase of 3%.
- (2) That Officers present a report on the composition and levels of reimbursement with a view to setting up an Independent Review Panel to determine the level of allowances for 2002/03.  
(DC(F&ES))

---

**392 THAMES GATEWAY – SOUTH ESSEX**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive concerning the implications of the extension of the Thames Gateway into South Essex which would become operational from Spring 2001.

Representatives from Authorities within the Thames Gateway: South Essex designation – Thurrock, Basildon, Castle Point, Southend – had met on two occasions to discuss how local Councils could best work together in partnership to move the initiative forward in South Essex. A key issue that remained to be resolved was the resource implications/contributions that were likely to be required from each Authority, and it was clear that, if the Council wanted to be involved, a financial commitment would be necessary. Members noted that whilst only a small part of the District actually lies within the Gateway, the investment potential that such designation would bring to the South Essex corridor would have employment and infrastructure implications.

It was, on a motion by Councillor P F A Webster and seconded by Councillor Mrs M A Weir agreed that a contribution of up to £5,000 be made to ensure that the District's views and interests were promoted.

**RECOMMENDED**

That a contribution of £5,000 be made towards the Thames Gateway South Essex Initiative. (CEX)

**393 ESSEX-WIDE BEST VALUE GENERAL CONSULTATION SURVEY**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive, which brought to Members' attention the findings of the Essex-wide Best Value General Consultation Survey carried out by ORC International in which 11 Councils, including Rochford District Council and Essex County Council, had participated. A list of the participating Authorities was appended to the report.

The Chairman introduced and welcomed to the Meeting Mr Gavin Ellison (Project Manager, ORC International) who gave a presentation concerning the background to, methodology of, and the main results from, the survey.

Members were reminded that, as part of the Best Value process, the Government requires all local authorities to formally consult with its local population about service delivery. In June 2000, the Council had decided that, rather than carry out such a survey in isolation, there would be benefits from joining a consortium of Essex Authorities, both in terms of resource expenditure and the opportunities for benchmarking. In August 2000, the Essex Consortium commissioned ORC International to undertake the survey. The questionnaire

---

produced by ORC International followed the format prescribed by DETR guidelines, with the addition of three extra questions for each of the Essex Authorities and two further questions specific to this Council.

Members noted that the survey was carried out by post over a 5 week period. The initial mailing went to 2,600 residents in mid-October 2000 and a total of 1,265 completed questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 48.9%

Mr Ellison outlined the results of the survey in the following areas:-

- Overall satisfaction with the Council's performance.  
Rochford had, at 75%, achieved the highest satisfaction rating of all Essex Councils, against a benchmark of 67%.
- Complaint handling.  
The Chief Executive reminded the Sub-Committee that the complaints procedure had been revised to make the registration process more rigorous. In future, instances of large numbers of complaints about particular services would be brought before Members.
- Satisfaction with environmental services.
- Satisfaction with planning services.  
The Head of Planning Services informed Members that the results of the Council's own user survey were awaited, but initial indications were that 80% were very satisfied/fairly satisfied.
- Satisfaction with cultural and recreational services.
- Satisfaction with housing services.
- Satisfaction with litter clearance.
- Satisfaction with waste collection.
- Provision of recycling facilities.
- Sports/Leisure facilities.  
It was noted that this was not a user survey and that many respondents were therefore giving their perception of the service as a whole.
- Theatres/Concert hall

- 
- Overall satisfaction with parks, open spaces, play areas and other community recreation facilities and activities
  - Essex Consortium “common questions”, concerning how well informed/uninformed residents felt about the Council’s services; and whether the Council gave good value for money.

Regarding the former, in which Rochford had achieved 60% against a benchmark of 61%, the Chief Executive drew attention to the promotional value of the Council’s newspaper “Rochford District Matters”. Disappointingly, however, the local press coverage of, and interest in, the Council’s activities was frequently scant in contrast with that enjoyed by some neighbouring Authorities. Concerning the latter, Members pointed out that the Council Tax comprised levies from the Parishes and County Council, in addition to the District which possibly contributed to the uncertainty identified among respondents.

- Specific questions: use of the internet to obtain access to Council services; and experience of use of particular services.

Data obtained regarding the first of these would be useful in the development of the Council’s E-Strategy and IS/IT Strategies, for which Government funding could be available on a bidding basis. Comments submitted under the latter demonstrated some confusion among respondents about the responsibilities of different tiers of Local Government, an issue which would need to be addressed by increasing public awareness of the District/County/Parish Councils’ functions.

In conclusion, Mr Ellison summarised the “highlights” and lowlights” of the survey, which, for this Council, was generally highly satisfactory. It was recognised that the main challenges for the Authority would be to maintain the already high satisfaction rates in many areas whilst improving those in others.

The Chairman on behalf of the Sub-Committee, thanked Mr Ellison for his informative presentation and he then left the Meeting.



**RECOMMENDED**

That the contents of the report be noted, with the findings being fed through to the appropriate Best Value service reviews and other relevant Council initiatives. (CEX)

**394 COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal Services which provided an update on the arrangements with Castle Point Borough Council on the Community Legal Service Partnership.

Members noted that the partnership had established a Steering Group under the guidance of the Legal Services Commission, which had two dedicated officers co-ordinating attendance of meetings and maintenance of interest by all parties. The Steering Group had met three times and had drawn up terms of reference which detailed the work of the partnership. A 'needs' assessment was undertaken to identify the gaps in service provision in the areas covered by the partnership, and this would be supplemented by consultation with the public and other relevant organisations, following which a strategic plan to make provision for the gaps identified would be prepared and finalised by October 2001.

At the Group's meetings, Castle Point Borough Council had appointed a representative from among its Councillors and Members agreed to make a similar appointment from this Sub-Committee.

**RECOMMENDED**

- (1) That Officers continue to work as part of the partnership and keep Members informed of progress
- (2) That a representative on the Steering Group be appointed for the remainder of this municipal year. (HLS)

**395 ROCHFORD ECONOMIC AUDIT**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive which gave details of an audit of the economy of Rochford District which had been carried out by Public and Corporate Economic Consultants.

A summary of the full report and the key action points recommended by the consultants was appended to the report, and a copy of the entire document had been placed in the Members' room.

In the context of the Council's emerging Local Plan it was noted in particular that the consultants' report had drawn attention to the relative

success of advanced manufacturing; the role of the construction industry as a major provider of jobs in small firms; and the relatively low levels of skills among the resident population of Rochford as measured by NVQ attainment. It was agreed that the implications of these factors should be investigated with a number of partner organisations to identify future assistance/improvement strategies that could be adopted.

Members referred to a number of initiatives to assist in economic regeneration that had been implemented by the Council, such as re-forming Business-Link involvement with the Association of Small Businesses, and the creation of the post of Economic Development Officer. The Study had highlighted some positive elements in the District's economy, such as high growth rates and the success of the manufacturing sector, and these, along with the other findings would be fed into the Local Plan process.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) That the consultants' report be referred to the Planning Policy Sub-Committee which is responsible for consideration of the new Local Plan.
- (2) That the action involving the Council's partner organisations, as outlined in the Chief Executive's report, be endorsed.
- (3) That Officers complete their work on a draft economic strategy for the District, based on the consultants' report, for consideration at a future meeting. (CEX)

**396 APPLICATION FOR WAIVER OF PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT  
LICENCE FEES, VILLAGE FAIR, GREAT WAKERING**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care concerning an application for the waiver of public entertainment licence fees for a village fair to be held at Great Wakering recreation ground on 27 August 2001.

The application had been submitted by the Clerk to Great Wakering Parish council and a letter giving further information about the proposed event, together with a statement of the Parish Council's accounts, was appended to the report.

**RECOMMENDED**

That the fee due for a Public Entertainment Licence for the Great Wakering Village Fair, if granted, be waived in full. (HHHCC)

**EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

To agree that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining business on the grounds that exempt information as defined in paragraphs 9 and 14 of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

**397 LAND AT MILL HALL, RAYLEIGH**

The Sub-Committee considered the exempt report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) which outlined the results of negotiations that had taken place between Rochford District Council and an adjacent landowner as part of the scheme to provide car parking and landscaping around Mill Hall, Rayleigh.

Members examined three possible options relating to Council-owned land upon which outbuildings containing the gas heater store and oil store for the Sports and Social club were situated. Following demolition of the Club, the buildings and land were no longer required. The site shares a party wall with an adjoining landowner and, given that there was no further use to which the Council could put the premises, it was agreed to dispose of the land occupied by the oil store at a price to be set by the District Valuer. (A plan of the site was appended to the report). This would avoid future maintenance and remove the need for a Party Wall Act agreement with the adjacent landowner. It was noted that the sale would be subject to a covenant preventing the new landowner from future development of the site.

**RECOMMENDED**

That the land at the Mill Hall, Rayleigh, identified on the plan attached to the Corporate Director's report, be sold subject to a covenant to protect its use. (CD(F&ES))

**398 MILL HALL, RAYLEIGH – INSTALLATION OF CCTV**

**Note:** The Chairman had agreed to admit this item of business as urgent, since there were currently contractors on site who could carry out the ducting work associated with CCTV installation.

The Sub-Committee considered the exempt report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) which gave details of the

estimated costs of installing a multi-camera CCTV system to improve security to the new car parking areas around the Mill Hall.

It was noted that the quotations obtained were within the sum allocated by Council for inclusion in the 2001/02 budget for this purpose.

During discussion, the following main points arose:-

- The Council would need to register the use of the cameras under the Data Protection Act.
- The Police would be bringing reports to future meetings of Community Safety Sub-Committee to examine the value of CCTV as a crime deterrent. A protocol existed for the use of CCTV as evidence in Court proceedings but generally it was regarded as a tool to assist in law enforcement.
- It was re-iterated that the scheme at Mill Hall had been agreed at the Council's budget setting meeting on 23 January, for which a sum of £20,000 had been earmarked. Any funds remaining from this project could be used for installing CCTV at other locations within the District, for example at Clements Hall.
- In response to Member comments concerning the need for CCTV elsewhere, and in particular at Rochford Town Centre, the Chief Executive reminded the Sub-Committee of the way in which priorities for schemes at shopping parades had been agreed through the committee process. For the future, Members were invited to submit suggestions for additional projects, which could be considered in the light of competing budgetary priorities.
- The Police would be consulted about the specification for the Mill Hall scheme and the protocol governing the use of CCTV cameras generally within the District.

On a motion by Councillor Mrs J Helson and seconded by Councillor Mrs J M Giles it was, following a vote,

**RECOMMENDED**

- (1) That Officers undertake the installation of a CCTV system to cover the whole of the Mill Hall site, at an approximate cost of £8,500 with the balance of the budgetary allocation being used for other schemes to be identified.

- (2) That the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) be authorised to utilise part of the £20,000 budget provision for 2001/02 in the current financial year. (CD(F&ES))

The Meeting closed at 9.35pm

Chairman

Date

## NNDR Consultation – Questions raised

Question	Answer
Chamber of Trade Budget	<p>Budget currently available - £ 5,000 from 1999/2000 and £5,000 in 2000/01 less the provision of £4,000 in respect of the CCTV for Rayleigh. If Members agree the budget an additional £ 5,000 will be available next year. (total £15,000 less £4,000 = £11,000)</p> <p>Verbal confirmation of the approval to the CCTV scheme was given to Mr Byford after the Council approval on the 19 th December. The installation can be carried out by either the District Council or the Town Council. The Town Council will undertake the on-going management of the scheme.</p>
Why no budget for wheelchair taxis support?	Members agreed the support for 3 years only. A report will go to Transportation Sub Committee to review the position
Why no consultation on charges?	The Taxi trade is not consulted on charges. There is consultation on taxi fares. The Council has to aim for a balanced budget on taxi licensing. The charges have increased for wheelchair taxis to bring them into line with other taxis in view of changes in legislation. Charges have been focused on the initial registration of drivers and vehicles rather than renewals.
Taxi Driver Health & Safety	As yet no confirmation that funding is available from ECC. Should Members agree the budget ECC funding will be determined before any scheme is implemented.
Mechanical Sweeper – Can the use be increased?	Under the new contract, coming into operation from 1 st April, the main shopping areas are to be swept mechanically twice a day Monday – Saturday. Sundays and Bank Holidays once per day. This covers Rayleigh, Hockley, Hullbridge,

	Ashington (Golden Cross), Rochford and Great Wakering. It is a matter for the contractor as to the number and placement of machinery required to deliver the service specification.
Bird Droppings	<p>Cleansing teams have been instructed to pay particular attention to soiled areas.</p> <p>The New contract includes a requirement to cleanse areas under the instructions of the supervising officer. The contract measurement is 10 metres square 25 occasions per year.</p> <p>Members considered the problem of pigeons some years ago and limited action authorised. A report will be bought back to Community Services to look at the issues again.</p>
Car Park – Mill Hall – when will it open?	Members have been advised that the expected opening will be 23 rd February
Recycling proposal – if the scheme will not start until say June will the proposed budget be reduced	The Financial Services Manager advises that the budget should stand. The figure is for the net cost of the scheme including £ 23,600 of recycling and composting credits. The report to Members qualified that this income related to a mature scheme. The budget provision needs to be flexible in this first year.