

Council – 29 July 2003

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **29 July 2003** when there were present:-

Cllr R A Amner (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs R Brown (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr P A Capon	Cllr C R Morgan
Cllr Mrs T J Capon	Cllr R A Oatham
Cllr R G S Choppen	Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr T G Cutmore	Cllr P K Savill
Cllr K A Gibbs	Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn	Cllr D G Stansby
Cllr J E Grey	Cllr Mrs M A Starke
Cllr Mrs S A Harper	Cllr M G B Starke
Cllr K H Hudson	Cllr J Thomass
Cllr A J Humphries	Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr T Livings	Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr C J Lumley	Cllr P F A Webster
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley	Cllr D A Weir
Cllr J R F Mason	Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins
Cllr Mrs M D McCarthy	

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs C I Black, T E Goodwin, C A Hungate, Mrs L Hungate, C C Langlands, G A Mockford, S P Smith.

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
S Fowler	- Head of Administrative and Member Services
G Woolhouse	- Head of Housing, Health and Community Care
C Thomas	- Emergency Planning & Health & Safety Manager
M Martin	- Committee Administrator

362 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

363 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM CHAIRMAN

The Chairman reported that it had been a privilege to attend civic engagements on behalf of the District. These had ranged from visiting a person of 102 years old to supporting new sports initiatives within the District.

To date he had attended a total of 34 venues and a further 5 had been attended by the Vice Chairman on his behalf.

364 COMMITTEE MINUTES AND REPORTS

Council received the Minutes of Committees and considered Committee reports as follows:-

	Committee	Date	Minute No
(1)	Planning Services	29 May 2003	239 – 243
(2)	Environmental Services	5 June 2003	246 – 254
(3)	Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny	10 June 2003	255 – 257
(4)	Policy & Finance	10 June 2003	258 – 266
(5)	Community Overview & Scrutiny	12 June 2003	267 – 271
(6)	Environment Overview & Scrutiny	17 June 2003	272 – 280
(7)	Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny	19 June 2003	281 – 285
(8)	Planning Services	24 June 2003	286 – 290
(9)	Appeals & Licensing	27 June 2003	299 – 301
(10)	Community Services	1 July 2003	302 – 315
(11)	Environmental Services	3 July 2003	316 – 324
(12)	Policy & Finance	8 July 2003	325 – 335
(13)	Standards	10 July 2003	336 – 340
(14)	Community Overview & Scrutiny	15 July 2003	341 – 346
(15)	Environment Overview & Scrutiny	17 July 2003	347 – 352

Members noted that Cllr Mrs M A Starke had not attended the meeting and that Cllr M G B Starke had attended as a visiting member.

(a) Websters Way Environmental Enhancement (Minute 348)

The Leader of the Council reported that all Members of the Council were in receipt of a copy of a letter from Rayleigh Town Council confirming that they would not be in a position to offer financial assistance in respect of this project.

(16)	Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny	22 July 2003	353 – 360
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(b) Disposal of Old Ship Lane Public Convenience and Car Park – Further Issues (Minute 355)

Members noted that the Evening Echo had incorrectly reported the scale of parking charges. The Corporate Director had written to the newspaper identifying the correct figures of 25p for the first half hour and 50p for a maximum of two hours, in common with all the District's car parks.

Resolved

- (1) That the Old Ship Lane public convenience be demolished and redeveloped for car parking purposes to provide a total of approximately 10 spaces to the rear of the Old Ship public house.
- (2) That the car park be brought within the Council's Car Parking Order and that the spaces be designated as paying spaces, with a maximum permitted stay of 2 hours.
- (3) That the above be financed from within the existing Capital programme. (CD(F&ES))

(c) Finance Best Value Review (Minute 357)

Resolved

- (1) That the action plans set out in Appendices, 2, 3 and 4 to the report be agreed.
- (2) That officers be instructed to initiate negotiations with regard to forming a partnership for the delivery of the national non domestic rates service.
- (3) That the Head of Financial Services be instructed to report in December with proposals for improvements to the payroll and personnel services. (CD(F&ES))

(d) Code of Corporate Governance (Minute 358)

Resolved

- (1) That a Training & Development Support officer be appointed.
(CD(LP&A))
- (2) That the annual assessment of the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance be agreed. (CD(F&ES))

(e) Review of Committee Structure (Minute 359)

Resolved

- (1) That the use of the scoping form be introduced at the start of each policy development/review.
- (2) That each Overview & Scrutiny Committee should consider the most appropriate venue for its work.
- (3) That the use of site visits and expert witnesses be considered as appropriate.
- (4) That the broadcasting of Council meetings on the website be pursued when cost-effective technology can be identified.
- (5) That further training in Overview & Scrutiny be arranged for Members.
- (6) That specific budget provision of £5,000 for Overview & Scrutiny be considered as part of the draft 2004/05 budget.
- (7) That all internal audit reports be considered by the Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee in the first instance.
(HAMS)

(f) Signage in the Council Chamber (Minute 360)

Resolved

That improved signage, as detailed within the report, be purchased for the Council Chamber (HAMS)

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| (17) | Finance & Procedures
Overview & Scrutiny | 23 July 2003 | 361 |
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(g) Rayleigh Market Review (Minute 361)

The Chairman of the Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee reported that he was in receipt of a letter of thanks from the Market Proprietors for the manner in which the review had been conducted and the courteous way in which they and the market traders had been treated by Members and officers.

Resolved

- (1) That at the present time the market be retained within the Market Car Park, Rayleigh.
- (2) That the licence be renewed for a period of 7 years within a relevant area which allows for the retention of car parking throughout the week on the western part of the site and subject to a workable scheme being agreed which addresses the pedestrian and health and safety issues. (HLS)

365 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

The Proper Officer reported that, pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 12, the following Motions had been received from Councillors J R F Mason and Mrs H L A Glynn.

(1) Residents' Panel

"This Council recognises the value that would be added by the establishment of a Residents' Panel (as described below) and agrees to implement a Residents' Panel in the Municipal year 2004/2005 for an initial period of three years. This motion stands referred to the Policy and Finance Committee which will report to Full Council by 30 November 2003.

What is a Residents' Panel?

A Residents' Panel would be representative of all the different ages, cultures and income groups of the community in Rochford District. As members of the Panel, they would help the Council learn more about what the residents of Rochford District really think. An independent market research organisation typically holds the details of Panel members to guarantee anonymity and encourage honest and open consultation. Panel members would take part in a range of consultation events including Residents' Workshops, Focus Groups, Postal and Telephone Surveys. The views of Panel members would be fed back to Council Officers and Councillors so that the opinions of local people are taken on board as a significant voice in the decision making processes of the Council."

The Chief Executive referred Members to the meeting of Council held on 26 June when he had advised that a statistically robust joint consultation forum with Castle Point Borough Council and the Castle Point and Rochford Primary Care Trust had been set up by a consultancy firm, comprising 1500 members. Members might, therefore, consider that the setting up of a Resident's Panel would not add any significant value.

On a show of hands it was:-

Resolved

That the Motion be not agreed. (CE)

(2) Furniture Re-Cycling Scheme

"This Council recognises that a furniture re-cycling scheme along the lines of the Exeter Turntable Project (described below) can improve the quality of life for many residents of Rochford District. The Council will undertake a community consultation and a feasibility study with support agencies of the opportunities to provide or provide support for such a project. This motion stands referred to the Community Services Committee which will report to Full Council by 31 December 2003.

Exeter Turntable Project

In the early 1990's the central churches in Exeter found that more and more people were asking for help in furnishing their homes. Ad-hoc arrangements were put in place to meet this demand but it soon became apparent that a more structured response was necessary.

Project start-up funding was obtained from the Department of Employment which allowed Turntable to start operating in 1993. Since then, the Project has gone from strength to strength and we are currently supplying more than 5000 items of furniture to over 700 clients each year.

Turntable is a charitable organisation that collects donated household items such as 3-piece suites, beds, wardrobes, electrical white goods etc to pass on to families and individuals on very low incomes.

A house is hardly a home without some decent furniture and furnishings. Turntable provides a service which helps people to settle into new accommodation more quickly and more permanently.

All the people who receive furniture are referred by Social or other Support Workers (Health, Probation, Womens' Aid etc).

All the furniture that is collected is put on show to allow people to choose what they need. The only charge made is a nominal delivery fee.

Since starting in 1993, Turntable has been overwhelmed with requests for its services. It is currently supplying furniture to more than 700 families and individuals each year.

Turntable currently employs long-term unemployed people who volunteer their services to develop their own skills in order to help them secure full-time employment."

Council commended this Motion and noted that :-

- it would meet one of the Council's corporate objectives of seeking to improve the quality of life of people within the district
- no other facility of this nature existed within the area.
- it might be possible to combine this with the Council's existing collection service.

However, Members noted that issues around the storage of large quantities of furniture together with ensuring that health and safety standards were complied with would need to be fully investigated.

Resolved

That the Motion stands referred to the Community Services Committee to report to Full Council by 31 December 2003. (CD(F&ES))

366 DRAFT FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2002/03

Council considered the Draft Financial Statement for 2002/03 prior to its submission to the Council's external auditors.

Members complimented officers on the presentation of one of the best statements received by this Council.

On a Motion moved by Cllr P F A Webster and seconded by Cllr T G Cutmore it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the accounts be signed by the Chairman.
- (2) That the accounts be agreed for submission to the external auditors.
(HFS)

367 HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

Council considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care which invited Members to approve the draft homelessness strategy.

Members noted that detailed consideration had been given to this by the Housing Best Value Sub-Committee and that their amendments had been incorporated.

Resolved

That the homelessness strategy be approved. (HHHCC)

368 A COMMUNITY PLAN FOR ROCHFORD DISTRICT

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive which outlined the draft Community Strategy for Rochford District. Members were reminded that whilst the preparation of the document had been led by the Council, it had been developed with key partners and stakeholders in the community.

Members thanked the Chairman for his attendance at the launch of the project. Whilst the report had invited Council to give its views on the key priorities which should be addressed through the Community Strategy, Members were of the opinion that it would be sensible to wait until the results of the extensive consultation had been analysed before reaching its decision.

Resolved

That Council defer giving its views on the key priorities to be addressed through the Community Strategy until after the consultation is completed. (CE)

369 CIVIL CONTINGENCIES BILL

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive which advised Members of the possible consequences of the Civil Contingencies Bill which had been published on 19 June 2003.

Resolved

- (1) That the District Council welcomes the spirit of the Civil Contingency Bill, but requires clarification of the execution of the proposed statutory duties, given the ambiguity raised between the Bill and the supporting documentation.
- (2) That this view be expressed formally to Central Government within the consultation framework.
- (3) That a copy of the Council's response be sent to both the Local Government Association and the two local MP's. (CE)

370 BEACON COUNCIL SCHEME – ROUND 5

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive which detailed the latest round of the Beacon Council initiative outlining the themes eligible for bid submission.

Resolved

- (1) That expressions of interest be submitted in connection with Benefits Administration and Crime and Disorder Partnerships under the Beacon Council Scheme Initiative.
- (2) That, in connection with Benefits Administration, officers complete the assessment work against the revised performance framework criteria before determining whether a bid should then be made.
- (3) That, in connection with the Crime and Disorder Partnership, the support of other Essex Districts and the County Council be sought in making a joint bid submission. (CE)

371 RISK MANAGEMENT

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive which updated Members on progress on the Risk Management Strategy.

Resolved

That progress to date on the Risk Management Strategy be noted and that the revised Work Programme be agreed. (CE)

372 DISTRICT YOUTH STRATEGY GROUP

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive which sought two Member nominations to a District Youth Strategy Group being set up for Rochford District by the County Council.

A Motion proposed by Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn and seconded by Cllr J R F Mason that Cllr J R F Mason be considered for one of the two positions was lost on a show of hands.

Resolved

That Cllrs K A Gibbs and T A Livings be this Council's Member representatives to the District Youth Strategy Group. (CE)

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Chairman

Date