

Council – 7 February 2002

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **7 February 2002** when there were present:

Cllr R S Allen – Vice-Chairman in the Chair

Cllr R Adams	Cllr C C Langlands
Cllr R Amner	Cllr V H Leach
Cllr C I Black	Cllr T Livings
Cllr Mrs R Brown	Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr P A Capon	Cllr G A Mockford
Cllr T G Cutmore	Cllr C R Morgan
Cllr D F Flack	Cllr P J Morgan
Cllr Mrs J E Ford	Cllr R A Pearson
Cllr G Fox	Cllr S P Smith
Cllr K A Gibbs	Cllr M G B Starke
Cllr Mrs J M Giles	Cllr P D Stebbing
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn	Cllr Mrs W M Stevenson
Cllr J E Grey	Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr Mrs J Hall	Cllr R E Vingoe
Cllr D R Helson	Cllr M J Webster
Cllr Mrs J Helson	Cllr P F A Webster
Cllr A Hosking	Cllr D A Weir
Cllr Mrs L Hungate	Mrs M A Weir

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
G Woolhouse	Head of Housing, Health & Community Care
J Bourne	Leisure & Contracts Manager
S Worthington	Committee Administrator

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs S J Lemon and Mrs L I V Phillips.

45 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr P F A Webster declared a non-pecuniary interest in the item on the leisure contract by virtue of being a user of Council leisure facilities.

46 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 18 December 2001, 10 January

2002 (Extraordinary) and 17 January 2002 (Extraordinary) were approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of 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.

47 LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

(1) Contracts Sub-Committee – 30 January 2002

Council considered the minutes of the Contracts Sub-Committee held on 30 January 2002 and the recommendations contained therein.

(2) Leisure Contract

Council considered the exempt report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) apprising Members of the Best and Final Officers received from contractors in respect of the Leisure Contract.

On a motion called by Cllr Mrs J Helson and seconded by Cllr P F A Webster it was:-

Resolved

That a public vote be taken at the meeting of Council on 7 February 2002, to record the decision of the Council (CD(F&ES))

The press and public were readmitted to the meeting at this point in the proceedings.

A motion was then moved by Cllr Mrs J Helson, amended by Cllr C I Black and seconded by Cllr P F A Webster that the Council's leisure management contract be awarded to Holmes Place for a 20 year period without the development of the Park site, but that nonetheless certain commitments be made in respect of the latter.

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

For (37)	Cllrs R Adams, R S Allen, R A Amner, C I Black, Mrs R Brown, P A Capon, T G Cutmore, D F Flack, Mrs J E Ford, G Fox, K A Gibbs, Mrs J M
----------	---

Giles, Mrs H L A Glynn, J E Grey, Mrs J Hall, D R Helson, Mrs J Helson, A Hosking, Mrs L Hungate, C C Langlands, V H Leach, T Livings, J R F Mason, G A Mockford, C R Morgan, P J Morgan, R A Pearson, S P Smith, M G B Starke, P D Stebbing, Mrs W M Stevenson, Mrs M S Vince, R E Vingoe, Mrs M J Webster, P F A Webster, D A Weir, Mrs M A Weir

Against (0)

Abstentions (0)

Resolved

- (1) That Holmes Place be awarded the Council's Leisure Management Contract for a 20 year period without the development of the Park site.
- (2) That the Council nonetheless remain committed to the provision of a new leisure centre at Park School, to be opened by the end of 2005 at the latest.
- (3) That, irrespective of the result of any planning application, the Council work with the Contractor to agree the way forward for the use of the Park site and keep the local community informed and involved as much as practical. (CD(F&ES))

48 HOUSING MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE – 4 DECEMBER 2001

Council considered the minutes of the Housing Sub-Committee held on 4 December 2001 and the recommendations contained therein.

Minute 152 – Housing Rents and Charges

Resolved

- (1) That rents be increased in accordance with Government guidelines.
- (2) That rents of garages be increased by 20p to £6.00 per week.
- (3) That charges to residents of sheltered accommodation be increased by an average of 2.42%. (HFS)

49 MEMBER BUDGET MONITORING SUB-COMMITTEE – 16 JANUARY 2002 AND 31 JANUARY 2002

Council received the minutes of the Member Budget Monitoring Sub-Committee held on 16 January 2002 and on 31 January 2002.

Minute 164 – Leisure Contract and Budget Strategy

Resolved

That the charges around car parking (with the exception of the Approach Car Park), cemeteries and church yards and Hackney Carriage Licensing be retained at their current price levels pending the review by the Finance and Procedures Overview and Scrutiny Committee for detailed consideration. (HFS)

50 CORPORATE RESOURCES SUB-COMMITTEE – 22 JANUARY 2002

Council considered the minutes of the Corporate Resources Sub-Committee held on 22 January 2002 and the recommendations contained therein.

The Chairman of the Corporate Resources Sub-Committee updated Council on proceedings at the Sub-Committee meeting held on 6th February 2002 in relation to consideration of the frequency of formal consultation with the Chambers of Trade. It was accordingly:-

Resolved

That the Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee conduct meetings twice yearly with the Chambers of Trade, the first to take place in September/October 2002. (CEX)

51 BUDGET STRATEGY AND COUNCIL TAX

Council considered the report of the Head of Financial Services on the Revenue Budget, Council Tax, Fees and Charges and Capital Programme.

Members were advised that for the next financial year Government has announced that funding will only increase by around £82,000. Members have previously been advised that the cost of Government initiatives cost the Authority over £500,000 in the current financial year. These items were still applicable to next year's budget.

There were significant cost increases facing the Council, although the Council would achieve significant cost savings through the new leisure contract.

With respect to Council Tax, Members were advised that for the next financial year the Government's own figures showed an assumption of an increase of 8½% for the Authority. Officers recommended, however, an increase of 10% over the next three years, in order to deliver the new Park Sports Centre and to address the reduction in funding from the Government.

The Council considered the General Fund Programme. On a motion moved by Cllr Mrs J Helson and seconded by Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn it was:-

Resolved

That the General Fund Virements for 2001/02 and the revised estimates for 2001/2002, as outlined in the report of the Head of Financial Services, be agreed. (HFS)

The Council then went on to consider the General Fund Draft Revenue Estimates for 2002/2003. On a motion called by Cllr Mrs J Helson and seconded by Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn it was:-

Resolved

That the General Fund Draft Revenue Estimates for 2002/03, as outlined in the report of the Head of Financial Services, be agreed. (HFS)

Turning to Fees and Charges, a motion was called by Cllr Mrs J Helson and seconded by Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn and it was:-

Resolved

That Fees and Charges be accepted in line with the report of the Head of Financial Services, with the exception of those recommended at the Member Budget Monitoring Sub-Committee on 31 January 2002. (HFS)

Council next considered items that the Committees had requested be considered as part of the Budget Process. On a motion moved by Cllr Mrs J Helson and seconded by Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn it was:-

Resolved

That Committee Supported Bids be accepted, as outlined in the report of the Head of Financial Services, other than Essex Rural Partnership

and Biodiversity Partnership. (HFS)

The Council then went on to consider bids received by Political Groups. On a motion called by Cllr Mrs J Helson and seconded by Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn it was:-

Resolved

That the political bid for an out of Hours Noise Abatement Officer should not be accepted. However, Officers should continue to investigate the possibility of joint Authority working to provide a solution, and to carry out the Best Value Review. (HFS/HHHCC)

Considering the Council's Revenue Budget for 2002/2003, it was moved by Cllr Mrs J Helson and seconded by Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn that the Council should provide for an additional 5000 households to be included in the kerbside recycling initiative to meet the Council's Corporate objective and that, in addition, the Council's 3 year budget strategy should aim to include 5000 homes year on year.

In favour of the motion, reference was made that landfill was an expensive method of waste disposal and that recycling could offer the possibility of cash, as well as environmental savings.

Against the motion, reference was made that there would be the requirement of a permanent commitment to revenue and capital expenditure. There was also some concern that such a commitment could hamper the provision of services this Council may wish to provide in future.

The motion was lost on a show of hands.

On a motion moved by Cllr Mrs J Helson and seconded by Mrs H L A Glynn it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the Officer bid for £8,000 for Housing Rent Guarantee scheme and for £10,000 for Sewer and Ditch Clearance be accepted.
- (2) That the bid for £40,000 for Dog Fouling Enforcement be rejected.
- (3) That the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee be instructed to investigate all enforcement/monitoring issues. (HFS/CEX)

Considering Council Tax for 2002/2003, it was moved by Cllr Mrs J Helson that Council Tax for 2002/2003 should increase by 10%, with

an additional 2% for recycling, and that the Council Tax strategy for the next 3 years should be to safeguard the Council's financial position and achieve approximately two thirds of households in the District within the recycling scheme.

Whilst considering the Motion it was noted that, while recognising that an additional 2% increase in Council Tax would equate to 5 pence per week, it was possible that many residents within the District would not receive salary or pension increases much in excess of the likely inflation figure of 2.5%.

Cllr P F A Webster moved an amendment to the motion, that the Council Tax for 2002/2003 increase by 10%, and this was seconded by Cllr G Fox.

The amended motion was carried on a show of hands, and it was:-

Resolved

That the Council Tax for 2002/2003 increase by 10%. (HFS)

Considering the General Fund Capital Programme, it was noted that the General Fund balance was low and that the Capital Programme would be overdrawn at the end of 2002/2003.

On a motion carried by Cllr P F A Webster and seconded by Cllr R E Vingoe, it was:-

Resolved

That £50,000 be transferred to the General Fund balance and that £50,000 be used to remove the overdrawn Capital Programme in 2002/2003.

On a motion carried by Cllr Mrs J Helson and seconded by Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That a further £40,000 be added to the Windmill Fund to support a Heritage Lottery Bid.
- (2) That the bids from the Community Services Committee of £60,000 for Sweyne Park and £15,000 for CCTV to finish the programme of local shopping parades be accepted. (HFS)

Cllr Mrs J Helson moved a motion that the above be funded from the sum set aside in respect of the Building Condition Survey and the removal of £75,000 currently allocated for the refurbishment of 50 – 54 West Street.

Cllr Mrs M A Weir moved an amendment that the £75,000 for 50 – 54 West Street be retained in the Capital Programme rather than removed at this stage. As yet, no planning application had been forthcoming and it was important that the Council retained its options in terms of addressing this site. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs J E Ford.

This motion was carried on a show of hands and it was:-

Resolved

That the above amendments to the Capital Programme be funded from the Building Condition Survey but that £75,000 be retained in the capital programme in respect of 50 – 54 West Street at this stage. (HFS)

Cllr Mrs J Helson moved a motion, seconded by Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn, that further refurbishment of the Council's public toilets not be undertaken at the present time, but that Officers bring a condition report to Council in the new Municipal year.

Cllr G Fox moved an amendment that £60,000 be allocated in the Capital Programme for further refurbishment of the Council's public toilets, and this was seconded by Cllr P D Stebbing.

Against the motion, reference was made to there being insufficient funds available within the Capital Programme, given the retention of the £75,000 allocation for West Street now agreed.

The amendment was lost on a show of hands.

Council then agreed Mrs J Helson's motion and it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That further refurbishment of the Council's public toilets not be undertaken at the present time.
- (2) That Officers bring a condition report to Council in the new Municipal year. (HFS/CD(F&ES))

Turning to the Housing Capital Programme, a motion was carried by Cllr Mrs J Helson and seconded by Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn and it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the Housing Capital Programme for 2002/2003 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 be accepted with the inclusion of the 2 vacant properties in Rochford Garden Way.

- (2) That Officers bring forward a report on the financial implication on the Housing Revenue Account of converting these into 1 bedroom properties. (HFS)

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm

Chairman _____

Date _____