

Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee

– 18 September 2003

Minutes of the meeting of the **Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **18 September 2003** when there were present:-

Cllr T G Cutmore (Chairman)

Cll P A Capon
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn
Cllr C C Langlands

Cllr T Livings
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Cllr C R Morgan

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J Thomass.

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	Chief Executive
J Honey	Corporate Director (Law, Planning & Administration)
D Deeks	Head of Financial Services
S Fowler	Head of Administrative & Member Services
S Rom	Economic Development Officer
M Martin	Committee Administrator

416 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 22 and 23 July 2003 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

417 IT SERVICE AND CONTRACTOR

The Committee received a presentation from officers about the IT service, its contribution to the Authority and how the service is provided by the contractor, Vivista, together with a video demonstrating how one of the Council's software packages operates.

Members noted that:-

- access to the Council and some of its services via the website is in addition to existing methods of communication and therefore residents without on-line access would not be disadvantaged.
- visits to the website had dramatically increased.
- the website had been structured to aid the visually impaired
- the IT service is central to the Council's business.
- the Council had benefited from being part of the Essex On-Line Partnership which included, amongst others, the County Council, as well as Basildon, Braintree, Maldon and Tendring Councils, with whom the

Council was working in partnership implementing the Essex Marketplace e-procurement solution.

- improved IT systems will enable an enhanced customer service to local residents whether their enquiry is by telephone, paper, in person, or online.
- Vivista would be in attendance at the next meeting of this Committee and it was agreed that the preferred venue would be Committee Room 4. Members requested that officers ensure that the representatives in attendance would be able to answer questions relating to the period of the contract to date.

Members of the Committee were invited to make an appointment to view some of the various systems in use by officers at the Council offices.

Members thanked the officers for the quality of the presentation.

418 CLOSURE OF ACCOUNTS 2002/03

Note: Cllr C R Morgan declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of his wife being in receipt of an Essex County Council pension.

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Financial Services which invited Members to consider some of the detail regarding the Statement of Accounts which had been submitted to Council on 29 July 2003.

Resolved

- (1) That the budget amendments identified in this report be agreed.
- (2) That the Pensions information be noted.
- (3) The cash flow statement be agreed for submission to the external auditors. (HFS)

419 ROCHFORD DISTRICT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive which advised Members of the responses involved in connection with the consultation exercise on the Council's draft Economic Development Strategy 2003/07 and which put forward the amended Strategy for approval.

Members noted that:-

- the intention was to review the Strategy on an annual basis.
- partnership working was an essential part of the Strategy.
- the Strategy was seen as a 'live' document which linked in with the work on the emerging Local Plan and the Thames Gateway Strategic Framework.

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- As these documents developed, the Economic Development Strategy would in turn need to be amended and updated.

Recommended to Council

That the Economic Development Strategy be approved. (CE)

420 BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE CONSULTATION PROTOCOL

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive which sought Members' agreement to a finalised protocol for groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Chambers of Trade and Federation of Small Businesses, following consultations with the business community.

Recommended to the Policy and Finance Committee

That the Business Representative Protocol be approved as a framework for consultation with the business community. (CE)

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

Chairman

Date