

Minutes of the meeting of the **Corporate Resources Sub-Committee** held on **Tuesday 4 July 2000** when there were present:

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

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

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllrs Mrs R Brown, Mrs J Hall and R E Vingoe.

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	- Chief Executive
R Crofts	- Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
A Bugeja	- Head of Legal Services
A Smith	- Head of Administrative and Member Services
D Deeks	- Head of Financial Services
I Douce	- Senior Environmental Health Officer
G Brazendale	- Committee Administrator

329 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Resolved

That Councillor C R Morgan be appointed Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

In thanking the Sub-Committee for his appointment, Councillor Morgan made reference to the direct pecuniary interest that could arise during consideration of the Sub-Committee's business by virtue of his wife's employment by the Council. In such instances he would vacate the Chair and a temporary Chairman would be nominated for the appropriate agenda item(s).

330 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Members declared non-pecuniary interests in the reports outlined below, with the reason for the interest given in brackets:

- "Community Legal Service" – Minute 333 - Councillor Mrs R Brown (Member of the Management Committee of Rochford Citizens Advice Bureau)

- “Photocopying for Town and Parish Councils and Voluntary Organisations” – Minute 337 – Councillor Mrs R Brown (Hullbridge Parish Councillor); Councillor T G Cutmore (Rayleigh Town Councillor); Councillor Mrs J M Giles (Rayleigh Town Councillor); Councillor Mrs J Helson (Rayleigh Town Councillor); and Councillor R E Vingoe (Hockley Parish Councillor)
- “Hullbridge Motor Project” – Minute 342 – Councillor Mrs R Brown (Hullbridge Parish Councillor); and Councillor C R Morgan (Hullbridge Parish Councillor)
- “Application for Waiver of Theatres Act Licence Fee – Open Air Plays at Rayleigh Mount” – Minute 344 – Councillor P F A Webster (Member of National Trust)
- “Land at Beckney and Wood Avenues” – Minute 347 – Councillor R E Vingoe (Hockley Parish Councillor)
- “Asset Review – Malvern Road Open Space, Ashingdon” – Minute 351 – Councillor T G Cutmore (Ashingdon Parish Councillor); and Councillor Mrs J Hall (Ashingdon Parish Councillor)

In addition, a pecuniary interest was declared by Councillor Mrs R Brown in the report concerning the Citizens Advice Bureau for the Rochford District (Minute 334) by virtue of her position on the Management Committee of Rochford Citizens Advice Bureau. She therefore withdrew from the meeting while the matter was discussed.

331 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of 28 March 2000 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

332 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Sub-Committee’s terms of reference, as agreed by Annual Council, were noted.

333 COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal Services which updated Members on the progress of discussions concerning the establishment of a community legal service partnership with Castle Point Borough Council.

The Chairman introduced and welcomed to the meeting Mr Karl Demian, the Regional Planning and Partnership Manager of the Legal Services Commission, (LSC) who gave a brief presentation regarding the Community Legal Service. (CLS)

The presentation covered the following main points:

- Background to the establishment, in April this year, of the CLS, which had received cross-party support in the House of Commons, and which was statutorily supported by the LSC (formerly the Legal Aid Board).
- Aims
 - : to develop networks of quality assured suppliers of legal services
 - : to provide services to local communities based on a local assessment of need
- Three key elements of the Service:
 - The website, which would deliver electronic information relating to the CLS to users and providers.
 - The quality mark, audited by the LSC, which could be available to all providers of legal help and information.
 - Community Legal Service Partnerships, the “bedrock” of the organisation, involving the local authority and the LSC as key partners. The organisational structure of the Partnerships, comprising the Steering Group, Funders Group and the Network, was explained in detail.
- Resources. The LSC would provide a dedicated Planning and Partnership Consultant, and a dedicated Planning and Partnership Executive to work with the Partnerships in Essex. There would also be a major input into the needs and supplier mapping process.
- Benefits to Users. The Partnerships would help to ensure that services would be responsive to needs; that there would be better information about supply and suppliers and active referral networks; and that services would be quality assured.
- Benefits to the Council. The proposals would link well with Best Value and Beacon Status; target funding effectively; increase the opportunity to work with other funders to improve services; and encourage links with the development of community strategies.

In response to questions, the Sub-Committee was advised as follows:

- It was estimated that approximately half a day per week of officer time per authority would be required from participants in the scheme. Authorities could combine to share the workload and the development of standard documentation would avoid duplication.

- Citizens Advice Bureaux would be audited by specially trained staff and also by the LSC who would itself be audited, to provide a comprehensive quality assurance scheme.
- The Council's participation in the project would be entirely voluntary and could be terminated at any time.
- A report on progress with the proposals' implementation would be brought back to Members in six months' time, as part of the budgetary review process.

The Chairman thanked Mr Demian for his detailed and succinct presentation.

RECOMMENDED

That the proposed partnership arrangement with Castle Point Borough Council be undertaken, and a further report be brought back to Members in six months' time, outlining progress with the scheme's implementation. (HLS)

334 CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU SERVICE FOR ROCHFORD DISTRICT

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Financial Services which examined the existing structure of the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) service for the District and outlined proposals for its re-organisation. The Chairman introduced and welcomed to the meeting David Reynolds and John Edwards, Chairmen of the Rochford and Rayleigh Bureaux respectively, who had been invited to attend to answer Members' questions.

The Sub-Committee received details of the financial support agreed for 2000/01; existing organisational and staffing arrangements; and an action plan for re-organisation of the Service following meetings between both Bureaux, as set out below:

- Development of a single management committee covering both Bureaux. The Authority would liaise with a single body for funding and lease agreements.
- Appointment of a single manager to cover both Bureaux and consolidation of a pool of volunteers.
- Retention of the two service delivery points whilst ensuring that, between the two locations, there would be better coverage of service hours.
- Consideration of the strengths of each Bureau to ensure that specialist services were not duplicated and were delivered to maximum effect.

- Establishment of a single contact for the community legal service for the Rochford District.
- Retention of the local fund raising sub-committees to provide a focus for the operation area.
- Encouragement of Member and Officer involvement in the management and operation of the service. The Sub-Committee agreed to recommend that the Council's representation on the new body should comprise one Officer and one Member.
- Introduction of future developments involving new technology across the service as a whole.

Members noted that, to achieve the objective of merging management and staffing structures, there would be a requirement for an additional one-off sum of £4,000, which included redundancy costs.

In addition, the new structure would necessitate the recruitment of a suitably experienced and qualified manager to oversee the new unified service. Consequently, the proposed paid staffing structure would require additional resources of £4,800. Depending on the speed of implementing the new structure, £2,000 would be needed in 2000/01 and the full budget in 2001/02.

In responding to Members' questions, the Bureaux Chairmen advised as follows:

- Moves to begin amalgamation of the two organisations could begin imminently, but it was more difficult to predict the length of time needed to complete the staff recruitment process.
- The proposed new staffing structure would comprise a manager and two site supervisors, each employed for 20 hours per week. If additional staff hours were needed the Bureau would need to review their business plan, to identify possible funding sources. External funding would be sought to increase supervision levels, which was a vital component in achieving quality control.
- It was appreciated that the funding proposals set out above would comprise the full extent of the Council's financial assistance for the CAB Service for future years.
- The Bureaux staff had been consulted about, and were agreeable to, the proposals.

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the plan of action identified above be agreed.

- (2) That an additional one-off grant of £4,000 be agreed for 2000/01.
- (3) That the additional grant in respect of staffing support for 2000/01 of £2,000 be agreed.
- (4) That the additional financial implications of the indicative staffing structure be approved in respect of 2001/02.
- (5) That the Corporate Director (Law, Planning and Administration) be authorised to vary any existing agreements necessary as a result of these proposals.
- (6) That the Council's representation on the new CAB would comprise one Officer and one Councillor. (HFS)

335 INTER-AUTHORITY SUPPORTIVE WORK ASSISTANCE SCHEME

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal Services which gave details of an initiative being developed by Essex Authorities for partnership working between Local Authority Legal Departments.

It was noted that the scheme, which had been devised as part of Best Value, would provide participating Authorities with a formal mechanism for sharing knowledge, expertise and experience in legal matters, with a number of associated practical benefits.

RECOMMENDED

That the Council supports the initiative and joins the Inter-Authority Supportive Work Assistance Scheme. (HLS)

336 SUPPORT SERVICES FOR MEMBERS

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Administrative and Member Services which invited Members to consider the type of support services with which they would wish to be provided in the future.

At the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held last November, the provision of a number of services were identified as meriting further consideration. Details of these, together with proposals for their implementation and likely costs, were appended to the report.

During consideration of the report, the following issues arose:

- Security of the Civic Suite. The Head of Administrative and Member Services indicated that the introduction of digital locks or the use of swipe cards to improve the Civic Suite's security was to be considered by the Member Budget Monitoring Working Group at its meeting on 5 July 2000.

- Members' despatch. Some Members had expressed concern about the effectiveness of the despatch of their post from the Council's offices. It was agreed that a questionnaire would be included within the forthcoming Members' Bulletin in order to canvass all Councillors' views on the current arrangements.

Concerning the suggested package of support measures outlined in the report a motion by Councillor P F A Webster and seconded by Councillor Mrs J Helson, to defer further consideration until after the implementation of the new political structure associated with the Local Government Act, was agreed.

RECOMMENDED

That consideration of the support services to be provided for Members be deferred until after the Council's new political structure has been established. (HAMS)

337 PHOTOCOPYING FOR TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Administrative and Member Services regarding the charge to be made for the photocopying service offered to town and parish councils, and to voluntary organisations.

It was noted that, for some years, the Council had offered a photocopying service to local town and parish councils and to voluntary organisations, the current charge for which was 2p per copy, a rate set in the early 1990's. Since then, however, the cost of operating the Council's photocopiers had increased considerably. Based on current costs, it was agreed that it would be appropriate to raise the charge made in future to 5p per copy (including VAT).

RECOMMENDED

That a photocopying service continues to be provided to local town and parish councils and to voluntary organisations at a revised charge of 5p per copy (including VAT) (HAMS)

338 RAYLEIGH CIVIC SOCIETY: PLANNING SERVICES AGENDA/MINUTES

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Administrative and Member Services concerning a request for a reduction in the annual charge by the Council for the supply to the Rayleigh Civic Society (RCS) of Planning Services Agenda, Minutes and Schedule of Planning Applications.

The RCS had, upon receiving notification of the increased cost of these documents for 2000/01, (which reflected the level agreed by Finance

and General Purposes Committee in July 1999) requested that the charge be reduced to approximately £40.00 per annum. They argued that, for an organisation which depended entirely on voluntary subscriptions to function (including, for example, payment of speakers' and accommodation fees), the increased charge was unaffordable.

RECOMMENDED

That the request by Rayleigh Civic Society to reduce the cost of Planning Services Committee Agendas, Minutes and the Schedule of Planning Applications to £40.00 per annum be agreed (HAMS)

339 EAST OF ENGLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE – ROCHFORD COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives which brought to Members' attention a plea from the recently appointed Regional Director of the East of England Local Government Conference for Rochford to reconsider its decision to discontinue its Conference membership.

It was noted that the Regional Director had been invited to give a presentation to the Sub-Committee's next meeting, and it was agreed to defer consideration of the Council's membership of the Conference until that time.

RECOMMENDED

That consideration of the Council's membership of the East of England Local Government Conference be deferred, pending a presentation by the Regional Director to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee. (HCPI)

340 STAFF LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS/CLOSURE OF COUNCIL OFFICES BETWEEN CHRISTMAS 2000 AND THE NEW YEAR

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Administrative and Member Services concerning a request received from UNISON that the Council closes its offices for the period 25-29 December 2000 inclusive.

Since 1996, the Council's policy had been to grant a day's leave over and above the statutory holidays of 25 and 26 December which could, this year, be fixed on Wednesday 27, Thursday 28 or Friday 29 December with the offices being closed on that day, thereby leaving a two day interim working period. Members received details of the leave arrangements of other Essex authorities, and agreed that the Council should remain open between Christmas and New Year.

RECOMMENDED

That staff be granted flexibility to take the additional day's leave on either Wednesday 27, Thursday 28 or Friday 29 December 2000, with the Council's offices remaining open to the public on all 3 days.
(HAMS)

341 GRANTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES – RAYLEIGH OPERATIC AND DRAMATIC SOCIETY (RODS)

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Financial Services which gave details of a grant application received from RODS. A letter outlining details of other applications, together with a summary of this year's application were appended to the report.

Members noted that the application had not been received by the closing date; it did not meet the qualifying criteria; and that the grants budget for 2000/2001 was exhausted.

For these reasons, it was therefore

RECOMMENDED

That the application be refused. (HFS)

342 HULLBRIDGE MOTOR PROJECT

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives which outlined current progress with the Motor Project proposed by Hullbridge Parish Council, and requested Members to consider granting additional funding to enable the project to continue.

It was noted that £15,010 would be needed to fund the project for its first year, including the costs of setting up the scheme and equipping the barn. The parish had raised £9,750 and consequently £5260 was still required to enable the scheme to commence. The Parish Council had now requested a contribution of £5,000 from the District Council in addition to a similar sum pledged in 1998.

Members referred to the innovative and worthwhile nature of the project but expressed concern about the financial aspects given that it had proved difficult to raise sufficient funds to enable its launch; furthermore there was no firm evidence that the scheme could run beyond the first year. The Chief Executive indicated that Hullbridge Parish Council would be provided with advice relating to possible sources of additional funding.

On a motion by Councillor P F A Webster and seconded by Councillor Mrs J Helson, and on a show of hands, it was

RECOMMENDED

That Hullbridge Parish Council be informed that the District Council is not prepared to make a further substantial contribution towards the start up costs of the Motor Project. (HCPI)

343 RAYLEIGH ASSOCIATION OF VOLUNTARY SERVICES (RAVS) – GRANT

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) which updated Members on current progress by RAVS in its service provision, and sought agreement to releasing the grant previously allocated.

Members were satisfied that the programme outlined in a letter received earlier in the year from RAVS was being implemented.

RECOMMENDED

That the grant of £1,500 be released to RAVS. (CD(F&ES))

344 APPLICATION FOR WAIVER OF THEATRES ACT LICENCE FEES – OPEN AIR PLAYS, RAYLEIGH MOUNT

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives concerning an application by the Rayleigh Mount Local Committee for the waiver of the Theatres Act Licence fee for an outdoor theatrical performance at Rayleigh Mount. A copy of the application, a further explanatory letter and the Committee's accounts were appended to the report.

Members noted that the performance of outdoor plays on Rayleigh Mount had become a firmly established annual event, and had been licensed by the Council since 1997. Fee waivers of 80% in 1997, and 100% in 1998 and 1999 had been granted.

Given that the plays had become a regular event, Members agreed to delegate power to the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) to determine the fee in future years unless there were material changes to the format, or objectives, of holding the plays.

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That a 100% waiver of the fee due for a Theatres Act Licence be granted.
- (2) That the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) be given delegated power to waive 100% of the licence fee for all future waiver applications received from the Rayleigh Mount Local Committee, on condition that the format and objectives of holding the plays remain largely unchanged. (HHHCC)

**345 COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER FOR LAND AT
ETHELDORE/WOOD AVENUE, HOCKLEY**

It was apparent that, due to a printing error, Members' copies of this report were incomplete. It was therefore agreed that, for this reason, consideration of the matter should be referred direct to Finance and General Purposes Committee. The report is reproduced in full as Appendix 1 to these minutes, for Members' consideration.

346 APPRAISAL OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive which sought approval to re-establish the Member Appraisal Panel with responsibility for the appraisal of the Chief Executive.

It was considered appropriate to reconvene the Panel, and also to arrange for a special meeting of the Corporate Resources Sub-Committee, inviting those Chairman of the main service committees not already on the Sub-Committee, so that the appraisal process could be progressed in the current municipal year.

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the Member Appraisal Panel, comprising the Chairman of the Corporate Resources Sub-Committee and the four Group Leaders, or their nominees, be re-established to oversee the appraisal of the Chief Executive. Once appointed to the Panel, no Member substitution would be permitted during the municipal year.
- (2) That a special meeting of the Corporate Resources Sub-Committee be convened prior to the Chief Executive's appraisal taking place, to discuss and agree those issues to be taken up by the Member Appraisal Panel with the Chief Executive as part of the appraisal process, with those Chairman of the main service committees not already on Corporate Resources Sub-Committee being invited to the Sub-Committee specifically for this item. (CEX)

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

Resolved

That the public and the press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of Exempt Information as defined in Paragraphs 7 and 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

347 LAND AT BECKNEY AND WOOD AVENUES, HOCKLEY

The Sub-Committee considered the confidential report of the Head of Legal Services which sought Members' views on the future of land between Beckney and Wood Avenues, Hockley which, following the sale of adjoining land for development, was surplus to the Council's requirements. A plan showing the location of plots of land that had been sold, and those that remained within the Council's ownership, was appended to the report.

Members noted that the individual parcels of land were situated in the Metropolitan Green Belt. It was agreed that, in line with the Council's policy, the surplus land should be offered to the Parish Council.

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the land between Beckney and Wood Avenues, Hockley which is surplus to requirements be offered in the first instance to Hockley Parish Council.
- (2) That should that Council express no wish to obtain the sites then a further report be brought back to this Sub-Committee. (HLS)

348 LAND AT WOOD AVENUE, HOCKLEY

The Sub-Committee considered the confidential report of the Head of Legal Services which outlined requests by two owners of properties in Wood Avenue to purchase adjacent Council owned land. The location of the plots of land, which comprised part of the overall site examined in the previous agenda item (minute 347) was shown on a plan appended to the report.

Members were informed that the prospective purchaser of the smaller area of land comprising 1000m² (marked 'A' on the plan) intended to convert it to a wildlife area. Although generally supportive of the resident's request, given that this area was now land locked in consequence of the adjoining residential development, the Sub-Committee wished to ensure that the sale would be supported by a covenant restricting the site's use for the intended purpose for a period of 50 years. A motion to this effect by Councillor P F A Webster and seconded by Councillor Mrs M A Weir was agreed.

The circumstances relating to the second request, concerning a larger area of land (2,200m², marked 'B' on the plan), were considered in detail and on a motion by Councillor P F A Webster and seconded by Councillor Mrs M A Weir it was agreed to recommend refusal.

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That site 'A' on the plan attached to the Head of Services' report be sold to the owner of the adjoining property on the basis outlined above, and on such other terms and conditions as the Head of Legal Services deems necessary, including selling the

land at market value, with a further report on the details of the disposal being brought back to this Sub-Committee.

- (2) That the request to purchase the larger area of land (shown 'B' on the plan attached to the report) be refused. (HLS)

349 ASSET REVIEW – THE FREIGHT HOUSE, ROCHFORD

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal Services which gave details of an unsolicited offer received from the Bass Leisure and Retail Group for the freehold of the Freight House, Rochford.

Members noted the likely capital receipt if such a disposal was to take place, and also the associated loss of facilities at the site currently used by the Council. It was pointed out that the Council's Leisure Consultants (PMP) were preparing possible options for leisure provision in the future, including an assessment of leisure assets and it was therefore agreed that it would be more appropriate to await the findings of their report in the autumn cycle before any decision with regard to the possible disposal of the site was taken.

RECOMMENDED

That the offer to purchase the freehold of the Freight House, Rochford be declined at this point in time. (HLS)

350 ASSET REVIEW – LAND AT LABURNUM GROVE, HOCKLEY

The Sub-Committee considered the confidential report of the Head of Legal Services which examined the results of a consultation exercise concerning the possible disposal of the Play Area in Laburnum Grove, Hockley.

The Council had previously considered the future of the site in 1988/89 and a copy of the relevant minute was appended to the report.

Members noted that approximately 50 letters and two petitions had been received which objected to the proposed disposal. Arising from the consultation exercise, specific complaints had been received from local residents relating to the intimidating behaviour of Youths using the area and it was agreed that a report focussing specifically on this issue be considered by Community Safety Sub-Committee.

Hockley Parish Council's views had been sought, and their response had highlighted the value of retaining the facility for the local community. The Sub-Committee therefore agreed that the transfer of

the site to the Parish Council, for management as a local facility, should be pursued.

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the disposal of the Laburnum Grove Play Area in Hockley should not be pursued.
- (2) That Hockley Parish Council be approached to discuss whether it would take over the site.
- (3) That a report concerning the use of the play area by youths, and the associated crime and disorder implications, be considered by Community Safety Sub-Committee. (HLS/HCPI)

351 ASSET REVIEW – MALVERN ROAD OPEN SPACE, ASHINGDON

The Sub-Committee considered the confidential report of the Head of Legal Services which examined the results of consultations concerning the possible disposal of the open space in Malvern Road, Ashingdon.

It was noted that whilst many of the responses had supported the site's retention as an open space, other views highlighting the disruption caused to local residents by users had also been received. Examples of both types of response were appended to the report.

A Member informed the Sub-Committee that Ashingdon Parish Council was opposed to the sale and had expressed a wish to take control of the site. Under this arrangement, the land would be leased on a long term basis, with the District Council retaining ownership. In reply to a Member question, the Chief Executive acknowledged that future local consultations on potential land disposals would need to be drawn more widely.

RECOMMENDED

That the Open Space in Malvern Road be offered to Ashingdon Parish Council on terms and conditions deemed necessary by the Head of Legal Services. (HLS)

352 RELOCATION EXPENSES

The Sub-Committee considered the confidential report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) which proposed a number of improvements to the Council's relocation expenses scheme which had last been reviewed in 1996. Details of the existing scheme, a summary of other authorities schemes, an example from Colchester Borough Council, and the proposed revisions were appended to the report.

Members noted that, at present, the Rochford scheme was not competitive when compared to the responses received from other

Essex Councils and agreed that the value of the package should be increased. The resource implications of the proposals were examined.

The Sub-Committee endorsed the view of a Member that the scheme should be sufficiently flexible to allow its variation to suit particular circumstances, especially for those senior appointments considered by Members.

RECOMMENDED

That the proposals as set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes be adopted as Rochford District Council's scheme of relocation expenses for non Member appointments with immediate effect. (CD(F&ES))

353 BUILDING CONTROL – QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The Sub-Committee considered the confidential report of the Acting Head of Planning Services which advised Members of the recently published document "Building Control Performance Standards", the requirements within it, and the implications of adoption.

Members noted that the object of the document was to establish recommended standards of performance for the Building Control Service which all Building Control Bodies (BCB's), Local Authorities and Approved Inspectors, against which the service provided by any BCB could be assessed. Proposed performance indicators prepared by the Building Control Services Steering Group were appended to the report.

It was considered that an additional administrative post of Team Clerk within the Building Control Service was required to enable effective operation of a Quality Management System; at present, administrative support was shared with the Development Control Section. The cost of securing additional administrative support would be recovered over any 3 year rolling period, through increased income and/or by increasing charges, thereby avoiding an additional net cost to the budget..

It was agreed that the post be graded Scale 2/3, in common with existing Team Clerks in the Planning Services Division.

RECOMMENDED

That a new post of Team Clerk (Building Control) be created at Scale 2/3. (AHPS)

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Chairman

Date

COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER IN RESPECT OF LAND AT ETHELDORE/WOOD AVENUE, HOCKLEY

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1. The Council's formal resolution is sought to the making of a compulsory purchase order in respect of the residual unassembled land at Etheldore/Wood Avenue. This is necessary to facilitate the comprehensive redevelopment of the site in accordance with the planning consent and the Development Plan Policy for this area.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In 1997 the Council entered into an agreement with Countryside Residential Ltd subject to the grant of planning consent, for the sale of approximately 1.4 hectares of land, which it owned in Etheldore Avenue and Wood Avenue. In accordance with the Local Plan and the Design Brief for the site, the agreement envisaged the use of compulsory purchase powers to achieve a comprehensive development as the balance of the land was in diverse and in some cases unknown ownership and required assembly to facilitate the residential redevelopment of the area.
- 2.2 Planning permission was granted on the 11th January 2000 following the completion of an agreement under s 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the land in the Council's ownership has since been sold to the developer.
- 2.3 Over the time the Developer has been involved with this site they have made considerable efforts to trace the owners with a view to negotiating terms to acquire all the land within the development site. This has largely been successful, with the exception of the plots shown hatched on the attached plan which are not in the ownership of the developer. Whilst negotiations are still continuing it is unlikely that all these areas will be secured without the use of compulsory purchase powers. The contract states that the Council will use powers of compulsory acquisition of "key parcels of land as an act of last resort" to bring about the comprehensive development of the site.
- 2.4 In order to satisfy the Design Brief and meet the Council's housing allocation targets it is necessary that the area is developed in a comprehensive manner, and to this end Policy H4 of the Rochford District Local Plan provides (inter alia):

"Consideration will be given, if appropriate, to the use of compulsory purchase powers in order to ensure that the development is put into effect in the plan period."

This provision is reflected in the Design Brief.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 To meet the above objective and the Council's obligations arising from its agreement with Countryside the use of compulsory purchase powers to acquire the residual plots of land are now considered to be necessary.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 These have been fully examined at the planning application stage.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Developers would be required to meet the full costs of the process, including all reasonable legal expenses incurred by the Council

6 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The site is located in Hockley Parish.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council has an obligation to facilitate the comprehensive development of the site.

8 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RECOMMENDS**

- (1) That the Head of Legal Services completes an agreement with Countryside Residential Ltd relating to the acquisition and transfer of the residual areas of land to the Company at no cost to the Council and on such other terms and conditions as agreed by the Head of Legal Services.
- (2) That the Council makes a Compulsory Purchase Order pursuant to the powers contained in Section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in respect of those areas of land at Etheldore/Wood Avenue shown hatched on the attached plan which Countryside Residential Ltd has not acquired, in order to secure the carrying out of the approved development. (HLS)



Albert Bugeja

Head of Legal Services

Background Papers:

None.

For further information please contact Albert Bugeja on (01702) 318130.



This copy has been produced specifically for Planning and Building Control purposes only.

PROPOSED ROCHFORD SCHEME

1. Eligibility

- 1.1. This scheme provides financial assistance for new employees appointed to a post with the Council if, as a result of that appointment, he/she is required to move his/her place of residence in order to satisfactorily perform the duties of the post and the offer of the scheme was made at the time of interview
- 1.2. The scheme will not apply where the journey could reasonably be undertaken without moving home and this will normally be regarded as a journey of 30 road miles from their new place of employment or office base.
- 1.3. Similarly, employees who qualify and claim financial assistance under this scheme will normally be expected to take up residence within 15 road miles from their new place of employment or office base.

2. General Conditions

- 2.1. Relocation expenses must be claimed within 18 months of sale or commencement of duties. If employees experience difficulties in relocating within this period then exceptions can be made at the discretion of the appropriate Corporate Director.
- 2.2. In the event of an employee leaving the Council's employ within the two years of the final claim, then the expenses are repayable in full. Officers will be required to sign an authorisation allowing the Council to deduct any sums payable from amounts of salary, etc. payable by the Council.
- 2.3. Employees on temporary or fixed term contracts may receive relocation expenses, but the same repayment terms apply.

3. Scope of Financial Assistance

- 3.1. The scheme is designed to be as flexible as possible to enable employees to maximise their potential benefits from the scheme.
- 3.2. The financial limits for eligible employees are:-
 - i. Purchase and sale of property £5,500 plus VAT on professional fees.
 - ii. Either purchase or sale of property only £3,500 plus VAT on professional fees.
 - iii. No purchase or sale (rented accommodation) £2,000 plus VAT on professional fees.
- 3.3. Employees are entitled to claim ANY COSTS they incur as a result of their relocation provided they can provide receipted evidence that they have incurred expenditure, subject to the relevant maximum limit.

Examples of costs which are normally associated with relocation include:-

- Legal expenses
- Agents' fees
- Temporary lodging expenses including hotel expenses
- Travelling expenses associated with return home trips, search for property, etc.
- Storage fees for furniture
- Removal expenses
- Furnishings/fittings, etc.

This list is not intended to be inclusive nor exhaustive but to serve as an illustration of the scope of the scheme.

- 3.4. In cases where employees anticipate difficulties in producing receipted evidence of expenditure, for example, in relation to travelling expenses, they should contact the Personnel Manager, PRIOR to incurring the expenditure, who will refer the matter to the appropriate Corporate Director if necessary.
- 3.5. Employees are entitled to claim any VAT that is payable on any items provided that such VAT may legitimately be claimed by the authority from HM Customs and Excise. Advice on such matters may be obtained from the Principal Income and Payments Officer.
- 3.6.1 One day annual leave in order to move to new accommodation.
- 3.7 All claims must be authorised by the Personnel Manager.

4. Enquiries

Enquiries regarding the scheme should be directed to the Personnel Manager..

5. Application

All claims must be made on the appropriate forms provided.