

**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING held at 7.30 pm at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 18 JUNE 2001**

Present:- Councillor D W Gregory – Chairman.
Councillors Mrs C A Bayley, W F Bowker, Mrs C A Cant,
Mrs M A Caton, R P Chambers, Mrs J F Cheetham,
R A E Clifford, R J Copping, Mrs D Cornell, A Dean,
Mrs C M Dean, R C Dean, Mrs C D Down, Mrs S Flack ,
M L Foley, M A Gayler, Mrs E J Godwin, R D Green, M A Hibbs,
D M Jones, A J Ketteridge, P G F Lewis, Mrs C M Little,
Mrs J I Loughlin, Mrs J E Menell, R A Merrion, R J O'Neill,
A R Row, Mrs S V Schneider, G Sell, R C Smith, R W L Stone,
Mrs E Tealby-Watson, A R Thawley, R B Tyler and P A Wilcock.

Officers in attendance:- Mrs E Forbes, Miss K Chapman, J B Dickson,
A Forrow, Mrs S McLagan, B D Perkins, Mrs J Postings and
M T Purkiss.

Also in attendance:- Mr M Ware (Consultant).

52 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E C Abrahams,
D M Miller, D J Morson, G W Powers and A C Streeter.

53 **CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chairman reiterated that he had extended an invitation to all churches
within the district for him to worship within their area. He had received a few
responses but was keen to hear from as many churches as possible. He also
stated that no definite dates had been arranged for Chairman's fund raising
events.

54 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act
1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of
business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of Exempt
Information as defined in paragraphs 7 and 9 of part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Act.

55 **FUNDING OF THE LEISURE PFI PROJECT**

Councillor Copping stressed that the recommendations before the meeting
had evolved from a great deal of research, negotiation and discussion. He
said that it was a tribute to the hard work of the PFI (Leisure) Board and the
Officers that the Council was still at the negotiating table. He added that the
present issue was about the funding of the scheme and this was explained in
the report. Mr M Ware, the Council's Financial Consultant, advised Members

of the current funding requirements for the joint public/private sector project to provide new leisure centres at Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet, together with refurbishments at the Lord Butler Fitness and Leisure Centre in Saffron Walden.

Mr Ware outlined the options available to the Council and explained the advantages of proceeding on the lines which he suggested at the meeting and which were recommended in the report. If Members approved the required funding provision, meetings were due to take place with representatives of the preferred bidder and the schools to agree a detailed timetable up to contractual and financial close. This would then be discussed prior to 30 June with representatives from the DETR which had indicated that it might be prepared to extend the deadline if it could be shown that the funding had been approved by the Council and there was a detailed and achievable timetable and continued commitment from all parties.

Following a number of questions from Members the Consultant, the Director of Resources and the Project Manager explained the details of the financial arrangements.

It was then

RESOLVED that the Council approves the recommendations as set out in the report.

Councillor Row expressed his thanks to Members for the faith and confidence which they had shown in the Leisure (PFI) Board. By making this decision the Council had given the green light for the largest project in the Council's history. He said that hard work and a will on both sides had made this achievable and the Council was fortunate in securing funding of nearly £12 million from Central Government over the next thirty years. He was convinced that the project would be a huge success. He said that an excellent team of Members, Officers and advisors had been assembled and he paid particular tribute to the work of Mr Ware. He concluded that the real work was still to come but the Council was nearly there.

The meeting ended at 8.35 pm.