

COUNCIL MEETING held at 7.30pm at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 2 JULY 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, R C Dean, Mrs S Flack, M L Foley, M A Gayler, D M Jones, A J Ketteridge, P G F Lewis, Mrs C M Little, Mrs J I Loughlin, R A Merrion, D M Miller, D J Morson, A R Row, Mrs S V Schneider, G Sell, R C Smith, A C Streeter, Mrs E Tealby-Watson and P A Wilcock

Officers in attendance: Mrs E C Forbes, J B Dickson, A Farrow, B D Perkins, Mrs J Postings and Mrs C Roberts

56 STATEMENT BY MS SOPHIE A CROUCH – GLOBAL WARMING

The Chairman introduced Ms Sophie Crouch who made a statement at the commencement of the meeting. A summary of the statement and the response by the Leader of the Council is attached to these Minutes.

57 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Dean, Mrs C M Dean, Mrs C D Down, Mrs E J Godwin, M A Hibbs, Mrs J E Menell, R J O'Neill, R W L Stone, A R Thawley and R B Tyler.

58 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2001, the Annual meeting held on 8 May and the special meeting held on 18 June 2001 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as correct records.

59 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute 347 – Speed Limits Through Villages

Councillor R C Smith thanked Members for their support and asked that the comments to be made to the Essex County Council Portfolio Officer and Officers be kept as broad as possible.

(ii) Minute 349 – Proposed Waiting Restrictions High Stile, Great Dunmow

Councillor Mrs S Flack described how, because she was a serving Governor on the Dunmow Junior School, she had been disqualified from speaking at the meeting of the County Council's Development Control and Regulation Committee held on 29 June 2001.

(iii) Minute 353 – Night Flights at Stansted Airport

It was noted that Parish Councils were giving their support to the principle of a complete night flight ban.

RESOLVED that this topic be discussed by the Airport Working Party at its meeting on 23 July 2001.

60

CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman reported the sad death of Mrs Ann Tyler, the wife of Councillor Barry Tyler. He described her as a most charming and gracious lady. He informed Members of the arrangements which had been made for the funeral and explained that donations had been requested to be made to Uttlesford Crossroads. Members' sympathy and thoughts were with Councillor Tyler at this time.

The Chairman updated Members on the meeting of the Community Safety Steering Group now scheduled for 18 July 2001 in Brentwood, the opening of public buildings in Dunmow (public toilets) and Thaxted (CIC), arrangements which had been made for the Chairman's charity sponsored walk of the Fritch Way on 2 September 2001 and arrangements for two street collections.

61

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 19 June 2001 were received.

(i) Minute 43 – Members' Allowances

Councillor G Sell commented that it was important if possible to obtain a Panel member with knowledge of local government or the public sector possibly from a local university.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 19 June 2001 be approved and adopted.

62

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 12 June 2001 were received.

(i) Minute 17 – Hatherley House

The Director of Community Services informed the meeting that Hatherley House had now been acquired by a private contractor.

Councillor M L Foley voiced concern that new employees were being sought by the new management and that they were being paid less than the cleaners at Stansted Airport. Councillor R P Chambers stated that there were strict guidelines about the standard of care. Councillor Mrs D Cornell assured the meeting that the Friends of Hatherley would monitor the situation and report any problems to the District Council.

(ii) Minute 19 – Hospital Community Transport

Arising on a discussion of the grant to Uttlesford Community Travel, Members commented on the need to ensure that Hospital Community Transport facilities were adequately publicised.

(iii) Minute 21 – Parking Strategy Working Party

It was noted that there was to be a meeting of the Parking Strategy Working Party with Dunmow Chamber of Trade on 12 July 2001 to discuss the report of the retiring Warden of Dunmow car park.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 12 June 2001 be approved and adopted.

63

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Development Committee held on 14 June 2001 were received. Councillor R P Chambers asked that the new Environment & Transport Committee consider forming a Stansted Airport Advisory Panel at the first opportunity. Councillor M A Gayler expressed agreement with the creation of this Panel but continued that it should be different from the Airport Working Party. The terms of reference, aims and objectives of the Panel should be examined in detail as well as the best methods of fulfilling the objectives.

RESOLVED that:

- 1 The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Development Committee held on 14 June 2001 be approved and adopted.
- 2 The Environment & Transport Committee be invited to form a new Stansted Airport Advisory Panel.

64

LEISURE (PFI) BOARD

The Minutes of the meetings of the Leisure (PFI) Board held on 24 April, 1 May, 15 May, 13 June and 26 June 2001 were received.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meetings of the Leisure (PFI) Board held on 24 April, 1 May, 15 May, 13 June and 26 June 2001 be approved and adopted.

65 **CONTRACTS BOARD**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Contracts Board held on 18 June 2001 were received.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Contracts Board held on 18 June 2001 be approved and adopted.

66 **MODERNISING POLITICAL STRUCTURES**

A report was received requesting Members to approve, in principle, draft procedures and regulations which would form a large part of the Council's new constitution, namely:

Council Procedure Rules (Standing Orders)
Financial Regulations
Delegation Scheme
Access to Information Procedure Rules

Members were also asked to authorise Officers to submit a summary draft constitution based on these documents to the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) to enable the new structure to be in place by 1 September 2001.

Councillor Wilcock commented that the aim was to modernise the existing bureaucracy. He considered that the documents should be shortened and translated into language which all could understand.

Councillor Gayler felt that the key point about the new system was actually doing it during the year. Issues would arise as the Council put the system into practice. Changes could be made in a formal review in December or January. In this connection, it was noted that the Council had already agreed that Members would review the new system in March 2002.

Councillor Smith supported Councillor Gayler's remarks.

Councillor Mrs S Flack asked that all comments made by Councillors and Officers should be stored in one accessible document so that Members could be aware of all suggestions and of why they were or were not incorporated in the final document.

RESOLVED that:

- 1 the draft Council Procedure Rules, Financial Regulations, Delegation Scheme and Access to Information Procedure Rules be approved in principle
- 2 Officers be authorised to submit a summary draft constitution to the DTLR to enable the new structure to be in place by 1 September 2001

- 3 a special meeting of the Council be arranged on 21 or 28 August 2001 to approve the final document, subject to a meeting of Group Leaders taking place in mid August to decide whether a special meeting of the Council is, in fact, necessary.

67 **BEST VALUE AUDIT REPORT**

The report of the Chief Executive was received on the Best Value Audit Report. The District Audit Statutory Report was attached and explicitly stated that in the opinion of the District Audit, the plan had conformed with the legislation and statutory guidance. The Chief Executive added that it would be appropriate for liaison to take place with the Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committees as regards the Chief Executive's response to the recommendations in the District Audit Report.

The Leader of the Council commented that Best Value costs had been very large and to that extent, Best Value might threaten to undermine its original purpose.

RESOLVED that:

- 1 the Audit Report on the Best Value Performance Plan be received.
- 2 the Chief Executive be authorised to respond to the recommendations in the report on the basis of the observations contained in paragraph 5 of the Chief Executive's report and following consultation with the Chairmen of the two Scrutiny Committees.

68 **JUBILEE OF HM THE QUEEN**

Councillor R P Chambers reminded Members that in the year 2002 the Queen would celebrate the 50th Anniversary of her succession to the throne. It was noted that many of the Parish Councils had already begun making plans for the event. The Council could perform a useful role in providing a database of events with a view to avoiding clashes as far as possible.

RESOLVED that the Chairman and Vice Chairman consider what action the District Council should take in respect of this occasion.

The meeting ended at 8.50pm

ANNEX**Statement by Ms Sophie Crouch.**

Ms Sophie Crouch referred to the letter she had sent asking the Council not to buy Esso (ExxonMobil) products until a clear commitment was given by Esso to stop undermining the Kyoto Protocol on Global Warming. She stated that weather patterns were becoming more erratic and threatening to the daily lives of all. Esso openly supported President Bush's decision to abandon the Kyoto Protocol, the international agreement to tackle Global Warming. Esso had donated over one million dollars to help Bush get elected and was credited with helping to convince Bush to walk away from the Kyoto Protocol. Esso refused to accept the link between burning fossil fuels and Global Warming.

Ms Crouch called upon the Council to comment on the behaviour of Esso in this respect.

Councillor R P Chambers expressed his pleasure at seeing a young person speaking in the Council Chamber. He assured her that the Environment and Transport Committee would discuss this subject in general and would contact Ms Crouch.