

**HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE held at 7.30 pm at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 6 SEPTEMBER 2001**

Present:- Councillor R W L Stone – Chairman.  
Councillors R P Chambers, Mrs C M Dean, Mrs S Flack,  
M A Hibbs, A J Ketteridge, Mrs C M Little and Mrs J Loughlin.

Officers in attendance:- R Chamberlain, N Harris, B D Perkins and  
P Snow.

**HH1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A C Streeter and from Mrs J Bolvig-Hanson (Tenant Panel representative).

**HH2 POLICY PRIORITIES AND BUDGETS 2002/03**

The Principal Accountant presented a report outlining proposals for budget savings targets and committee cash limits arising from the review of priorities recently undertaken by the Administration. It was intended that these targets and the principles underlying them would be used by officers as the basis for preparing service plans and committee budgets for the next financial year.

The budget strategy report presented to Committee in June had projected a potential savings figure of £465,000 which would allow for a Council Tax increase of no more than 2.5%. This figure would not allow for any new growth items.

Target savings now identified for each committee totalled £635,000 which was £170,000 more than the funding gap projected in June. The latter sum would be all that was available to meet any new growth items or anything else unforeseen at this stage.

This Committee's share of the target savings identified by the Administration amounted to £43,000.

The Leader spoke about the effect of the proposed target savings and said that they were a realistic basis for further investigation by officers. In answer to a question from Councillor Hibbs the Leader said that, it was not proposed, at this stage, to identify specific items where budget savings could be achieved. He would welcome suggestions from any Member. He also said that the new scrutiny committees should be allocated a sufficient budget to enable them to carry out their work effectively. At this stage, it was proposed to grant each scrutiny committee a budget of £10,000, although this figure would be subject to further review.

RESOLVED that officers prepare service plans and detailed budgets based on the stated cash limits, subject to overall confirmation by the Council on 16 October.

**HH3 HOUSING STRATEGY STATEMENT 2002 – 2006 AND 30 YEAR BUSINESS PLAN**

The Housing Services Manager presented a report inviting the Committee to approve the Housing Strategy Statement 2002 – 06 and the 2001 Housing 30 Year Business Plan for submission to the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR). The version of the 30 year Business Plan circulated to Members was an abridged draft, but a full copy of the report had been placed in the Members' room. Both reports had been considered in detail by the Housing Strategy Working Group.

It was noted that copies of both draft documents had already been submitted to DTLR by the deadline date of 13 August 2001 on the basis that the final approved documents would be submitted as quickly as possible. In this context, it was noted that the new constitution required Housing Strategy documents to be referred to the Council for approval.

Members asked a number of questions about various aspects of the two documents. In response to one question, the Housing Services Manager agreed to circulate details of the Tenants' Cash Incentive Scheme and the Homebuy Scheme to all Members.

Councillor Hibbs noted that there would not be a great deal of opportunity for savings to be made in the housing budget and he drew attention in this context to the importance of key objective 6 relating to the provision of housing management services and advice to tenants and other customers. Members also discussed possible means of encouraging greater tenant participation and the Housing Services Manager advised Members that all tenants would be informed directly of this year's Tenant Panel AGMs. These matters would be addressed further in the forthcoming Best Value review.

Officers advised the Committee that a full survey of the Council's housing stock was currently intended to be undertaken during 2003.

RECOMMENDED that the Housing Strategy Statement 2002-06 and the 2001 Housing 30 Year Business Plan be approved for submission to the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions.

**HH4 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 3 and 8 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**HH5 ADAPTATION TO A HOUSE IN RADWINTER**

The Committee received a report about proposals to carry out major adaptation work to a Council house in Radwinter to benefit a resident within the household. The cost of the scheme was estimated to be £34,000.

RESOLVED that the house in Radwinter referred to in the report be adapted to assist the resident identified by Essex County Council, Social Services.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm.