

**RESOURCES COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD  
SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 20 JUNE 2002**

Present:- Councillor Mrs M A Caton – Chairman.  
Councillors M A Gayler, P G F Lewis, R A Merrion, D J Morson,  
R J O'Neill, Mrs S V Schneider, R B Tyler and P A Wilcock.

Also present:- Councillors Mrs J F Cheetham and R J Copping.

Officers in attendance:- J B Dickson, Mrs C Hughes, J K Mercer and  
P J Snow.

**RE1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Dean and  
D W Gregory.

**RE2 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2002 were received, confirmed  
and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**RE3 BUSINESS ARISING**

**(i) RE42 – Stansted Airport Referendum**

Councillor Wilcock referred to the telephone survey currently being carried out  
by MORI on behalf of BAA Stansted Airport Ltd, enquiring into local attitudes  
towards development at Stansted Airport. It appeared that the initial survey  
results would shortly be published on BAA's website.

The Chairman said that she would shortly be attending a seminar in London  
on public consultation methods, together with the Director of Resources and  
another councillor.

**(ii) Minute RE44 – IT Programme**

Councillor Wilcock referred to recent difficulties regarding the reliability of the  
link between Members and the Council's IT systems. The Head of IT  
Services acknowledged that service to Members had been unreliable and that  
many of these problems were caused by the network connection. He  
expressed hopes that current system enhancements would demonstrate  
benefits in the near future.

**RE4 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

**(i) Community and Leisure Committee – 28 May 2002 – Bridge End  
Gardens – Special Projects Budget**

The Committee was advised of a recommendation from the Community and Leisure Committee on 28 May 2002 to roll forward to the 2002/03 budget a residual amount of £900 in the 2001/02 Special Projects Budget for Bridge End Gardens.

RESOLVED that the residual amount of £900 in the 2001/02 Special Projects Budget for Bridge End Gardens be rolled forward to 2002/03.

**(ii) Health and Housing Committee – 30 May 2002 – Housing Needs Survey 2002/03**

The Health and Housing Committee, at its meeting on 30 May 2002, had requested this Committee to agree to make available an additional sum of up to £23,000 from reserves and to make provision for an annual increase from £6,000 to £11,000 to fund future housing needs surveys.

The Director of Resources explained that the immediate sum of £23,000 would be taken from reserves, but that future provision would be made to enable the reserves to be replenished over a period of time.

Councillor Wilcock asked whether any attempt had been made to benchmark the cost of conducting the housing needs survey with other similar sized authorities. The Director of Resources confirmed that some cost comparisons had been made and officers would continue to ensure that value for money was achieved.

RESOLVED that an additional sum of up to £23,000 from reserves be made available to fund the housing needs survey in the current financial year and that provision be made for an annual increase from £6,000 to £11,000 to fund future surveys.

RE5

**PARISH REVIEW WORKING GROUP**

The report of the Parish Review Working Group meeting on 5 June 2002 was received.

The Electoral Services Officer explained that this report marked the culmination of the Parish Review which had commenced at the end of August last year and had included two stages of public consultation. There had been a disappointing response from many parish councils and local residents potentially affected by proposals, but the Working Group had tried to identify feelings of local community and the wishes of local inhabitants which were the primary considerations to be taken into account. The Council's final recommendations would be submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister which was now responsible for making any order implementing the proposals. Officers had been advised that it was likely that the draft proposals would be implemented in time to take effect at the elections in May 2003.

The Committee considered each of the Working Group's recommendations in turn.

**(i) Proposal DR9 – Readjustment of boundaries along the A120 (west)**

This proposal concerned a possible realignment of boundaries between five parishes in the area between the M11 and the west of Takeley village. The Working Group had concluded that there was no well defined sense of local community identity in this area, but that the opportunity should be taken to tidy up boundaries to resolve anomalies caused by the location of the M11 motorway, Stansted Airport and the new A120. As a result, some 27 residential properties would transfer to a new parish.

The Working Group had been unable to define a proposed boundary between Birchanger and the parishes of Great Hallingbury and Stansted Mountfitchet and had asked the officers to provide a solution. The intention of this was to meet the wishes of Birchanger Parish Council that part of the parish should be included on the site of Stansted Airport, east of the M11, so that the parish would be in a more beneficial position in relation to future consultation arrangements concerning airport matters.

In this context, letters from Councillor Mrs E J Godwin (Birchanger ward) and Councillor Mrs C M Dean (Elsenham ward) were read to the meeting. Councillor Mrs J F Cheetham said that she understood the view of Birchanger Parish Council about the importance of ensuring adequate consultation on airport matters and this reflected the view of Takeley Parish Council.

Councillor M A Gayler asked whether redefined parish boundaries would be coterminous with the new district wards to be implemented in May next year. The Electoral Services Officer confirmed that the necessary provision would be made in any boundary order to enable the various electoral areas to be coterminous.

Councillor R A Merrion asked whether officers, in consulting with members of the public, had taken account of the differing levels of parish precepts in the parishes concerned. Officers replied that no such account of parish precept levels had been taken as the purpose of the parish review was primarily to identify community links and identities.

The Electoral Services Officer presented a map identifying three possible boundary definitions to meet the wishes of Birchanger Parish Council. A fourth possible option was to leave the boundary undefined, whilst stating as a general principle that Birchanger Parish should continue to extend east of the M11. He said that Ordnance Survey had a statutory role in respect of boundary definition. After discussion, Members indicated a preferred option.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the wording in recommendation 1 be revised to read “(as shown on map A attached, as now amended by recommendation 2 below)”;
- 2 recommendation 2 be amended to read as follows “that the parish boundary between Birchanger, Great Hallingbury and Stansted Mountfitchet be amended to run, from its present position on the western edge of the M11 motorway, round the

western and northern edges of the roundabout at junction 8 to follow Thremhall Avenue in a roughly north-easterly direction to Priory Wood roundabout and then partially round the north-western edge of that roundabout to the point where it meets the most northerly of the two slip roads connecting with the M11 (currently under construction), then following the line of that slip road back to the eastern edge of the M11, then northwards to the point where it meets the Duck End overbridge, then westwards across that bridge to the western edge of the motorway, and finally roughly northwards along the western edge of the M11 until it meets the existing parish boundary, and that boundaries crossing the site of Stansted Airport remain otherwise undefined;

3 Recommendation 3 to be deleted.

- (ii) **Proposal DR3 – Ringers Farm House, Newport**
- (iii) **Proposal DR4 – Formation of a new parish at Swards End**
- (iv) **Proposal DR5 – North Park Cottage, Little Chesterford**

RESOLVED that proposals DR3, DR4 and DR5 be adopted.

- (v) **Proposal DR6 – Stoney Common Road, Stansted**

The Electoral Services Officer explained that Members of the Working Group had indicated they wished to press ahead with what would be, effectively, an interim settlement of this boundary to tidy up an anomaly caused by the over spilling of development south of Stoney Common Road. As a consequence of this anomaly, it had been necessary for 30 properties at this location to be included on the Birchanger Parish register. Officers had indicated misgivings about this decision in view of the intention, expressed in the second part of the recommendation, to conduct a further parish review in relation to the boundary between Birchanger and Stansted Mountfichet at the point where it divided the Rochford Nurseries development site.

In conducting a parish review, it appeared that the District Council was required to take into account three factors. These were, the shape of the boundary, the views of the affected parishes, and any likely future development. The Electoral Services Officer advised Members that the Working Group's proposal did not appear to take account of at least two of these factors and asked the Committee whether it wished to reconsider this proposal.

Members expressed a clear intention to proceed with a proposed boundary change now, even in the knowledge that a further review would be likely to take place once 200 properties at Rochford Nurseries had become occupied.

RESOLVED that proposal DR6 be adopted.

**(vi) Proposal DR10 – Latchmore Cottage, Little Hallingbury**

RESOLVED that proposal DR10 be adopted.

**(vii) Proposal DR11 – Readjustment of boundaries adjoining the A120 (east)**

The Electoral Services Officer asked Members whether they wished to reconsider the Working Group's recommendation not to recommend a change at this location, in view of the apparent isolation of properties north of the existing A120 following construction of the new road.

The Committee took the view that there was insufficient evidence of community identities at this location to proceed with any change at this stage.

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Working Group be adopted.

The Committee also gave consideration to a number of proposals which the Working Group had decided not to pursue for various reasons.

**(viii) Proposal DR1 – Amalgamation of parishes of Elmdon and Wenden Lofts**

The Working Group had decided not to pursue this matter, but officers had expressed concerns because the Parish Council was clearly in breach of the 1976 grouping order requiring each of the parishes of Elmdon and Wenden Lofts to continue to hold separate parish meetings.

The Chairman of the Parish Council had asked officers to investigate whether the District Council had the power to revoke this provision. The Electoral Services Officer advised that the Local Government Act 1972 required there to be a parish meeting for every parish and there was no provision to remove this requirement of primary legislation by order. It appeared that all that could be achieved would be to remove the requirement for each parish to meet twice annually and to substitute a provision that one annual meeting was required.

Members did not wish to take any action to request the Parish Council to comply with the District Council's 1976 grouping order.

RESOLVED that the recommendation be approved.

**(ix) Proposal DR2 – Exchanges of land between Newport, Wendens Ambo and Wicken Bonhunt**

RESOLVED that the recommendation be adopted.

**(x) Proposal DR7 – Possible changes to the Takeley/Little Canfield boundary at Priors Green**

Councillor Mrs Cheetham said that both Takeley and Little Canfield Parish Councils had worked hard to achieve a pattern of settlement at Priors Green

that would reflect current parish boundaries and she felt that a review should not take place until the whole development was completed. The Committee agreed with this view.

RESOLVED that the recommendation be amended to read “that the Council agree, in principle, to carry out a future parish review incorporating the position of the boundary between Little Canfield and Takeley at Priors Green and that such a review take place at a suitable time when occupation of the entire site has taken place”.

- (xi) **Proposal DR8 – Bacon End, Great Canfield**
- (xii) **Proposal DR12 – Oakwood Park, Little Dunmow**
- (xiii) **Consequential changes to electoral wards as a result of the proposed changes**

RESOLVED that each of the recommendations listed above be adopted.

The Committee also considered proposals for changes to parish electoral arrangements which could be implemented by the District Council by order.

**(xiv) Proposal PEP4 – Numbers of parish councillors**

The Electoral Services Officer reported the receipt of letters from Great Chesterford and Henham Parish Councils concerning their present number of parish councillors. Great Chesterford Parish Council was requesting an increase in their number of Members from nine to ten to take account of the increase in workload caused by the expanding number of activities dealt with by the parish council as specified in the letter.

RESOLVED that the recommendation be approved and that the request from Great Chesterford Parish Council for the allocation of an extra councillor be not agreed.

**(xv) Proposal PEP5 – Quendon and Rickling**

Councillor P A Wilcock said that Quendon and Rickling Parish Council wished to retain its existing warding scheme (based on the line of the former boundary between the parishes which were merged in 1949) for historical reasons. He said that he could see the logic of what the Working Group was proposing, but asked the Committee to reconsider this matter.

Quendon and Rickling Parish Council had not responded to either of the two public consultation stages. It nevertheless appeared that they were opposing the Working Group’s proposals, but no reasons for doing so had been put forward.

The Electoral Services Officer said that the present ward boundary was ill-defined and haphazard and did not reflect community representation, and that neither of the statutory criteria justified warding being maintained in this case. The Working Group had agreed with this analysis and had presented two

options at the second consultation stage. Neither of these had included maintaining the existing scheme as no justification for this could be found.

The Committee nevertheless wished to maintain the existing warding scheme which had received no support at either of the two consultation stages.

RESOLVED that the Working Group's recommendation be rejected and that the existing warding arrangements at Quendon and Rickling be maintained.

RE6

## **CONFIRMATION OF CHAIRMAN'S ACTION**

The Director of Resources advised Members of a number of actions, approved by the Chairman, where it had been found necessary to carry forward unspent money into 2002/03 or make provision for funding from reserves. These were as follows:-

- 1 £15,000 carry forward of 2001/02 underspend – Internal Audit
- 2 £7,000 carry forward of 2001/02 underspend – Finance external advice
- 3 £5,000 use of New Financial Framework Reserve – Greater Cambridge Partnership
- 4 £3,000 carry forward of 2001/02 underspend – Members' training and seminars.

Councillor Wilcock asked whether it would be preferable for such items to be transferred to reserves in the future. The Director of Resources confirmed that the Council's Financial Regulations were currently being reviewed and they would recommend a change of practice in this area.

In the capacity of Chairman of Scrutiny Committee 2, Councillor R J Copping said that he was very concerned about the under spending of £15,000 in 2001/02 due to staff vacancies in the Internal Audit section and that it was necessary for staffing levels to be increased in this area as quickly as possible. The Chairman said that she had not been receiving copies of Audit reports and that a review of practice in this area was needed. It was understood that a report would be submitted to the Committee's next meeting about a possible Internal Audit partnership arrangement with another local authority.

RESOLVED that the action taken by the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Chairman, be confirmed as set out below:

- 1 £15,000 – Carry forward of 2001/02 underspend – Internal Audit
- 2 £7,000 – Carry forward of 2001/02 underspend – Finance external advice
- 3 £5,000 use of New Financial Framework Reserve – Greater Cambridge Partnership, and
- 4 £3,000 carry forward of 2001/02 underspend – Members' training and seminars.

RE7

**BUDGET UPDATE AND STRATEGY**

The Director of Resources presented a report outlining a recommended strategy for preparing and setting the Council's budgets for 2003/04, and future years, in line with its priorities, to be updated as required. It had been prepared against the background of a changing framework of central government support for local authorities and continuing pressure on the Council's revenue reserves.

The report included provisional outturn information for 2001/02 and early monitoring information for the current year. It now appeared that the General Fund overall had held much closer to the original budget for 2001/02 than the revised estimates had indicated last autumn. The reasons for this position were indicated in the report, but included action to temporarily freeze some posts, increased fee income and a more advantageous cash flow position than expected.

As far as 2002/03 was concerned, there had been two important developments since budgets were approved in February. These were the approved changes to the Members' Allowances scheme and increases to employers' national insurance from 2003/04 onwards. These two developments were expected to cost an additional £100,000 in a full year.

The second part of the report dealt with budget priorities and a strategy for 2003/04. The impact of the factors mentioned in the previous paragraph, together with additional expenditure on the housing needs survey, meant that about £105,000 additional expenditure would be added to the General Fund. The effect would be to increase to about £305,000 the additional net savings which would have to be identified to achieve the 2.5% target level of Council Tax increase.

It would now be necessary for the Council's priorities to be reviewed and updated as necessary to remove from the list any that had now been achieved and reflect any changes that Members might require, one year on, to the pattern of the Council's resource usage and to help determine budget targets for committees.

During the course of the discussion on this report, Councillor Wilcock proposed that part (a) of the recommendation should be amended to refer to a Council Tax increase not exceeding 2.5%, or the rate of inflation. It was further proposed by Councillor Gayler that the current list of priorities be reviewed and updated by the Council on 16 July 2002. The respective proposers of these motions agreed that they should be considered together.

Councillor Copping raised the matter of the Council's increased pension costs and the Director of Resources agreed that this would present a potential problem for the Council in future years. He said that reliable projections of pension costs would not be available until the time of the next three year review. The Government was presently looking at the local government pension scheme and officers proposed to submit a report to the October meeting of Scrutiny Committee 2 on a review of the Council's early retirement policy.



Councillor Gayler declared his interest in this item as a member of the local government pension scheme.

RESOLVED that to initiate the 2003/04 budget making process, the following be confirmed:-

- (a) that a District Council requirement of £6.888 million should continue to be used as the working target for budget projection purposes, equivalent to a Council Tax increase not exceeding 2.5%, or the rate of inflation, based on the current tax base and central support assumptions;
- (b) the current list of priorities be reviewed and updated by the Council on 16 July 2002, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- (c) the subsequent process to prepare for each committee budget target proposals reflecting the updated list of priorities be carried out by mid-August, for consideration by committees during the September cycle of meetings for approval by Council on 22 October 2002; and
- (d) that officers should provide support for this process by feeding back to Members, by the end of July 2002, opportunities they had identified for reducing budgets by increasing income or from efficiencies within their control.

In response to a request from Members, the Director of Resources agreed that the figures shown on pages 12 and 13 of the report should be shown in a more consistent format in all future reports.

RE8

## TREASURY MANAGEMENT

The Director of Resources advised Members of the provisions of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Approved Investments) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2002 adding two new kinds of investments – Money Market Funds (MMF) and the Debt Management Account (DMA) Deposit Facility - to the existing list of approved investments. Officers had previously raised the possibility of the Council engaging a specialist fund manager to manage a part of its investments and the Director of Resources had been asked to report back to this Committee before entering into a formal contract.

He said that the intention was to maximise use of the large cash flow holdings available to the Council at any one time. He explained how MMFs and DMAs operated and the advantages that would accrue to the Council from having the use of a fund manager working on the Council's behalf. Although fees would clearly be payable for the use of this facility it was anticipated that an additional return of some £25,000 on average per year could accrue on a fund of £5m and assuming investment rates of 5%. At present, the facility to operate a DMA was being run as a pilot scheme with 20 local authorities over a six month period and the Government anticipated it would be made available to all local authorities after that time.

During the course of the discussion, Members asked several questions about the operation of these investment facilities. A number of questions were raised about the security of the proposed investments and Members were

anxious to ensure that suitable limits were placed on the total amounts to be invested. The Director of Resources assured Members that the type of investments envisaged were extremely secure and had demonstrated a good track record of success.

Councillor Merrion advised the Committee of the existence of COIF, a group set up by the Local Government Association and the Charity Commission to safeguard the interests of local authorities in investment matters. The Director of Resources agreed to ask the Council's advisors to examine the merits of investing through this organisation.

A question was also raised about the validity of investing outside of the Sterling currency zone. The Director of Resources said in response that currency gambling was not allowed as part of the rules governing these investment facilities.

Members were advised that a company called Butlers had acted as the Council's treasury management advisors for a number of years. Butlers was a reputable company operating in the City of London. The Director of Resources stressed that all investments to be made would be prudent and no undue risks would be taken with the Council's investment funds. Members asked that regular monitoring reports should be given to this Committee. There was general agreement that the investment opportunities identified in the report should be pursued subject to the provisos mentioned.

RECOMMENDED that, subject to the setting of appropriate limits on amounts to be invested and to the submission of regular monitoring reports to Members:

- 1 the Council pursues the establishment of a Money Market Fund up to a total of £3m at any one time and engages advisors to assist it in this process;
- 2 the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility be added to the Council's Approved Counterparties for use if and when the Government rolls out the scheme to all Councils; and
- 3 the Council appoints a fund manager to manage a £5m tranche of the Council's cash balances and that advisors be appointed to assist in the selection process.

RE9

## **DSO OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

The Committee received a report outlining the conclusions of the consulting firm of Techman Consultancy Services Ltd on their preferred option in relation to future arrangements for the Council's Direct Service Organisation (DSO). This was that the Council should retain a separate DSO and transfer one or more client functions to the DSO.

Officers had also investigated the feasibility of two additional options. The first of these was to maintain a DSO similar to that currently provided but to improve the monitoring of quality control and the working relationship between the client and contractor. The second option was to merge one or more DSO services back into their respective client sections.

The Director of Resources reported that the consultant's preferred option together with the other options identified would be further explored by officers and a report submitted to a future meeting of this Committee. There was also the option of pursuing a DSO partnership arrangement with one or more neighbouring local authorities and this possibility would be explored as well. The report also explained all of the options explored by the consultant.

Councillor Gayler said that he thought it was a contradiction that self monitoring should be part of the DSO. The Director of Resources replied that self monitoring had worked well in other local authorities, particularly on the quality control side. He also recommended that partnership arrangements should continue to be explored.

Councillor O'Neill said that he could not understand the relationship in the report between the transfer of one or more client operations to the DSO and the seven points listed. The Director of Resources acknowledged that this matter could have been better explained. The client budget for the operations carried out by the DSO would continue to come within the purview of the relevant committee, but this Committee would be responsible for the DSO itself.

Councillor Gayler proposed adoption of the recommendation in the report but felt more emphasis should be placed on option 1(c) as the one which should be preferred.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the Director of Resources investigate the following options, with a particular emphasis on (c) below which is this Committee's preferred option, and report back to a future meeting:
  - (a) transfer one or more client operations to the DSO;
  - (b) merge one or more DSO services back into their respective client sections; and
  - (c) maintain a DSO similar to that currently provided, but with improvements to the monitoring of quality control and the client/contractor relationship.
- 2 the possibility of DSO partnership arrangements with neighbouring councils be further explored and a report made to a future meeting of the committee on any developments.

RE10

## **E-GOVERNMENT STRATEGY**

The Head of IT and Audit Services presented a report advising Members of the content of a consultation paper published jointly by the DTLR and the LGA setting out a draft national strategy for local e-government. The consultation paper addressed the Government's intention that, by 2005, all local services should be available electronically, and that progress towards this target would

be measured using Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 157. Seven critical tests were identified in the paper to measure the success of this project.

The Committee was advised that there appeared to be no clear vision of where this project was leading, that it appeared to involve much duplication of effort and some wasted resources and that further investment would be required after 2003/04. A task group had been established, under the chairmanship of Councillor Merrion, to address these concerns and it was anticipated that the group would report to this Committee by September this year.

It was agreed that a Members' Workshop should be arranged on the subject of e-government in the near future.

RESOLVED that the following comments be made in response to the recent DTLR consultation paper:

- 1 the Council welcomes the development of a national e-government strategy, as a means of assisting councils to focus effort and scarce resources in key areas; however, without additional funding for Councils beyond 2003/04, many of the aims and objectives of the strategy would not be achieved;
- 2 the Council supports the seven 'critical tests' and the list of priority transaction initiatives set out in the paper;
- 3 the priority developments set out in the paper were largely supported; however it was felt that many councils would have already begun to address a number of these areas and there was a consequent risk that much of the pathfinder work would be wasted; this would particularly apply to areas such as workflow, website development and CRM; instead, efforts should be concentrated on emerging technologies, or where developments by individual councils were prohibitively expensive, such as telemetry and digital TV;
- 4 it was felt that further development of BVPI 157 was required if it was to be an effective measure of progress towards the 2005 target;
- 5 the Council declined the general invitation to participate in the pathfinder projects as it did not have the available resources; however, it was intended to closely monitor the outcome of these projects and take advantage of the opportunities they present.

RE11

## **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 9 and 10 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

## RE12 **E-GOVERNMENT INFRASTRUCTURE**

A report was presented advising the Committee of the details of contracts entered into for the supply, installation and continuing support of various elements of a new e-government infrastructure. Members were asked to approve the action taken by officers on the grounds of urgency.

It was noted that a 'hybrid' solution had been adopted that would not leave the Council vulnerable to failure by a single supplier and which kept costs within the available budget. The Committee was satisfied that this option presented the best available solution.

RESOLVED that the action taken by officers to adopt a hybrid solution for a new e-government infrastructure be approved as follows:

- 1 BT to provide an upgraded leased line service;
- 2 Enline Plc to build the infrastructure and provide continuing management of the firewalls – the most critical part of the infrastructure and the area requiring specialist skills; and
- 3 the Council would provide continuing support for the website which would be installed on high grade hardware with built-in resilience, to minimise 'down-time'.

## RE13 **READMISSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that the public be readmitted to the meeting.

## RE14 **DRAFT CHARTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES**

The Head of Personnel and Office Services explained the content of the UNISON Charter for the Public Services which had been recommended to this Committee for approval by the Local Joint Committee (LJC).

Members were happy to accept the six principles outlined in the charter, but felt that the second introductory sentence should be amended to read 'The Council shares the six principles set out in UNISON's Charter for Public Services' instead of 'values' the six principles.

RESOLVED that the Uttlesford District Council Charter for Public services be adopted, subject to the following amendment:

'The Council shares the six principles set out in UNISON's Charter for Public Services'.

**RE15 STAFFING UPDATE**

The Committee received, for information, a report indicating each staff vacancy that had arisen since the Committee's last meeting.

Councillor O'Neill referred to the reference to 'one new PT post' of a parking attendant under the Community and Leisure Service. Officers did not have available at the meeting information as to the reasons for the establishment of this new post and agreed to advise Councillor O'Neill and the remaining Committee members of the relevant background to this decision.

**RE16 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 items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of Exempt Information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

**RE17 ILL-HEALTH RETIREMENT**

The Head of Personnel and Office Services advised Members of the circumstances relating to the retirement on 17 May 2002 of a member of staff in Housing Services on the grounds of ill-health. The Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of this Committee had given approval for this action.

**RE18 OFFICE SERVICES POST DELETION**

The Committee received a report following the decision made at the meeting on 21 March to agree the early retirement of the Office Manager, Personnel and Office Services, on the grounds of efficiency of the service. A follow up report was requested to advise Members which post was to be deleted from the permanent establishment.

RESOLVED that the deletion of the post of Assistant Office Manager be agreed.

**RE19 READMISSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that the public be readmitted to the meeting.

**RE20 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2002/03**

The Director of Resources presented the draft Best Value Performance Plan 2002/03 which was required to be published on the Council's website by no later than the end of June. This was clearly a detailed and complicated document and the Director of Resources suggested that any comments that

Members may have should be submitted to him in writing or in person before next Wednesday 26 June.

Councillor Copping said that all Members had now received this document in draft form and that the Scrutiny 2 Committee he chaired would take the opportunity to examine the BVPP in more detail. The Director of Resources emphasised that the Plan must be published before 30 June.

Councillor O'Neill stated that he was unhappy that such a major item should be bounced through Committee with limited opportunity for discussion and comment. He said that he would take the opportunity to meet with the Director of Resources for a more detailed discussion. The Director said that he would arrange for the Assistant Chief Executive, who had helped to draft the document, to be present at any such meeting.

Councillor Wilcock commented that many of the graphs included in the document were unreadable and he strongly supported Councillor O'Neill's comments, especially as information items had been considered earlier in the meeting.

The Director of Resources apologised for the late submission of the document to Members and said that he would do everything possible to ensure that all Members' comments were taken fully into account.

It was noted that the Council would be unable to consider the BVPP until after the required publication date and Councillor Gayler suggested that a special meeting should be scheduled in next year's calendar of meetings to enable the BVPP to be considered and agreed within the allotted timescale.

Councillor O'Neill proposed that the recommendation in the report should be adopted for recommendation to Council, subject to a number of amendments incorporating many of the comments recorded in this Minute.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council be recommended to approve the Best Value Performance Plan 2002/03, subject to the following:-

- 1 any Members' comments to be made to the Director of Resources by no later than 26 June; and
- 2 a copy of the BVPP be sent immediately to all Members of the Council.

RE21

### **CHAIRMAN'S URGENT ITEMS**

The Chairman proposed from the Chair that officers should be asked to explore an incentive scheme for officers to walk, cycle or car share in the light of the recent decision to centralise the Council's administration in Saffron Walden and report back to a future meeting. The purpose of such a scheme would be to seek to alleviate some of the potential excess parking demand arising from this decision.

Councillor Wilcock said that an incentive scheme should be revenue neutral by including penalties for the inappropriate use of private motor vehicles. This comment did not find favour with other Members of the Committee.

Councillor O'Neill said that it was not appropriate for Members to become involved in the generation of this type of scheme and it was for officers to come forward with any suitable proposals they felt necessary. The Chairman responded that her proposal had been put forward in good faith and was intended to address some of the concerns expressed by members of staff arising from the recent centralisation decision. The proposal was put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED that officers be asked to explore an incentive scheme for officers to walk, cycle or car share, in the light of the recent decision to centralise the Council's administration in Saffron Walden and report back to a future meeting.

The meeting ended at 10.35 pm.