

**EXTRAORDINARY RESOURCES COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 5 FEBRUARY 2003**

Present:- Councillor Mrs M A Caton – Chairman.
Councillors A Dean, 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 at the invitation of the Chairman:- Councillors R P Chambers,
R J Copping, Mrs C M Little, Mrs J E Menell and A R Row.

Officers in attendance:- Mrs E Forbes, Mrs M Cox, J B Dickson,
Ms C Hughes and J Mitchell.

RE71 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D W Gregory.

RE72 DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2003/04 – 2004/05

The Committee received the revised Capital Programme for 2002/03 and the Programme for 2003/04. The figures were consistent with the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Fund Revenue estimates previously presented.

At its last meeting, the Committee gave approval for the use of credit approvals in 2002/03 and 2003/04 and these were reflected within the programme funding included in this report. The Director of Resources explained the legislative uncertainties relating to the Council's ability to make use of or even retain, the right to buy capital receipts. This meant that the programme for April 2004 onwards could only be indicative at this stage.

Councillor A Dean agreed that there was a need to review and strengthen the Council's Capital Strategy and welcomed the possibility of a member workshop prior to submitting the strategy at the end of July 2003. He then moved, and it was seconded by Councillor Morson that "a one off sum of £50,000 be included in the 2003 Capital Programme for flood relief schemes." He added that this initiative would be reviewed before any funds were committed in future years.

In answer to a question from Councillor Gayler, the Committee was informed that the majority of the Eastern Sector funds were earmarked for specific schemes in that area. He asked if he could be provided with a statement of the committed and uncommitted funds in relation to Section 106 Agreements.

RECOMMENDED that the Council

- 1 formally adopt the revised Capital Programme 2002/03 and the Capital Programme 2003/04, including the sum of £50,000 in 2003/04 for flood relief schemes,

- 2 the Capital Programme projections for 2004 onwards be accepted as a basis for further work needed to strengthen the Council's forward planning, bidding and prioritisation processes in time for producing the Capital Strategy document in July 2003.

RE73 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of Exempt Information as defined in paragraphs 1, 7, 8 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

RE74 PLANNING SERVICE RESTRUCTURING

The Committee received a report regarding the restructuring of the Planning Service, which had been considered previously by the Environment and Transport Committee on 14 January 2003 and the Development Control and Licensing Committee on 3 February 2003. One of the Council's priorities was to restructure the Planning Service in order to improve efficiency of the service. Both Committees had endorsed the new structure and had considered the financial and staffing implications of achieving this structure. The Committee endorsed the resolution passed at the meeting of the Development Control and Licensing Committee.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the proposed structure be approved, its implementation phased as proposed by the Development Control and Licensing Committee at its meeting on 3 February 2003
- 2 officers be authorised to enter into negotiations with post holder S840 to secure early retirement in the interests of the efficiency of the service within about six months
- 3 the frequent payment of maximum added years pension, be authorised in accordance with PPN 25.

The public were then readmitted to the meeting.

RE75 GENERAL FUND REVENUE ESTIMATES 2003/04

The Committee received a report which summarised the draft General Fund Revenue Budget for 2003/04. It included the budget related recommendations of this Committee on 23 January 2003 and reflected final technical adjustments and the recommended Council Tax increase of 7.5%. The report had been prepared in advance of the final settlement details. These had now been received but they did not change the RSG figures.

The Committee discussed the detailed figures. Councillor A Dean drew attention to the proposal for £50,000 in the 2003/2004 budget for the purpose of providing community wardens in conjunction with the Essex Police Authority and Essex County Council. He felt that some Members had yet to be convinced about this scheme and put forward a recommendation as a way of dealing with this matter. This was duly seconded by Councillor Chambers. *Councillor R P Chambers declared a non-prejudicial interest in the above matter as a member of the Police Authority.*

RESOLVED that

- 1 Uttlesford District Council earmarks £50,000 in the 2003/2004 budget for the purpose of community wardens, subject to being satisfied that the Essex Police Authority would make adequate and proportionate provision in its own budget for the proposition to be financially viable
- 2 the District Council enter into discussions with the Chief Constable on the implications of implementing such a scheme, the minimum period of any financial commitment, and a service review process and frequency
- 3 the Community and Leisure Committee to approve the details of the scheme before it was implemented and Resources Committee to approve the final commitment in 2003/2004
- 4 the scheme, if approved, to be implemented as soon as was compatible with all the necessary elements being in place.

The Director of Resources mentioned the shortfall in the Essex County Council Pension Fund and the significant impact this was likely to have on the budget in future years. *Councillor M A Gayler declared an interest as an employee of Essex County Council.*

Councillor A Dean mentioned the £185,000 additional interest on balances in the 2002/03 Revenue Estimates. He knew that this was a one off sum, but commented that it was equivalent to a 6.5% Council Tax increase but would not be sustainable.

Councillor R P Chambers then moved and it was seconded by Councillor Lewis that "the recommendations in the report be approved with the addition that, the Chief Executive be instructed to revisit the post of Part Time Assistant Communications Officer and prepare a report for a future meeting of the Committee, making use of the leeway in the budget of £11,500."

Councillor Chambers said that he had put forward this additional recommendation as he had looked in more detail at the implications of the retirement of the Assistant Chief Executive and that an additional part time post in the Committee Section would be necessary. Councillor Tyler did not consider that this course of action was appropriate, as the Committee had voted against this post at its last meeting. The £11,500 was in the budget, but the Committee would want to see a new and robust report from the Chief Executive to justify any additional staff resources. He moved an amendment

which was duly seconded that “the recommendations set out in the report be approved, excluding any additional recommendation”.

The amendment was then put to the vote and was carried on the casting vote of the Chairman. It was then

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 final approval be given to the contributions to and use of earmarked reserves in 2002/03 and 2003/04 as detailed in REV 3;
- 2 final approval be given to the General Fund Revenue Revised Estimates 2002/03 and the General Fund Revenue Estimates 2003/04 as detailed in REV 1;
- 3 final approval be given to a council tax increase of 7.5% and;
- 4 group leaders or their nominees be appointed as a sub committee for the purpose of confirming the overall council tax figures for election purposes on 18 February 2003, following Essex County Council’s decision making meeting on the same day, and the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requiring political balance shall not apply.

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm.