

**RESOURCES COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 11 MARCH 2004**

Present:- Councillor M A Gayler – Chairman.
Councillors A Dean, M L Foley, S C Jones, A R Row and
M J Savage.

Officers in attendance:- A Bovaird, P O'Dell, J B Dickson, C Hughes,
J Mercer, I Orton and C Roberts.

RE88 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R P Chambers,
R J Copping, A J Ketteridge and P A Wilcock.

RE89 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 22 January 2004 and 3 February 2004
were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

RE90 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute No RE80 Dunmow Offices And Depot

Councillor Dean asked for an update on the progress with the Dunmow
Offices.

The Chairman explained that two working group meetings had been held and
a consultant had been appointed to undertake an options appraisal which
would cover areas including accommodation for the voluntary sector, relevant
parts of the Quality of Life plan and Dunmow issues. The consultant's final
report was to be submitted to the June meeting of the Committee.
Discussions with the voluntary sector had been very positive. A number of
issues had been resolved and they should be able to move into the building in
the near future.

Councillor Dean offered his congratulations to all involved.

(ii) Minute No RE85 Golds Nurseries Write offs

In answer to a question from Councillor A Dean the Performance Manager
gave details of the much improved tenancy take-up rates and re-branding of
the site.

RE91 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources
recommending that the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel be
paid an allowance of £500 per annual review from 2004/5 to reflect a

substantial increase in the scope of the Panel's workload and responsibilities since the allowance was fixed in 2001 at £250 per annual review.

The Director of Resources gave details of the additional work to be undertaken by the Panel and informed the Committee about allowances paid for such work by another Essex authority.

RESOLVED that the members of the Panel be each paid an allowance of £500 per annual review.

RE92

E GOVERNMENT FUNDING

The Head of IT and Anti-fraud Services reported that additional funding of £150,000 had been provided by the Government in support of the Council's IEG bid. It was therefore recommended that the additional funding be spent on accelerating the Council's progress towards the Government target of having all services available electronically by December 2005, specifically in the three areas:-

E government (compliance with BVPI 157)
First Point of Contact Implementation (IT implications)
Intranet Developments (installation of a personnel system)

The Head of IT and Anti-fraud Services answered Members questions which particularly concerned links to the Quality of Life Plan for which budgeting had already taken place. Members also stressed the importance of multiple channel access to Council services, some being 24 hour, and the need for the same information to be given out through all Council information points

RESOLVED that the receipt of the additional £150,000 funding for e government related development be noted and the proposals for spending it on accelerating the Council's progress towards the Government target of having all services available electronically by December 2005 be approved.

RE93

TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL CODE

The Committee considered the detailed report of the Principal Accountant on the following aspects of Treasury Management;

Appointment of a Fund Manager
The Prudential Code – Treasury Management Indicators (and the Housing Revenue Account Capital Financing cost indicator)
Local Government Investments – Draft Guidance
Annual Investment Strategy for 2004-05.

The Director of Resources explained further the need, in the interests of prudent financial management, for the actions suggested and those already taken.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the appointment of Standard Life to manage a £5m tranche of the Council's cash balances be noted.
- 2 the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators and the Capital Financing Indicator for the Housing Revenue account included in the report in paras 10 – 14 be recommended to the Council for approval at its meeting on 20 April 2004.
- 3 the Local Government Investments – Draft Guidance be noted.
- 4 the Annual Investment Strategy 2004/5 be recommended to the Council for approval at its meeting on 20 April 2004.

RE94 SERVICE PLANS – 2004/05

The Committee considered an overview of Service Planning for the authority as a whole and specifically summary service plans for Revenues, Legal, IT, Personnel and Office Services and Financial Services for 2004-2005.

The Director of Resources agreed to investigate once more the merits of debt-selling operations for the Council.

RESOLVED that the Committee notes the Service Planning process and confirms the Service Plans for Revenues, Legal, IT, Personnel and Office Services and Financial Services for 2004-2005.

RE95 MEMBER TRAINING – PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Committee and Communications Manager. It summarised feedback from Members following a recent questionnaire on training needs and suggested the development of a training programme.

RESOLVED that

- 1 a detailed training programme be prepared based on the information provided with further in house training for planning and IT and specific training events/workshops for Finance, Communication (including public speaking and speaking at meetings), dealing with media, chairing meetings, Best Value and Leadership.
- 2 the Committee and PR Manager keep Members informed of external training opportunities and arrange attendance where requested.
- 3 a programme for Chairs of policy and scrutiny committees to attend the IDeA Leadership Academy be drawn up so that all appropriate Members have attended the programme by the end of the financial year 2004/05.

- 4 opportunities be sought for joint training sessions for Members and Officers.

RE96 **GREEN TRAVEL UPDATE**

The Committee received an update on the activities of the Travel Plan Working Group.

RESOLVED that the progress to date of the Travel Plan Working Group be noted and a final report submitted to the meeting of the Committee in June.

RE97 **STAFFING UPDATE**

The Committee noted the table of staff vacancies that had arisen since the last meeting of this Committee.

RE98 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that these involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Director of Resources left the room for the remainder of the meeting.

RE99 **ORGANISATIONAL RESTRUCTURE**

Members considered a request for the early retirement because of efficiency of the service on savings grounds. The Committee considered the report of the Head of Personnel and Office Services and the Financial Services Manager (circulated at the meeting).

RESOLVED that

- 1 the Council accepts the postholder's proposal and agrees his request as set out in the report by the Financial Services Manager and the Head of Personnel and Office Services
- 2 the Council accepts the efficiency of the service retirement date proposed by the postholder and reaches a mutually agreed termination date of 31 May 2004.

RE100

HONORARIUM PAYMENT

The Committee received a report recommending that an honorarium be awarded to a named postholder in recognition of additional responsibilities undertaken during review of management structure.

The Head of Personnel and Office Services referred to a previous occasion when an honorarium had been awarded to a postholder in recognition of additional responsibilities undertaken during review of management structure

Members noted that any honorarium given would be taxable and superannuable. They discussed but decided against awarding an honorarium where a postholder had not undertaken comparable additional responsibilities during review of management structure.

RESOLVED that the Committee approves the payment to the named postholder of the honorarium recommended in the report.

The meeting ended at 9.18 pm.