

**RESOURCES COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD  
SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 24 JUNE 2004**

Present:- Councillor M A Gayler – Chairman.  
Councillors R P Chambers, A Dean, S C Jones, R T Harris,  
M J Savage and P A Wilcock.

Councillors R J Copping, S Flack and B Hughes also attended the meeting.

Officers in attendance:- A Bovaird, M Brean, P O'Dell, C Hughes, R Kirmani,  
J Mercer, J Mitchell and I Orton.

**RE1 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A J Ketteridge, M Foley and A Row.

**RE2 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 11 March 2004 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**RE3 BUSINESS ARISING**

**(i) Minute RE90 - Gold Enterprise Zone**

In response to a query from Councillor Dean the Performance Manager informed the Committee that three units had been let of which one unit had been let that day. A total of 16 units had been let out of 18 units on the estate.

**RE4 UTTLESFORD CREDIT UNION**

The Chairman informed the Committee that this item had been brought forward at the request of Councillor Hughes.

The Executive Manager (Customer Services) informed the Committee that the Quality of Life Corporate Plan required that an evaluation be carried out for developing a Credit Union (CU) scheme.

Three options that were available for offering CU facilities in the Uttlesford area were

- a) Uttlesford District Council Scheme;
- b) Joining Essex Savers Net Credit Union;
- c) Partnership with Rainbow Saver Anglia CU Ltd.

Councillor Hughes said that a CU scheme should be established for the Uttlesford area. A CU scheme was a profit-sharing financial co-operative owned and controlled by its members. The money would be used for the benefit of the local area.

RESOLVED that

- 1 to agree in principle to provide Credit Union facilities in the Uttlesford area;
- 2 option 7c as detailed in the report be adopted, subject to a further report once a decision was known on the change in the Rainbow Saver Anglia CU Ltd. common bond & receipt of their formal proposal.

RE5

### **FORWARD PLAN**

The Executive Manager (Finance and Asset Strategy) informed the Members of the Forward Programme for this Civic year. The Quality of Life Plan required that each Committee to consider at the beginning of the new Civic year a forward programme of reports that it required to be submitted before it during the year.

The Chairman said that the Forward Plan should be published on the Intranet and be easily accessible to the public.

RESOLVED that

- 1 The forward plan for the current civic year be noted;
- 2 Officers to prepare further report on Review of Quality of Life Corporate Plan and this to be discussed on 18 November 2004

RE6

### **FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND SERVICE PLANNING PROCESS**

The Executive Manager (Finance and Asset Strategy) introduced the report which examined the financial and policy context of the Council's medium term plans for services and proposed:-

- a) A four year financial strategy for the General Fund;
- b) A new approach for prioritisation of General Fund services;
- c) A move towards devolved financial management at officer level.

Councillor Dean said that it was an excellent report as it suggested the way forward, clear framework and guidance.

Councillor Wilcock suggested that the any increase in the Council Tax should be kept as low as possible

RESOLVED that

- 1 the six point plan as contained in paragraph 10 be approved as the basis of developing a four year budget strategy;
- 2 the initial four year budget reduction projections as contained in paragraph 15 be noted and a Council tax increase of no more than 5% per annum over the next 4 years be targeted, subject to any major changes in external funding and other factors, with additional spending pressures being met by further efficiencies where possible;
- 3 the principles of service categorisation outlined in paragraph 22 be agreed and a working group of Members & officers be appointed to develop the details of each category & suggest allocation of all services to each category, with proposals to be brought back to this Committee;
- 4 the Leader of the Council, Chairman & Vice Chairman of this Committee together with the Chairmen of Development Control Committee, Community and Leisure and Scrutiny 2 Committee (ex-officio) be appointed on this Group. The Chairman of this Committee be appointed Chairman of this Group;
- 5 the proposed move towards devolved financial management at officer level be endorsed.

## RE7 **ZERO - BASED BUDGETING**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Manager (Finance and Asset Strategy) that proposed an approach to Zero-Based Budgeting of the Council's services on a phased basis, with the aim of making decisions on appropriate resource allocation in line with the Council's priorities. This report needed to be read in conjunction with the report elsewhere entitled Financial Strategy and Service Planning Process.

RESOLVED that the broad process and time table for Zero-Based Budgeting as outlined in the report be agreed.

## RE8 **CONTRACT SERVICES INTEGRATION**

The Committee considered the report that informed the Members that as part of the restructuring of the Council's senior management the Contract Services had been split up and management responsibilities for the individual activities had been transferred to the relevant Executive Managers. A project had been

developed to review the arrangements for service provision and finances under the new structure.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the terms of reference proposed for this project be agreed;
- 2 a further report be submitted on the progress of this project.

RE9

### **AMENDMENTS TO FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Executive Manager (Finance and Asset Strategy) informed the Committee that due to the officer restructuring that was implemented on 1 June 2004 amendments to the Council's Financial Regulations were required to reflect the new titles of Executive Managers and the Executive Management Team. It was proposed that these new terms replaced the previous terms of Chief Officer and Chief Officer's Management Team where these appeared in the Financial Regulations. The Executive Manager (Finance and Asset Strategy) would now be the Council's Chief Financial Officer.

RECOMMENDED that the Council meeting on 20 July be requested to approve the changes to Financial Regulations contained in this report.

RE10

### **TENDERS FOR PROVISION OF BANKING & INSURANCE SERVICES**

The Committee was informed that the contracts for Banking and Insurance Service would expire on 31 March 2005. The report outlined the processes that would be undertaken to ensure appropriate arrangements were in place to achieve the continuity and possible enhancement of these services at the most economically advantageous cost to the Council

RESOLVED that

- 1 the progress made to date be noted;
- 2 the possibility of collaborating with Essex County Council in provision of banking services be investigated by the officers.

RE11

### **DUNMOW OFFICES**

The Committee was informed that this report followed on from the resolutions of the Resources Committee of 22 January 2004. It detailed the outcome of the consultant's study into the options for the future use of the Dunmow site. It discussed the way forward and requested Members guidance on progressing with the matter now highlighted.

RESOLVED that

- 1 Officers investigate the practicalities of using the front offices for both the voluntary sector centre and to meet the Council's own requirements for a base in Dunmow;
- 2 if the front offices be unable to accommodate the voluntary sector centre along with the Council's own requirements, the rear offices should be retained, & a longer term lease offered to the voluntary sector;
- 3 a full analysis be undertaken by the officers of the future car parking needs of Dunmow;
- 4 sale of the depot site for residential development should be subject to the outcome of the analysis of Dunmow's car parking needs and how they could be met.

RE12

**BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS**

This report requested the authority to consult with local businesses in Great Dunmow about the concept of establishing a Business Improvement District.

RESOLVED that the report be referred to the Environment Committee and officers to consult with the Chairman of that Committee on options.

RE13

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2004/05**

The Performance Manager provided the Committee with an update on three projects within the Quality of Life Corporate Plan that were linked to the 2004/05 Capital Programme and requested Members to include two additional items within the 2004/05 Capital Programme.

RESOLVED that

- 1 it be noted that the Cycle Track Project will not get underway in 2004/2005 and reschedule the £25,000 from the current year's Capital Programme into the 2005/06 financial year, with that year's provision of the same sum also moving back a year to retain a £25,000 per annum budget over each of the next two financial years;
- 2 it be noted that the Green Lanes Project will not commence in 2004/05 and reschedule the £10,000 from the current year's Capital Programme into the 2005/06 financial year, with that year's provision of the same sum also moving back a year to retain a £10,000 per annum budget over each of the next two financial years;

- 3 £18,000 audio visual package for the Council Chamber not be approved at this stage, pending further investigation on other possible improvements to the use of the Council Chamber;
- 4 £15,000 from the Capital Programme be agreed for the installation of an electronic data gathering system to collect & monitor performance and appraisal data throughout the authority.

**RE14 CAPACITY FOR IMPROVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

The Committee received a report on proposed solutions to address issues of capacity of services within Development Services, particularly the Planning Services, to deliver day-to-day service requirements in the face of increasing workloads. The Committee noted that this report was considered by the Environment Committee and the Development Control Committee, both Committees had endorsed the recommendations and requested an additional recommendation to appoint a Customer Care Officer.

RESOLVED that the resolution of the Environment Committee as set out in paragraph 3 of the report be endorsed.

**RE15 ENERGY EFFICIENCY POST**

The Committee considered the need for the creation of a self funding energy efficiency post to help cut energy consumption through practical housekeeping measures.

RESOLVED that the creation of the Energy Efficiency Post be approved as recommended by the Environment Committee on 8 June 2004 and it be added to the establishment.

**RE16 EXECUTIVE PROGRAMME OFFICE**

The Committee considered the report that provided an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the Executive Programme Managers (EPMs) and recommended establishing a framework within which corporate projects could be managed, monitored and delivered.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the roles and responsibilities of the Executive Programme Managers and their respective programmes be noted with salary costs and any other budgets to be included in the Resources Committee's budget under a separate heading to be called Executive Programme Office;

- 2 the project management framework, as outlined in paragraphs. 14-16 be adopted and this be incorporated into the Corporate Plan review.
- 3 a temporary Programme Assistant post be created, at an estimated cost of £16,000 in 2004/05, to be funded from reserves, with a further report reviewing the need for a permanent post brought back to this Committee on 18 November 2004 as part of the 2005/06 budget process;
- 4 to provide funding flexibility across projects, the sum of £40,000 be drawn from reserves to fund initial options appraisals and feasibility studies in connection with the 'Improving the Quality of Life' theme of the Corporate Plan;
- 5 a further report be brought to this Committee in November 2004 examining the need for a permanent budget to be established to assist the Executive Programme Office with options appraisals, feasibility studies and other activities to implement the Quality of Life Corporate Plan. This report to take on board the proposed revisions to the Plan and provide a multi-year justification for a permanent budget;
- 6 Councillor Wilcock be appointed to oversee the development of the various projects.

## RE17 **E-GOVERNMENT STRATEGY**

The Executive Programme Manager introduced the report on E Government Strategy for Uttlesford. The Strategy provided details of how the Council would set about meeting the various e-Government related deadlines and priorities set by central Government.

RESOLVED that the E-Government Strategy be adopted.

## RE18 **COUNTER – FRAUD PARTNERSHIP**

The Executive Programme Manager reported on the options for the future management of the Council's Counter-Fraud function. He suggested the establishment of a formal counter-fraud partnership with East Hertfordshire District Council (East Herts) for an initial period to 31 March 2006. This provision would have a number of benefits like adoption of the best counter-fraud practices of each council, reduction in management costs, improved flexibility and increasing capacity. The other option was to retain services in house.

The Committee considered all options and it was

RESOLVED that

- 1 subject to satisfactory consultations with the staff, the staffing structure in Appendix 1 of the report be adopted;
- 2 a counter-fraud partnership between East Herts & Uttlesford be pursued, for an initial trial period to 31 March 2006, the trial to start at the earliest possible date;
- 3 East Herts to provide the management for the partnership;
- 4 a further report be submitted to the Committee before the end of the trial period, recommending long-term management arrangements.

RE19 **HOUSING & COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT RECOVERY OVERPAYMENT POLICY**

The Committee considered the report on a policy for the administration and recovery of Housing and Council Tax Benefit overpayments.

RESOLVED that the Housing & Council Tax Benefit overpayment recovery Policy as attached at appendix 1 of the report be approved.

RE20 **REFURBISHMENT OF TOILETS-SAFFRON WALDEN**

The Committee was advised of the results of the tender exercise for the refurbishment of the Hill Street Toilets, Saffron Walden. The lower suitable tender had emerged much higher than estimated.

RESOLVED that this be referred back for further information.

RE21 **TRAVEL PLAN**

The Travel Plan Working Group (TPWG) had reviewed the stated objectives of the Travel Plan published in 2003 and identified how to achieve this, with a view to making recommendations to Members.

The Committee considered the report and it was

RESOLVED that

- 1 the report be referred to the next Transport and Highways Committee;
- 2 a further report be submitted to this Committee on 23 September incorporating any comments from the Transport and Highways Committee.



RE22 **ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES-HEALTH & HOUSING-  
27 MAY 2004**

RESOLVED that the following recommendations be approved

(i) **Affordable Housing - Ardley Crescent**

1 it be agreed to transfer the housing site (known as 1 - 4 Ardley Crescent Hatfield Heath), at nil cost, to a registered social landlord to enable the provision of new affordable housing in return for full initial nomination rights.

(ii) **Margaret Street – Thaxted – public conveniences**

1 the disposal of lavatories for the sum of £6,000 be approved.

RE23 **CLEANING CONTRACT**

The Executive Manager Human Resources reported that the tenders for the Building and Cleaning contract were due to be submitted by 1 June 2004. But unfortunately due to the accident of the steward closing date for submission of tenders had to be moved to 21 June 2004. The Committee was requested to delegate the authority to manage the selection of the contractors.

RESOLVED that the three Executive Managers be authorised to conclude the tender process and appoint contractors after consultation with the Chairman of the Resources Committee.

RE24 **STAFFING UPDATE**

RESOLVED that future staffing updates be placed in the Members Bulletin.

RE25 **CONGRATULATIONS**

The Leader of the Council informed the Committee that the new Chief Executive had successfully completed the probation period and welcomed him to the establishment on a permanent basis.

The meeting ended at 9.55 pm.