

**RESOURCES COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES SAFFRON
WALDEN at 7.30pm on 31 MARCH 2005**

Present: - Councillor M A Gayler - Chairman,
Councillors A Dean, R T Harris, A J Ketteridge, V J Lelliott,
A R Row, M J Savage and P A Wilcock.

Officers in attendance: - A Bovaird, V Borges, M Brean, W Cockerell,
P O'Dell and T Turner.

RE79 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S C Jones.

Councillor M A Gayler declared a personal prejudicial interest as a Member of Great Dunmow Town Council and would leave the room for the discussion of the item.

RE80 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2005 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the inclusion of the words "the new overpayment figure of £800 and" after "Members adopt" under minute RE76.

RE81 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

(i) Health and Housing Committee – Fees and Charges Review

The report was introduced to the Committee by the Executive Manager (Finance and Asset Strategy) on behalf of the Executive Manager (Environmental and Cultural Services). The Health and Housing Committee had agreed some revised charges for its services, which although technically it could do under its own delegated powers, it wished to notify the Resources Committee as the proposals were to some extent a continuation of the recently agreed budget process.

RESOLVED that the Committee note that Health and Housing Committee had approved amended fees and charges for 2005/06 relating to pest control, fee structure for the Border Inspection Post and the micro chipping of pets.

RE82 ACCESS TO SERVICES BEST VALUE REVIEW

Councillor Lelliott updated the Committee on the latest position with the Access to Services Review and the concept of a contact centre. He said that the contact centre would provide staff with variety but time would have to be

spent on the staffing situation. He added that all the costs involved were affordable and the IT surrounding the Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) appeared to be straightforward.

The Executive Manager (Customer Services) then introduced the report, which explained that the key aim of the Council was to improve access to value for money services, which originated from the Quality of Life Corporate Plan. He then gave a presentation, which outlined the issues surrounding the access to services review including the problems, objectives, the implementation of integrated customer management and advantages. This was then followed by a short DVD on Three Rivers District Council's approach to customer service delivery.

After the DVD Members debated the Council's proposed integrated customer management approach to service delivery.

Councillor Savage said that during the implementation there would need to be milestones within the project plan and EMT would need to report on each element. The Chief Executive informed the Committee that if the resolution was carried EMT would need to work out the project plan and all progress would be reported back to this committee. He also said that significant numbers of staff were worried about the new system but this would be about providing a better job with more variety. He added that the intention would be to deliver a better and consistent public service on the current staffing capacity and no job losses would be expected. After further discussion it was

Unanimously RESOLVED that

1. Members approve an Integrated Customer Management approach to customer service delivery.
2. Additional revenue expenditure of £25,000 per annum be built into the base budget with appropriate part year effect for 2005/06 and full provision in following years, pending identification of any compensating efficiencies during operation that keep costs to £25,000 or even less.
3. The Committee approve the Access to Service Best Value Review Service Improvement Plan.
4. The Executive Management Team becomes the project board for implementation of Integrated Customer Management.
5. The Executive Management Team develops a comprehensive implementation plan.
6. The e-Government Task Group monitor the progress of the project
7. Progress is regularly reported to this Committee.
8. Members ask the Chief Executive to congratulate the efforts of staff and note their concerns. Members are sure that an Integrated Customer

Management approach will improve the quality of their jobs in exceeding customer expectation.

RE83 AUDIT COMMISSION: USER FOCUS INSPECTION

The Executive Manager Strategy and Performance introduced the report, which advised Members of the outcome from the Audit Commission's User Focus Inspection in November 2004 and provided members with an action plan, which detailed measures to be taken to address issues raised in the report.

She commented that there were areas of good practice within the Council and evidence of improved services as a result of user feedback. However weaknesses in communication, consultation and the coordination of user-focussed activity were identified. There was also a need to improve equalities and diversity in relation to black and minority ethnic groups, and to establish a research led evidence base to monitor activities and to aid continuous improvement. The corporate capacity to address the Council's ambitious plans in the Corporate Plan were also questioned.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Committee notes the User Focus inspection report and supports the associated action plan.
2. Reports be brought to future meetings as required in order to secure resources to carry out the required actions.

RE84 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Executive Manager (Finance and Asset Strategy) introduced the report which detailed guidance issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) under Section 15 (1) (a) of the Local Government Act 2003 requiring that Local Authorities prepare an Annual Investment Strategy. He added that the report contained the Council's Annual Investment Strategy for 2005/06, which covered treasury limits, current treasury position, and prospects for interest rates, specified and non-specified investments and liquidity of investments.

In response to a question from Councillor Row the Executive Manager (Finance and Asset Strategy) informed the Committee that they sought advice from Butlers Treasury Advisors and a fee was paid for this service.

RESOLVED that the Council be requested to approve at the meeting on 26 April:

1. The Annual Investment Strategy 2005/06 including the criteria for determining suitable counterparties.

2. A maximum amount of £12 million for Non – Specified investments managed internally by the Council.
3. A maximum amount of £5 million for Non-Specified investments managed by Standard Life.

RE85

ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENTS

The Committee considered the report, which provided an overview of the purpose and requirements of Annual Efficiency Statements under the Gershon review.

The Executive Manager (Financial and Asset Services) explained that the Gershon review identified possible efficiency gains of over £20billion across the public sector by 2007/08. He added that these figures had been built into the assumptions underpinning the Chancellor of the Exchequer's recent budget announcements. He said that the target for local government was around £6.5billion by 2007/08 and that detailed guidance and requirements had been issued. He added that the Council would need to develop a longer-term strategy to meet the increasing requirements of the Annual Efficiency Statements.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the report and submit it to Council to notify all Members of the key elements of this key corporate requirement.

RE86

AIR QUALITY MONITORING EQUIPMENT

The Principal Environmental Health Officer informed the Committee of the option to purchase an Air Quality Analyser to measure hydrocarbons, which would be installed in the existing air quality monitoring system. He explained that the intention would be to place the equipment in locations that had experienced aircraft related pollution incidents and at sites, which were subject to heavy road traffic. He added that the capital programme be increased to cover the additional cost of £13,000 for the enhanced level of monitoring.

In response to a question from the Committee the Principal Environmental Health Officer informed Members that the suppliers of the new equipment had given an assurance that the analyser would be able to detect hydrocarbon emissions associated with aircraft.

RESOLVED that the Capital programme be increased by £13,000.

The Chair of Committee Councillor Gayer declared a personal prejudicial interest as a Member of Great Dunmow Town Council and left the meeting. Councillor Savage took the chair for this item.

RE87

CCTV – FEASIBILITY STUDY – UPDATE

The Executive Manager (Finance and Asset Strategy) introduced the report, which detailed the formal request from Great Dunmow Town Council to have its CCTV System upgraded. He explained that partners had agreed to contribute towards the costs of the upgrade and this Committee agreed a capital sum on 27 January 2005. He added that Great Dunmow Town Council had originally indicated that it did not want to participate in the upgrading and therefore no request was made for a capital contribution. They had since revised this decision and had agreed to contribute to costs in conjunction with the Dunmow Chamber of Trade and Commerce. However in order to supply, install and commission the upgrade an additional capital sum of £5,000 was required.

Councillor A Dean said that there would need to be an equitable scheme for all and requested for some of the financial figures to be issued. In answer to a question from Councillor Savage it was confirmed that the CCTV system would be an evidence-based system but that officers were looking into a voluntary monitoring scheme through the use of volunteers.

RESOLVED that the CCTV System in Great Dunmow be upgraded and that an additional capital sum of £5,000 be included in the budget provision for 2005/06.

At the end of the item Councillor Gayler returned to the room and took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

RE88

APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE TO SAFFRON WALDEN INITIATIVE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

The Committee considered the report, which advised Members of the need to appoint a Council representative to sit on the Saffron Walden Initiative Partnership Board. The Executive Manager (Finance and Asset Strategy) explained that at Resources Committee in September Members had agreed that the Council would support the appointment of a Saffron Walden Project Officer. As part of the funding arrangements laid down by the main supporting body (The Countryside Agency) there was a requirement for a Memorandum of Agreement between the relevant parties and for a Partnership Board to be established consisting of the representative bodies. He said that two representatives were required from Uttlesford District Council, one being an Officer and the other a Member. The Executive Programme Manager would be attending board meetings as the Officer representative and it was proposed that Councillor Savage be appointed as the Council Representative.

Councillor Savage informed the Committee that he had attended the first Partnership Board meeting where the work programme was discussed. He added that the programme of work was significant and further funding would need to be found to support the position of the Project Officer for the future at a later date.

RESOLVED that Councillor Savage be appointed as the Council representative on the Saffron Walden Partnership Board

RE89 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

The Executive Manager (Finance and Asset Strategy) introduced the report, which detailed the proposed extension to the appointments of the Independent Remuneration Panel Members. He explained that the Panel had been set up in October 2001 following statutory guidance. He added that the Panel was made up of three people and the intention was that the initial appointments of the Panel Members would be for 2, 3 or 4 years to ensure that Panel Members did not become too familiar with Councillors. However he explained that this had not been the case and there would be advantages to renew the current Members for a further period of 2 years until 2007. From that time one Member be replaced each year with the new Members being appointed for periods of 2 years.

RESOLVED that the current Remuneration Panel Members be renewed for a further period of 2 years until 2007 and from that time one Member be replaced each year with the new members being appointed for periods of 4 years.

RE90 COMMITTEE TIMETABLE

The Committee considered the report, which contained the draft Committee timetable.

Members identified that the date for Scrutiny 1 in November was on a Tuesday and would need to be altered to be Wednesday 9 November 2005. It was further agreed to amend the Resources Committee date from the 22 September 2005 to the 29 September 2005 due to the Liberal Democrats Conference. There was a discussion about whether it was appropriate to tailor Council dates to fit in with political commitments. Councillor Wilcock added that the Stansted Airport Advisory Panel dates would need to be altered as they did not fit in with key dates and he would advise the Democratic Services Manager of the new dates.

RESOLVED that the Council on 26 April be requested to approve the Committee Timetable 2005/06 with the agreed amendments

RE91 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 item of business on the grounds that is involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of part 1 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RE91

REQUEST FOR EARLY RETIREMENT

Members considered the report, which sought the approval for the early retirement of an employee in the interests of the efficiency of the service and with the expectation of the costs being recovered over the medium term.

RESOLVED that Members agreed to the early retirement of the employee on the terms that were set out in the report.

The meeting ended at 8:30pm.