

URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE

11th June 2001

PRESENT:-

Labour Group

Councillor Richards (Chair), Councillor Whyman (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Dunn, Lauro, Southerd, Southern and Wilkins.

Conservative Group

Councillors Lemmon and Mrs. Wheeler.

US/87 **REPORTS OF MEMBERS**

(a) Parliamentary Election – The Count

Councillor Lauro expressed concern regarding the length of time taken to count the Parliamentary votes at the election held on 7th June 2001. He also expressed concern regarding the fee of £35 for counting staff on duty from 9.30 p.m. to 5.00 a.m. He asked for a report on how much the Authority receives to conduct the count and how this sum is divided up between Officers of the Council. The Chief Executive advised that the wage paid to counting staff was comparable with other authorities of a similar size but that he would be looking at increasing the amount paid due to the length of time involved at the count. He advised that the Authority had experienced problems recruiting counting staff. It was noted that some of the counting staff appeared to be counting slowly on the evening and accordingly, the Chief Executive advised that he would be looking at training staff in the future. He also advised that there was a need to change how the Authority approached elections. The Chief Executive advised that the Government suggested that 54 counting staff be used for a division of this particular size and in fact the Authority had used 60 counting staff. There had also been a number of spoilt papers which had delayed the process. Councillor Lauro queried why bundles of votes had not been weighed using accurate scales.

The Chief Executive agreed to provide a report on the issues surrounding the Count as outlined above, together with a plan of action to improve Counting arrangements for the future.

Councillor Whyman advised that Members would not want the staff involved within the Election and the Count to feel that Members were being over critical as all staff had put in a massive effort during the election period. Councillor Southern advised that many people who had always received postal votes had not received them this year and expressed concern regarding this. It was agreed that a report on all of the issues raised would be submitted to the first Meeting of the Finance and Management Committee.

Councillor Southerd expressed concern at the poor access at the Springfield Road School Polling Station (main hall) and also asked for an alternative Polling Station to St. George's Church Rooms to be used for future elections.

(b) Financial Reports

Councillor Wheeler expressed concern at the length of time which had elapsed since she had received any reports outlining the financial position of the Authority. She was advised that a timetable of meetings was available and this included Finance and Management Committee Meeting dates.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO SUB-COMMITTEE

US/88 **REPORTS OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

(a) Coton-in-the-Elms Parish Council – Lease Extension and Cashflow Support

Members were reminded of this longstanding scheme which aimed to provide a new community facility, to meet the social, recreational and community needs of the Parish of Coton-in-the-Elms. Under Minute No. HE/21 of 10th August 2000, the Housing and Environment Committee agreed to provide a 90 year lease subject to any Deed restrictions and Secretary of State consent. However, since that time, the Millennium Commission had requested a 99 year term for the lease.

Members were advised that the cash flow projection for the scheme took into account likely delays in the funding “draw-down” process and indicated potential deficits that could prevent contract payments being met on time. The Coalfields Community Landmarks (CCL) initiative requested that this issue be addressed and it was likely a term and condition to be specified by the Millennium Commission. The Parish Council had requested therefore, that the District Council provided this facility.

Members were advised that there were no financial implications of extending the lease to 99 years. However, careful consideration was required to the request for the Council to underwrite cash flow for this project. Before entering into any commitment to do this, the Council would need to have the following reassurance:-

- (a) All funds associated with the project were in place – if the project relied on further parish council fund-raising then the Council would carry the risk that this might not be successful.
- (b) All payments to the contractor must be made by the parish council. No payments could be made direct to the contractor by the District Council as this could have VAT implications for both the Parish and District Council.

In terms of direct financial implications, the Council would suffer a loss of interest on payments made to the parish council under the guarantee. This money would otherwise be available to the Council for investment.

RESOLVED:-

That in order to progress the Coton-in-the-Elms Village Hall project, a 99 year lease be granted and a formal legal agreement to guarantee contract payments (subject to meeting the conditions outlined above) be entered into.

(b) Payment of Mileage Allowance to Tenants' Representatives

Members' approval was sought for the payment of travel allowances to tenants attending meetings, training sessions etc., as part of the Council's Tenant Involvement Strategy. It was proposed that Casual Car User Allowance or 2nd Class rail fare be paid, as appropriate. The tenants would be required to submit appropriate claim forms to be approved by the Housing Services Manager.

RESOLVED:-

That the payment of travelling expenses, as appropriate, to tenants involved in tenant involvement work be approved and such expenses be met from within the existing Tenant Consultation budget.

(c) Better Care, Higher Standards – Charter for Long-Term Care

Members received a copy of the Derbyshire Better Care, Higher Standards Charter for long-term care for 2001/02. The Council was required to have such a charter in place and published by 30th June 2001.

RESOLVED:-

That the draft Charter, as submitted for 2001/02 be approved.

US/89 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)****RESOLVED:-**

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

US/90 **REPORTS OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**(a) Flooding, Newhall (Paragraph 3)

The Sub-Committee refused to make an ex-gratia payment to the tenant of the property outlined in the report who had suffered from flooding damage.

(b) Provision of Homelessness and Advice Services (Paragraph 2)

The Sub-Committee approved the appointment of an experienced Homelessness Officer for a period of 6 months.

K.J. RICHARDS

CHAIR