

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

12th June 2003

**PRESENT:-**

**Labour Group**

Councillor Pabla (Vice-Chair in the Chair) and Councillors Carroll, Isham (substitute for Councillor Wilkins), Lane, Richards, Southerd, Southern and Whyman M.B.E.

**Conservative Group**

Councillors Harrison, Lemmon, Nalty, Mrs. Renwick and Mrs. Wheeler.

**In Attendance**

Councillors Bell, Harrington and Murphy (Labour Group).

**APOLOGY**

An apology for absence from the Meeting was received from Councillor Wilkins (Chair)(Labour Group).

FM/1. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd April 2003 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

FM/2. **REPORTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES -  
MONITORING OF COUNCIL PLANS AND STRATEGIES**

The Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Bell presented this item. The Scrutiny Committee had undertaken a review of arrangements for monitoring Council plans and strategies and it was submitting reports to each of the three policy committees. A background was given to the Review and a small working group had been appointed to undertake this matter. It had produced a comprehensive list of all the current plans and strategies and the list contained over one hundred items. Appended to the report were details of the plans and strategies relating to this Committee. The schedule included details of each Plan's status, its date of approval and review, the responsible Officer within the Corporate Management Team and the Committee responsible for the development and implementation of the plan or strategy. The Working Group had considered that it would be impractical to review the monitoring arrangements in detail and the Scrutiny Committee had agreed to refer this matter to policy committees for further discussion.

The report then set out a number of issues for policy committees to consider. In the White Paper “Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services”, the Government had announced proposals to streamline and rationalise the number of plans that it required Councils to produce. Essentially, Councils judged “excellent” under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment would only be required to prepare a Best Value Performance Plan and a Community Strategy. A key decision for policy committees would be whether to retain certain plans and strategies in order to support the effective management of the organisation. A further consideration in terms of rationalisation was the proposed South Derbyshire Community Strategy.

Once the reports had been considered by the three policy Committees, it was suggested that a Task and Finish Working Group be appointed, to ensure a consistent approach to the rationalisation of plans and strategies.

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the report of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee be received.***

**MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE**

FM/3. **2002/03 SERVICE PLANS – FINAL MONITORING REPORTS**

The Committee received the Final Service Plans Monitoring Reports for Economic Development (in respect of Asset Management only), Personnel and Development, Legal and Democratic Services, Financial Services, Revenue Services, Internal Audit, IT and Customer Services and Policy and Best Value.

(a) Economic Development

Councillor Wheeler suggested that a Farmers Market should be held within the District and the Economic Development Manager agreed to pursue this matter accordingly.

(b) Personnel and Development

Councillor Whyman asked whether the Council was doing enough to improve equal opportunities within the Council. The Personnel and Development Manager outlined that the Council’s internal procedures addressed equal opportunities fully but that the Council did not attract enough minority groups in its recruitment process and this matter was being addressed. Councillor Wheeler suggested that this Council could approach schools within areas such as Stenson Fields with regard to attracting pupils for work experience at the Council.

A detailed discussion took place with regard to long term absences within the Council. In order to put these statistics into perspective Councillor Whyman requested details of short term absences within

the Council. Councillor Harrison asked for information on statistics relating to absences which took place on Mondays and Friday.

(At 6.45 p.m. Councillor Lemmon left the Meeting.)

(c) Legal and Democratic Services

It was noted that procedures with regard to elections were to be reviewed.

(d) IT and Customer Services

Councillor Harrison requested statistics on the percentage of 'hits' to the Council's web site which were tourism related.

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the Committee receives the final Service Plan Monitoring Reports.***

FM/4. **CORPORATE PLAN 2002/03 FINAL MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee received a detailed report on the Corporate Plan 2002/03. It was noted that in many cases progress on one critical success factor would impact on progress being made on another critical success factor and/or department key tasks and vice versa. Good progress had been made in all areas, in particular short and medium term tasks, possibly because these were easily defined.

Progress on the longer term objectives had been more limited in some cases although achievement of Investors in People was a major success in achieving a key long term goal. It might assist if managers were able to identify measurable intermediate targets and apply project management principles to those tasks. Therefore the Council should consider the training and development of managers with regard to a better project management approach. It was noted that there were areas within the plan where the Council had set and achieved more targets. These tended to be in the Council's 'comfort zones' where the Council had an established track record. Progress in these areas appeared to be moving the Council towards its desired objectives.

It was reported that there were two areas of the model where the Council had achieved a significantly lower proportion of its key tasks. These were in the areas of Leadership and Customer Results and the Council needed to review why this was the case. The lessons outlined would be incorporated into the Council's approach regarding this year's Corporate Plan and the training and development plans for the current year.

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the Corporate Plan 2002/03 Final Monitoring Report be received.***

**FM/5. SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PLANNING**

The Committee was asked to establish a Service and Financial Working Group to consider additional spending bids in the light of the budget outturn.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That a Task and Finish Service and Financial Planning Working Group be created.***
- (2) That the Working Group referred to in (1) above be comprised of Councillors Whyman, Carroll, Southern, Southerd and Wilkins (Labour Group) and Councillors Lemmon, Wheeler, Harrison and Shaw (Conservative Group).***
- (3) That the first Meeting of the above Working Group takes place on 22nd July 2003.***

**FM/6. SECTION 106 FUNDING WORKING GROUP**

The Committee was requested to establish a Working Group to consider the allocation of Section 106 monies.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That a Task and Finish Working Group to consider the distribution of Section 106/Agreement Funds be created.***
- (2) That the Working Group referred to in (1) above be comprised of Councillors Southerd, Harrington, Southern, Lauro and Isham (Labour Group) and Councillor Wheeler (Conservative Group).***

**FM/7. COMMUNITY DRUGS OFFICER**

Members were reminded that in July 2002 the Council, on behalf of the Crime and Disorder Partnership had appointed a Community Drugs Officer on a two year contract and since then the appointment holder had undertaken a great deal of work. The Substance Misuse Action Team and the Partnership as a whole had recognised the value of this work and wished to make the post permanent. It was particularly keen to adopt the community development based work that had been undertaken in Newhall and use it in other communities.

The proposed contract extension would not resort in any increased costs to the Council as the Partnership would fund the shortfall.

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the contract of the Community Drugs Officer be extended to 31st March 2005.***

FM/8. **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

The Committee received the above mentioned document embracing Council policy on e-mail, internet, telephone use and virus controls for all Councillors and employees. The policy also embraced the current telephone policy in force.

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the Electronic Communications Version 1.4 Policy Document, as submitted and agreed by the Joint Negotiating Group on 15th May 2003 be approved.***

FM/9. **LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP – DRAFT CONSTITUTION**

The Committee received the Draft Constitution for the proposed South Derbyshire Local Strategic Partnership. It was noted that this Constitution had been reviewed recently by the Business Planning Group and an updated version would be circulated accordingly.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the draft constitution for the proposed South Derbyshire Local Strategic Partnership (SDLSP) be received.***
- (2) That a report be submitted to the Council Meeting on 14th August 2003 in order that this Council's comments on the draft constitution can be agreed and conveyed to the first Annual General Meeting of the SDLSP in the Autumn.***

FM/10. **DISBURSEMENT OF PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT 2003/04**

Under Minute No. ED/ of 27th May 2003 the Environmental and Development Services Committee had agreed that this grant be devoted to the Planning Service as intended by the Government. Members considered that priority should be given to ensuring the capacity to secure future grants for this purpose.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That expenditure of up to £75,000 from the Planning Delivery Grant 2003/04 for the purposes identified in the***

**report to the Environmental and Development Services Committee on 27th May 2003 be authorised.**

- (2) That the Chief Executive allocates proposed expenditure up to £75,000 in accordance with the above mentioned report with particular emphasis on expenditure likely to secure future grant funding.**

**FM/11. 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.**

**MINUTES**

**The Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd April 2003 were received.**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF AND PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEW FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYTEM (Paragraph 8 and 9)**

**The Committee received an update on the implementation of the Council's new Financial Management System and agreed a course of action with regard to a partnership arrangement.**

**ACCOMMODATION OF COUNCIL STAFF AND MEMBERS (Paragraph 8)**

**The Committee agreed a course of action with regard to Council staff and Members.**

**HOUSING AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT FRAUD ISSUES (Paragraph 5)**

**The Committee received a detailed report on the latest issues surrounding Housing and Council Tax Benefit Fraud and the Benefit Investigations Unit Business Plan for 2003/04.**

**REDUCTION OR REMISSION OF THE NON-DOMESTIC RATE (Paragraph 5 )**

**The Committee approved an additional grant of 30% Hardship Relief to the applicant outlined in the report.**

**REPORT OF THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PANEL**  
***(Paragraph 1)***

***The Committee agreed a course of action arising from the report of the Recruitment and Retention Panel.***

L. S. PABLA

CHAIR