

MINUTES of the MEETING of the
SOUTH DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
held at Civic Offices, Civic Way,
Swadlincote on 13th December 2001
at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Labour Group

Councillor Mrs. Mead (Vice-Chair in the Chair) and Councillors Bambrick, Bell, Brooks, Carroll, Dunn, Evens, Ford, Harrington, Lauro, Pabla, Richards, Routledge, Shepherd, Southerd, Southern, Stone, Taylor, Whyman and Wilkins.

Conservative Group

Councillors Bladen, Douglas, Harrison, Hood, Lemmon, Mrs. Robbins, and Mrs. Wheeler.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Rose (Chair) and Councillors Knight and Mrs. Rose (Labour Group) and Councillors Bale, Shaw and Mrs. Walton (Conservative Group).

CL/76. **REPORT OF INSPECTOR WETTON – SWADLINCOTE POLICE**

Inspector Wetton of Swadlincote Police addressed Members in connection with the Crime and Disorder Partnership, which had now been operating for a period of approximately three years. He referred to the positive way in which the Council had engaged services to develop the Strategy and advised that the Constabulary's 'D' Division had been recently re-structured. An investment had been made in the provision of eleven Beat Constables in South Derbyshire to develop problem-solving within the District. It was noted that various Departments of the Council utilised the facilities at Swadlincote Police Station for interviewing purposes. The next stage of the Crime and Disorder Partnership was now the subject of a consultation process and for the future, Inspector Wetton reported that a mobile Police Station would be visiting remote areas within the District to indicate a presence. This would be staffed by two Officers for seven days per week to supplement the Beat Constables.

Following concern raised by a Member, Inspector Wetton acknowledged that the telephone response had not been satisfactory but it was hoped that a new call system would be introduced in February 2002 to improve this aspect.

Inspector Wetton advised Members that he would shortly be leaving Swadlincote to assume a post at the Constabulary Headquarters from 2nd January 2002. His successor at Swadlincote would be Inspector Hargreaves with effect from this date, who was an experienced Inspector currently based in the Operations Office at Headquarters. Members paid tribute to the efforts of Inspector Wetton and expressed their best wishes to him in his new post.

(Councillor Taylor left the Meeting at 6.25 p.m.)

CL/77. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 1st November 2001 (Minutes Nos. CL/64 - CL/71) were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Members referred to the renaming of the Development Services Committee to the “Environmental Services Committee” and advised that this name may be reviewed in due course.

CL/78. **CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

On behalf of the Chair of the Council, the Vice-Chair read a response from the Mayor of New York following the Chair’s letter in connection with the terrorist atrocities on 11th September 2001. It was reported that a Supper and Song Evening with Rachel would be held on 19th January 2002 and tickets were available from the Chair’s Office.

CL/79. **LEADER’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader referred to the recent announcement on the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2002/03. The average national increase was 7.4% but this Council’s settlement had increased by only 4.5%. The Leader expressed his disappointment at the continuing discrimination against smaller Councils but advised that this Authority would continue to plan and budget in a responsible manner to enable the level of Council Tax to be maintained at the lowest possible level.

CL/80. **PRESENTATION BY PEOPLE EXPRESS**

The Council received a presentation by Julie Batten and Robin Gray of People Express on the activities of the organisation.

(Councillor Wilkins left the Meeting at 7.10 p.m.)

CL/81. **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

RESOLVED:-

That the Open reports of the following Committees be received and noted and any recommendations contained therein be approved and adopted, subject to any matters annotated:-

Development Control Committee, 6th November 2001 (Minutes Nos. DC/59 - DC/68)

Development Services Committee, 8th November 2001 (Minutes Nos. DS/18 - DS/27)

(Minute No. DS/24, Cleansing the Environment Best Value Review – The Chair of the Committee advised of the recent launch of the ‘Clean Team’ to concentrate on littered areas and it was hoped that the benefits of this initiative would be evident shortly).

Community Services Committee, 15th November 2001 (Minutes Nos. CS/52 – CS/62)

(Minute CS/56, Service Plans – Following a query by a Member, the Chair advised that works were currently being undertaken to Council properties to improve security.

Following a request by the Chair, it was agreed that letters of thanks be forwarded to those Wardens who were shortly leaving the Council's employment through voluntary early retirement or voluntary redundancy.)

Overview Committee (Special), 19th November 2001 (Minute No. OV/11)

Finance and Management Committee, 22nd November 2001 (Minutes Nos. FM/53 - FM/65)

(Minute No. FM/61, Complaints – Following a question by the Leader of the Council relating to progress on any training and support for staff, the Chief Executive advised that this matter was currently being progressed through Divisional Managers as a corporate issue and a report would be submitted to a future Meeting of the Committee on initial findings.)

Community Scrutiny Committee, 26th November 2001 (Minutes Nos. CYS/12 - CYS/16)

Development Control Committee, 27th November 2001 (Minutes Nos. DC/71 – DC/78)

Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 3rd December 2001 (Minutes Nos. COS/15 - COS/20)

Licensing and Appeals Committee, 4th December 2001 (Minute No. LA/3)

Licensing and Appeals Committee, 5th December 2001 (Minute No. LA/5)

Overview Committee, 10th December 2001 (Minutes Nos. OV/12 – OV/16)

Area Meetings

Repton, 31st October 2001 (Minutes Nos. RA/13 – RA/19)

Linton, 7th November 2001 (Minutes Nos. LA/12 – LA/17)

Melbourne, 13th November 2001 (Minutes Nos. MA/12 – MA/16)

(It was noted that Councillor Shepherd had not been present at this Meeting.)

Etwall, 21st November 2001 (Minutes Nos. EA/11 – EA/18)

Swadlincote, 28th November 2001 (Minutes Nos. SA/14 – SA/22)

(Minute No. SA/16, Speed of Vehicles along Hearthcote Road, Swadlincote – Councillor Southerd advised that he had sought to arrange a site visit on this issue after the Christmas period and a progress report would be submitted in due course).

Newhall, 6th December 2001 (Minutes Nos. NA/14 – NA/20)

CL/82. **NOTICES OF MOTION**

- (a) In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 12, it was reported that Councillor Mrs. Mead had given notice of the following Motion:-

“This Council welcomes the establishment of a Holocaust Memorial Day.

The Council fully supports the aims of the Day, which are to:-

- Raise awareness and understanding of the Holocaust as a continuing issue for all humanity.
- Highlight the values of a tolerant and diverse society.
- Reflect on recent atrocities that raise similar issues.

In support of the Day and its aims, this Council resolves that the Chair of the Council dedicates a tree within the National Forest to mark Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January 2002 and in each ensuing year.”

Councillor Mrs. Mead proposed the Motion, which was duly seconded. It was debated and, on a vote, it was,

RESOLVED:-

That the Motion be carried.

- (b) In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 12, it was reported that Councillor Mrs. Wheeler had given notice of the following Motion:-

“At the recent Annual Conference of the Local Government Association, delegates from local authorities nationwide expressed grave concern at the extreme cost, excessive bureaucracy and inefficiency of the Best Value system imposed by the Government in 1999.

The experience of South Derbyshire District Council is in line with that of other councils and therefore this Council urges the Government to suspend the system whilst a detailed review and audit is carried out preparatory to radical change and simplification of that system. Such simplification shall be determined following careful consultation with the local authorities involved with the object of the Government setting realistic and measurable target levels for achievement.

In the meantime, over each of the Council’s service areas could Members be told of the percentage of total time spent on Best Value compared to service delivery?”

Councillor Mrs. Wheeler proposed the Motion, which was duly seconded. It was debated and, on a vote, it was,

RESOLVED:-

That the Motion be lost.

CL/83. **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

RESOLVED:-

That the Sealed Documents listed at Annexe SMB1 to the Signed Minute Book, which have no specific authority, be duly authorised.

CL/84. **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

Further to Minute No. CL/65 of 1st November 2001, it was reported that the Leader of the Council, with the Chair of the Development Control Committee and the Leader of the Conservative Group had met with the Independent Remuneration Panel on 6th December 2001. Since this Meeting, it had not been possible to evaluate the information provided by the Panel and draft a considered response to the Panel's recommendations. Accordingly, in order that the information may be evaluated fully and taken into consideration in the scheme for the next civic year, it was considered appropriate to defer consideration of this matter until the next Meeting of the Council to be held on 31st January 2002.

It was noted that the existing scheme, as approved by the former Policy and Resources Committee on 26th April 2001, had not provided for a special responsibility allowance for the Vice-Chair of the Development Control Committee. In this regard, it was reported that the Independent Remuneration Panel had recommended that the level of special responsibility allowance for this post should be fixed in the sum of £1,500 for the current year.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That consideration of any changes to the existing scheme of Members' Allowances for the next civic year be deferred until the next Meeting of the Council to provide time to consider the responses to points of clarification provided by the Independent Remuneration Panel at the Meeting with nominated Members on 6th December 2001.***
- (2) That a special responsibility allowance of £1,500 be approved for the Vice-Chair of the Development Control Committee for the current year, as recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel.***

CL/85. **CONSTITUTION – SUBSTITUTION RULES**

Further to Minute No. CL/70(b) of 1st November 2001, Members considered a revision to Council Procedure Rule No. 4 relating to the appointment of substitute Members of Committees and Sub-Committees. It was noted that the current rule provided each political Group to nominate a number of substitutes on a committee or sub-committee up to a maximum of 66.6% of the ordinary seats held.

RESOLVED:-

That Council Procedure Rule No. 4 be amended to provide that each political group may nominate a number of substitutes on a committee or sub-committee up to a maximum of 100% of the ordinary seats held.

(Councillor Lemmon advised that the Conservative Group wished to add Councillor Mrs. Wheeler to its substitutes for the Community Services Committee).

CL/86. **REVISION OF TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT 2001/02**

It was reported that under Item 11.2 of the Council's Treasury Management Policy, the Annual Treasury Management Statement could be revised where it was necessary to avoid incurring loss or cost to the Council. The existing statement aimed to strike a balance between achieving reasonable rates of return at a low level of risk and for this reason, a limited number of institutions with high credit ratings were used with a limit placed on amounts invested with set/said institutions.

Notification had been received on 12th November 2001 from the Co-operative Bank of some amendments to the Public Sector Reserve Account with effect from 3rd December 2001. As a consequence, the following two amendments would restrict the optimisation of investment returns severely within the current approved list of institutions:-

- (a) A restriction to the maximum amount that could be invested in or withdrawn from the Reserve Account on any one day of £1million, and
- (b) The interest margin on balances in excess of £1million to be adjusted to 0.65% below Base Rate (currently 0.5% below Base Rate).

Under the Council's Urgency Procedures, the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, had authorised an amendment to item 5.3 of the Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement by broadening the list of approved institutions that may be used for the investment of the Council's funds. This would now include other local authorities, major British clearing banks incorporated in the UK and their subsidiaries, UK building societies, British Merchant Banks and Securities House Association members, and the secondary banking sector. This would enable the Council to maximise the rate of return on invested funds, whilst ensuring a control on risk, in order to fulfil short-term cash flow requirements.

Members received details of limits which would apply on the amount of money that could be invested with any one of the institutions outlined above at any one time.

RESOLVED:-

That the action taken by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council be approved and confirmed.

CL/87. **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 for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as indicated in the reports of Committees.

MINUTES

The Exempt Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 1st November 2001 were duly received and approved.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Exempt reports of the following Committees were received and noted and any recommendations contained therein approved and adopted:-

Development Control Committee, 6th November 2001

Development Services Committee, 8th November 2001

Community Services Committee, 15th November 2001

Finance and Management Committee, 22nd November 2001

Development Control Committee, 27th November 2001

Licensing and Appeals Committee, 4th December 2001

Licensing and Appeals Committee, 5th December 2001

REPLACEMENT OF ALARM SYSTEM IN CIVIC OFFICES (Paragraph 8)

The renewal of the intruder alarm system at the Civic Offices was approved.

C.H. ROSE

CHAIR