

RESOURCES SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7 February 2000 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Evans (Chair); Councillors Mrs Begg, Mrs Boad, Mrs Clayton, Cockburn, Mrs Compton, Doody, Dove, Evans, Ms Flanagan, Gifford, Mrs Goode, Hammon, Kirton, Mrs Leddy, Short and Thomas.

(Councillor Mrs Goode substituted for Councillor Boad)

1. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 1999 having been printed and circulated were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

PART I

(Matters not the subject of powers delegated to the Sub-Committee by the Council)

NIL

PART II

(Matters delegated to the Sub-Committee by the Council)

2. **REVISED ESTIMATES 1999/2000**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from Finance on the situation with respect to revised estimates for 1999/2000, information on other items which affected the general fund and recommendations on the level of general fund balances.

The Strategy Committee had approved the revenue estimates of £11,194,000 for 1999/2000 on 16 February 1999. The service committees had now considered their revised budget requirements in respect of 1999/2000 and those revised estimates showed the latest estimated requirements incorporating changes in service provision, actual inflation to November 1999 and the revised notional capital charges. The final revised estimate total had to equal the original estimate figure of £11,194,000 as this was the amount that would be received from Council Tax, revenue support grant and contribution from the National and Non-Domestic Rate pool. Accordingly, any surplus could be used to finance additional expenditure or be transferred to the reserves and, similarly, any deficit would need to be financed from a reduction in expenditure or transfer from reserves.

It was considered desirable to maintain a balance on the general fund of £1,000,000 and it was anticipated that there would be a surplus on the general fund of £169,600 at 31 March 2000. The treatment of any surpluses or deficiencies for 1999/2000 would be dealt with in the report on the accounts in June when the actual position was known.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the revised estimates for 1999/2000 be approved; and
- (2) the general fund balance of £1,000,000 be approved.

3. **BENEFITS - FUNDAMENTAL REVIEW**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Benefits Fundamental Review Group on the findings of a fundamental review of the benefits service.

The report set out the process and results of the review. A copy of the proposed action plan was appended to the report. The results of the review showed the significance and relevance of the new software system for the calculation of benefits which was part of the resources 1999/2000 capital programme. The rest of the results were considered in the light of the challenge, consult, compare and compete format of Best Value.

It was considered that the review had shown the standard of service currently being provided, and established how the Finance Unit were planning to develop a service over the next five years. The general level of service was considered to be excellent and one which the Council could be proud, as had been indicated by the external consultants. The future improvements required to the service were detailed in the action plan.

It was suggested that any future requirements for saving options could be considered alongside the major issue items, i.e. the introduction of advanced technology, data image processing and the requirements of the Verification Framework.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the actions of the Sub-Group and the undertaking of the Benefits Fundamental Review be approved;
- (2) the action plan for benefits, as appended to the report, be approved; and
- (3) the appreciation of the excellent level of performance by the Benefits Division of Finance be recorded.

4. **MOBILE CAMERA**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Team on the possible purchase of a mobile camera and on alternative proposals to tackle vehicle crime in the rural area.

At its meeting on 31 March 1999, this Sub-Committee had allocated £25,000 to purchase a mobile camera subject to its compatibility with existing systems and a demonstration to members of the recommended equipment.

The Police had carried out a full investigation into current technology, including an automatic number plate recognition system. However, the Superintendent of Leamington Police had advised the Council that it would be unwise to proceed with the purchase of a mobile camera at this time. Alternative proposals to tackle rural car crime had, therefore, been considered and the report detailed a number of proposals that had been considered by the Vehicle Crime Tasking Group. The Sub-Committee gave consideration to the merits of the various schemes.

RESOLVED that

- (1) following Police advice, no action be taken on the purchase of a mobile camera; and
- (2) the monies be safeguarded for rural crime reduction and possible traffic calming initiatives.

5. **CONCURRENT SERVICES EXPENDITURE - PLAY AREAS**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Team on requests by various parish councils for improvements in standard of service of play areas provided by them to be counted as concurrent expenditure.

From 1 January 1999, new European standards came into effect relating to fixed play equipment and servicing within play areas. Leisure Committee had set up a working party to deal with the issue and it was likely that a phased approach would be adopted to bring all its play areas up to those standards within five/six years. Parish councils were informed of Leisure Committee's decision and advised that if they were inclined to adopt a similar approach, any such expenditure would be treated as an improvement in the standard of service being provided. Reimbursement under the concurrent scheme would require the Council's prior approval before any payment was made.

Four parish councils had indicated that they wished to upgrade the play equipment in their area, three of whom had decided on a phased approach, with the fourth deciding on an all at once approach. No budget provision had been made by this Council in 2000/2001. Any decision by this Sub-Committee to treat the expenditure by parish councils in 2000/2001 on upgrading their play areas as concurrent expenditure would need to be treated as a bid for additional resources to be considered by the Strategy Committee, along with all the other bids, at its next meeting. It was considered that a phased approach by the three parish councils could be deferred until 2001/2002, and that a bid for additional resources for concurrent services expenditure be considered in the budget process for 2001/02.

RESOLVED that no action be taken for 2000/01 on requests to consider additional expenditure by parish councils in upgrading play areas as concurrent expenditure, but that a bid for additional resources be considered in the budget process for 2001/02.

6. **RURAL INITIATIVES SCHEME - APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Team on applications for grant from the Rural Initiative Scheme.

The strategic capital programme had made a provision on £150,000 over a three year period for schemes in the rural area which helped to implement the Council's Key Issue Strategies. Approximately £137,600 of this had already been allocated.

Councillor Butler had applied for a grant towards the cost of improvements to the football pitch at Hampton Magna, estimated to cost £10,000. There had been no offer of match funding by the football club or by the Parish Council. The Head of Leisure and Amenities did, however, support the scheme. Improvements to the pitch would enable the club to play their fixtures at home rather than travel to St. Nicholas Park.

Cubbington Parish Council had applied for a Rural Initiative grant of £2,400 towards the cost of providing a basket ball court. Some match funding was available and the scheme was supported by the Head of Leisure and Amenities.

RESOLVED that

- (1) a grant of £10,000 or the cost of the work, whichever is the lower, be awarded in respect of Councillor Butler's request towards the cost of improvements to the Parish Council's football pitch at Hampton Magna; and
- (2) Cubbington Parish Council be awarded a grant of £2,000 towards the cost of providing a basket ball court.

7. VILLAGE HALLS - DISABILITY ADAPTATIONS - APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Team on applications for grants by Hatton Village Hall Management Committee and Cubbington Parish Council, towards the cost of installing disabled facilities. The Social Key Issues Strategy Revenue Budget had made a one off provision in the current year for £10,000 for grants for disability actions in village halls. No part of the budget had yet been allocated.

The Trustees of Hatton Village Hall had applied for a grant towards the costs of providing a disabled toilet facility at Hatton Village Hall at an estimated cost of £3,800. At its last meeting, this Sub-Committee awarded a grant of 50% of the cost of upgrading the drainage system and resurfacing the car park, estimated to cost £24,278 plus VAT, to the Trustees of Hatton Village Hall.

Cubbington Parish Council had applied for a grant towards the cost of providing disabled toilet facilities and an access ramp at Cubbington Village

Hall estimated to cost £4,600 in total. During 1999 the Parish Council had undertake refurbishment works at the village hall and intended to complete the final phase of the refurbishment works in the next financial year.

RESOLVED that

- (1) Hatton Village Hall Management Committee be awarded a grant of £3,000 towards the cost of providing disabled toilet facilities at Hatton Village Hall; and
- (2) Cubbington Parish Council be awarded a grant of £3,500 towards the cost of the provision of a disabled toilet facilities at Cubbington Village Hall.

8. **SHRUBLAND COMMUNITY PARK**

The Chair reported that this item had now been withdrawn.

9. **COMMUNITY CHEST GRANT**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from Finance on an application for grant aid from the Council's Community Chest for 1999/2000.

An application had been received from Darren Middleton for financial support from the Council to enable him to participate in an expedition organised by Raleigh International to Ghana this summer. Mr Middleton was required to raise £2,995 to help with the running costs of the expedition and had embarked on a whole range of local fund raising projects which to date had raised around £650.

RESOLVED that a Community Chest grant of £300 be made to Darren Middleton towards the cost of an expedition to Ghana in summer 2000.

10. **DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF 1999/2000**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from Finance on the levels of rate relief granted in respect of various voluntary and charitable organisations.

RESOLVED that the level of discretionary rate relief to be awarded be as detailed in Schedule 1.

11. **GENERAL REPORT**

(A) CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING

The Sub-Committee considered a report from Finance on the current progress of capital programme schemes under the control of Finance.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(B) **COUNCIL TAX - DISABLED REDUCTION - TAKE UP CAMPAIGN**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from Council Tax and Rating on the outcome of a campaign to highlight the relief available to Council Tax payers who were, or who lived with, disabled persons. This relief was being extended to Tax payers of properties in Band A from April 2000. During the course of the campaign the total relief granted had increased by over £8,700.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(C) CODE OF PURCHASING PRACTICE

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Team on a review of the purchasing code of practice specifically to comply with EMAS requirements and other necessary updates.

RESOLVED that the amended code of purchasing practice, attached as an appendix to the report, be approved.

(D) PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Sub-Committee considered a report from Finance on the finance performance indicators for inclusion in the Council's Best Value performance plan 2000/01.

Under the Local Government Act 1999, this Council was required to produce a Best Value performance plan which identified the measures which this Council would be taking to implement Best Value. As a result, it was necessary for this Sub-Committee to review its current performance indicators for finance for inclusion in the Best Value performance plan 2000/01.

RESOLVED that the Finance performance indicators identified for inclusion in the Council's Best Value performance plan for 2000/01 be noted.

(E) PUBLICATION OF MANPOWER INFORMATION FOR THE HALF YEAR TO 10 DECEMBER 1999

The Sub-Committee considered a report from Finance on the number of personnel employed by the Council at 10 December 1999 which showed the variations under the previous half and full year.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

12. **PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as outlined below:-

<u>Minute Number</u>	<u>Paragraph Number</u>
13 and 17	1
14, 15 and 16	8 and 9
18	7

13. **STAFFING FOR REGENESIS**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Team requesting the staffing of Regenesi s to be included within the Council's staff establishment. This would involve the creation and reevaluation of new posts and the reevaluation of two existing posts.

In June 1998, the Council agreed to set up the Leamington Old Town Partnership Board with a view to using it as the way in which to regenerate the old town part of the district. The Partnership Board had been successful in securing Single Regeneration Budget Round 5 funding of £4.6 million over seven years and now had evolved into Regenesi s - The Leamington Old Town Community Partnership. It was envisaged that Regenesi s would become an independent charitable company. However, whilst Regenesi s was close to achieving its charitable company status, it had been advised that it needed more time to develop its capacity before becoming an employer. It was, therefore, proposed that existing posts and the proposed new posts would need to be added to the Council's establishment for two/three years.

Because partnership working of this nature was still new, it was considered appropriate to subject the posts to a formal HAY evaluation.

RESOLVED that it be agreed that the Regenesi staff be added to the Council's establishment for two/three years and the existing two posts be formally re-evaluated and the new posts be evaluated.

14. **1, 2 AND 3 ALTHORPE STREET, INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from Property Services on the marketing of 1, 2 and 3 Althorpe Street Industrial Estate, Royal Leamington Spa.

Units 1, 2 and 3 were small light industrial units let at open market rental value. However, only Unit 1 was let at the current time. The Council had received some interest in acquiring the freehold of Units 1, 2 and 3, but these interests had been withheld as the units were considered as a suitable alternative location for the tenant of Unit 16 which the Council wished to repossess to facilitate the redevelopment of the Court Street area. The tenant of Unit 16 has since notified the Council that Units 1, 2 and 3 would not be suitable for his use and, consequently, the units could be available for sale.

RESOLVED that the marketing for sale of Units 1, 2 and 3, Althorpe Street Industrial Estate, Royal Leamington Spa be approved, the final terms and conditions to be agreed by this Sub-Committee at a future meeting.

15. **4-6 CLEMENS STREET, ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA**

(Councillors Mrs Begg, Dove and Gifford declared non-pecuniary, substantial interests in this item and left the room during the discussion and voting).

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Team on progress being made in respect of raising funding to purchase and renovate 4-6 Clemens Street.

The Council had agreed that the Leamington Spa Conservation Trust and/or Age Concern would be given the opportunity to purchase 4-6 Clemens Street from the Council at the price at which it was obtained. At its meeting on 18 October 1999 the Sub-Committee agreed to a deadline of March 2000 for the Conservation Trust and/or Age Concern to purchase the property, but at the end of that period, if either body was unable to purchase the property, it would be offered to Regenesi to purchase.

The Conservation Trust and Age Concern had been working to raise funds the purchase and restoration work but had been informed by the Heritage Lottery Fund that it would not consider the Conservation Trust's application for lottery funding until 29 March 2000. The Conservation Trust had, therefore, written to the Council requesting that the deadline to purchase the property be extended to the end of June 2000. Regenesis would still be able to purchase the property from the Council if the Trust were not able to buy the property by the end of June 2000.

RESOLVED that it be agreed to extend the deadline for the purchase of 4-6 Clemens Street by the Leamington Spa Conservation Trust/Age Concern to the end of June 2000, but if the Trust or Age Concern were unable to buy it by that time, the property be then sold to Regenesis at the price for which this Council bought it.

16. **UNITED REFORMED CHURCH, SPENCER STREET, ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from Property Services seeking approval to lease the basement of the United Reform Church, Spencer Street, Royal Leamington Spa.

The Council had agreed to lease the United Reformed Church from 21 October 2001. At the time the lease was agreed, the basement of the Church was not included. However, it had since gained planning consent for a restaurant and bar and it was recommended that the Council agree a lease for the basement to be used for artistic/cultural/entertainment purposes or a wine bar.

The report detailed the terms that had been agreed for the rent of the basement, the lease of which will expire at the same time as the remainder of the Church.

RESOLVED that it be agreed to lease the basement of the United Reformed Church, Spencer Street, Royal Leamington Spa on the terms set out in the report.

17. **PROPERTY SERVICES BUSINESS UNIT**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from Property Services on the first stage of a restructuring of the Property Services Unit.

The first stage of the restructuring related to the Technical Section. The retirement of two members of staff in the Technical Section had made it necessary to make initial recommendations which would form part of the

review of the Unit that would be submitted to this Sub-Committee at a future meeting.

The report detailed the proposals to create a trainee post on a six year fixed contract and the proposals for the three posts in the Clerk of Works Section. All of the proposed changes resulting from the review would be met from existing resources.

RESOLVED that the proposals for the first stage of the restructuring of the Property Services Unit, as detailed in the report, be approved.

18. IRRECOVERABLE COUNCIL TAX AND NON-DOMESTIC RATES

The Sub-Committee considered a report from Finance seeking authority to write off amounts due to the Council in excess of £500.

RESOLVED that the amount set out in the report be written off as irrecoverable.

(The meeting ended at 7.45 p.m)

SCHEDULE 1 MINUTE NO. 10

DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF 1999/2000		
No.	Name and Address	Discretionary
Mandatory		
8 0%	Kenilworth Town Football Club Gypsy Lane, Kenilworth	75%
126 0%	Central Ajax Football Club Hampton Road, Warwick	100%
New 0%	Leamington Studio Artists Ground Floor, r/o Congregational Church, Spencers Yard, Leamington Spa	100%
New	Leamington Studio Artists Old Church Hall North, Congregational Church, Spencers Yard, Leamington Spa	100%

0%		
New	Community Arts Workshop The Portacabin, Spencers Yard, Leamington Spa	100%
0%		
New	Jumping Jacks Unit 3, Westgate House, Market Street, Warwick	100%
0%		