

## **REPORT OF POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

(Meeting held 18 October 2000)

### **1. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS NOVEMBER 2000 TO MAY 2001 (REPORT A) (MINUTE NO. 56)**

The Committee has approved a schedule of meetings for the period November 2000 to May 2001 for the new Committees and Panels which have been appointed in accordance with the approved new Democratic Structures.

The Schedule is attached to this report at Annex 1.

### **2. BEST VALUE POLICY STATEMENTS (REPORT B) (MINUTE NO. 57)**

Under the Local Government Act 1999, Best Value Authorities are required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvements in the way in which they exercise their functions having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Proposed Policy Statements in respect of the "Challenge", "Comparison" and "Competition" elements of Best Value Reviews were considered by the Committee.

Members have been reassured that Councillors will be fully involved in the Best Value process. They will be involved in the drafting of a Best Value Performance Plan and the relevant Portfolio Holder will also be concerned with the scoping and review processes. In addition, part of the workload of the new Portfolio Performance and Review Panels will be to look at individual Best Value Reviews and methodology.

The Policy Statements on the subject of challenge, comparison and competition (which were attached as Appendices 1-3 to Report B) were approved.

### **3. LAND CHARGES INCOME (REPORT C) (MINUTE NO. 58)**

Members have noted that Land Charges income during the current year has been substantially down on the budget estimates, due to a slowing down in the housing market within the District, which was also reflected by comparison with other Hampshire districts.

The current best estimate of the likely shortfall during the current financial year is approximately £100,000 and members have noted that the Council has no control over the number of Land Charges searches it receives.

To deal with the immediate problem, staff overtime has been suspended for the past two months and any spare staff capacity had been used to check the accuracy of data stored on the new Geographical Information System (GIS) database. It is envisaged that the new GIS system will be fully utilised to maximum effect by spring 2001.

Members have noted that the ongoing situation will continue to be closely monitored, with any changes to estimated income being reported as quickly as possible. A supplementary estimate request of £100,000 has been included in the Financial Report for the period April - August 2000, which is the subject of the following item.

**4. FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD APRIL TO AUGUST 2000 (REPORT D) (MINUTE NO. 59)**

The forecast of variations of all Committees from their original estimates for 2000/01 for both the General Fund and Capital Expenditure have been considered by members. The report also included illustrative graphs relating to the actual to-date expenditure, compared with profiled forecast budgets. The current forecast for the Housing Revenue Account has also been considered.

During the discussion, members have been reassured that the heating system replacement programme required in the east wing of Appletree Court is currently on target, although the financial implications have been re-phased.

The list of financial recommendations included in paragraph 5 of the Report to the Committee have been approved and the current forecast levels of expenditure for 2000/01 have been noted.

**5. ANNUAL EMPLOYEE REPORT 1999/2000 (REPORT E) (MINUTE NO. 60)**

The Committee considered a wide ranging report on key employee issues. During consideration of the report, the following matters were raised:-

It was noted that an in-depth review was being undertaken of the Council's Pay and Reward Strategy. In answer to a member's question, it was stated that the existing Strategy was some ten years old and required a fundamental overhaul. A number of neighbouring authorities now offered significantly better salaries and conditions to employees and the lengthy salary bands within this authority needed to be reviewed. There were a number of other anomalies within the Pay and Reward Strategy which needed to be addressed, alongside the continuing single status review. The current Pay and Reward Strategy had already highlighted certain difficulties in recruitment in particular job specialisms. However, following consultation with the Trades Unions, a market testing exercise had not been undertaken this year, as the budget for this had been expended on the job evaluation review for single status.

Members were appreciative of the continuing reduction in car leasing expenditure. Members also noted the reduction in 'casual' employment, and that this had resulted in a slight increase in full time equivalent employee numbers as employees were offered permanent contracts to comply with employment legislation.

It was gratifying to note that the proportion of female employees in middle and senior management positions was continuing to increase, year on year.

It was reported at the meeting that the training and development budgets should have included an additional £30,000 which had been spent on Management Development, bringing the total expenditure on training and development to £256,861. Members were also pleased to note that the District Council had been successful in the Unison Target 2000 award, which recognised good quality industrial relations.

Officers agreed to include in future years a breakdown of those employees who had left the Council's service as a result of voluntary severance, as opposed to early retirement or redundancy.

In answer to a question from the Chairman, it was stated that when assessing retirement benefits the Council had full records of all of those officers with continuous service, but that where there had been a period of broken service, records were occasionally deficient. The procedure was being reviewed and employees would be asked to declare any previous service, so that full information was available to members when decisions were being taken on early retirements and redundancies.

Members noted with pleasure that the Council's average sickness record of 5.9 days lost per employee per year was well below all comparative measures, both within the public and private sectors and the Government's Best Value Indicators.

Members expressed some concern at the continuing level of accidents, particularly among manual employees in the refuse collection and recreation centre areas. It was noted that extensive training programmes continued, but that the nature of work within such employment inevitably led to some accidents, whereas office-based employee accidents were very infrequent.

A member stressed the importance of the continuing relationship between the Council's Personnel Services Section and the Occupational Health Service provided by Southampton University Hospital, which gave independent medical advice to many employees who had been on long-term sickness. It was noted that next year's report would contain information on the number of cases referred to the Occupational Health Services, together with illness trends. The anticipated Stress Audit identified in the previous year would be completed shortly.

The report has been noted with satisfaction and the Council's employees congratulated on their generally excellent attendance record. Further progress on various issues highlighted in the report will be presented to members in due course. Finally, whilst progress in tackling accidents at work has been welcomed, managerial responsibility and appropriate accountability in efforts to maintain the continuing improvements will be stressed to all employees.

**6. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EMPLOYEE STRUCTURE SUB-COMMITTEE - 18 SEPTEMBER 2000 (REPORT H) (MINUTE NO. 66)**

The Committee has approved proposals in relation to the structure of the Visitor Information Centres and employee restructuring costs.

**7. LYMINGTON QUAY IMPROVEMENTS (REPORT K) (MINUTE NO. 69)**

The Committee has considered a report on the tenders received for the improvements required at Lymington Quay.

***RECOMMENDED:***

***(a) That a supplementary capital estimate of £143,000 be approved; and***

- (b) *That a revised application for Scheme Approval under the Coast Protection Act 1949 be made to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.***

**Cllr M J Kendal  
VICE-CHAIRMAN**

(PR181000/Report)

# MEETINGS

## NOVEMBER 2000 - MAY 2001

All programmed Council, Advisory Cabinet, Committee and Panel meetings to be held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst.

DATE	TIME*	MEETING
<b>2000</b>		
<b>November</b>		
1	10:00	Advisory Cabinet
7	9:45	Leisure Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
8	9:00	Planning Development Control Committee
14	18:30	Crime and Disorder Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
15	10:00	Policy and Resources Committee
16	9:30	Environment Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
24	9:30	General Purposes and Licensing Committee
29	9:30	Economy and Planning Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
<b>December</b>		
6	10:00	Advisory Cabinet
6	18:00	Housing Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
7	14:00	Corporate and Finance Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
13	9:00	Planning Development Control Committee
20	10:00	Policy and Resources Committee
<b>2001</b>		
<b>January</b>		
3	10:00	Advisory Cabinet
8	18:30	Council
9	9:45	Leisure Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
10	9:00	Planning Development Control Committee
11	9:30	Environment Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
16	18:30	Crime and Disorder Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
17	10:00	Policy and Resources Committee
26	9:30	General Purposes and Licensing Committee
31	9.30	Economy and Planning Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
<b>February</b>		
7	10:00	Advisory Cabinet
7	18:00	Housing Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
8	14:00	Corporate and Finance Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
14	9:00	Planning Development Control Committee
21	10:00	Policy and Resources Committee
26	18:30	Council

# MEETINGS

## NOVEMBER 2000 - MAY 2001

DATE	TIME*	MEETING
<b>March</b>		
6	9:45	Leisure Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
7	10:00	Advisory Cabinet
8	9:30	Environment Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
13	18:30	Crime and Disorder Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
14	9:00	Planning Development Control Committee
21	10:00	Policy and Resources Committee
23	9:30	General Purposes and Licensing Committee
28	9:30	Economy and Planning Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
<b>April</b>		
4	10:00	Advisory Cabinet
4	18:00	Housing Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
5	14:00	Corporate and Finance Portfolio Performance and Review Panel
11	9:00	Planning Development Control Committee
18	10:00	Policy and Resources Committee
23	18:30	Council
<b>May</b>		
2	10:00	Advisory Cabinet
9	9:00	Planning Development Control Committee
14 <sup>1</sup>	18:30	Council
16	10.00	Policy and Resources Committee

<sup>1</sup> See paragraph 2.3 of covering report

\* TIME denotes start time public participation period (if any)