



# FAREHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

CIVIC OFFICES CIVIC WAY FAREHAM HAMPSHIRE

## Minutes of the Policy, Strategy and Finance Overview Panel

*Minutes of a meeting held on 18 September 2003  
in the Collingwood Room, Civic Offices, Fareham*

**PRESENT:**

Councillor F G Devonshire  
(Chairman)

**Councillors:** J V Bryant,  
Mrs D M Burton-Jenkins,  
P J Davies (deputising for Councillor R H Price),  
M F Godrich,  
T G Knight (deputising for Councillor Mrs D R Harrison),  
and D J Murray

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from the Vice-Chairman, Councillor R H Price and Councillor Mrs D R Harrison.

**2. MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 24 July 2003 be confirmed and signed as a correct record ([ps-030724-m](#)).

**3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Martin Cattermole, one of the Government's Comprehensive Performance Assessors, to the meeting.

#### **4. COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAMME – SUMMARY OF GRANTS APPROVED THROUGH THE FAST TRACK FUNDING PROCESS AND GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON GRANT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED**

(Minute 8 of 20 March 2003)

The Panel received an information report from the Director of Corporate and Community Strategy which gave the following details on grants:-

- (i) applications received for consideration under the Council's "fast-track" funding stream, since the previous report to members on 20 March 2003; including those awards made and those applications not supported;
- (ii) all grant applications received during the three year period commencing September 2000.

(Copy of report [ps-030918-r02-jmi](#), circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

The Panel was also given details of the funding history of the fast-track applications in the report.

It was AGREED that the present position on the Community Grants Programme be noted and supported as meeting the criteria and that the officers be thanked for their report.

#### **5. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

(Minute 6 of 16 January 2003)

The Panel received a report for the Chief Executive Officer, which advised members that the Government had made new regulations on members' allowances and access for councillors to the Local Government Pension Scheme (copy of report [ps-030918-r01-pbo](#), circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes). The Panel was advised that the Council, at its meeting on 25 September 2003, would be considering the new provisions, taking account of the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and would then be required to implement a new scheme of allowances. In doing so, the Council would also have regard to any views submitted by the Overview Panel, the Executive and the public.

The report of the Chief Executive Officer, included the text of the proposed report to the Council, (which incorporated the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel).

It was AGREED that the Council be informed that the Panel:

- (a) is broadly satisfied with the points based system for basic and special responsibility allowances;

- (b) suggests that rather than introducing a flat rate lump sum mileage allowance for travel within the Borough, the existing system of paying motor vehicle mileage rates, bus fares, etc. for travel within the Borough, should be retained in the interests of equity between members, in order to avoid any possible further taxation implications which could result from such a lump sum payment and to retain the link between remuneration and real expenses incurred;
- (c) concurs with the views of the Independent Panel on the indexing of allowances as set out in the Panel's report;
- (d) welcomes the opportunity for councillors to access the Local Government Pension Scheme and endorses the recommendations of the Independent Panel as set out in the Panel's report; and
- (e) considers that the level of dependant's carer's allowances (ie. for dependants and children) may not be reasonable at their current hourly rates and should therefore be given further consideration following the receipt of information on current market rates.

## 6. FINANCE STRATEGY

(Minute 8 of 16 January 2003)

The Director of Finance and Resources submitted a report which contained the text of a report to the Executive for its meeting on 22 September, 2003, on the review of the Council's Finance Strategy (copy of report [ps-030918-r04-kth](#), circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

The members were advised that the Panel was being consulted on the matter under which the Council's overall financial position would be reviewed prior to the approval of budget guidelines for 2004/05.

It was AGREED that the Executive be advised that the Panel:

- (a) suggests the following order for the reserve list of new capital priority action schemes:
  - (i) Achievement of recycling target of 40%.
  - (ii) Ferneham Hall – Adaptation of the Octagon Lounge
  - (iii) Provision for matched funding.
  - (iv) Neighbourhood facilities for young people.
  - (v) One-Stop Shop element of the Clean and Tidy Borough Review.
  - (vi) Seafield Park – new sports facilities.
  - (vii) Decriminalised parking.

- (b) supports the budget guidelines for 2004/05 as set out in paragraph 117 of the report to the Executive, subject to the replacement of the words 'the market price is being charged in all areas' with 'that note is taken of comparable fees and charges in neighbouring authorities' at the end of the paragraph under bullet point 3. (Voting: 4 for and 0 against with 3 members declaring abstentions from voting).
- (c) supports the maintenance of a minimum of £1m in the spending reserve and the use of any surplus above that sum in 2004/05. (Voting: 4 for and 3 against).
- (d) requests the Executive to seek all forms of revenue for the Council in 2004/05.
- (e) suggests the following order of priority for the reserve list of new revenue projects:
  - (i) Liquor licensing
  - (ii) Support to Fareham Community Centre users
  - (iii) Neighbourhood facilities for young people
  - (iv) Clean and Tidy Borough Review
  - (v) Seafield Park
  - (vi) Decriminalised Parking.

It was also AGREED that the Executive be informed of a minority report comprising the views of Councillors P J Davies and D J Murray who wished to suggest that in the third bullet point of the budget guidelines for 2004/05 (paragraph 117 of the report to the Executive) which related to increases in fees and charges, the words "to achieve at least a 5% increase in income" be replaced by the words "in line with inflation"; and the views of Councillor T G Knight who expressed concern at the proposal contained in the penultimate bullet point in paragraph 117, regarding capital schemes and suggested that the Council should accept the existing planned capital expenditure of £18,910,000 as summarised in paragraph 39 of the report to the Executive and place a moratorium on capital expenditure for the next three years.

## **7. NEW PRUDENTIAL CODE FOR CAPITAL FINANCE – IMPLICATIONS**

The members received a report from the Director of Finance and Resources which informed the Panel that the Executive, at its meeting on 22 September, 2003, would be advised of the implications for the Council of the new Prudential Code for Capital Finance (copy of report [ps-030918-r05-kth](#), circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes). The report to the Panel contained the text of the report to the Executive which the members were asked to consider and then submit any comments or views to the Executive.

It was AGREED that the Director of Finance and Resources be requested to inform the Executive that the Panel:

- (a) advises the Executive to pursue any requirements for the implementation of the proposed Prudential Code as soon as practicable;
- (b) advises the Executive to confirm that they no longer wish to pursue the achievement of 'debt-free status';
- (c) notes that borrowing is likely to be available as a financing option in the future;
- (d) supports the draft response to the consultation on the proposed new capital finance and accounting regulations (in Appendix 2 to the report to the Executive) but suggests that the points made in relation to the Council's serious homelessness problems should be strengthened with particular stress on the lack of social housing for the homeless and also that the Council's overall concern at the increasing housing waiting list in relation to its diminishing housing stock should be given greater emphasis in the submission.

**8. WORK PROGRAMME – 2003/04  
(Minute 6 of 24 July 2003)**

The Panel received a report on the Panel's current work programme for 2003/04 agreed at the last meeting on 24 July 2004 (copy of report, [ps-030918-r03-pbo](#), circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

The Panel reviewed the programme and it was AGREED:-

- (a) that, as necessary, any further reports on members' allowances be added to the appropriate Panel agenda before the end of the current municipal year;
- (b) that a consultation item on the Economic Development Strategy – 2004-07 Review, be added to the work programme for the meeting on 13 November 2003;
- (c) that a consultation item on the Roll Forward of the Town Centre Management Initiative – 2004-07, be added to the work programme for the meeting on 13 November 2003; and
- (d) that the briefing report on future proposals for CCTV provision be moved from the meeting on 11 March 2004 to the meeting on 15 January 2004 (with appropriate site visits for Panel members to the CCTV control centre being arranged before the meeting on 15 January).

(The meeting started at 6:00 pm  
and ended at 9:20 pm )