

**COMMERCIAL & HUMAN RESOURCES  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

11 March 2003  
(4.30 –5.40 pm)

**PRESENT:** Councillors White (Chair), Bagnall, Bradnack, Knowles, Liddle, Smart, and Smith.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Amanda Taylor, Executive Councillor for Commercial and Human Resources

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

**03/CHR/10 MINUTES**

The minutes of 14 January 2003, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**03/CHR/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Dryden and apologies for lateness from Councillor Bagnall.

**03/CHR/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Ellis-Miller declared a personal interest in minute number 03/CHR/18 as a user of the dental practice. Councillor Bagnall declared a personal interest in minute number 03/CHR/22 as she knew someone who lived in Flower Street.

**03/CHR/13 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No members of the public wished to address the Scrutiny Committee.

**03/CHR/14 ASSESSING MILL ROAD AGAINST APPROVED CRITERIA FOR NEW  
CCTV SCHEMES (see also Record of Decision 03/CHR/05)**

The Director of Central Services introduced the report. The Committee noted that although Mill Road satisfied the criteria, other locations within the city were also likely to satisfy the criteria, but had not been assessed in the same way.

The Director of Central Services informed members that there was a report on the possible use of mobile CCTV cameras to be considered at Strategy Scrutiny Committee on 24 March. An alternative proposal for Mill Road being served by mobile CCTV cameras was outlined with the financial costs of fixed cameras against mobile included in paragraph 8a.

In welcoming the report, Councillor Bradnack stated that Labour Group had proposed a budget for mobile CCTV cameras. However, there was currently no available funding in

2003/04 for a mobile CCTV scheme. He stated that the report should have addressed the possibilities of attracting partnership funding for other services when CCTV is installed e.g the Wren Nursery offering a play area near the Bath House. Councillor Smith stated that mobile CCTV would be welcome at the city's various local shopping parades based on the requests made to him from local shopkeepers.

The Chair, in noting that the officers would be investigating the financial implications of a mobile CCTV system, proposed an amendment to the recommendation to indicate a preference for a mobile CCTV scheme in Mill Road and that this be reported to Strategy Scrutiny Committee on 24 March. The Committee agreed with the Chair's proposal.

The Executive Councillor noted Councillor Smith's comments concerning local shopping parades and agreed with the Committee that a mobile CCTV system enabled built-in flexibility. She advised the Committee that investigations were taking place to identify possible capital funding for a mobile CCTV scheme.

The Committee agreed (by 8 votes to 0) to pursue a CCTV scheme for Mill Road as soon as funding permits and that a mobile CCTV system is the preferred system to deploy.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the amended recommendation.

**03/CHR/15 GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS, CARRY FORWARDS AND SIGNIFICANT VARIANCES** *(see also Record of Decision 03/CHR/06)*

The Accountant advised the Committee that there was £119,000 of carry forwards, subject to the outturn at the end of the year, including an additional £20,000 savings on CCTV so that the figure in the final column of Appendix A should now read £111,900 and not £91,900. The £20,000 came from additional income from East Cambridgeshire District Council and from staff savings as one post was not filled.

In response to questions from Councillor Knowles about items SC127 and SC145 in Appendix B, the officers clarified that the improvements to Committee Rooms 1 and 2 had not been completed due to any new lighting scheme requiring permission from the listed buildings officers and that the roof of Cellarers Chequer which was a listed building which the Council had a duty to look after, had needed substantial repairs.

The Committee agreed [by 7-0 on a) and by 6-0 on b)-e)] the recommendations for the Executive Councillor as stated in the report.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

**03/CHR/16 HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES, AS EMPLOYERS – THE WAY FORWARD** *(see also Record of Decision 03/CHR/07)*

The Head of Environmental Health & Waste Strategy introduced the 3 main elements to the report – the Council's response to the guidance from the Health and Safety

Commission on how it should operate to be an exemplar of good health and safety practice; the actions for Corporate Management Team outlined at section 5.5 of the Accident Analysis report for 2001/2002 and the Work Programme of the Joint Health and Safety Committee.

He said that the Joint Staff Employer Forum had considered the report in detail and had highlighted the following: absence from work due to stress needed to be addressed, concern at the under-reporting of violent incidents, more proactive work required on the appropriate use of mobile phones in vehicles and the provision of the Occupational Health Service being located at a distance in Milton Keynes. The Forum had recommended that the Executive Councillor for Commercial & Human Resources be included in the Pictorial Representation of the Council's Health and Safety Arrangements (page 26 of the report).

Councillor Bradnack asked whether the Council would be able to meet the targets set by the Health and Safety Commission by 2010. The Head of Environmental Health and Waste Strategy acknowledged that it would be difficult particularly since raising awareness in relation to the importance of reporting violent incidents would initially lead to an increase in the figures.

Councillor Bradnack also commented on the absence of reference to the contribution of the unions in the report. The Head of Environmental Health and Waste Strategy emphasised the contribution of the unions particularly their role in changing the culture of non-reporting of incidents and that mutual consultation occurred on a regular basis to agree a joint programme of work. Councillor Smart as Chair of the Joint Staff Employer Forum said that the unions had made a very helpful contribution to the discussions at the Forum, where they had also stressed the importance of prevention.

The Executive Councillor welcomed the Government's initiative on improving health and safety in the workplace, stressing the Council's responsibilities to provide a healthy and safe environment for staff. She pointed out that although more stringent reporting procedures might initially increase the number of reported lapses, that better information would enable the Council to take preventative action, thereby reducing accidents in future.

The Chair suggested that a report from the Trade Unions should be appended to future health and safety reports coming to the Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor as stated in the report (by 8 votes to 0).

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

03/CHR/17 **COUNCIL TAX ENFORCEMENT – COMMITTAL PROCEEDINGS** (see also *Record of Decision 03/CHR/08*)

The Head of Revenue Services tabled an amendment to the recommendations to the report. He said that committal proceedings was a last resort and that the process would

take account of the principles and approach of Revenue Services Anti-Poverty Strategy which had been revised last autumn. The Committee noted that the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy should be reviewed and considered at a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for approval.

On being put to the vote, the amended recommendation was approved as follows:

To re-affirm the authority's overall policy for the full utilisation of all enforcement options available in recovering outstanding debts appertaining to Local Taxes and in accordance with the principles of the Council's anti-poverty strategy (by 7 votes to 0).

**Agreed** (by 7 votes to 0) To re-affirm the authority's overall policy for the full utilisation of all enforcement options available in recovering outstanding debts appertaining to Local Taxes and in accordance with the principles of the Council's anti-poverty strategy.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the amended recommendation.

03/CHR/18 **KEY DECISION SALE OF LAND AT SEYMOUR STREET** (*see also Record of Decision 03/CHR/09*)

The Chief Estates Surveyor made a correction to the report at section 7(a) Financial Implications. The sale would generate income for the Housing Revenue Account and not for the Housing General Fund capital pot. He said that the planning permission for the surgery had required an egress into Seymour Street and that was the reason for the sale.

Councillor Smart spoke as a Ward Councillor supporting the recommendation. She said that the surgery was a large NHS practice and that exiting on to the ring road on Brooks Road increased the likelihood of accidents. Councillor Gilchrist, Ward Councillor, also spoke in favour of the recommendation as a successful outcome of several years of work.

Councillor Smith suggested that the money from the sale be ring fenced for use in the Romsey area. The Head of Housing Services indicated that this committee could make a recommendation but that it was the Executive Councillor for Housing & Health who decided how money was spent.

Councillor Smith proposed an amendment to the recommendation that "The Executive Councillor for Housing & Health use the money from the sale on improving the paving slabs in Wycliffe Road".

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost by 2 votes to 6.

The Committee agreed the recommendation for the Executive Councillor as stated in the report by 8 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendation.

03/CHR/19 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**Resolved -**

To exclude members of the public from the meeting on the grounds that, if they were present, there would be disclosure to them of information defined as exempt from publication by Categories 3 and 7 as defined in the Council's Constitution part 4B (pages 153/4).

03/CHR/20 **NNDR BUSINESS RATES – IRRECOVERABLE DEBTS TO BE WRITTEN OFF** *(see also Record of Decision 03/CHR/10)*

The Scrutiny Committee agreed to the recommendation for the Executive Councillor as stated in the report (by 8 votes to 0).

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendation.

03/CHR/21 **GENERAL DEBTS – BAD DEBTS FOR WRITE OFF** *(see also Record of Decision 03/CHR/11)*

The Scrutiny Committee agreed to the recommendation for the Executive Councillor as stated in the report (by 8 votes to 0).

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendation.

03/CHR/22 **PURCHASE OF LAND AT FLOWER STREET** *(see also Record of Decision 03/CHR/12)*

The Chief Estates Surveyor tabled an aerial photograph of the area showing where the land was located.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed to the recommendation for the Executive Councillor as stated in the report (by 9 votes to 0).

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendation.

The meeting ended at 5.40pm

**CHAIR**