

Runnymede Borough CouncilCORPORATE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

8 September 2005 at 7.30pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors G.B. Woodger (Chairman), N. Thewlis (Vice-Chairman), A. Alderson, J.R. Furey, P.A. Greenwood, J.E. Haas, R.K. Habgood, C.J. Norman, Ms. C.M. Simmons and P.J. Waddell.

Members of the Committee absent: None

Councillors J.R. Ashmore, J.M. Edwards and Mrs. L.M. Gillham also attended.

218. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 July 2005 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

219. ALLIANCE CAPITAL – PERFORMANCE REVIEW

(Ref: Minutes of Corporate Management Committee, December 2004, page 470, para. 378).

Members received the first of a regular 6 monthly presentation from the new managers of the Council's medium term investment portfolio, Alliance Capital. The presentation, which had been deferred from the July meeting because of transport disruption caused by the terrorist attacks in London on the same day, outlined the market background, global and UK economic outlook and reported on performance and future strategy.

The Committee was pleased to note that the gross return of 2.10% (net 2.04%) had slightly outperformed the benchmark London Inter Bank Bid rate of 1.97% in the fiscal year to 31 August. About half the portfolio had initially been invested in 6 month Certificates of Deposit (CD's) on yields of around 5% and a further 15% in 1 year CD's and bank corporate bonds at 5.1%. As yields subsequently fell in the first quarter of 2005/06 the interest rate exposure had been run down, although some 6-8 month CD's were acquired at 4.65% to protect against successive base rate cuts. Significant exposure had been built up in financial corporate bonds, close to the maximum permitted limit of £6m. These were primarily Floating Rate Notes offering additional yield of 0.1 – 0.25% compared to short CD's with the same issuers and with similar low exposure to interest rate changes. The portfolio had benefited from the additional yield as premiums generally tightened.

Members were informed that the market forecast interest rates of 4.5% for the remainder of the financial year, falling slightly to around 4% in 2006/07. The Fund Manager, however, tended to the view that the present low yields were not an indicator of a global slowdown and simply reflected prolonged low official rates. The worst of the UK slowdown was thought to have passed and, contrary to the market assumption, a series of rate cuts were not expected. It was noted that this picture could change if the effects of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast of the United States sent the US economy into recession, but this was considered to be an unlikely scenario. The key factor was oil prices and these had been rising steadily for some time without impacting on growth.

Despite the subdued economy and the recent easing in monetary policy the Fund Manager was therefore content, for the moment, to retain a cautious duration position with higher yields. The average life of the portfolio was currently 1.8 months which was reflected in the yield of 4.55%.

220. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2005/06 – FIRST QUARTER PERFORMANCE

Members received details of the Council's progress against the Best Value Performance Indicators for the period 1 April to 30 June 2005. It was noted that the overall performance had been very pleasing with significant progress in a number of service areas. Particularly noteworthy performance had been recorded in respect of housing stock repairs and maintenance, the average times for processing new Housing and Council Tax benefit claims and the proportion of 'other' planning

applications (such as consultations by adjoining authorities) determined within 8 weeks. The recycling performance would be further improved by the introduction of the green waste pilot scheme and the planned introduction of cardboard and mixed paper banks. Some concern was, however, expressed at the failure of the kerbside collection contractor to collect recyclable materials from flats. This represented a breach of the contract terms and Officers were in discussions with the company in an attempt to secure compliance.

The Committee noted that it was difficult to deliver a solely Council based recovery strategy in respect of those areas of underperformance where the Police was essentially the lead agency. The community safety targets had not all been met, but performance still compared well against both national and countywide outturns. This relative success reflected the achievements of the Safer Runnymede partnership and the Community Safety Strategy.

221. PRIORITY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE 2005/06 - FIRST QUARTER PERFORMANCE
(Ref: Minutes of Corporate Management Committee, June 2005, page 27, para. 49)

The Committee received details of performance in the first quarter of 2005/06 in respect of the Council's 10 priority indicators. The overall picture was positive, with sustained improvements in performance which compared favourably with the challenging targets the Council had set itself. Members were pleased to note that the average time taken to process new benefit claims had reduced still further to 23.7 days, well within the 34.5 day target, and the level of tenant satisfaction with repairs stood at more than 95%, against a target of 90%. Other achievements included an increase in the proportion of Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates collected compared with the same period in the previous year and a reduction in the average time taken to relet void properties to 27 days, which compared favourably with the recast target of 30 days. The proportion of household waste recycled was also on course to surpass its target, with the green waste pilot and the collection of cardboard and mixed papers expected to take the outturn to 18%.

The Committee noted that there had also been a slight improvement in the proportion of invoices paid within 30 days, rising from 93% to 93.5%. The development of the purchase ordering module of the TASK Financials system was expected to improve this still further since it would substantially solve the problem of invoice dates not being correctly recorded, allow reminders to be sent, help identify other problem areas at an early stage and provide further management information on the habitually late payers.

Despite these encouraging trends there remained some areas of underperformance, including a failure to reach the 98.8% target in the proportion of housing rent collected. Members noted that this was due to a number of reporting tools and automated arrears processes not being fully functional following a major system upgrade and the time staff needed to devote to the new system in order to manage the end of year routines. Performance would continue to be monitored closely and corrective action taken. Targets for the processing of notifications of changes in benefits claimants circumstances could no longer be met because the Government now calculated the start date from receipt of written notification of the change rather than receipt of all relevant supporting information. Officers would report back to Members on suitable alternative targets in due course. Members also noted that an increase in the household waste collected was primarily due to the inclusion, for the first time, of weights from street cleansing, special collections, clinical waste and recycling. The introduction of the pilot green waste collection was likely to reduce waste weights collected, as green waste was banned from wheeled bins in the pilot areas. This would be complemented by increased education and awareness programmes to try to reduce waste. Examination of best practice elsewhere continued. There had also been a slight fall-back in the percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks. The Planning Committee was shortly due to give consideration to the best means of meeting the 65% target.

RESOLVED that –

satisfaction be expressed with the progress to date and, where appropriate, the proposed corrective action but pressure be maintained to pay invoices within 30 days except where there is an issue in dispute.

222. EQUALITY STANDARD - RACE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

(Ref: Minutes of the Corporate Management Committee, July 2005, page 277, para. 159)

The Committee approved the adoption of a corporate Equality and Diversity policy which incorporated the existing Race Equality Scheme, a revised timetable for the review of policies, training and consultation and the criteria for prioritising impact assessment.

Members noted that the new policy encompassed the full range of the Council's equalities obligations, drawing together the various policy statements and strategies, including the Race Equality Scheme, and general duties not to discriminate in terms of gender, disability, race, sexual orientation or belief and, from 2006, age. This was consistent with the Government's intention to merge the Commissions for Racial Equality, Disability Discrimination and Equal Opportunities into a single Commission for Equality and Human Rights by 2009.

The new policy sought to apply the principles and duties enshrined in the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 to all areas of potential discrimination. This would oblige the Council to extend the existing monitoring of statistics in relation to gender, disability and ethnicity in terms of staff recruitment and promotion to include training, disciplinary hearings and grievances. It would also be necessary to review all policies and functions on a three yearly cycle to assess their impact on equalities. The policy scheduled a review of functions prioritised by the following criteria

1. Service having a direct impact on individuals' life, death, employment or housing
2. Services having a direct impact on personal income or individual environment
3. Services having an indirect impact on residents or members of staff

An internal Officer group had been established to guide the development of impact assessment. It was noted that the initial review of policies would be time intensive, although it would subsequently be integrated into the normal process of policy development. Relevant community groups would be consulted about the outcome of the assessments, the results of which were to be published on the website and in the Annual Report. It was hoped that some of these discussions could be incorporated within other consultation exercises or be undertaken in conjunction with other local agencies.

The Committee concurred with the view that all staff and Members should receive adequate equalities training from a specialist provider, with the process being managed in the first year by the consultancy resource engaged on the Equalities project. Training given to Housing Officers in combating racial harassment would also be offered to other staff while Officers responsible for policy development would be given assistance in assessing the potential impact on equalities. The cost of the training programme, estimated at approximately £13,000, could be met from within existing budgets.

RECOMMEND that –

- i) the equalities policy as set out at Appendix 'A' be adopted, subject to minor drafting changes;**
- ii) the approach to training set out above be endorsed;**
- iii) the criteria set out above be agreed as those by which policies will be prioritised for their impact on equalities assessment; and**
- iv) the method of funding, up to a maximum of £13,000, from existing corporate resources be noted.**

223. PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENTS – AREAS FOR POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION

(Ref: Minutes of Corporate Management Committee, December 2003, page 1113, para. 55)

The Committee gave consideration to the extent of the Council's participation in the proposed Surrey wide Public Service Agreement (PSA) for the period 2006-2009.

Members recalled that PSA's were a form of contract between the Government and one or more public authority/agency, designed to encourage and support sustained improvement in performance

in designated areas of public service. The target areas were to be well defined, with base data and agreed improvement measured over a three-year period. Agreements were only available through Unitary and County authorities although they could enter into partnerships with others. Pump priming of £1.85m was available for a Surrey scheme, to be allocated amongst the 12 local authorities and the Police Service. In addition, a Reward Grant of up to 2.5% of the individual authorities' net revenue budget would be provided if targets were met, together with a range of freedoms and flexibilities. Graduated rewards would be available for partial achievement where 60% or more of the target(s) was attained.

The Council had already agreed in principle to participate in a Surrey-wide PSA but progress on refining and agreeing the topic areas with the relevant Government departments had been slow and difficult, as had the settling of "stretch" service targets on which the reward grant would be calculated. This process had, however, now been completed and it was necessary to confirm which of the 12 service areas within the Agreement the Council would be participating in.

Members, mindful of the policy priorities of the Council, the nature of the contribution that could be made and the Council's present performance in each of the proposed target areas, were of the view that the five targets set out below were suitable for participation;

- i) Reducing journey times to work – by contributing the yellow bus and cycling initiatives and the saved peak hour journeys (target 2).
- ii) Enhance tonnage of non-domestic and commercial recyclable waste – by co-operation with the private sector companies (target 4).
- iii) Reduce the number and seriousness of road accidents – by including the Safer Runnymede speed reduction initiative (A320 in particular) already validated by the Transport Research Laboratory (target 6).
- iv) Reduce presence of litter and associated highway detritus – consistent with the Council's target for BVPI 199a (target 3).
- v) Improving the numbers offering themselves for volunteering – with agreement and co-ordinated by the Runnymede Association of Volunteer Services (target 12).

The service areas identified were all high performing, mainstream activities of the Council and complemented its priorities and objectives. It was noted that payment of the reward grant would be dependant not only on the Council's performance but also that of its partners in the individual target areas. Although the PSA was scheduled to commence in April 2006 it had been agreed that performance in the 2005/06 year could be counted towards the targets, thereby allowing account to be taken of improvements which had already been achieved or were in hand. No budgetary assumptions had been made for possible receipt of initial pump-priming monies or subsequent reward grant in 2009.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the Council reaffirms its willingness to participate in the proposed Surrey-wide Public Service Agreement 2006-09; and**
- ii) the service areas detailed above and scheduled in Appendix 'B' be confirmed for participation by the Council.**

224. NET REVENUE REDUCTIONS – FURTHER PROPOSALS

(Ref: Minutes of Corporate Management Committee March 2005, page 833, para 558)

Members gave consideration to a series of proposals for further net revenue reductions in the period 2005/6 to 2007/8. The proposals touched on a range of service areas, not all of which fell within the purview of the Committee. However, the Chairmen of the respective policy Committees had agreed that the programme should be dealt with in its entirety at this meeting in order to avoid delay and duplication. Where there was a need for third party agreement or consideration of detail, reports would be presented to the appropriate Committees.

The decision of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to cap the Council's revenue expenditure in the current year had placed additional financial pressure on the Authority at a time when a phased reduction in net expenditure was already required to achieve a sustainable budgetary position from 2009/10. The rephrasing of deficit payments to the pension fund had covered the immediate need for savings of £271,400 arising from the capping Order but, assuming that the Government maintained the present capping criteria in future years, the total revenue reductions target would effectively increase from £2m to £2.8m. A first tranche of net reductions, totalling £1.25m, had already been identified and the Committee now received details of a substantial programme of additional net reductions (set out in full at Appendix 'C') provisionally estimated at £1.633m.

The proposals, which had emerged after a challenging and rigorous exercise, were consistent with the policy guidance on potential reductions and had been formulated with regard for existing policy priorities, legislative obligations, the external efficiency targets set by the ODPM and an internally devised ranking mechanism developed for prioritisation purposes. The reductions largely arose from the rebasing of budgets, increases in discretionary fees and charges, the rescheduling of, and reductions in, special works, the restructuring, refocusing or reduction of service provision and re-engineering and efficiency savings. The reductions were planned for delivery in the current year where possible or otherwise during 2006/07 - 2007/08. As the underspent provisions previously identified had now been adjusted and budgets rebased to reflect patterns of spend, the figure of £250,000 originally allowed for the end of year betterment had now been removed from the calculations. The total reductions now identified therefore stood at £2.623m, a sum which would satisfy most of the requirements of the medium term financial strategy.

Members recognised that some of the proposals were provisional and further work would be required to properly establish the nature and scale of what could be achieved. Nevertheless, the Committee was of the opinion that the package of measures represented a coherent, credible and deliverable response to the considerable challenge facing the Council. The efforts to minimise the impact on service delivery and protect expenditure on those services particularly valued by the public was welcomed. It was felt that the measures would enable the Council to move forward and concentrate on service delivery without the distractions of an ongoing savings exercise. Members did, however, acknowledge that the proposals would reduce the capacity of the organisation to respond to new initiatives and lessen its overall resilience. It was agreed that regular reports should be submitted to the Committee in order to monitor progress towards the targeted reductions.

The Committee noted that staff redundancies would be minimised and, if possible, avoided. However, as some of the proposals involved potential redundancies, full consultation would take place with UNISON (which had already submitted a constructive response to initial discussions) and affected staff prior to any final decisions being implemented. All staff would receive a detailed briefing on the proposals, their implications and timing once approvals had been forthcoming. Consultation would also be undertaken with users of the Queen Elizabeth House and Eileen Tozer Day Centres in respect of the proposals to revise the service provision at the former and withdraw the weekend meals facility at the latter.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the Chief Executive Officer and Directors be authorised to implement the net revenue savings listed at Appendix 'C', subject to third party agreement as to consideration of detail where necessary; any such additional matters to be dealt with by the appropriate Committees;**
- ii) the views of UNISON, detailed at Appendix 'D', be noted; and**
- iii) the policy committees and Review Board be asked to note the proposals and monitor progress via their Service Plan reporting mechanisms, where appropriate.**

225. CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT - BUSINESS CASE
(Ref: Minutes of Corporate Management Committee, July 2005, page 270, para. 151)

At its meeting in July 2005 the Committee had given consideration to the procurement of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software in order to improve the delivery of services and enhance

internal efficiencies through the effective utilisation of existing data. It had been agreed at that time to open negotiations with the two market leaders, Northgate and Lagan, and procure the most cost effective solution for a sum not exceeding £130,000, provided that a satisfactory business case could be made. Consideration was therefore now given to a detailed business analysis which examined the strategic, economic and technical case for CRM and sought to identify the risk factors and likely impact of the new arrangements.

Members noted that the strategic case was driven by the increasingly customer focused mechanisms for service delivery which the Council wished to adopt in the new offices. Evidence suggested that the delivery of certain kinds of local authority services could be managed more effectively and economically by providing the Officer dealing with the public with enough information to enable them to complete the transaction, or transactions, at the first point of contact. CRM would provide a means of focussing the information on the point of contact, enabling the Officer concerned to draw on disparate information from a variety of sources, including the administrative databases, workflow system, image repository and content management system, whether they were dealing with the public on the telephone or face to face. The same principle would apply with the routing of information to the website in respect of the electronic delivery of the service. As the ways in which the services were grouped and the range of provision deliverable outside of the back office would change over time, the technology would have to be able to support whatever pattern of working the Council chose to be the most appropriate in that area of activity and be readily configurable by practitioners.

The other strand of the strategic case was the need to maintain the high quality of service delivered by the Council as measured by the Governments various performance monitoring regimes. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) believed that services should be delivered through CRM technologies. High scores on a number of indicators could therefore only be achieved using CRM. The economic case was based on the findings of the ODPM National CRM project and the experiences of individual authorities of all sizes which had adopted similar CRM solutions. Examples presented to the Committee, including case studies of West Lancashire and Swale District Councils, demonstrated tangible efficiency improvements and service enhancements. It was felt that considerable benefit would be obtained from the opportunity to completely re-engineer the method of service delivery, thereby accelerating the trend away from the departmentally based delivery of services. The full integration of CRM into most of the existing systems was a key element in the user specification and it was expected that the software of both of the previously identified suppliers would fit readily into the Council's existing IT infrastructure. The level of potential savings was still to be determined as it would be dependent on the extent of process change settled on by the Council. Given that both the technology and the supplier would be well established, the risks of implementation were considered to be both predictable and manageable.

Members therefore accepted the business case for a CRM solution, enabling the Council to proceed with the procurement exercise along the lines proposed at the previous meeting.

RESOLVED that -

the business plan for the adoption of CRM be accepted.

226. GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM – PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Committee received details of changes to the Geographical Information System (GIS) Project Management plan in order to take account of slippage in the extension of corporate access to the system. Members noted that it had been necessary to make adjustments to the programme as a result of 'settling in' issues arising from a significant upgrade of the software in 2004 and work on the creation of a corporate address database as part of the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG). A revised project plan therefore sought to set the detailed context for the development of access via the Intranet and Internet and the identification of additional applications. The Plan would be reviewed and monitored on an annual basis within the reporting framework of the Committee's Service Plan. It was noted that on-line access to departmental property based data through the NLPG reference would require the provision of a bespoke software solution for each database. The cost for each link was yet to be finalised although some development work was being undertaken as part of the upgrades to systems such as those in Planning and Building Control.

RESOLVED that –

the overall aims and direction of the GIS project be endorsed and progress monitored within the reporting framework of this Committee's Service Plan subject to further examination of the resource implications.

227. PROPOSED LEGISLATION AFFECTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Committee received details of Government Bills currently before Parliament that were likely to have implications for the Council.

Members noted that the range of potential legislation was not as great as in previous years. Nevertheless, while some of the new powers might be helpful, the general increase in complexity of procedure and legislation was, as always, a potential problem with inevitable resource implications.

One of the most significant packages of measures was contained in the Violent Crime Reduction Bill which sought to control imitation guns and knives as well as alcohol. This proposed that District Councils be empowered, following consultation with the police, to create alcohol disorder zones which would impose charges on clubs and pubs in the designated area in order to contribute to the cost of alcohol related disorder. There would be potential additional staff time involved both for the Council and the other agencies, including the Police and the County Council, which would also acquire new powers under the Bill. It was, however, possible that the proper use of the additional powers would counterbalance this extra call on resources with enforcement benefits.

Meanwhile some concern was expressed at provisions in the Charities Bill which sought to change the division of powers between the Charity Commission and local authorities in regard to collection permits and move towards a degree of self regulation. In future all types of collection, whether house to house, on the street, in supermarkets, or solicitation of direct debit pledges, were to be covered by one type of permit. The only matter with which the authority would be concerned was the appropriateness of the time and place of the proposed collection, although it would have limited enforcement powers against unauthorised collectors. The removal of scrutiny at local level, and a lessening in the Council's ability to co-ordinate and control different types of charitable activity, was thought likely to lead to an increase in complaints from members of the public, particularly in respect of direct debit "chuggers" who were not presently very active in the Borough. Handling this could conceivably take up more time than at present. Reports would be made on the provisions and resource implications in due course.

Members noted that it was too early to assess the likely affects of the Housing Benefit Bill or the Electoral Registration Bill, neither of which had yet been published. The former would seek to reform Housing Benefit to better meet the needs of people on low incomes and give them more choice and responsibility, as well as improving fraud enforcement. The latter was to be aimed at increasing electoral turnout and the prevention of voting fraud. It was likely to lower the qualifying age for standing for election to 18 and simplify party and candidate rules, amongst other provisions. Further reports would be brought on both measures in due course. While the ultimate impact on workload was, as yet, unclear, it would be essential for relevant staff to receive thorough training in the new provisions. The implications of the Identity Cards Bill were similarly uncertain at this stage in its passage through Parliament. Although primarily a national measure, there was a likelihood that it would be possible to check eligibility for public services against the National Identity Register.

228. DELEGATION TO THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

(Ref: Minutes of Corporate Management Committee, July 2005, page 253, para. 163)

Following a request at its previous meeting, the Committee considered extending the Director of Finance's discretionary authority to deal with write-offs, discretionary business rates relief and applications for hardship relief.

Members noted that the Director of Finance currently had delegated authority to write off debts of up to £1,000. This limit had remained unchanged for 10 years and was lower than that normally applied in neighbouring authorities. In order to prevent the Committee being overburdened with detail an increase to £2,000 was considered to be appropriate. There was not, however, felt to be a need to extend the Director of Finance's powers in respect of the award of discretionary business rates relief beyond the existing authority to top up relief to those organisations that fell within the scope of

Guideline 1 of the Council's policy guidelines on the matter (i.e. scouts/guides groups, community associations, village halls and day centres.) Applications from non-profit making leisure and sporting organisations within Guideline 2 would continue to be reported to Committee for determination. It was felt that Members should also retain responsibility for the determination of applications for hardship relief from Non Domestic Rates because of the need to assess the wider interests of local taxpayers. This was consistent with the practice in most of the other authorities in Surrey.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the Director of Finance be authorised to reduce and write off as irrecoverable debts properly due to the Council of up to £2,000;**
- ii) applications to reduce or remit the payment of National Non-Domestic Rates on grounds of hardship continue to be determined by the Committee; and**
- iii) determinations for the granting of relief in cases that fall within the scope of Guideline 2 (non-profit making leisure and sporting organisations) of the Council's policy guidelines on the determination of discretionary NNDR relief continue to be determined by the Committee**

229. HOMEWOOD HOUSING ASSOCIATION – DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF

The Committee gave consideration to an application from Homewood Housing Association for discretionary rate relief in respect of the Association's head office at the Old Fire Station in Pycroft Road, Chertsey. The Association was already in receipt of mandatory relief for the premises which reduced its rate bill by 80% and now sought discretionary relief for the remaining liability of £1,060, some 75% of which would be borne by the Council. The Association, which had recently registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, was principally concerned with the provision of accommodation for employees at NHS Trusts and associated keyworker organisations. It was not a registered charity but effectively held equivalent status. It was noted that the Director of Housing and Community Services was a Member of the Association's board but had not been involved in the submission of the application.

Members recognised the valuable service provided by the Association, particularly its contribution towards the Council's key-worker housing aims contained in the Strategic Plan. However, it was noted that the Association, which had recorded a modest surplus in its most recently published accounts, did not fall within the categories of organisation normally eligible for such assistance. Under the circumstances it was felt that discretionary relief should not, therefore, be awarded.

RESOLVED that -

the application from Homewood Housing Association Limited for 20% discretionary business rates relief be refused.

230. NOMINATION TO OUTSIDE BODIES – REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Committee noted that the Surrey Local Government Association had invited nominations from member authorities in order to fill a vacancy on the Regional Environmental Protection Advisory Committee.

RESOLVED that -

no nomination be made to the Surrey Local Government Association in respect of the vacancy on the Regional Environmental Protection Advisory Committee.

231. URGENT ACTION - STANDING ORDER 42

Members noted details of the following action which had been taken after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee under Standing Order 42.

<u>Officer</u>	<u>Action Taken</u>	<u>Central Index No.</u>
Director of Technical Services	Virement of £14,500 from Town Centre maintenance, Smart Borough and Environmental Maintenance budgets to help meet the £32,500 cost of reinstating and enhancing the Garfield Road car park and landscaping and paving outside the new Community Centre.	591
Director of Technical Services	Approval of purchase of a software package to assist in meeting Planning performance indicator targets upon which part of the 2005/06 Planning Delivery Grant was dependent.*	592

* in conjunction with the Chairman of the Planning Committee.

232. EXTERNAL APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE – MINUTES

RESOLVED that –

the Minutes of the meeting of the External Appointments Sub-Committee held on 1 June 2005, attached at Appendix 'E', be received and adopted.

233. SAFETY COMMITTEE – MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Safety Committee (formerly the Health and Safety Advisory Group) held on 7 June 2005, attached at Appendix 'F', were received and noted.

234. WRITE OFFS

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 7 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee agreed that a number of debts should be written off as irrecoverable.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the Council Tax arrears, totalling £1,553.06, as detailed in Exempt Appendix '1' to the Agenda, be written off as irrecoverable; and**
- ii) the Non-Domestic Rate arrears, totalling £1,995.78, as detailed in Exempt Appendix '2' to the Agenda, be written off as irrecoverable.**

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 9.29 p.m.)