

# Minutes



Meeting CORPORATE STRATEGY AND CO-ORDINATION STANDING  
SELECT COMMITTEE

Date Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> September 2004 (commencing at 10.30 am)

## membership

Persons absent are marked with `A`

## COUNCILLORS

D E Pulk (Chair)  
Tom Pettengell (Vice-Chair)

A	Steve Carroll	A	K L O'Toole
	G Gilfoyle		Mrs Sheila Place
A	Richard Jackson		Ray Poynter
	B Laughton		Maureen Tewson
A	Ellie Lodziak		Y Woodhead
A	J T A Napier		

## ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor M Brandon-Bravo

## MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2004, having been circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

## APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillor Richard Jackson  
“ Ellie Lodziak  
“ K L O'Toole

## DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

None.

## BALANCE OF FUNDING REVIEW – REFORM OF THE COUNCIL TAX SYSTEM

Vernon Coaker, MP for Gedling attended the meeting to take back the views of the Nottinghamshire public on council tax reform to Government.

Councillor Pulk commented that the survey of Nottinghamshire residents showed that 46% were in favour of local income tax and 23% a mix of local income tax and council tax. He added that the over-riding feeling was that the present system was not fair.

In response to a question from Councillor Poynter, Mr Hurford from the Resources Department explained that the interpretation by the Local Government Association was that there would be a 7% increase of council tax next year but that there was pressure for low single figures. There was a Government assumption that efficiency savings would close the gap. Councillor Poynter stated that council tax was perceived to be unfair, was difficult to understand and the gearing issue was a problem. He added that it was difficult to get people to understand why if inflation was 2% for example council tax inflation was not the same. He pointed out that another issue was tasks being transferred from central government to local government without funding. He commented that the last time there was a funding review there was a suggestion as to whether local government funding should be removed from education. Councillor Pulk stated that this review had been based on local services provided by local government as they were at the moment. He added that the question of education funding was outside this consideration.

Councillor Laughton stated that Charles Clarke, the Secretary of State for Education had decided that funding of education would be taken out of county councils budgets. This would give the Government a way out and allow them to discount council taxes. He felt that the positive responses for a local income tax had been because this was the only alternative given them and they felt that anything would be better than the present system. Councillor Pulk pointed out that it was unfair to suggest that local income tax had been the only option offered and that other options had been put forward.

Vernon Coaker MP commented that all political parties were looking at the issue of education funding and that none had made their minds up. He added that people wanted local government funding to reflect the ability to pay and that the task for Government was to find a way that was fair and reasonable. Councillor Laughton pointed out that one of the issues was that people had to pay council tax out of taxed income.

Councillor Gilfoyle commented that in reality people did not want to pay tax. He added that if people had to pay tax they wanted it to be fair and based on ability to pay and to provide services they believe were needed. He felt that most of the public were not interested in who paid for education but were interested in how much they paid each week. He added that there was a need not to forget the cost of collecting the tax. Councillor Tewson felt there was a need to consider the issue of students. She pointed out that those who paid council tax did not see it as fair that students did not contribute.

Councillor Brandon-Bravo commented that it was not clear from the report what was meant by a local income tax, was it regional, shire, borough or parish. He thought there were more problems with local income tax than had been touched

on. Councillor Pulk stated that there were issues around possible future migration. Another issue was whether it was paid on where a person lived or worked. If it was based on where they lived the costs of collection increased. Councillor Brandon-Bravo commented that the problems became identified in the detail of schemes. Councillor Poynter felt that a local income tax was a question of principle not detail. He pointed out that around the world many countries implemented a local income tax. Councillor Pettengell agreed that there was an issue around students not paying. He also felt that pensioners were being badly treated under the present system, particularly those around the threshold.

Vernon Coaker, MP, said he would try to summarise the points raised with a view to sending the summary to Nick Raynsford, the Local Government Minister and the Prime Minister. He pointed out that whoever won the next general election, the issue of local government funding would be decided by Cabinet. He added that people did feel there was a problem with the present system but the difficulty was coming up with solutions. He felt that the Select Committee had adopted a mature approach. The key element was that people felt there was no relationship to ability to pay. He commented that local income tax appeared to be the answer but when one got into the detail problems arose. He added that the system needed to be understood by the public and hold local politicians to account. The cost of collecting the tax and the thresholds also needed to be considered.

It was agreed that a summary of the review be forwarded by Vernon Coaker MP to Nick Raynsford and the Prime Minister.

#### **DOMESTIC BURGLARY RATES: RESPONSE FROM THE DEPUTY LEADER**

Councillor Pulk reported that he had received a letter from the Deputy Leader. It was agreed that a report on this be presented to the next meeting.

#### **ACCESS TO SERVICES BEST VALUE REVIEW: AUDIT COMMISSION INSPECTION**

Councillor Pulk reported that the Strategic Management of Property Ad Hoc Committee was considering Access to Services as part of its review. It was agreed that the report be passed on to the Ad Hoc Select Committee for comments.

#### **PROGRESS ON THE CORPORATE ICT BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW**

The progress towards implementing the approved service review action plan was noted.

## **STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF PROPERTY AD HOC SELECT COMMITTEE**

It was agreed that the Strategic Management of Property Ad Hoc Select Committee be re-established as a Sub-Committee of this Committee with its current membership and terms of reference.

## **WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme was noted. It was agreed that the response from Councillor Kirkham to the Committee's report on burglaries and crime be added to the October meeting agenda.

The meeting closed at 11.26 am

## **CHAIR**

M\_1sept04