

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD  
ON WENESDAY 20 APRIL 2005 AT  
6.30 PM

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PRESENT: Councillor M G Carver (Chairman/Leader).  
Councillors H G S Banks, M R Alexander,  
N Burdett, D Clark, A P Jackson, T Milner,  
R L Parker, N C Poulton.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors W Ashley, S A Bull, R N Copping,  
Mrs M H Goldspink, A M Graham,  
Mrs D L E Hollebon, M P A McMullen,  
J O Ranger, J P Warren and M Wood.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Miranda Steward	- Executive Director
Rachel Stopard	- Executive Director
Amanda Brodie	- Solicitor
Cliff Cardoza	- Head of Contract Services
Declan Hoare	- Interim Assistant Director (Direct and Contract Services)
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Lorraine Kirk	- Senior Communications Officer
Bernard Perry	- Assistant Director (Human Resources)
David Tweedie	- Assistant Director (Financial Services)

723 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Executive passed a resolution pursuant to Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public during consideration of the business referred to in Minute 724 on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

RECOMMENDED ITEM

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724 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT PERFORMANCE

The Executive Member for Environment submitted a report detailing the actions taken to address ongoing poor performance of the grounds maintenance contract.

The Executive Member detailed the background to the letting of the contract to Sodexo Land Technology Ltd (SLT) and made a number of suggestions for the Executive's consideration. He detailed three main options and their advantages and disadvantages as follows:

- Continue with the current approach - putting operational and financial pressure on SLT to improve performance.
- Finalise negotiations with SLT with a view to the Council funding additional resources.
- Negotiate with SLT to remove grass cutting on highways and in residential areas from the contract and place this work with another contractor.

The Executive Member proposed that additional resources be allocated to achieve the required standards for grass cutting within the District. He

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emphasised that additional funds would only be paid on a monthly basis if the Council's officers were satisfied that specific targets had been met. He also proposed that monthly progress reports be submitted to the Executive Board. Specifically, the Executive Member proposed that recommendation (B), as set out in the report now submitted, be supported, subject to an amendment to the effect that the recommendation would read as follows:

**'an increase in the grounds maintenance budget of up to £108,000 for 2005/06 be approved to fund additional resources in order to achieve the required standards for grass cutting within the District'**

The Executive Member for Finance referred to Council's decision to earmark a contingency of £50,000 for 2005/06. This sum would be applied as the first call for the additional resources proposed. Further sums up to a total of £108,000 would be met initially from the Council's general contingency. He stated that, as part of the 2006/07 budget preparation, further consideration would need to be given to the level of funding allocated to grounds maintenance depending on the performance of SLT over the coming months.

In response to a number of Members' questions, the Executive Member for Environment detailed the circumstances of the award of the contract to SLT in April 2001, the number of defaults that had been issued, and the need to consider further the non grass-cutting items that formed part of the contract.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed and noted that these would be referred to the Council meeting on 20 April 2005, for determination, by way of an oral report by the Leader of the Council.

**RECOMMENDED - that (A) an increase in the grounds maintenance budget of up to £108,000**

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**for 2005/06 be approved to fund additional resources in order to achieve the required standards for grass cutting within the District, and**

**(B) officers continuing with the current approach outlined in sections 4.10 – 4.13 to improve contract monitoring and management and acknowledge the risks involved, be approved.**

**ACS**

The meeting closed at 7.02 pm

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Chairman	.....
Date	.....