

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
ON WEDNESDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2007
AT 6.45 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A P Jackson (Chairman/Leader).
Councillors M R Alexander, M G Carver,
L O Haysey, T Milner and M J Tindale.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors W Ashley, R Beeching, R Cheswright,
R N Copping, A D Dodd, R Gilbert,
A M Graham, D L E Hollebon, G Lawrence,
G McAndrew, J Mayes, D A A Peek, N C Poulton,
W Quince, R Radford, J O Ranger, P A Ruffles,
S A Rutland-Barsby, R Taylor, J P Warren,
N Wilson, M Wood and C Woodward.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Anne Freimanis	- Chief Executive
Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Cliff Cardoza	- Head of Environmental Services
Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Philip Hamberger	- Director of Internal Services
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic Services
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services
Ian Sharratt	- Grounds Maintenance Manager
Nick White	- Communications Officer

340 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor R L Parker.

341 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Leader asked Members to note that there were two reports on the agenda relating to the Grounds Maintenance Contract. The second report, forming item 8 of the agenda, duplicated the content of the first report but also contained exempt information as defined under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972. This exempt information aimed to assist the Executive in considering this matter. Unless there was a specific question on the exempt information, it was intended to consider solely the public report.

342 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor T Milner declared a personal interest in the matter referred to at Minute 344 – Grounds Maintenance Contract, as he was the Council's appointed representative on the management board of Riversmead Housing Association.

RESOLVED ITEMS343 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 23 October 2007 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

344 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

The Executive Member for Environment and Conservation submitted a report on the results of the tender evaluation process for the Council's Grounds Maintenance Contract.

The Executive Member advised that, in May 2007, Council had agreed to re-tender this contract for a period of 6 years and 9 months with a possible extension period of up to 7 years.

The Executive noted that the grounds maintenance service had been exposed to a 'restricted' tendering procedure in line with EU procurement legislation. This had resulted in 18 companies requesting the tender documentation. Seven of these met pre-qualification criteria and were selected to submit tenders. Tenders had been received from the following four companies:

- Connaught Environmental Ltd;
- Wyevale Environmental Ltd;
- John O'Conner Grounds Maintenance Ltd, and
- Sodexho (Land Technology) Ltd.

The Executive Member explained the tender evaluation methodology that had been used. He also advised that the procurement process and decision had both been subjected to risk assessments.

The Executive noted that officers had consulted with the key clients of the service. Hertfordshire Highways had indicated that it wished to continue using East Herts Council as its contractor for highways grounds maintenance under the new contract upon existing terms, subject to price.

Riversmead Housing Association had confirmed that it wished the Council to provide grounds maintenance services within its estates and for sheltered housing sites, subject to price. South Anglia Housing Association had indicated that it no longer wished the Council to provide

these services on its behalf. The Executive noted the reasons behind South Anglia Housing Association's decision.

The Executive Member highlighted that the available net budget, after contributions from partners, for this service, uplifted for 2008/09 prices, was £804,247. The net budget requirement for the preferred bidder was £853,690, allowing for anticipated contributions from partners. The budget shortfall, assuming a decision to accept the tender from the preferred bidder, would be submitted for inclusion within the 2008/09 budget.

In response to comments from Members, the Leader confirmed that officers would discuss with relevant public service providers the need for a consistent approach to be taken to providing grounds maintenance services, particularly where their properties shared a communal boundary with areas covered by the proposed contract.

The Leader confirmed that an appropriate evaluation of the financial standing of the preferred bidder had been undertaken.

The executive supported the recommendations on this matter as detailed in the report now submitted.

RESOLVED – that (A) the grounds maintenance contract be awarded to John O'Connor Ltd;

(B) the Director of Customer and Community Services be requested to open discussions with Hertfordshire County Council and Riversmead Housing Association on which of their options should be included in this contract, if any, and the basis for new Agency Agreements, and

DCCS

(C) the provision for the additional sum of £49,443 be submitted for inclusion in the 2008/09 budget.

DCCS/
DIS

The meeting closed at 7:00 pm

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Chairman
Date