

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL – 25 MARCH 2008

REPORT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

3. AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

'D' RECOMMENDATION – that the amendments to the Financial Regulations and Financial Procedures contained in the Constitution be approved.

1.0 Purpose/Summary of Report

1.1 The report considers amendments to the Council's Financial Regulations and Financial Procedures which form part of the Constitution to assist the Council to deal with financial matters. The Monitoring Officer monitors and reviews the Constitution on a regular basis. Recommended changes are included in the appendix (Appendix 'A', pages 5 - 64) to the report.

2.0 Contribution to the Council's Corporate Objectives

2.1 **Fit for purpose, services fit for you**

Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.

3.0 Background/Report

3.1 The current version of the financial regulations which form part of the Constitution was approved by the Council on 10 January 2007. The financial regulations have been completely rewritten to make them easier to follow and apply. They have taken account of requests for changes to achieve greater flexibility to meet the needs of modern Councils whilst retaining effective controls. They follow current best practice. The amendments also take account of changes in the senior management arrangements and a different approach to the management of virements.

- 3.2 The provisions relating to procurement have also been extensively changed (Appendix 'B', pages 65 - 94). These regulations have been amended to take account of changes in legislation and the need for a more flexible approach to enable joint procurement exercises to be undertaken with other Councils.
- 3.3 The proposed amendments are so extensive that it is not possible to show them by tracked changes. A commentary comparing the old regulations with the new regulations is shown italics within the text.
- 4.0 Portfolio Holder Briefings
- 4.1 The amendments reflect proposals to revise the roles and responsibilities of the Capital Strategy Group, the Asset Management Group and the IT Steering Group.
- 4.2 The Capital Strategy Group would be replaced. New capital schemes would be considered prior to a report being submitted to the Executive. At the same time progress of the capital programme and other financial monitoring would be considered and reviewed.
- 4.3 Asset management would be considered at Member briefings for the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Internal Support and the Portfolio Holder for the relevant service. Implementation would be delegated to officers, where appropriate, reports to Members would be generated. The views of Corporate Management Team (CMT) would be obtained. The Asset Management Plan would be submitted to the Executive for approval and progress would be subject to scrutiny by the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.0 Structure for IT Services
- 5.1 The report by Socitm on the Council's IT Service recommended that a new governance structure is established, along the following lines:
- 6.0 ICT Member Group
- 6.1 This Group would be chaired by the relevant Portfolio Holder and meet every 3 months.. This will have the dual purpose of overseeing the progress of the ICT programme, and liaising with ICT over the provision of ICT services to Members. Written reports would be presented in accordance with the normal procedure. These arrangements will continue until the end of March 2009 when they will operate on the basis of exception reporting and briefing for the Portfolio Holder.

7.0 ICT Strategy Group

7.1 This Group would comprise Heads of Service from each Directorate or nominated by the Director of Internal Services and chaired by the Director of Internal Services, meeting normally every 3 months, but perhaps more frequently during the development of the annual work programme. Written reports (plans and progress) should be presented by the ICT Manager, supported by members of his management team as appropriate. The main focus of this group is to oversee the development and maintenance of the ICT Strategy, and the prioritisation of the ICT work programme. On an exceptional basis, they may review performance indicators. This Group will be accountable to Corporate Management Team. CMT would receive reports on a frequency to be decided the Director of Internal Services.

8.0 ICT Liaison Group

8.1 The Group would include the key users or system administrators in each Division. This would initially be chaired by the Director of Internal Services, with the intention of passing this on to another Head of Service when it is established. The main focus of this group is to share information and best practice, to generate ideas and act as a sounding board for ICT management, to discuss major operational issues, and to review ICT performance. The suggested frequency for meeting is once every one or two months. The ICT Manager should present written reports; it may be appropriate to delegate this to other members of his management team when the group has become established.

9.0 Consultation

9.1 Consultation has taken place amongst Executive Members and Directors.

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 The legal implications have been taken into account in amending the Constitution.

11.0 Financial Implications

11.1 There are no financial implications that result directly from this report.

12.0 Human Resource Implications

12.1 There are none.

13.0 Risk Management Implications

13.1 A Constitution which reflects the Council's structure and delegation is important to the smooth running of the organisation.

Background Papers

The Constitution, relevant Regulations and Guidance.

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