

MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY
MEETING OF EAST HERTS COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 25 MARCH 2008 AT
7.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A L Burlton (Chairman).
Councillors M R Alexander, W Ashley,
K A Barnes, S A Bull, M G Carver,
Mrs R Cheswright, R N Copping, J Demonti,
A D Dodd, R Gilbert, Mrs M H Goldspink,
A M Graham, P Grethe, J Hedley,
Mrs D L E Hollebon, A P Jackson, G McAndrew,
M P A McMullen, J Mayes, T Milner, R L Parker,
D A A Peek, M Pope, N C Poulton, W Quince,
R Radford, P A Ruffles, S Rutland-Barsby,
J J Taylor, R I Taylor, M J Tindale, A L Warman,
J P Warren, N Wilson, M Wood, C B Woodward.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Allen Gales	- Deputy Section 151 Officer
Philip Hamberger	- Director of Internal Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services
Nick White	- Communications Officer

ACTION599 AMENDMENTS TO FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Leader of the Council submitted a report seeking amendments to the Council's Financial Regulations and Financial Procedures, which formed part of the Constitution, to assist the Council to deal with financial matters.

Council noted that the current version of the financial regulations had been approved by Council on 10 January 2007. The Leader stated that these had been completely rewritten to make them easier to follow and apply. They had taken account of requests for changes to achieve greater flexibility to meet the needs of modern Councils whilst retaining effective controls. The proposed new regulations followed current best practice and also took account of changes in the senior management arrangements and a different approach to the management of virements.

The provisions relating to procurement had also been extensively changed. These regulations had 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.

The Leader also proposed new arrangements for capital, IT and asset management as detailed in the report now submitted.

In response to Members' questions, the Leader clarified that proposed capital schemes were developed in accordance with the Council's agreed priorities. He believed that the proposed new arrangements would provide greater clarity and transparency.

The Leader also updated Members on the latest budget monitoring information for 2007/08. This indicated that the £1.1m underspend projected in February 2008, was now in the region of £1.4m. He proposed that the additional £300k be allocated to the Service Improvement Fund.

ACTION

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised Council of the comments made by Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 18 March 2008. The Committee had made the general comment that the Council's approved Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy should be included within the new Regulations. Copies of this had been made available to Members at the meeting. More specific comments had been made as follows:

Financial Regulations

<u>Paragraph</u>		<u>Comment</u>
4.4.3	}	Reporting via Members' Information Bulletin not necessary as reported in other ways.
4.4.4	}	
4.5.4	}	
15.1.1		The limit should be kept at £50.
17.3.2		The minimum cover should be £5m.

Contract Procurement Rules

3.5		The inclusion of an additional band was supported.
6.1		The options for tendering were supported.
10.1	}	The urgency provisions for the Chief Executive to take action were supported.
13.3	}	
17.2	}	The proposals on variations were supported.
17.3	}	

ACTION

Appendix C – Legal Provisions	The provision of parent company guarantees instead of performance bonds was supported.
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Appendix F – Engagement of Consultants	The approach was supported.
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Council accepted the Scrutiny Committee's comments as now detailed. The Director also drew attention to various typographical errors, which would be corrected.

In response to a question from Councillor A M Graham, the Director clarified that the Council's Insurance Officer worked closely with insurers in reviewing the minimum cover arrangements regularly.

In respect of the payment of travelling and subsistence claims, the Director commented that Members' wishes could be recognised.

Council approved the new Financial Regulations as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that the amendments to the Financial Regulations and Financial Procedures contained in the Constitution be approved.

600 RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Leader of the Council submitted a report seeking approval for the revised Risk Management Strategy. The Corporate Risk Management Group had reviewed the strategy and a revised draft was set out in Appendix 'C' of the report now submitted. The proposed amendments were shown as tracked changes.

The Leader commented that in order to add clarity to the document, details of the risk management cycle, the risk assessment process and the impact/likelihood matrix had been included. Section 3 had been amended to take

ACTION

account of the new training arrangements for Members and the role of the Council’s Audit Committee to monitor the development and operation of risk management. The amendments also took account of the key lines of inquiry for use of resources (2008 assessments). Finally, the Leader stated that a new section had been added on risk management and partnerships.

The Leader invited Members to notify the Director of Neighbourhood Services of any typographical errors as soon as possible.

Council approved the revised Risk Management Strategy

RESOLVED - that in accordance with Financial Regulations, the revised Risk Management Strategy be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm

Chairman
Date