

**MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE
WEDNESDAY, 18 JANUARY 2006**

Councillors *Adje (Chair), Lister (Vice-Chair), Canver, Hillman, Meehan, Milner, Reith, Sulaiman and Wynne

*Denotes present

Also Present: Councillors Jean Brown, Bull, Hoban, Williams and Winskill.

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTON BY
TEX157.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors Canver, Diakides, Lister and Milner. An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Hillman.</p>	
TEX158.	<p>ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER</p> <p>(Report of the Director of Finance – Agenda Item 3):</p> <p>Our Chair agreed to accept the report as urgent business. The report was late because the District Auditor’s Annual Audit and Inspection Letter had not been received until 16 January 2005. The report was too urgent to await the next meeting because of the need to consider actions required to secure further improvement in the Council’s performance.</p> <p>Our Chair welcomed to the meeting Michael Haworth-Maden (District Auditor) and Carol Mounfield (Audit Manager) who introduced the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter. We noted their assessment that the Council was improving well and had achieved an overall comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) of three stars. In particular, this year had seen positive outcomes in services for children and young people and for vulnerable adults. Nearly 75 per cent of best value performance indicators (BVPIs) had been maintained or improved, although performance was coming from a low base in some services. The Council was developing its focus on areas where progress was less consistent.</p> <p>We also noted that spend was generally high in comparison to other near neighbours and that whilst the Council could demonstrate factors affecting its spend, such as demographic mix and the need to invest for service improvement, there was a mixed picture when assessing whether costs were commensurate with performance levels.</p> <p>We were informed that action had been taken to address the ongoing qualification of the Council’s accounts in respect of the accounting treatment adopted for the Alexandra Palace long-term debt. The general fund balance had been maintained in line with the Council’s target level, although financial pressures were continuing in 2005/06 and the medium to longer-term. Standards of financial conduct and the arrangements to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and to maintain the legality of</p>	

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	<p>financial transactions are generally satisfactory. However, their review of overspending on the Technical Refresh project had highlighted serious failures in the Council's corporate governance arrangements in respect of that project.</p> <p>We were also informed that action needed to be taken by the Council to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustain improvement in better-performing services, whilst continuing to develop its focus on those services where progress was less consistent; • demonstrate that high-cost services were delivering value for money, and embed the culture of challenge for value for money Council-wide; • maintain tight budgetary control to deliver financial balance for 2005/06 and the medium to longer-term; and • as a priority, develop and implement an action plan in response to the District Auditor's report on the Technical Refresh project. <p>Arising from our consideration of paragraph 46 of the District Auditor's Letter clarification was sought of the position with regard expenditure on mortuaries and on the New Deal for Communities Bridge Scheme. We noted that work remained on-going in these two areas as a result of which a certificate to conclude the audit for 2004/05 had not yet been issued.</p> <p>(At this juncture Councillor Meehan left our meeting to attend the School's Organisation Committee).</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the response and actions to the recommendations contained in the Audit and Inspection Letter as set out in paragraph 8.6 of the interleaved report be approved. 2. That the Council be informed accordingly. 	<p>DF</p> <p>HMS</p>
<p>TEX159.</p>	<p>TECH REFRESH - REVIEW OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>(Report of the Chief Executive – Agenda Item 4)</p> <p>Our Chair agreed to accept the report as urgent business. The report was late because the District Auditor's Annual Audit and Inspection Letter had not been received until 16 January 2006. Consideration of the report on the Tech Refresh project in parallel with that on the Annual Letter was logical given the cross referencing between these two reports and the availability of representatives from the Audit Commission. The report was too urgent to await the next meeting because of the need to obtain Member agreement at the earliest opportunity to enable officers to prepare and implement further work.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p>	

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the report of the Audit Commission as set out as an Appendix to the interleaved report of the Interim Chief Executive be noted. 2. That the Interim Chief Executive produce a detailed action plan for submission to the February meeting of the Executive. 3. That the Council be informed accordingly. 	<p>CE</p> <p>HMS</p>
<p>TEX160.</p>	<p>IS/IT INFRASTRUCTURE ARRANGEMENTS</p> <p>(Report of the Interim Chief Executive – Agenda Item 6)</p> <p>Our Chair agreed to accept the report as urgent business. The report was late because the offer from the incumbent infrastructure supplier had not been received until early January and had to be explored by the Council. The report was too urgent to await the next meeting because the consideration of the offer required a Member decision and any delay would cause the Council to incur additional cost.</p> <p>This item was the subject of a motion to exclude the press and public from the meeting as it contained exempt information relating to terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods and services.</p> <p>With the consent of our Chair, an addendum to the interleaved report was tabled.</p> <p>Having considered the revised offer received from Northgate Information Solutions as set out in the interleaved report of the Interim Chief Executive and the tabled addendum, we</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That our decision of 20 December 2005 (vide Minute 156) to proceed with in-house provision of a range of network and helpdesk services be endorsed. 2. That a further report be submitted to our February meeting on the proposed in-sourcing including on the questions of reporting systems to Members, and the implementation of a Service Level Agreement. 3. That the Council be informed accordingly. 	<p>ACE (A)</p> <p>ACE (A)</p> <p>HMS</p>

CHARLES ADJE
Chair