

**FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL  
OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 29 JANUARY 2009**

Present:- Councillor R P Chambers – Chairman.  
Councillors:- R Clover, J E N Davey, K L Eden, D M Jones, A J Ketteridge, T P Knight, R M Lemon, H S Rolfe, G Sell, A D Walters and P A Wilcock.

Officers in attendance:- J Mitchell (Chief Executive), S Joyce (Chief Finance Officer), S Martin (Head of Customer Support and Revenue Services), C Roberts (Democratic Services Officer) and A Webb (Director of Central Services).

**FA30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R D Sherer and M L Foley.

**FA31 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2008 were received and signed as a correct record.

**FA32 CHAIRMAN'S VERBAL REPORT**

The Chairman of the Committee said that he would like to comment that the Council was well on the way towards the production of a prudent sound and workable budget.

**FA33 LEAD OFFICER'S REPORT**

Members received the report of the Director of Central Services which gave an update on the new lease car scheme, development of a procurement card scheme and progress with resolution or writing off of three historical balances. The Director of Central Services answered Members' questions on these matters and Councillor Wilcock asked that, regarding the HMRC balance, a letter be sent to the Treasury direct if the current appeal to HMRC was unsuccessful.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

**FA34 MATTER ARISING FROM IT WORKING GROUP**

The Director of Central Services referred to the last year's capital programme and the draft capital programmes for 2009/10 and 2010/11, and explained that the IT Working Group had recommended the replacement of the electoral system in these programmes by a document imaging system. The reason that a change to the computerised electoral roll system had been

contemplated was not due to the capability of the system but due to its sustainability as the supplier of the original system was a very small company with very few employees. Since the initial inclusion of the project the original supplier had been taken over by one of the market leaders in electoral roll systems and therefore the need to replace had been removed.

Councillor M Lemon explained that the Working Group had debated the matter at length, and supported the proposed change.

**RESOLVED**

That the £50,000 funds allocated within the capital programme for a new computerised electoral system be now re-directed to further develop a document imaging project.

FA35

**2009/10 FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REVENUE BUDGET**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Central Services, and the Chief Finance Officer on its revenue budget for 2009/10 for final determination.

The Chief Finance Officer described the budget as a “steady state” budget without growth or cuts. Since it had been issued there had been received details of increased housing and council tax benefit claims which had caused changes to the detail of the budget although not affecting the bottom line figures. *(This will be amended before final determination of the budget by the Council on 19 February.)*

**RESOLVED**

that the Committee’s 2009/10 revenue budget as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved for recommendation to the Finance and Administration Committee.

FA36

**TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND LANDSBANKI UPDATE**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer which summarised treasury management activity for the period 1 November to 15 January including the appointment of new Treasury Management advisers, Arlingclose Ltd, replacing Butlers, an update on the Landsbanki issue and news on the Council’s application to capitalise certain costs.

Members welcomed the change of adviser and asked that the Director of Arlingclose be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee.

**RESOLVED**

that the Committee:-

- 1 Notes the treasury management activity and current position as set out in the report
- 2 Notes that a capitalisation approval is expected which if confirmed will alleviate pressure on the Council's revenue budget
- 3 Decides not to commission a third party independent review of the Council's counterparty arrangements which would cost about £5,000 - £6,000.

FA37

### **USE OF RESOURCES 2008/09**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer on the progress being made towards improving the Council's scores in the Use of Resources assessment.

Members discussed the advantages to be obtained from the Improvement Board if the Council had an Audit Commission score of "1", compared with the situation should it become a "2" council.

Councillor Rolfe suggested that agenda items should incorporate more risk analysis but that the "Impact" box was frequently not useful.

RESOLVED that the report is noted and the Performance Select Committee requested to oversee the programme of work to improve scores for use of resources.

FA38

### **ANTI FRAUD POLICY**

The Committee considered the Council's Anti Fraud Policy for the purposes of carrying out the annual review upon it.

The report also informed the meeting about the new generic Enforcement Team.

RESOLVED that the Council endorses the existing policy.

FA39

### **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of Exempt Information as defined in paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

FA40

**RELOCATION OF GREAT DUNMOW COMMUNITY INFORMATION CENTRE**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Customer Support and Revenue Services regarding proposed relocation of the Great Dunmow CIC to the new Great Dunmow Library.

RESOLVED that subject to negotiation with ECC and staff consultation the Great Dunmow Community Information Centre is relocated to the new library.

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm.