

**THE MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF EASINGTON
HELD ON FRIDAY 28 SEPTEMBER, 2007**

Present: Councillor R Taylor (Chair)

Councillors B Bates, E Bell, S Bishop,
Mrs G Bleasdale, B Burn, A Burnip,
R Burnip, P J Campbell, R Davison,
Mrs S Forster, Mrs J Freak, J Haggan,
H High, A J Holmes, G Johnson,
D Maddison, Mrs J Maslin, Mrs S Mason,
K McGonnell, D Myers, G Patterson,
G Pinkney, D Raine, P Stradling,
T Unsworth, C Walker, P G Ward and
Mrs V M Williams

1. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT

J Dafter, Audit Manager from the Audit Commission was in attendance to discuss the Annual Governance Report for 2006/7.

He briefed Members on the Report produced in accordance with the Audit Commission's Code of Practice, which provided a summary of work carried out during the 2006/7 audit of accounts, conclusions reached and recommendations made to discharge statutory audit responsibilities to those charged with governance.

He advised that the Audit Commission proposed to issue an unqualified audit opinion and in their view the Statement on Internal Control had been prepared in accordance with proper practice specified by CIPFA and was consistent with the findings of the audit. The Audit Commission's work on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources was now complete and it proposed to issue an unqualified conclusion.

The Use of Resources Assessment was due to be completed by 31 October 2007 and the outcome would be reported to Officers with feedback to the Council within the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter.

He explained that the Audit Commission was required to report all unadjusted mis-statements that had been identified during the course of the audit, other than those that were clearly trivial. He was pleased to report that there were none to bring to the attention of Members.

The Audit Commission was also required to bring to the Council's attention mis-statements that had already been corrected by management where they were considered relevant to the wider governance responsibilities. These were set out in Appendix 6, with an analysis of the most significant items provided within the Report.

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Other work included the requirement to report on the qualitative aspects of the Council's accounting practices and financial reporting, and to consider the Council's systems of accounting and financial control, details of which were set out in the Report.

To conclude, he stated that the Council had taken a positive and constructive approach to the audit and he expressed his appreciation to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and the Accountancy team for their effort, assistance and co-operation. The Executive Member for Resources reiterated this and commented on the good working relationship that existed between the Council's Finance and Accountancy Section and the Audit Commission.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

2. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraph 4, Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Prior to consideration of the following items of business, Councillors B Bates and R Davison declared their personal and prejudicial interests and left the meeting.

3. EAST DURHAM HOMES MAINTENANCE SERVICE VALUE FOR MONEY REVIEW

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Executive Members for Housing and Resources on the East Durham Homes Maintenance Service Value for Money Review, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that the recommendations as outlined out in Section 7 of the report, be agreed.

4. HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES – FINANCIAL PLANNING ISSUES 2007/08 TO 2011/12

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Executive Members for Housing and Resources regarding the financial planning issues in respect of the Housing Management and Maintenance Services for the period 2007/8 to 2011/12, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that the recommendations as outlined in Section 8 of the report, be agreed.