

**CUSTOMER FIRST AND ACCOMMODATION ADVISORY GROUP
(Report of the Advisory Group)****1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Advisory Group met on 5th August 2008 and Councillors P L E Bucknell, S J Criswell, T V Rogers, L M Simpson and G S E Thorpe were present. Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor P J Downes.
- 1.2 Councillor L M Simpson was elected Chairman of the Advisory Group.
- 1.3 Also in attendance were Councillor I C Bates and Messrs S Couper, D Monks, R Preston, R Reeves and M Sharp and Miss H Ali.
- 1.4 The report of the meeting of the Advisory Group held on 29th November 2007 was received and noted.
- 1.5 Councillors P L E Bucknell and G S E Thorpe declared personal interests in respect of their membership of the Development Control Panel. Additionally, Councillor Bucknell declared a personal interest as Executive Member for Planning Strategy and Transport.

2. NEW ACCOMODATION DELIVERY – MID-PROGRAMME REVIEW

- 2.1 The Advisory Group received and noted a report by the New Accommodation Project Co-ordinator reviewing the progress and delivery of the new accommodation buildings at the half way stage of the project as a whole.
- 2.2 The Advisory Group received a detailed explanation in respect of a number of aspects to the project, including the successful completion of Eastfield House, an overview of the construction work currently taking place on the Headquarters site, a revised property strategy for Castle Hill House and the site of Block A and details of a number of risks that had been identified outside the development agreement. In terms of the site of Block A, the Advisory Group was advised that initial attempts at marketing the land fronting St Mary's Street had been unsuccessful which reflected the current economic climate and state of the building industry. Options to address the situation were currently being considered by the Project Team.
- 2.3 The Advisory Group was acquainted with the budget variations that had arisen over the course of the project which were attributed to additional works and staffing costs relating to Eastfield House and additional costs relating to the Headquarters build which included increased property strategy costs, improvement works to Castle Hill House, exceptional items outside the development agreement, design changes to improve the functionality of the Headquarters building and further contingency costs for the duration of the project.

- 2.4 In terms of decanting staff from the existing building to the first completed phase of the new building, the Advisory Group was advised that this would occur over a two week period in early December 2008, which would include the transfer of all data and telephony to ensure that ICT services were maintained throughout the move.
- 2.5 The Chairman updated the Advisory Group with progress made to date in respect of the Civic Suite.
- 2.6 The Advisory Group placed on record their appreciation to the New Accommodation Project Co-ordinator and his Team for their hard work and effort in co-ordinating the project to date.

3. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The report submitted to the Advisory Group meeting contained exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972. They are therefore unavailable for public inspection. In the event of any questions at the Cabinet meeting relating to the content of the report, the Cabinet will be invited to pass a resolution to exclude the press and public where the necessary answers are provided.

Chairman