

CITY OF ELY COUNCIL
PERSONNEL, FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF AN EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING HELD AT 7.00 PM ON
7TH JULY 2025 AT SESSIONS HOUSE, LYNN ROAD, ELY

PRESENT: Mrs T Coulson – Clerk to the Council

Cllr C Ní Dhónaill

Cllr R Trent

Cllr R Ward

Cllr C Phillips

Cllr R Moss-Eccardt

Cllr L Fox

Cllr M Banyard

Cllr R Denness

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Novick.

2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. TO AGREE TO PERMIT THE PROCUREMENT OF THE URGENT REPLACEMENT OF THE MALTINGS' BOILERS WITH ONLY ONE QUOTE AS PER SECTION 5.13 OF THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Due to the urgent nature of the situation with the two boilers at the Maltings which have experienced a critical failure: the pressure rose too high, triggering the pressurisation valve and resulting in the release of approximately three feet of water. The plumber has expressed concern that this may have caused significant damage to the burners, although he cannot confirm the extent of the damage or guarantee their safety.

Whilst the pressure had been reset, the problem could recur. Should it happen again, the potential damage could be far more severe. The boilers could be condemned, and we could end up with no heating or hot water and potentially the building could flood or have an impact on the safety of staff, the public and residents. This would result in financial damage to the business and running of the Maltings.

Given the critical nature of the heating infrastructure and the need to ensure continuity of service, the council has opted not to go out to tender for the boiler replacement. Instead, it will be proceeding with a **direct award to a trusted contractor** with a proven track record on our site. This decision is based on the following key factors:

1. **Continuity and Familiarity:** The selected contractor has extensive knowledge of our existing systems, having maintained and serviced them over several years. This familiarity significantly reduces the risk of installation errors, delays, and post-installation issues.
2. **Time Sensitivity:** The current boiler system is nearing failure, and any delay in replacement could result in service disruption, particularly during colder months. A tender process would introduce unnecessary delays that could compromise operational resilience.
3. **Risk Mitigation:** Engaging a new supplier through a tender process introduces risks related to onboarding, site induction, and potential incompatibility with existing infrastructure. These risks are mitigated by using a known and trusted provider.

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COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
18TH AUGUST 2025

It was agreed the only viable solution is the urgent full replacement of the boiler system and to waive the Financial Regulations in so far as going to competition because of the reasons above, as per 5.13 should be followed. "5.13 - When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the council or the Personnel, Finance & Governance Committee. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason."

Cllr Moss-Eccardt proposed the urgent replacement of the Maltings' boilers with only one quote, as per section 5.13 of the Council's Financial Regulations. This was seconded by Cllr Banyard and a vote undertaken. The result of which was 3 for the replacement and 2 against. The motion was therefore approved and the boilers will be ordered as a matter of urgency.

The award will be advertised on Contracts Finder.

The Clerk agreed to look at the Council's Risk Management Policy to review and amend this to ensure that these types of situations are covered within this.

4. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on the 18th August 2025.

The meeting closed at 7.34 pm.

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COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
18TH AUGUST 2025