

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2014, AT 7.00
PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Alexander (in the Chair)
Councillors M Carver, L Haysey, P Phillips,
S Rutland-Barsby and M Tindale.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors P Ballam, R Beeching,
E Buckmaster, S Bull, M McMullen, P Moore,
N Symonds, J Thornton and J Wing.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

211 **CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN 2015/16 - 2018/19**

The Executive considered a draft of the Council's Strategic Plan 2015/16 – 2018/19, which outlined priorities for the next four years and identified key outcomes it would be seeking to achieve.

The Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 26 August 2014, had recommended the Plan for adoption.

Councillor J Wing referred to comments he had made at the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee meeting, in respect of the recycling service and asked whether the financial implications of seeking to achieve a 60% recycling target had been built into the Plan. The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services referred to the reducing costs of recycling in recent years and stated that any specific projects identified during the Plan period would need to feed into the Medium Term Financial Plan.

In response to Councillor J Wing's comment on the use of capital receipts to achieve additional affordable housing, the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport referred to the affordable housing policies within the emerging District Plan and the importance of achieving the right mix of property types within housing developments. The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support also reminded Members of the Council's work with Registered Social Landlords in transferring land ownership that enabled affordable housing units to be provided.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that the 2015/16 – 2018/19 Corporate Strategic Plan be approved.

212 **FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2015/16 - 2018/19 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE**

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report which considered revisions to the Financial Strategy including the policy on Reserves and the proposed planning assumptions to be used in updating the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

The Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 26 August 2014, had considered the report and, whilst supporting the Financial Strategy and the MTFP, had expressed concern that the level of Reserves currently being held was not within the agreed limits set out in the Reserves Policy.

The Executive Member for Finance accepted these comments and stated that the Authority could either raise the ceiling within the Reserves policy or lower the level of Reserves. He advised that a report on this matter would be submitted to a future meeting of the Executive.

The Executive Member also drew attention to the planning assumptions within the MTFP as detailed at Essential Reference Paper ‘C’ of the report submitted. He suggested that, as part of the continuing budget preparations, the assumptions on the Pay Settlement and Members Allowances be merged into a single line. He also suggested that Fees and Charges increases should be closer to the inflation figure. Further work on these matters would be undertaken and specific proposals reported back to Members as part of the MTFP and budget consideration at future meetings.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the proposed Financial Strategy as now submitted, be adopted, subject to further consideration of the Reserves Policy; and

(B) the planning assumptions set out in the report submitted, be adopted as the basis for framing the 2015/16 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan to 2018/19, subject to further consideration of the Pay Settlement, Members Allowances and Fees and Charges, as now detailed.

213 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor A Jackson.

214 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 5 August 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Leader.

215 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY

The Executive received a report detailing those issues referred to it by the Scrutiny Committees, which were noted. Issues relating to specific reports for the Executive were considered and detailed at the relevant report of the Executive Member.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

216 ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

The Executive considered the 2013/14 Corporate Annual Report, documenting the Council's key achievements for each of the corporate priorities over the last financial year. The report also provided an overview of the Council's financial position and performance and a statement on contracts.

The Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 26 August 2014, had supported the Annual Report subject to clarification of a couple of references relating to census data on 'country of birth' and 'method of travel to work' which appeared to be inconsistent. The Committee had also suggested clearer information regarding the balance of income to expenditure of Housing Benefit Grants be included. The Executive accepted these as fair comments.

The Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport gave an update on the progress of the District Plan and

expressed his appreciation of the hard work undertaken by the Planning Policy team.

The Executive approved the 2013/14 Corporate Annual Report as now submitted.

RESOLVED - that the 2013/14 Annual Report be approved.

217 2013/14 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Executive considered the 2013/14 Annual Governance Statement and the 2014/15 Action Plan. The Audit Committee, at its meeting to be held on 24 September 2014, would be asked to approve these documents and the Executive was invited to comment.

The Executive noted the comments of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 26 August 2014, in relation to the 'Here to Help' statement being expanded to include the role of Members. The Executive supported these comments and the documents going forward to the Audit Committee.

RESOLVED – that (A) the comments of Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee be received; and

(B) the Audit Committee be advised that the Executive supports the 2013/14 Annual Governance Statement and the 2014/15 Action Plan, as now detailed.

218 PUBLIC HEALTH OFFER TO DISTRICTS AND BOROUGHES IN HERTFORDSHIRE 2014-16

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report detailing a funding offer received from Hertfordshire County Council to provide public health outcomes and projects. A total of £100,000 had been offered for the next two years for the delivery of mutually agreed public health priorities. The Executive Member detailed the

criteria for evaluating and selecting suitable projects and the proposed governance and monitoring arrangements.

The Executive Member referred to recent informal discussions with some Members and suggested that a representative of the Health and Wellbeing Panel on the proposed project board could represent a conflict of interest, given the Panel's role in the scrutiny function. She undertook to hold further discussions with the Panel Chairman.

Notwithstanding this, the Executive Member suggested a slight amendment to the membership of the project board, which would ensure that appropriate officer expertise would be available in the evaluation process. This was supported by the Executive.

In response to a comment by Councillor P Ballam on a current HCC consultation on bus services, the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport advised that a report on this matter would be submitted to the Executive in due course.

The Executive approved the recommendations as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the proposed structure for the selection of projects for the delivery of public health outcomes funded by the offer from Hertfordshire County Council, be approved;

(B) the Director of Neighbourhood Services be authorised to sign the memorandum of understanding between the County Council and East Herts Council; and

(C) the project board consisting of the Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support, the Director of Neighbourhood Services and senior Officers appropriate to the proposals under evaluation for determination, be approved.

219 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - JULY 2014

The Executive considered an exception report on performance and finance monitoring for the Council for July 2014.

The Executive approved the recommendations now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the budgetary variances set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report be noted;

(B) the extension of the Conservation Officer’s contract as stated in paragraph 2.4 of the report submitted, be approved;

(C) a drawdown £135,000 from the Local Plan reserve as set out in paragraph 2.20 of the report, be approved;

(D) the use of £35,200 from the Cost Of Change Reserve to support the Graduate Trainee Scheme in 2015/16 as detailed in paragraph 2.21 of the report, be approved;

(E) the use of the Interest Equalisation Reserve as detailed in paragraph 2.22 of the report, be approved; and

(F) changes to the capital programme as detailed in paragraphs 2.33 to 2.41 of the report and a supplementary estimate of £50,000 for additional work to be undertaken at Hartham swimming pool as set out in paragraph 2.37 of the report, be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.48 pm

Chairman
Date