

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
JOINT MEETING OF SCRUTINY
COMMITTEES HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2016, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Paul Phillips (Chairman).
Councillors D Abbott, A Alder, M Allen,
P Ballam, R Brunton, S Bull, M Casey,
K Crofton, G Cutting, H Drake, M Freeman,
J Goodeve, R Henson, Mrs D Hollebbon,
J Jones, P Moore, T Page, M Pope, S Reed,
Snowdon, M Stevenson, N Symonds,
K Warnell and J Wyllie.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, E Buckmaster,
L Haysey, G Jones, G McAndrew, P Ruffles,
S Rutland-Barsby and G Williamson.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Claire Bennett	- Manager of Housing Services
Ryan Brock	- NGDP Graduate Trainee
Cliff Cardoza	- Head of Environmental Services
Philip Gregory	- Head of Strategic Finance
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
Will O'Neill	- Head of Communications, Engagement and Cultural Services
Ceri Pettit	- Corporate Planning and

	Performance Manager
Paul Pullin	- Economic Development Manager
Kevin Steptoe	- Head of Planning and Building Control Services
Su Tarran	- Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services
Liz Watts	- Chief Executive
Ben Wood	- Head of Business Development

558 CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN 2016/17 – 2019/20

The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services submitted a report that presented a draft of the Council's Corporate Strategic Plan which outlined its priorities for the next four years (2016/17 – 2019/20) and the key outcomes it was looking to achieve.

In response to a query from Councillor M Pope, the Head of Planning and Building Control defined the meaning of an Urban Design Study. The Executive Member for Development Management and Council Support stated that she was not aware of any plans for an Urban Design Study for Ware in support of vibrant town centres.

The Executive Member confirmed to Councillor M Pope that Hertford Town Council had identified a number of aspirations for the town which had resulted in the Hertford Urban Design Study.

The Chairman commented on why the savings that

were detailed in the Medium Term Financial Plan were not included in the Corporate Strategic Plan. The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services confirmed that there was a significant amount of ongoing work that went into ensuring a balanced budget in support of the Corporate Strategic Plan for the period from 2017/18 onwards.

Members received the report and supported the recommendation now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the report be received; and

(B) the draft 2016/17 – 2019/20 Corporate Strategic Plan, as now submitted, be approved.

559 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs D Hollebon and seconded by Councillor J Wyllie that Councillor P Phillips be appointed Chairman for the joint meeting.

RESOLVED – that Councillor P Phillips be appointed Chairman for the joint meeting.

560 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors K Brush, J Cartwright, J Kaye, D Oldridge and R Standley.

561 MINUTES – 19 JANUARY 2016

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the joint meeting held on 19 January 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

562 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed the press and public to the

meeting. He also welcomed the Executive and Heads of Service.

563 2016/17 – 2019/20 SERVICE PLANS

The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services submitted a report that outlined the key service plan activity the Council intended to undertake between 2016/17 – 2019/20. The Service Plans sat underneath the Corporate Strategic Plan and were the result of a new integrated finance and business planning process, which had begun in the summer of 2015.

The Head of Business Development advised that the Service Plans contained more detail than the public facing Corporate Strategic Plan. He confirmed that the Service Plans supported the aspirations and content of the Corporate Strategic Plan.

The Head of Business Development emphasised that the Corporate Strategic Plan had only contained information of interest and relevance to the public. He concluded that new priorities would inevitably emerge and the Service Plans would consequently be revisited each year.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service confirmed to Councillor N Symonds that the transition into universal credit had commenced on 1 February 2016 with a completion of the first phase by the end of March 2017.

Councillor K Warnell was given clarification regarding the delivery of a modern car park management system. He was assured that this issue had been reported to the Executive and there would still be a system similar to RingGo.

Councillor P Moore commented on whether the Scrutiny Chairs could be included on Executive away days. The Leader summarised what occurred on Executive away days in that ideas were considered in line with the corporate priorities and straplines of the Authority.

The Leader stated that East Herts needed to be more focused as a Council and she indicated that consideration could be given to inviting the Scrutiny Chairs to join the Executive on future away days. The Head of Business Development summarised what had occurred at the budget workshops that had taken place in October 2015.

The Chief Executive responded to Members' comments by summarising the definition of a Business Improvement District. She referred to a meeting with Town Clerks and a pilot project before this concept would be rolled out more widely in East Herts. She assured Councillor J Jones that this concept would be the subject of substantial consultation.

The Chief Executive advised that many companies were building houses and research was needed to ascertain the best way to secure new housing for East Herts. She confirmed that once the research stage was complete, reports would be brought before Members for their consideration.

Councillor C Snowdon expressed concern that mental health had not been included in the Service Plans as part of the Health and Wellbeing agenda. The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing stated that Councillor P Moore was the Council's mental health champion and mental health would very likely be included in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Leader assured Councillor M Pope that football pitch provision was being looked at as part of the Bishop's Stortford sports review. She referred to the Bishop's Stortford North Strategy that was being funded via Section 106 money.

The Manager of Housing Services confirmed to Councillor M Pope that the Authority wanted to review the current and future use of temporary accommodation to ensure the Council made the best use of the temporary

accommodation available to it, avoids bottlenecks in the process and had sufficient provision to meet future demands.

Members received the report and supported the recommendation now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received; and

(B) the Executive be advised that the joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees supports the approval of the 2016/17 – 2019/20 Service Plans, key actions and performance indicators as detailed in Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ of the report submitted.

564 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION AND ACTION PLAN
2016/17 – 2019/20

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report inviting Members to support the Economic Development Vision for East Herts. The Executive Member stated that this document would be considered by the Executive on 8 March 2016 as the Authority did not currently have an up to date strategy.

Members were reminded that Economic Development was not a large department and the pragmatic reality was that only a small number of issues could be addressed by Officers. One particular focus was the Council becoming responsible for business rates from 2020.

Following a comment from Councillor M Freeman regarding slowing growth in East Herts in recent years, the Executive Member emphasised that East Herts was well placed in terms of employment in that there were not many residents who wanted to work who were unable to do so.

The Head of Business Development confirmed to Councillor J Wyllie that the Council did everything

possible to avoid the aspirations of residents being hampered by red tape. He also advised that the Authority had to be more conscious of all the surrounding areas in terms of the populations coming into East Herts.

The Executive Member for Economic Development and the Economic Development Manager responded to a comment from Councillor N Symonds regarding the importance of incubation space for business start-ups in East Herts.

The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services responded to an observation from Councillor M Pope. Members received the report and supported the recommendation now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received; and

(B) the Executive be advised that the joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees supports the approval of the Economic Development Vision and Action Plan 2016/17 – 2019/20.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

Chairman
Date