

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 23 JULY 2013, AT 6.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A Jackson (Chairman/Leader)
Councillors M Alexander, L Haysey,
P Phillips and M Tindale.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, R Beeching,
E Buckmaster, G McAndrew, M McMullen,
T Page, J Ranger, P Ruffles, J Thornton and
G Williamson.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
Will O'Neill	- Head of Communications, Engagement and Cultural Services
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

142 **BUSINESS CASE FOR SHARED SERVICES - (FOR ICT, BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT, PRINT AND DESIGN) (1)**

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report seeking approval for the creation of a shared ICT, Business Improvement, Print and Design service with Stevenage Borough Council.

The Executive recommended the proposals as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the delivery of ICT, Business Improvement, Print and Design service functions be delegated to Stevenage Borough Council; and

(B) additional capital funding of £82,500 to be added to the capital programme to support the delivery of shared services, be approved.

(see also Minute 148)

143 **HERTFORD THEATRE CAPITAL**

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a request for capital to be allocated to upgrading lighting, audio and other technical equipment, and the seating in the auditorium at Hertford Theatre.

The Executive noted that in order to enable continued growth in the business within the context of better than anticipated performance against the original business plan targets, the case for the proposed investment was overwhelming. Details of the equipment upgrading were set out in the report now submitted.

The Executive Member suggested an amendment in respect of the proposal on the seating in the auditorium. She proposed that a detailed specification be drawn up and that tenders be sought. Following this, a report

seeking the necessary capital allocation would be submitted to the Executive.

The Executive recommended the proposals as now amended.

RECOMMENDED - that (A) £64,500 be added to the Capital Programme for essential upgrades to audio, lighting and technical equipment at Hertford Theatre as specified in Essential Reference Paper 'C' of the report submitted; and

(B) in respect of upgrading the seating in the auditorium at Hertford Theatre, a further report be submitted following the tendering process.

144 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors M Carver and S Rutland-Barsby.

145 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 4 June 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

146 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that the Economic Development team had organised for Members a tour of the District showcasing various business enterprises that the Council had assisted. This would be held on 2 September 2013 and details would be circulated in due course.

147 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In respect of Minute 151 – Provision of Affordable Homes with Registered Providers in the District, Councillor M Alexander declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in that he was Board Member of Riversmead Housing Association. He left the

chamber whilst this matter was considered.

148 BUSINESS CASE FOR SHARED SERVICES - (FOR ICT, BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT, PRINT AND DESIGN) (2)

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report seeking approval for the creation of a shared ICT, Business Improvement, Print and Design service with Stevenage Borough Council. The Executive recalled that, in November 2011, it had approved a report on Shared Support Services which recommended that the detailed business case for sharing these support services be developed.

The Executive Member referred to the business case as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'B' and suggested that the case was persuasive. He outlined the three main objectives for the services, namely delivering efficiencies, strengthening resilience and increasing capacity to support ongoing service development. The key conclusions from the business case were set out in the Executive Summary now submitted. Details of human resource, finance and accommodation implications were also set out.

In response to Members' questions on conflict resolution, the Executive Member expressed his confidence that each Authority's Strategy document would enable them to move forward. The Director of Finance and Support Services added that the partnership agreement would be a legal arrangement that spelt out the staged methods of conflict resolution. Disengagement from the agreement would be a last resort, but would nevertheless, be outlined in a protocol to be developed. She suggested that this was an issue that perhaps Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee might wish to look at in the future.

The Leader added that the Revenues and Benefits shared service demonstrated a constructive working partnership between the two Authorities.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the proposal for delivery of ICT, Business Improvement, Print and Design services through a shared services with Stevenage Borough Council, including the transfer of staff who fall in scope of the partnership from East Herts Council to Stevenage Borough Council under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) 2006, be approved;

(B) a supplementary Revenue estimate of £85,000 to be met from the planning contingency, be approved; and

(C) delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance and Support Services in consultation with the ICT portfolio Holder, to negotiate and agree a partnership agreement to implement these proposals.

(see also Minute 142)

149 ICT INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report on ICT infrastructure costs as a result of the decisions taken elsewhere in respect of shared services. A core part of that proposal was to implement a shared data centre with Stevenage Borough Council, in which the majority of the ICT infrastructure required by the two Authorities would be housed.

The Executive Member set out the estimated cost of ICT infrastructure for East Herts Council under the shared service arrangement and compared that estimate to the cost of investing in infrastructure as a single authority over the same seven year period. The savings identified were set out in the report now submitted. He did not attempt to identify the future need to invest in ICT business applications, as a programme of work to review the Council's key line of business applications would be undertaken as a separate exercise.

In response to a question on the level of coordination with

Stevenage Borough Council, the Director of Finance and Support Services commented that this would be defined by the ICT Strategy and compatibility would be taken as far as possible. She reminded Members of the role of the IT Strategy Group in overseeing software requirements.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the findings of the ICT Health check and limitations in the current ICT Infrastructure referred to in section 2 of this report, be noted;

(B) the new investment programme for ICT Infrastructure 2013/14 to 2020/21 of £860,943 as set out in Essential Reference Paper C, be approved; and

(C) £400,000 of the £630,000 estimated saving on ICT Infrastructure over 7 years be set aside to fund new line of business applications in 2013/14 and 2014/15.

150 RESOLUTION OF OBJECTIONS TO THE "CHANTRY" SCHEME CHANGES

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report outlining Officer recommendations relating to objections received in respect of a proposed amendment to the Chantry Resident Permit parking scheme.

The Executive recalled that this scheme had been introduced in April 2012, covering 16 roads and approximately 650 properties. As part of a formal review process, the Council had completed an assessment of the scheme amongst households within the zone in June 2013, which had included a questionnaire for residents. 308 responses had been received and as a result of suggested amendments, a Traffic Regulation Order was advertised in April 2013. 19 formal objections had been submitted as detailed in the report now submitted. The Executive Member set out proposed responses to each objection.

The Executive considered the representations made and the Officer responses and approved the implementation of the scheme as amended.

RESOLVED - that (A) the representations and subsequent recommendations made by Officers in respect of objections received be considered, and

(B) Officers be instructed to proceed with the implementation of the scheme as detailed in the report submitted.

151 PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOMES WITH REGISTERED PROVIDERS IN THE DISTRICT

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report seeking approval to undertake land transfers to Registered Providers for the provision of affordable homes.

The Executive noted that Riversmead/Network Housing Association had gained planning permission to develop at 17 - 28 Grass Warren, Tewin, comprising a mix of 1 x 4 bed detached house, 4 x 3 bed semi-detached houses and 3 x 2 bed bungalows. The planning permission had included a parcel of land which was currently in East Herts Council's ownership. The Executive Member detailed the proposed land transfer, the potential value of the clawback and the nomination rights.

The Executive Member also proposed an amendment to the effect that the proposed delegation to Officers be subjected to the Asset Management Group having to confirm that a proposed disposal for affordable housing was most appropriate. This was agreed by the Executive.

In response to Members' questions, the Executive Member referred to ongoing discussions that Officers held with Housing Associations on the types of houses to be developed, and in particular, the need for more two bedroom units.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the Council agree to the transfer for £1 to Riversmead/Network Housing Associations, the land identified at Grass Warren, Tewin in exchange for nomination rights to lettings;

(B) the Council agree to revoke clawback under the Local Voluntary Stock Transfer agreement on the 4 bed house to be developed to the south of no.14 Cannons Meadow to be developed for market sale; and

(C) the Council agree in principle that delegated powers be given to the Director of Neighbourhood Services and the Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support the decision on any future land transfers required to aid sustainable affordable housing development in the District with Registered Providers, subject to a detailed review by the Council's Asset Management Group and confirmation that such land would be best utilised for affordable housing.

152 VEHICLE REMOVALS

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report re-appraising the cost/benefits of the proposed implementation of vehicle removals for persistent penalty charge notice evasion. He detailed the original decision to implement the scheme in December 2012 and the information that had since come to light making the scheme impractical. Therefore, he proposed that the project not be progressed.

The Executive approved the proposal as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the revised cost/benefit be noted, and

(B) the recommendation of Officers to discontinue the project be endorsed.

153 GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN
2012/13

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report advising of the General Fund Revenue Outturn for 2012/13 and the significant variances against the approved Estimates. He also advised of the financing arrangements for the Capital Outturn for 2012/13 and the planned funding of the updated 2013/14 capital programme.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the General Fund Revenue Outturn for 2012/13 be approved; and

(B) the level of fund Balances at 31 March 2013 as set out within the report, be noted.

154 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - MAY 2013

The Leader of the Council submitted an exception report on finance and performance monitoring for May 2013.

The Executive noted the report.

RESOLVED – that the change to EHPI 181 that it will only be measuring housing benefit performance as detailed at paragraph 2.6 of the report, be noted.

155 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Executive passed a resolution pursuant to Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public during consideration of the business referred to at Minutes 156 - 157 below on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

156 CCTV PARTNERSHIP - INCORPORATION OF COMPANY

The Executive Member for Community Safety and

Environment submitted a report on proposed arrangements for the incorporation of a new company to conduct the commercial trading affairs of the Hertfordshire CCTV Partnership. The Partnership comprised Stevenage Borough Council, North Herts District Council, East Herts Council and Hertsmeare Borough Council.

The proposal had arisen from a lengthy and protracted investigation by the CCTV Partnership, as detailed in the report now submitted. It was recommended that a company to conduct the Partnership's commercial CCTV affairs in the most effective, efficient and economical way for each of the partners, be created.

In response to Members' questions, the Director of Neighbourhood Services commented that the Directors on the new Board would have to be trained for their role. The Leader stated that Councillor J Thornton's view that the majority of Board Members should not be Officers would be noted and considered.

The Leader praised the work of the partnership and suggested that perhaps another visit to the CCTV Centre would be of interest to Members.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

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

(B) the incorporation of a new company to conduct the commercial trading affairs of the Hertfordshire CCTV Partnership, be approved.

157 SALE OF LAND AND BUILDINGS AT SOUTH STREET AND RIVERSIDE WALK, BISHOP'S STORTFORD

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report seeking consent for the sale of land and buildings at South Street and Riverside Walk, Bishop's Stortford, to Portland Place plc on the terms set out in the report now submitted.

The properties had been identified as surplus to requirements and had been marketed resulting in the offers now detailed in the report submitted.

In response to a question by Councillor T Page on whether a professional valuation had been sought, the Executive Member for Finance commented that the properties had been marketed by a commercial agent and the offers received were detailed in the report. He suggested that actual testing in the market provided a best possible valuation. The Executive Member undertook to provide in writing, the nominal value of the properties as listed for accounting purposes.

In response to a question by Councillor T Page on whether the proposed decision, if taken, would compromise Members at Development Management Committee when the planning application was submitted, the Leader stated that this issue had been considered by the Executive. The Executive Member for Community Safety and Environment, as the only Executive Member who was also a member of the Development Management Committee, would have to be mindful of his obligations when this matter came forward for determination.

The Executive approved the proposal now detailed.

RESOLVED - that subject to the purchaser receiving planning consent for development, 39 & 39b South Street and the former public conveniences at Riverside Walk be sold to Portland Place Plc for the sum detailed in the report submitted.

The meeting closed at 7.23 pm

Chairman
Date