

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON  
TUESDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2013, AT 7.00  
PM

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, P Ballam,  
R Beeching, E Buckmaster, M McMullen,  
P Moore, M Newman, J Ranger, P Ruffles  
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

205 **4 YEAR CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN (2014/15 TO  
2017/18)**

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**The Executive considered a draft of the Council's  
Strategic Plan 2014/15 – 2017/18, 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 27 August 2013, had recommended the Plan for adoption.

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support referred to various references to the Sustainable Community Strategy, which had been approved in 2009. She suggested that Officers should be requested to review this Strategy over the coming year to ensure that it was still fit for purpose for the Local Strategic Partnership and East Herts Council. This was supported by the Executive.

Councillor J Wing repeated his comment made at the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 27 August 2013, that the “Here to Help You” heading should be replaced with “Here to Give Good Service” and explained the subtle difference. The Leader commented that this was more about an attitude and frame of mind rather than customer service dogma.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed,

**RECOMMENDED** – that (A) the comments of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, be received;

(B) the 2014/15 – 2017/18 Corporate Strategic Plan be approved, subject to minor typographical errors and alterations being made, in consultation with the Leader; and

(C) Officers be requested to review the Sustainable Community Strategy over the coming year to ensure that it was still fit for purpose for the Local Strategic Partnership and East Herts Council.

206 **FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL  
PLAN TO 2017/18**

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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 27 August 2012, had considered the report and had made a number of comments as now submitted. Whilst supporting the Financial Strategy and the MTFP, the Committee had supported the concept of reducing the General Reserve, particularly in relation to keeping car park charges down and reducing the pension shortfall, and that these be fully costed for further consideration.

The Executive Member for Finance accepted these comments and stated that Reserves were currently over the ceiling. He referred to the triennial review of pensions that would be published in November 2013, and suggested that any decisions would be best served by awaiting its outcome.

Members had a wide ranging discussion on the Government's intentions on the future of the New Homes Bonus. It was noted that consultation was ongoing and that the Council was contributing via the Local Government Association and the District Councils Network. Some concern was expressed regarding potential reduced funding and its impact on parish and town councils.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

**RECOMMENDED** – that (A) the comments of Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee be received;

**(B) the proposed Financial Strategy, as now submitted, be adopted; and**

**(C) the planning assumptions set out in the report now submitted, be adopted as the basis for framing the 2014/15 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan to 2017/18.**

207 **WIDFORD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND  
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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**The Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport submitted a report on the Widford Conservation Area Appraisal following public consultation. He advised that this was the first of various such Appraisals that were being prepared and detailed the outcome of the public consultation in the report now submitted.**

**The Appraisal identified the special character of the Conservation Area together with the elements that should be retained or enhanced and those which detract from the identified character. Once adopted by the Council, the Appraisal would become a 'material consideration' in the process of determining planning applications. It would also link into the development of neighbourhood planning.**

**Councillor M Newman, as the local ward Member, welcomed the report.**

**The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.**

**RECOMMENDED – that (A) the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Widford Conservation Area Appraisal be agreed;**

**(B) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning**

and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, to make any further minor and consequential changes to the Appraisal which may be necessary; and

(C) the Widford Conservation Area Appraisal be adopted.

208 **STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI):  
PROPOSED ADOPTION OF DOCUMENT FOLLOWING  
PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

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The Executive considered and approved the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 25 July 2013, on the Statement of Community Involvement.

**RECOMMENDED** – that (A) the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Draft East Herts Statement of Community Involvement be approved; and

(B) the East Herts Statement of Community Involvement, 2013 be adopted.

(see also Minute 218)

209 **DISTRICT PLAN - UPDATE REPORT**

The Executive considered and approved the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 25 July 2013, on the District Plan Update.

**RECOMMENDED** – that (A) a change to the structure of the District Plan, to combine Strategic Policies, Development Management Policies, and Site Allocations, into a single District Plan, be approved;

(B) an early review of the District Plan, based on a 'plan-monitor-and-manage' approach particularly in respect of long-term planning, be approved; and

(C) the approach to obtaining critical delivery information, including ATLAS project support, be approved.

(see also Minute 218)

210 **DUTY TO CO-OPERATE – UPDATE REPORT**

The Executive considered and approved the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 25 July 2013, on the Duty to Co-Operate.

**RECOMMENDED** – that (A) the current main issues relating to the Duty to Co-Operate involving adjoining authorities, be noted; and

(B) the Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Planning Partnership Memorandum of Understanding, be approved for use in planning policy and development management work.

(see also Minute 218)

211 **POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS – UPDATE REPORT**

The Executive considered and approved the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 25 July 2013, on Population and Household Projections.

**RECOMMENDED** – that it be noted that recently published and emerging information, together with the ongoing interpretation by the Planning Inspectorate of 'objectively assessed housing

need' in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), continues to indicate that East Herts Council may need to plan for the upper end of the range 10,000 to 17,000 dwellings over the 20 year period 2011 to 2031.

(see also Minute 218)

212 **STRATEGIC LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SLAA)  
– ROUND 3 – UPDATE REPORT**

The Executive considered and approved the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 25 July 2013, on the Strategic Land Availability Assessment Update.

**RECOMMENDED** – that (A) the list of identified sites, contained as Essential Reference Paper 'B' to the report submitted, which includes responses received to the Call for Sites, be noted and taken into account as part of the preparation of Round 3 of the East Herts Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA); and

(B) any future Call for Sites suggestions be included and assessed as part of the preparation of Round 3 of the SLAA, and subsequently as part of the annual monitoring and review of the SLAA.

(see also Minute 218)

213 **TOWN WIDE EMPLOYMENT STUDY FOR BISHOP'S  
STORTFORD (JUNE 2013)**

The Executive considered and approved the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 25 July 2013, on the Town Wide Employment Study for Bishop's Stortford.

**RECOMMENDED** – that the Town Wide Employment Study of Bishop's Stortford, June

**2013, be approved as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan and for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications.**

**(see also Minute 218)**

214 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 23 July 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

215 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY

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

The Executive accepted the comments of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee in respect of the Employment Land Review.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

216 CORPORATE ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

The Leader of the Council submitted the 2012/13 Corporate Annual Report, documenting the Council's key achievements for each of the corporate priorities over the last financial year. He 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 27 August 2013, had recommended the Annual Report for adoption. The Committee Chairman referred to a particular comment made at that meeting on the absence of information on areas where the Council had performed less well and whether this impacted on the credibility of the Annual Report.

The Leader accepted this as fair comment and referred to the Corporate Strategic Plan elsewhere on the agenda. He believed this report looked forward to 2014 and beyond and included actions that would seek to improve performance in such areas. The Leader also mentioned that minor typographical errors would be corrected before the final version was published.

The Executive approved the 2012/13 Corporate Annual Report as now submitted.

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

(B) the 2012/13 Corporate Annual Report be approved.

217 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2012/13 AND ACTION PLAN 2013/14

The Executive considered the 2012/13 Annual Governance Statement and the 2013/14 Action Plan. The Audit Committee, at its meeting to be held on 18 September 2013, 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 27 August 2013, and supported them.

RESOLVED – that (A) the comments of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 27 August 2013, be received; and

(B) the Audit Committee be advised that the Executive supports the 2012/13 Annual Governance Statement and the 2013/14 Action Plan.

218 DISTRICT PLAN EXECUTIVE PANEL: MINUTES - 25 JULY 2013

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RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the District Planning Executive Panel meeting, held on 25 July 2013, be received.

(see also Minutes 208 - 213)

219 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - JUNE/JULY 2013

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The Leader submitted an exception report on the finance and performance monitoring for the periods June – July 2013.

Councillor J Ranger referred to sickness absence data and commented that the Human Resources Committee had agreed to focus on short term sickness rather than long term sickness on the basis that this was more manageable. He suggested that the Executive might wish to amend its performance indicator set accordingly. The Executive noted this comment and asked Officers to consider this suggestion.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

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

(B) in accordance with Financial Regulation 4.5.5, the £40k virement from the Planning Contingency budget agreed by CMT on 16 July for a Housing Needs Survey as detailed at paragraph 2.10 of the report, be noted;

(C) in accordance with Financial Regulation 4.5.5, the £24k virement from the Planning Contingency budget agreed by CMT on 16 July for a Human Resources post as detailed at paragraph 2.10 of the report, be noted;

(D) the continued monitoring of the performance of

EHPI 157a – Processing of planning applications: Major applications by CMT to ensure service changes are implemented, as detailed at paragraph 2.22 of the report, be noted;

(E) the planned appropriation to the interest equalisation reserve in 2013/14 being reduced in line with any shortfall in investment income arising in the current year as detailed at paragraph 2.27 of the report, be approved;

(F) April and May sickness absence data for EHPI 12c - Total number of sickness absence days per FTE being restated, as detailed at paragraph 2.29 of the report, be noted;

(G) £54,900 of the Community Capital Grants budget be re-profiled from 2013/14 into 2014/15 as outlined in paragraph 2.38 of the report;

(H) in accordance with Financial Regulation 4.5.5, the virement of £21,000 from the Discretionary Disabled Facility grants capital budget into the Historic Buildings grant budget as detailed at paragraph 2.39 of the report, be noted;

(I) £15,000 of the IT Merging Licensing and Environmental Health capital budget be re-profiled from 2013/14 into 2014/15 as outlined in paragraph 2.40 of the report; and

(J) the controls and scores listed in the strategic risk register for the period April to June 2013 as detailed at paragraph 2.42 of the report, be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm

Chairman .....

Date .....