

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 1 DECEMBER 2015, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor L Haysey (Chairman/Leader)
Councillors E Buckmaster, A Jackson,
G Jones, G McAndrew, S Rutland-Barsby
and G Williamson.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors A Alder, M Allen, R Brunton,
S Bull, J Cartwright, M Casey, M Freeman,
T Page and M Pope.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services
Liz Watts	- Chief Executive

433 **COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME**

The Executive Member of Finance and Support Services submitted a report proposing a local Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS) from April 2016. He detailed the financial and equality impacts of the recommended CTS scheme for East Herts' residents. He also stated that there were no proposed changes to the scheme from last year.

It was noted that the Corporate Business Scrutiny

Committee, at its meeting held on 14 July 2015, had supported the proposed scheme. However, it had noted that the potential impact of impending welfare reforms on residents were still uncertain in terms of their implementation. Therefore, the Committee asked that Officers report back in March 2016 on potential options for the 2017/18 Scheme.

The Executive supported the proposed CTS as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the forecasted financial implications arising from the recommended scheme for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTS) with effect from 1 April 2016 and the risks and assumptions attached to these, be received; and

(B) the CTS scheme detailed within the report submitted, be approved.

434

**CHARRINGTON'S HOUSE, BISHOP'S STORTFORD
CAPITAL BID**

The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services submitted a report seeking approval to add a new scheme to the capital programme and initiate consultants and works to complete the proposed refurbishment of a vacant office suite at Charrington's House, Bishop's Stortford. Following the recent purchase of the Old River Lane site, Charrington's House was a key source of income for the Council and it was therefore essential that the building was managed and maintained to a high standard. The proposed works would will aid tenant retention, encourage new lettings and deliver rental and capital growth.

In response to various questions and comments, the Director of Finance and Support Services clarified issues around the nature of the proposed refurbishment, current rental market conditions and the due diligence

undertaken at the time of the purchase.

The Executive supported the proposal as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED - that the proposed addition to the capital programme for the proposed refurbishment of a vacant office suite at Charrington's House, Bishop's Stortford, as now submitted, be approved.

435 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 3 November 2015, be approved and signed as a correct record by the Leader.

436 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.

437 REQUEST FOR AREA DESIGNATION FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING: SAWBRIDGEWORTH PARISH

The Leader of the Council submitted a report seeking approval for the designation of a neighbourhood area for Sawbridgeworth, as detailed on the plan attached to the report submitted.

The Executive considered the application made by Sawbridgeworth Town Council and the consultation undertaken. The report submitted detailed the main areas of consideration in determining the application in accordance with Schedule 9 of the Localism Act 2011.

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing and

Councillor A Alder, as local ward Members, both expressed their support for the application.

The Executive supported the application.

RESOLVED - that the application for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area, submitted by Sawbridgeworth Town Council, be supported.

438 QUARTERLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - JULY-SEPT 2015

The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services submitted a quarterly report on finance, performance and strategic risk monitoring for the Council as at September 2015.

In response to Members' comments and questions, the Director of Finance and Support Services explained how Officers were managing variances as pressures within their services.

The Leader shared Members' disappointment with the underspend on the Decent Homes Grant budget due to a lack of referrals and commented on the ongoing work with partners to improve the take up.

In respect of the Castle Weir Micro Hydro Scheme, Members noted the Council's continuing determination to progress this scheme.

The Executive approved the proposals now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the comments of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee on the Quarterly Corporate Healthcheck, be received;

(B) the revenue budget forecast underspend of £556k be noted;

(C) the use of the transformation reserve to fund the

compensation payments in respect of changes to the employee expenses policy of £198k be approved;

(D) proposed slippage on capital schemes of £277.7k be noted;

(E) the current explanation for long term trends for:

- EHPI 151 – Number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter;
- EHPI 152 – The number of applicants accepted as owed the main homelessness duty to secure accommodation;
- EHPI 2.6 – Percentage of residual waste (refuse) sent for disposal;
- EHPI 12c – Total number of sickness absence days per FTE staff in post;

be noted;

(F) the amendment to the indicator set out in paragraph 7.7 of the report submitted, be noted; and

(G) the risk controls and addition to the Strategic Risk Register be approved.

439 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of Minute 440 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

440 NNDR WRITE-OFF

The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services submitted an application to write off of an uncollectable business rates debt of £51,654.66. He detailed the

circumstances of the debt relating to a particular business which had now dissolved. He also described the efforts made by Officers to recover the debt.

In response to Members' comments, the Director of Finance and Support Services outlined the steps undertaken by Officers in working with debtors, including their preventative work and advice.

The Executive approved the write off now detailed,

RESOLVED - that the write off of an uncollectable business rates debt of £51,654.66, as detailed in the report submitted, be authorised.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm

Chairman
Date