

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON  
TUESDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2018, AT 7.50 PM

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors P Ballam, P Boylan, S Bull,  
Mrs R Cheswright, K Crofton, G Cutting,  
J Goodeve, J Kaye, M McMullen, P Moore,  
T Page, M Pope, S Reed, P Ruffles,  
R Standley, T Stowe and N Symonds.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Isabel Brittain	-	Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Emily Coulter	-	Graduate Management Trainee
Martin Ibrahim	-	Democratic Services Team Leader
Jess Khanom	-	Head of Operations
Graham Mully	-	Risk Assurance Officer
Andrew Pulham	-	Parking Manager

Kevin Steptoe	-	Head of Planning and Building Control Services
Alison Stuart	-	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Su Tarran	-	Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service
Liz Watts	-	Chief Executive
Ben Wood	-	Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy

### 350 BUDGET REPORT AND SERVICE PLANS 2018/19 – 2021/22

The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services submitted a report which set out proposals in respect of:

- the Medium Term Financial Plan 2018/19 – 2021/22;
- the Capital Programme 2017/18 to 2021/22;
- the Schedule of Charges for 2018/19; and
- the draft service plans for 2018/19.

He referred to the comments of Performance, Audit and Governance Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 16 January 2018, which had been noted elsewhere in the meeting (Minute 358 refers). Concerns raised in respect of proposed changes to the use of New Homes Bonus (NHB) and the proposed savings on PCSOs had been taken on board and addressed.

The Executive Member also referred to the draft service plans and advised that these would also be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 February 2018, whose comments would be referred direct to Council.

The Leader commented on the continuing challenges faced by the Council and expressed her thanks to the Head of Strategic Finance and Property for her efforts.

The Executive supported the proposals now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the draft service plans for 2018/19 be adopted;

(B) the East Herts share of Council Tax for a band D property at £164.09, be approved;

(C) the updated position on the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget for 2018/19 including the significant budget pressures and risks, be approved;

(D) new savings in 2018/19 as shown in Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report submitted, be approved;

(E) the Head of Strategic Finance and Property be authorised to lead on a process to investigate and implement the projects set out in Essential Reference Paper 'C' of the report submitted, with an investment pot of £200k for "invest to save" projects (those that will pay back and ultimately create a revenue saving);

(F) the implementation of the Capital Programme

as set out in Essential Reference Paper 'E' of the report submitted, be approved; and

(G) the schedule of charges set out in Essential Reference Paper 'F' of the report submitted, with an overall increase of 5% for 2018/19, be approved.

### 351 COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS

The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services submitted a report seeking to change the level of council tax discount granted on empty properties. He proposed that the discount for empty and unfurnished properties be removed from 1 April 2018. He also proposed that the discount for empty and unfurnished properties undergoing major repairs/structural work be removed from 1 April 2018.

A Member referred to a specific case and raised concern in respect of listed buildings where legitimate delays may have arisen as a result of the owner seeking to protect the District's heritage. It was suggested that some flexibility should be retained within the revised policy where special circumstances applied.

The Executive expressed sympathy for the view expressed but were mindful of the need for the revised policy to be agreed in time to be implemented on 1 April 2018. Therefore, the Executive requested that Officers consider further, an analysis of the numbers of listed buildings potentially affected and to report to the next Council meeting on how more flexibility in the revised policy can be included to accommodate such cases.

The Executive supported the proposals now detailed.

RECOMMENDED - that subject to a further report as now detailed, (A) the discount for empty and unfurnished properties be removed from 1 April 2018; and

(B) the discount for empty and unfurnished and undergoing major repairs /structural work properties be removed from 1 April 2018.

### **352 ASPENDEN CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**The Executive Member for Development Management and Council Support submitted a report on the Aspenden Conservation Area Appraisal following public consultation. She 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 detracted 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.**

**The Executive Member expressed her appreciation to Officers in the Conservation Team for their continued efforts.**

**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 Aspenden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be supported;

(B) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Development Management and Council Support, to make any further minor and consequential changes to the document which may be necessary; and

(C) the Aspenden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted.

### **353 ASTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Executive Member for Development Management and Council Support submitted a report on the Aston Conservation Area Appraisal following public consultation. She 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 detracted 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 T Stowe, as the local Member, referred to the Parish Council's comments and disappointment in respect of "Little Orchard" field, but overall expressed support for the proposals.

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 Aston Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be supported;

(B) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Development Management and Council Support, to make any further minor and consequential changes to the document which may be necessary; and

(C) the Aston Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted.

#### **354 COTTERED CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Executive Member for Development Management and Council Support submitted a report on the Cottered Conservation Area Appraisal following public consultation. She 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 detracted 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.**

**The Executive noted the important role that libraries and the county archives played in providing historical information.**

**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 Cottered Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be supported;**

**(B) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Development Management and Council Support, to make any further minor and consequential changes to the document which may be necessary; and**

**(C) the Cottered Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted.**

**355 ALLOCATION OF CAPITAL BUDGET FOR FIRE SUPPRESSION UNIT AT BUNTINGFORD DEPOT**

**The Executive Member for Environment and Public Space submitted a report seeking support for the allocation of capital funds for a fire suppression unit at Buntingford Depot.**

**The Executive supported the proposal now detailed.**

**RECOMMENDED – that capital funding, as detailed in the report submitted, for the supply and fit of a fire suppression system at Buntingford depot, be approved, subject to written agreement from North Herts District Council to contribute 50% of costs as part of the Shared Waste Service.**

**356 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meetings held on 31 October and 28 November 2017, be approved as correct records and signed by the Leader.**

**357 UPDATE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Executive received a report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee detailing its comments and recommendations on various matters considered at its meeting held on 12 December 2017, including on:

- a portfolio report of the Executive Member for Environment and Public Space;

- a communications update;
- the impact of alcohol use on policing the night-time economy; and
- the scrutiny work programme.

The Executive noted the report.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

### 358 UPDATE FROM PERFORMANCE, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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The Executive received a report from the Performance, Audit and Governance Scrutiny Committee detailing its comments and recommendations on various matters considered at its meeting held on 16 January 2018, including on:

- a portfolio report of the Executive Member for Finance and Support Services;
- the budget report and service plans 2018/19 – 2021-22;
- the annual audit letter and external certification of claims;
- the shared internal audit services audit plan;
- the Treasury Management Strategy;
- an asset management update;
- a Charrington’s House, Bishop’s Stortford update; and
- the scrutiny work programme.

The Performance, Audit and Governance Scrutiny Committee Chairman summarised the main issues raised in respect of the budget and was pleased to see that these

had appeared to be taken on board by the Executive. The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services responded to the issues raised elsewhere in the meeting (Minute 350 refers).

The Executive noted the report.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

359 SCOTTS GROTTO

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report on future arrangements for the ownership and management of Scotts Grotto, Ware. He detailed the background to the issue and set out various options for the future ownership/management model for Scotts Grotto. He referred to the options appraisal and the proposal that a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) be set up.

Some Members expressed concern over the proposal and sought reassurance that the necessary safeguards would be put in place to protect the long term future. Questions were also asked in respect of the potential level of income from charitable activities and grants.

In response, Officers referred to the involvement of Ware Society, who were comfortable with the capacity for the CIO to achieve self-sufficiency within the projected timeline. The Council would continue to provide ongoing support until the new CIO was in a more robust position.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) a Charitable Incorporated Organisation is set up to own and manage Scott's Grotto, with 4 Trustees initially (2 nominated from East Herts Council appointed by the Leader and 2 nominated from the Ware Society);

(B) delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Executive Member for Economic Development to transfer freehold ownership of Scotts Grotto to the Charitable Incorporate Organisation on 1 September 2018 for a nominal sum of £1, subject to the following conditions being met:

- Charitable Incorporate Organisation being incorporated;
- Trustees appointed;
- Business plan produced;

(C) subject to (B) above, freehold ownership of Scott's Grotto is transferred with current covenants regarding building, drainage, utility rights and fence maintenance as well as an additional restriction that the Grotto and land cannot be disposed of in future without the Council's prior consent; and

(D) a hybrid model of financing be adopted, entailing:

- a one off lump sum of £23,000 revenue from the New Homes Bonus priority spend reserve be provided on 1 September 2018 to the Charitable Incorporated Organisation; and
- a further £18,275 revenue from the New

Homes Bonus priority spend reserve be allocated for match funding improvements to the Grotto over a 5 year period.

360 PROPOSED SHARED USE OF CHANTRY RESIDENT PERMIT PARKING ZONE

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The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report seeking approval to implement a “shared use” business parking in the Chantry Resident Permit Zone in Bishop’s Stortford.

The Executive Member detailed the history to the scheme development and the public consultation arising from the publication of two Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO).

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the outcome of a recent Traffic Regulation Order consultation be noted;

(B) Officers be instructed to implement business permit parking on the terms outlined in the report submitted and in the associated TRO; and

(C) the new scheme be reviewed approximately six months after its implementation.

361 ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

The Executive Member for Development Management and Council Support submitted a report detailing the outcome of the pilot Article 4 Direction in Bishop’s Stortford Conservation Area. She suggested that the pilot had

worked well in that owners/occupiers were now exercising discretion and restraint in not carrying out works that might harm the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. She proposed that further Article 4 Directions be rolled out to other areas as detailed in the report submitted.

Councillor P Ruffles, speaking as the Conservation Champion, welcomed the proposals.

The Executive approved the proposals now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the outcome of the monitoring period for the pilot Article 4 Direction for Bishop's Stortford Conservation Area be noted, and

(B) the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Development Management and Council Support and local ward Members as appropriate, be authorised to make further Article 4 Directions, as have been successfully piloted in Bishop's Stortford, for all of the District's conservation areas in line with the 4-phase programme detailed within the report submitted.

## 362 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 355 on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said

Act.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm

Chairman	.....
Date	.....