

MINUTES OF AN ANNUAL MEETING OF
EAST HERTS COUNCIL HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 18 MAY
2005 AT 7.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor D E Mayes (Chairman).
Councillors M R Alexander, W Ashley,
P R Ballam, K A Barnes, N Burdett, A L Burlton,
M G Carver, D Clark, R Conway, R N Copping,
A F Dearman, A D Dodd, G L Francis, R Gilbert,
Mrs M H Goldspink, A M Graham,
Mrs D L E Hollebon, D M Hone, A P Jackson,
G McAndrew, M P A McMullen, T Milner,
Mrs S Newton, R L Parker, D A A Peek,
L R Pinnell, N C Poulton, J O Ranger, D Richards,
P A Ruffles, S Rutland-Barsby, J J Taylor,
J D Thornton, M J Tindale, A L Warman,
J P Warren, N Wilson and M Wood.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Miranda Steward	- Executive Director (Returning Officer)
Rachel Stopard	- Executive Director (Head of Paid Service)
Simon Drinkwater	- Assistant Director (Law and Control)
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Lorraine Kirk	- Senior Communications Officer
David Tweedie	- Assistant Director (Financial Services)

ACTION1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor D E Mayes, the Vice-Chairman, Councillor R N Copping presided for this item and invited nominations for the election of Chairman.

It was moved by Councillor M G Carver and seconded by Councillor A P Jackson that Councillor D E Mayes be elected Chairman of the Council to hold office for the Civic Year 2005/06.

RESOLVED - that Councillor D E Mayes be elected Chairman of the Council and hold office for the Civic Year 2005/06.

Upon entering the Chamber, the Chairman made the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office, and took the Chair.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

It was moved by Councillor A M Graham and seconded by Councillor Mrs M H Goldspink that Councillor M Wood be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the Civic year 2005/06.

It was moved by Councillor D A A Peek and seconded by Councillor R Gilbert that Councillor A L Burlton be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the Civic Year 2005/06.

After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, Councillor A L Burlton was appointed Vice-Chairman for the Civic year 2005/06.

RESOLVED - that Councillor D E Mayes be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council to hold office for the Civic Year 2003/04.

ACTION

The Vice-Chairman made the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 20 April 2005, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed the press, public and former Chairmen of the Council to the Annual Council meeting.

He thanked Members for re-electing him as Chairman for a further year. In particular, he expressed his appreciation to Councillor R N Copping's four years service as Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

The Chairman referred to the silverware on display in the Chamber. Yet again, East Herts' sporting young people had triumphed at the Annual Herts Youth Games, which were held at the weekend at the University of Hertfordshire. An estimated 2000 young people from all of the 10 districts participated over the course of the weekend in football, rugby, netball, squash, tennis, athletics and basketball events. East Herts' boys teams won the boys championship trophy. In the overall championship, East Herts was pipped to the overall championship title after a controversial decision in the girls rugby and finished a phenomenal second, only 7 points behind Broxbourne. He believed he could speak on behalf of all Members in congratulating the young people for another sporting achievement. He also expressed thanks to all those staff and club volunteers involved for their time and efforts.

The Chairman stated that a number of Members had yet to complete and return their Related Party Transactions form. This matter was now of utmost urgency as an audit of Members' returns would be undertaken shortly. Those

ACTION

Members who had a blank form on their table were asked to ensure that this form was completed and returned to the Assistant Director (Financial Services) as soon as possible, even if there was a “nil” return.

As far as tonight’s agenda was concerned, the Chairman drew Members’ attention to a list that had been tabled, detailing group nominations to seats on committees, etc, which would be referred to under item 13 on the agenda.

Finally, he invited all Members, Officers and former Chairmen to join him for a buffet reception at the end of the meeting.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chairman reminded Members that a Licensing Committee meeting would be held, and that those Members and Officers not involved in that meeting, should vacate the Chamber as quickly as possible.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members made the following declarations:

- Councillors K A Barnes, A L Burlton, R Gilbert, Mrs D L E Hollebon, D A A Peek and M Wood declared personal and prejudicial interests in the matter referred to Minute 12 – Rhodes Centre Development, in that they were all Members of Bishop’s Stortford Town Council. They all left the Chamber whilst this matter was considered.
- Councillor Mrs M H Goldspink declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the matter referred to Minute 12 – Rhodes Centre Development, in that she was a co-opted Member of the Project Management Committee. She left the Chamber whilst this matter was considered.

ACTION6 REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Leader of the Council reported on the work of the Executive and presented the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 26 April 2005. The Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 20 April were submitted for information only as an oral report on its proceedings was received and approved by Council meeting subsequently that day.

The Leader offered his congratulations to the Chairman of the Council for his re-election for a second term. He had found it a huge pleasure to work with him over the past twelve months. He had shown Members a new way of approaching the role of Chairman with lots of new initiatives, which had laid the foundation for what the Leader believed would be an even more successful and fruitful second year term. He wished him every success with the East Herts Fund for the Future project and with the tireless work he did personally.

The Leader expressed his regret at seeing Councillor Toni Schweizer resign from the Council and thanked her for her contribution.

The role of all councillors became more and more difficult each year and the pressure and strains were very rarely recognised by the public. The generally quiet, unassuming role, which all Members as community leaders took on in their respective Wards, was an intrinsic part of the huge success and strength of the democratic system, which must never be undermined. During the past year, a number of Members, both present and past, had experienced some serious illnesses. The Leader wished them all improving health during the coming years.

ACTION

The Leader stated that this was his opportunity to summarise on behalf of the Executive, what he saw as the highlighted successes of the Council and the challenges still to be faced. It had been a year of both change and consolidation, a year of successes handled with great enthusiasm, skill, commitment and generally good humour, by a dedicated and community-caring staff throughout the whole organisation.

The Leader looked forward to the successes and the challenges for the future. The Government had continued and would continue to put greater pressure on Local Authorities with less and less resources. In fact, through Gershon, the Council now had to demonstrate for a minimum of three years, a 2 ½% cost improvement, year on year. This was a tough challenge, but one the organisation had already faced and, in doing so, had created a platform, for not only improving, but redirecting resources to meet the Corporate Priorities. The establishment of the clear principles and practice of performance management had helped the Council learn more openly about where, and how, it could and was, improving services, as well as helping and guiding the organisation in terms of its skills base and the way each individual could be trained and improve their own opportunities.

The Council had completed four Best Value Reviews during the year in Organisational Development, Healthy Living, Environmental Stewardship and Development Control. All had given the organisation, partners and constituents the opportunity to input views and ideas to enable everyone involved to listen, learn and move forward with positive and exciting Action Plans for improvement into the future. The Leader believed that the listening, learning and improvement theme was highlighted by the Council's significant achievement to be shortlisted for the prestigious Local Government Chronicle Awards of Most Improved Council of the Year. To be in the top six in the country was no mean achievement and something of which everyone should be proud.

ACTION

The decriminalisation of parking had been a huge challenge for a District like East Herts, where for some time there had been little effective traffic management and control on town streets. To change that environment was never going to be easy, but the Council went out actively to the Community to listen, engage, learn and try to improve what had become almost 'vehicle and driver anarchy' on our streets. The Council had introduced the first phases and had always said it would review on an interactive basis over time by again listening to the community, learning from the professionals and, continually trying to improve the arrangements for all. Such changes would always involve trying to strike a balance between all the demands, requests and pressures. The Council might not yet have it right, but it would listen, learn and try to improve, but it could not be one sided.

The past year had also seen the huge challenges to the District in the shape of the Airports White Paper with the proposals for both Stansted and Luton Airports. The Council had listened to the representations and acted on the majority view to challenge with colleagues from Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils, as well as Uttlesford District Council and other neighbouring District Councils. The Council had had success in the High Court, and the news today from BAA clearly indicated that this success would remain meaningful in the future.

Alongside the Airport White Paper was the East of England Regional Plan, now euphemistically known as 'Prescottshire'. This was a real threat to the quality of life in East Herts for all constituents, as well as being a major threat to the democratic process. The challenge would continue in what was likely to be a long argument.

ACTION

The opening of the Buntingford Operations Centre was a major step forward in providing a modern, state of the art, operational facility cutting across a number of services, and providing a springboard for further improvement and development of front line services. Good partnership working was evident in a number of ways in the Centre and would assist in providing answers to many of the challenges to arise around waste/recycling and neighbourhood management.

The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) was now moving forward not only with an Action Plan but also with 'teeth', in that it was one of the first LSPs to have direct funding into its work. The links with the partners were invaluable in tackling together, rather than individually, a number of issues affecting the community.

The Leader congratulated the Development Control service. What a turn round and what an effect in terms of planning development grant. From a service, which all Members were concerned about, the Council could now move forward with confidence of a service with a good foundation for the future.

Amongst the work of Development Control, but cutting across the whole organisation, were the significant developments in Bishop's Stortford, which in the short term, would bring uncertainty, difficulties and inconvenience. The Council was doing as much as it possibly could to mitigate the problems and ensure that it listened, learnt and reacted to improve wherever possible. However, it was important to look to the future and try to achieve a balance with the heritage and history, which must be protected. This was again demonstrated by a major capital expenditure programme focussed on enabling more affordable housing, a continued and accelerated programme on recycling and assistance in cultural facilities, particularly at the Rhodes Centre in Bishop's Stortford.

ACTION

The Leader believed that this year had been a real milestone in the life of the Authority, its staff, Members and residents. But, it was more than a milestone and the Council still needed to reach the next. It would invest further in recycling, in fighting the fear of crime, in providing affordable housing and in delivering the best services it could throughout the District. The Council would strive to protect and improve the quality of life for all residents. He concluded by stating that in general, the residents of East Herts recognised this success by returning both Members of Parliament covering the District, with an increased majority, as well as a Conservative County Council, again with an increased majority.

In response, the Leader of the Opposition expressed his thanks to the Chairman for performing in his own style throughout the first year.

He also referred to the Local Government Chronicle Awards and congratulated the staff for their efforts in improving performance. In respect of the Development Control service, he agreed with the Leader that huge steps had been taken forward and congratulated all those concerned for this turnaround.

In respect of the East of England Plan and the Airports White Paper, the Leader of the Opposition referred to the cross party support for the Council's position on both issues.

In respect of Minute 737 – Review of Playschemes in 2004 and Recommendations for the Development of the Service in 2005 and Beyond, Councillor A M Graham asked for confirmation that reducing age eligibility to 12 years would not leave older children excluded from any activities.

ACTION

In reply, the Executive Member for Community stated that the proposed age eligibility criteria would dovetail with the provision of services by the County Council. Indeed, he suggested that attendance might increase because of this proposal. The Leader of the Council added that diversionary activities for over 12s were contained within the Building Safer Communities initiative.

In response to a question from Councillor A M Graham in respect of Criminal Records Bureau checks on existing staff, the Executive Member for Community undertook to provide a written response.

In respect of the proposal in recommendation (E) to introduce a charge of £3 for a full day playscheme, Councillor A M Graham moved, and Councillor G L Francis seconded, an amendment to the effect that the existing £1 charge be retained.

The Leader of the Council stated that the existing £1 charge related to a half day session and was being retained. The proposed £3 charge was for a full day playscheme. Following this clarification, Councillor A M Graham withdrew his proposed amendment.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 20 April 2005, be noted, and

(B) the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 26 April 2005 be received, and the recommendations contained therein, be adopted.

7 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(A) DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE – 27 APRIL 2005

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 27 April 2005, be received.

ACTION**8 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S DECISION
-MAKING STRUCTURE**

The Assistant Director (Law and Control) submitted a report reviewing the Council's Decision Making Structure. The Council recalled that it had adopted a new model for political management in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000, based on the Leader and Cabinet model. The Assistant Director's report had been prepared on the basis that the Council would continue with its existing political management model and constitution, subject to a number of amendments as now detailed.

In respect of Scrutiny, Regulatory and Joint Committees, it was proposed to retain the current arrangements.

Council noted that where Members of the Council were divided into political groups, the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 placed a duty on the Council to review the allocation between those groups of seats on its Scrutiny, Regulatory and Joint Committees according to certain principles. The aim was to ensure that the political composition of the Committees, etc reflected the composition of the Council. The rules of proportionality did not apply to the Executive. There were two duly constituted political groups within the Council. In addition, account had to be taken of those Members who were not Members of political groups on the Council, as they were entitled to a proportion of seats in relation to their relative percentage size. It was for Council to appoint such Members to the seats allocated. Details of political group, etc sizes were set out in the report now submitted.

A list detailing group nominations to seats on committees, etc, had been circulated at the meeting.

In respect of the Council's Standards Committee, it was proposed that this be appointed for the ensuing Civic Year comprising the two independent Members previously appointed to serve a four-year term of office, three District

ACTION

Councillors, one Town Council Member and one Parish Council Member.

Council recalled that, in October 2003, it had established five Community Voices to provide local residents an opportunity to comment upon issues concerning their community. These were based around the five main towns in the District: Bishop's Stortford, Buntingford, Hertford, Sawbridgeworth and Ware. Council had also agreed that rural communities' engagement needs should be dealt with via the convening of the Rural Parish Conference twice a year. It was proposed that the five existing Community Voice bodies be retained with the Chairman for each as detailed in the report now submitted.

In respect of the Executive, the Leader, as indicated at the Council meeting held in December 2004, proposed that the size of the Executive be reduced to five Members plus the Leader and Deputy Leader. Also, he proposed the appointment of Councillor A P Jackson as Deputy Leader. He referred to the revised Executive responsibility matrix, which had been placed around the table.

In making his proposals regarding the Executive, the Leader paid tribute to the two retiring colleagues, Councillors H G S Banks and N C Poulton, for their contribution to the Executive and the Council.

The Leader stated that Councillor H G S Banks was the architect of the new system, which was required by the Local Government Act, and had put a huge effort into making it work. He had worked tirelessly for the Council and had been the father mentor to the Executive and a strong and wise right hand to him personally. He had led the Council through a difficult period before handing over to him. The Leader had been learning from his experience ever since and was sure would continue to learn.

Cllr Nigel Poulton, commonly know as Mr Environment, was also retiring from the Executive. He had made a massive contribution not only to the environmental work in East Herts

ACTION

but throughout the County. He was well respected for his knowledge in the field and the Leader felt sure that he would continue to apply that expertise to the benefit of the Council.

The Leader knew that both were looking forward to bringing their knowledge and skills to bear in other parts of the Council's work, as well as imparting even more knowledge and wisdom to all Members of the Council. The Leader introduced the two new Members of the Executive, Councillors N Burdett and T Milner.

Councillor N Burdett was a law graduate and would be charged with handling the challenging portfolio around the priority of reducing people's fear of crime. Councillor T Milner, a political graduate, would be responsible for both the Customer Services Strategy and Health. The Leader welcomed them to the team and wished them every success in their new roles.

In respect of the appointment of Chairman of Scrutiny Committees, etc., Council noted a list of proposed appointments that had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Council approved its calendar of meetings for 2005/06 at its meeting held on 23 February 2005. Under the Constitution, Council was required to confirm its programme of meetings for 2005/06, as now detailed.

In respect of outside bodies, Council noted that the appointment of such representatives was delegated to the Assistant Director (Law and Control), in consultation with the Leader of the Council. These would be reviewed for the ensuing civic year. The Assistant Director, acting under delegated authority, would make appointments to outside bodies for 2005/06 in the near future.

Council agreed the proposed recommendations, as now detailed.

ACTION

RESOLVED - that (A) the following Scrutiny Committees, Regulatory Committees, Joint Member/Employee Panel, and Joint Committees be appointed, with the number of voting Members stated:

Policy Development Scrutiny	16
Performance Scrutiny	16
Call-In Scrutiny	12
Development Control	25
Licensing	15
Highways Joint Member Panel (6 from Hertfordshire County Council 6 from East Herts Council)	12
Local Joint Panel (4 Members of the Council and 4 representatives of employees drawn from UNISON with substitutes)	8
Royston, Buntingford and Bishop's Stortford Joint PCT Scrutiny Committee (4 non-executive Councillors from this Council)	
South East Herts Joint PCT Scrutiny Committee (2 non-executive Councillors from this Council)	

(B) the allocation of seats on Scrutiny Committees and the Development Control and Licensing Committees be as follows:

ACTION

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Seats</u>	<u>Cons</u>	<u>Lib Dem</u>	<u>KAB</u>	<u>JW</u>	<u>BWJS</u>	<u>DRA</u>	<u>Total</u>
Policy Scrutiny	16	13	2	1	0	0	0	16
Performance Scrutiny	16	13	2	0	1	0	0	16
Call-In Scrutiny	12	10	1	0	1	0	0	12
Development Control	25	20	2	1	0	1	1	25
Licensing	15	12	1	0	0	1	1	15
Total	84	68	8	2	2	2	2	84

(C) the allocation of seats on Sub-Committees to political groups be as detailed in the appendix to the report now submitted,

(D) the allocation of seats on the Highways Joint Member Panel (6) and Local Joint Panel (4) to political groups be as follows:

	<u>Cons</u>	<u>Lib Dem</u>	<u>KAB</u>	<u>JW</u>	<u>BWJS</u>	<u>DRA</u>
HJMP	5	1	0	0	0	0
LJP	3	1	0	0	0	0

(E) as a consequence of the decisions at (A) to (D) above, the membership of Scrutiny Committees, Regulatory Committees, Joint Member/Employee Panel and the Highways Joint Member Panel be as set out in the papers tabled, with Members being appointed in accordance with the wishes of the political groups to whom the seats on these bodies have been allocated,

(F) the following Members be appointed as Chairmen (and where specified, Vice-Chairmen) of the bodies detailed:

ACTION

	<u>Chairman</u>	<u>Vice-Chairman</u>
Policy Scrutiny	J O Ranger	-
Performance Scrutiny	Mrs D L E Hollebon	-
Call-In Scrutiny	M Wood	-
Development Control	R Gilbert	S A Bull
Licensing	M P A McMullen	W Ashley
Community Voice:		
Bishop's Stortford	A L Burlton	-
Buntingford	S A Bull	-
Hertford	S Rutland-Barsby	-
Sawbridgeworth	D Richards	-
Ware	J J Taylor	-

(G) Councillor A P Jackson be appointed as Deputy Leader for the remaining life of this Council;

(H) the number of Executive Members to be appointed to the Executive be 5, plus the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council,

(I) the Council's Standards Committee be appointed for the ensuing civic year consisting of two independent Members (previously appointed to serve a four year term of office), three District Councillors (one from each political party with five or more Members), one Town Council Member, one Parish Council Member and the following individuals be appointed:

ACTIONDistrict Council

Councillors A L Burlton, J P Warren, M Wood

Town/Parish Councils' Representative

Mrs E Woods (Town) and Mr B Taylor (Parish)

(J) the programme of Council meetings, as previously agreed, be confirmed.

(K) the action to be taken by the Assistant Director (Law and Control), in consultation with the Leader, under delegated authority, concerning the appointment of representatives to outside bodies, be noted, and ALC

(L) the Council's constitution be amended to take account of the decisions at (A) to (I) above; ALC

9 RESTRUCTURING THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Leader of the Council submitted a report on the Council's Executive Director management structure, which proposed to extend the existing arrangements for a temporary period.

Following a report to Council in February 2002, the senior management at East Herts Council was restructured. The post of Chief Executive was deleted and three Executive Director posts were created. This new structure took effect in October 2002. Council recalled that the post of Executive Director (Resources) was deleted in May 2004. At this time, the Executive Director (Head of Paid Service) and the Executive Director (Returning Officer) were appointed to their respective posts for a period of one year.

In reviewing the operation of the new structure, the Leader and Executive Members had recognised the significant progress achieved in many areas. These had essentially,

ACTION

been about putting the building blocks in place for functioning as a more effective and efficient corporate organisation.

It was considered that the additional capacity, introduced at senior management level, through increased investment had brought about the rapid development of the organisation. Further, it was considered that responsibilities for management of the team of Assistant Directors could continue to be achieved with two Executive Director posts. Following consultation, it was recommended that the Executive Directors continue with their existing designation for a temporary period to enable the terms and conditions, roles and responsibilities to be formalised.

During this period the posts would be reviewed. The current postholders would be consulted on the new proposals for responsibilities for the posts. The salaries would be evaluated by an external consultant, once the proposed terms and conditions, roles and responsibilities had been finalised. New job descriptions were currently being developed for these posts. A further report on these matters would be presented to Council on 27 July 2005 for approval.

Councillor M Wood referred to the rationale of the original decision taken in 2002 not to have a Chief Executive. He stated that Members were then advised that the trend was to move away from having a Chief Executive, and that the current trend was going the other way. He asked if structures in other authorities had been looked at.

In response, the Leader stated that extensive research had been carried out, the details of which would be included in the report for the July meeting.

In response to a request from Councillor A M Graham for the report in July to be despatched to Members as early as possible, the Leader stated that the usual notice period would be observed, but that the Leader of the Opposition would be consulted.

ACTION

RESOLVED – that (A) the existing arrangements be extended until 27 July 2005 to enable the proposed terms, conditions, roles, responsibilities and salaries to be finalised; and

(B) the salaries be evaluated by the Council's consultants with a report back to Council on 27 July 2005, with the details of the proposals and the financial implications.

(Note – The Executive Directors left the Chamber whilst this matter was considered.)

10 REVIEW OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Executive Director (Head of Paid Service) submitted a report outlining proposed changes to the Council's senior management structure, and informing Members about a number of initiatives aimed at strengthening capacity and improving performance of the organisation's workforce.

The Executive Director referred to establishment of the new management structure in September 2002 and the progress made to improve the infrastructure of the organisation, enabling it to be better placed to improve service delivery. She also referred to the structure at Executive Director level detailed at Minute 9 above. Whilst this was being considered, Executive Members had asked that a review of second and third tiers be undertaken. The aim of this review was to provide assurance that the authority had the capacity to manage the organisation with the correct balance of effectiveness and efficiency, as well as achieving Members' ambition of becoming an excellent authority.

In addition, these proposals addressed concerns raised by PKF in their review of management controls following the Hartham fraud in relation to inconsistency of job descriptions. This review had also linked into a number of actions arising from the Best Value Review of Organisational Development, such as a review of the Human Resources

ACTION

function, the introduction of a competency framework, and performance reward for staff.

The Executive Director stated that, compared to similar sized authorities, a management team of 10 posts was unusual if not unique. Whilst there was no room for complacency, the authority could afford to reduce its senior management capacity to a level more appropriate to its size and the task ahead, namely to consolidate the improvements made and to move the organisation to an 'excellent' rating by 2006/7.

The Executive Director referred to two particular areas of the organisation, which had required an in-depth review – Human Resources and Development Control. Details of these reviews and key findings were set out in the report now submitted. The Executive Director's report also detailed the consequent staffing structure issues arising from these reviews.

The Executive Director proposed that the number of divisions be reduced from eight to six. The divisions and associated service portfolios being proposed were set out in the revised paragraph 7.2 of the report which had been circulated as a supplementary paper.

It was proposed that the designation of Assistant Directors managing the six service portfolios be changed to 'Directors' in order to overcome the confusion amongst staff, Members and stakeholders concerning the unusual management structure in East Herts Council. It was more common for the designation of 'Assistant Director' to be used for third tier posts and the designation of 'Director' would reflect their role as second tier officers more accurately. In addition, a generic job description was being introduced for these six posts to better reflect the common leadership skills and competencies required at this senior level. To reflect this change, and as there was a better balance between the divisions in terms of scope and scale of responsibilities, it was also proposed that equitable remuneration be awarded to the six 'Directors'.

ACTION

The Executive Director detailed other changes in management arrangements, which Council noted. She also referred to the development of a Pay and Workforce Strategy under the requirements of the national three-year pay agreement. As part of this Strategy, roles within the organisation were being defined in the context of 'job families', to move away from the traditional approach that focused heavily on the gradings of posts. For each job family, priorities would be given as to the level of competency required to achieve successfully the role. A 'Competency Framework' had been developed for this purpose, which would enhance the existing performance and development review scheme. In order to reflect a desire for a more performance driven workforce, the existing 5% remuneration normally paid to staff who had worked for East Herts longer than three years, had been reviewed. From 2006, additional remuneration would only be paid to those staff achieving acceptable performance in both their personal objectives and the assigned competencies for their role.

In response to Members' questions concerning the filling of the vacant Director of Direct and Contract Services post, the Executive Director stated that the introduction of generic job descriptions enabled strategic management skills to be applied across the organisation.

In response to a question from Councillor A M Graham on the concerns raised by Unison, the Executive Director stated that these related mainly to the impact on fourth tier staff below the Head of Service level resulting from grading changes.

Councillor M Wood referred to the improvements in the Development Control service and expressed concern that these could come to a standstill by the proposed merger under the Regulatory Services division. The Executive Director (Returning Officer) responding by stating that the proposals would build on the interim arrangements in place since January 2004, and the natural synergies with other

ACTION

services within Regulatory Services.

Council approved the proposals as now detailed.

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| <u>RESOLVED</u> – that (A) the post of Assistant Director (Human Resources) be deleted from the establishment; | ED(HPS) |
| (B) the post of Assistant Director (Development Control) be deleted from the establishment; | ED(HPS) |
| (C) the remaining six Assistant Director posts be re-designated ‘Director’; | ED(HPS) |
| (D) the six Director portfolios as detailed at paragraph 7 of the report now submitted, be approved; and | ED(HPS) |
| (E) the Directors be appointed under a generic job description and receive equal remuneration for the role. | ED(HPS) |

11 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report proposing amendments to the Constitution following changes in the senior management structure and, as a result of legislative changes since the last review of the Constitution.

Following the changes to the structure approved at Minute 10 above, the eight posts of Assistant Director had been replaced by six Directors. This change had meant that all the references to the Assistant Director posts would need to be replaced by the new Director posts. The new responsibilities assigned to Directors would require that some delegations would need to be transferred to the new post. Amendments to Financial Regulations, Financial Procedures and the Rules relating to contracts would also be required to reflect changes to the officer structure.

ACTION

The Monitoring Officer also detailed changes to the Constitution that were necessary as a result of the following legislative changes:

- Housing Act 2004
- Anti-Social Behaviour Order Act 2003
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Communications Data) Order 2003
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) Amendment (England) Regulations 2005

Council approved the amendments now detailed.

RESOLVED - that the amendments to the constitution, now detailed, be approved.

ALC

12 RHODES CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

Council considered a report of the Deputy Leader of the Council proposing the allocation of additional funds to complete the Rhodes Centre development.

The Rhodes Centre was the main civic amenity in Bishop's Stortford and was both a museum and civic hall. The Council, in partnership, had funded the project through its Capital Programme for £1,916,700.

Council was advised that problems had arisen over the completion of the project and that negotiations had reached a possible solution with contractors and partners. It was requested that, in order to complete the project, £308,000 of additional funding was required as detailed in the letter from

ACTION

the Chairman of the Rhodes Birthplace Trust Project Steering Group, attached to the report now submitted. It was proposed that the Rhodes Trustees request £20,400 from the Lottery Fund, up to £150,000 from the Town Council, with the remainder from the District Council.

As there was uncertainty over the funding from other organisations, Council was recommended to approve the full amount, should it be required. The Town Council had intimated that it might request a loan of the £150,000 from the Council. The Council would be able to make a loan and should such a request be made, it was recommended that any advance be at 2% above Base Rate and repayable over a 10 year period.

The Deputy Leader emphasised that the proposals represented a final investment to enable the project to be completed. Councillor A M Graham suggested that the proposals be amended to clarify that the additional funds were for the completion of the building works. The Deputy Leader accepted this amendment. As such, he proposed an amendment to the recommendations to read:

(A) the addition to the Capital Programme of up to £308,000 to fund the completion of the structural building works of the Rhodes Centre Development be approved, and

(B) a loan of up to £150,000 to the Bishop's Stortford Town Council at a rate 2% above base rate and repayable over a 10-year period, be approved.

Council approved the proposals, as amended.

RESOLVED – that (A) the addition to the Capital Programme of up to £308,000 to fund the completion of the structural building works of the Rhodes Centre Development be approved, and

AFS

ACTION

(B) a loan of up to £150,000 to the Bishop's Stortford Town Council at a rate 2% above base rate and repayable over a 10-year period, be approved.

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The meeting closed at 8.50 pm

Chairman
Date

Nps\Council\Minutes 18 May 2005