

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
ON TUESDAY 16 AUGUST 2005 AT
4.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor M G Carver (Chairman/Leader).
Councillors M R Alexander, A P Jackson, T Milner
and R L Parker.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors W Ashley, H G S Banks, A L Burlton,
J Demonti, G L Francis, G McAndrew,
M P A McMullen, P A Ruffles, J P Warren and
M Wood.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Acting Executive Director
Rachel Stopard	- Executive Director (Head of Paid Service)
Miranda Steward	- Executive Director (Returning Officer)
Cliff Cardoza	- Head of Contract Services
Andrea Gilmour	- Development Control Manager
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Lorraine Kirk	- Senior Communications Officer
Dave McRobbie	- Head of Customer Relations
Dave Tweedie	- Director of Resources

228 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors N Burdett and D Clark.

229 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader welcomed the press and public to the meeting.

The Leader referred to the additional papers that had been tabled relating to the Development Brief for Land West of the River Stort and South of Station Road, Sawbridgeworth, which had been omitted from the agenda in error.

230 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M P A McMullen declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the matter referred to at Minute 233 – Minerals Local Plan Review 2002 – 2016 Report of Inquiry into Objections, as he lived in the vicinity of a site identified for mineral extraction. He left the room whilst it was considered.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

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231 DEVELOPMENT BRIEF – LAND WEST OF THE RIVER STORT AND SOUTH OF STATION ROAD, SAWBRIDGEWORTH (THE ESBIES ESTATE)

The Executive Member for Environmental Management submitted a report on the production of a Development Brief for land west of the River Stort and south of Station Road, Sawbridgeworth, known as The Esbies Estate.

He summarised the responses to consultation on the draft development brief for the site carried out in June/July 2005. The draft had been approved for public consultation by the Executive in May 2005. He suggested amendments to the brief as a result of the consultation. Following approval, it was intended that

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the document would be used for Development Control purposes as a material consideration in determining any planning proposals.

The Executive Member detailed the consultation carried out with internal and external consultees. The Executive noted that 15 separate responses had been received, including four from local residents. These were summarised on the additional papers tabled at the meeting. The main areas of concern raised were the financial viability of developing the site; location of the site within the floodplain; possible land contamination; land drainage; and, site access.

The Executive Member stated that the main changes proposed from the draft brief related to details to be included in the ecological appraisal, transport and access statements. The requirement for a desktop contaminated land study had also been included.

In response to a Member's question, it was clarified that the purpose of the Brief was to regularise the position by designating the existing partly developed area as a brownfield site, and restoring other areas to the Green Belt.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED - that (A) the representations and recommended changes to the Development Brief for Land West of the River Stort and South of Station Road, Sawbridgeworth (The Esbies Estate) be received; and

(B) the Development Brief for Land West of the River Stort and South of Station Road, Sawbridgeworth (The Esbies Estate) with any further changes be formally approved for Development Control purposes as a material consideration on future planning proposals at

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the site.

RESOLVED ITEMS232 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 19 July 2005, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

233 MINERALS LOCAL PLAN REVIEW 2002 – 2016
REPORT OF INQUIRY INTO OBJECTIONS

The Executive Member for Regional Development submitted a report advising the Executive of the Inspector's conclusions in respect of the Council's objections to the Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002 – 2016.

The Executive recalled that the Council had objected to the identification of land adjoining Rickneys Quarry, Hertford, as a Preferred Area for mineral extraction. A great deal of evidence had been submitted to the Inquiry on behalf of the Industry, local residents and amenity groups, together with the Council, in opposition to the identification in the Plan of Rickneys south.

Despite the case presented by the Council and the other objectors, the Inspector had concluded that Rickneys should be identified as a Preferred Area for minerals working. In summary, the Inspector had concluded that the site selection process had been robust and that she had been satisfied that there were no outstanding objections that could not be addressed at the detailed planning application stage. The Inspector had found that, notwithstanding its identification in the Plan as a Preferred Area, it would still be open to the Minerals Planning Authority, in accordance with Government guidance and the Minerals Local Plan Review policies, to refuse planning permission for extraction at Rickneys south, if it was found that any environmental impacts were not outweighed by the

ACTION

benefits of extraction.

A copy of the Inspector's reasoning and conclusions was set out in an appendix to the report now submitted.

The Leader expressed his disappointment and concern that a timetable of proposed use was lacking.

The Executive noted the report.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

234 CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM)
PROCUREMENT PROCESS

The Executive Member for Public Engagement submitted a report in respect of the process for Customer Relationship Management (CRM) procurement.

The Executive Member highlighted the importance of the CRM system as a critical success factor in the successful implementation of the Council's Enhancing Customer Services Strategy. He detailed the tender arrangements and the need to apply a 60:40 quality/price split.

The Executive noted the need for a brand new technical solution in the corporate environment, whereby a scalable solution that would grow with acquired knowledge in an ever-changing Local Government environment could be provided. The Council also required a flexible solution that would provide the ability to absorb corporate and service changes whilst constantly improving service to both internal and external customers. By simply focusing on the cheapest tender for software procurement, the Council would leave itself exposed to the potential for significant service costs (e.g. add-on modules, training, integration, support) in the future, as the Customer Service plan progressed.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

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RESOLVED - that the procurement process and the cost value split in respect of the purchase of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and associated services be approved on the basis of both the most economically advantageous tender, and the most fit for purpose solution for East Herts' needs.

DOD

235 BYELAWS – ST MICHAEL'S MEAD

The Executive Member for Environmental Management submitted a report seeking approval for draft byelaws at St Michael's Mead, Bishop's Stortford for the purposes of public consultation.

The Executive recalled that previous reports regarding byelaws for St Michael's Mead were submitted to the Executive on 3 September 2002 and the Overview 1 Scrutiny Committee on 7 January 2003. Approval had been given to proceeding with the byelaws subject to certain amendments, and to the draft byelaws being sent to relevant groups and Associations for consultation purposes. However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) had since completely revamped the format and wording of the Model Byelaws which had to be followed to be able to submit the same for confirmation, and in this connection, it was not possible to either adapt or alter the wording of individual byelaws from the Model Form.

Therefore, new draft byelaws had been prepared and had been split into two distinct forms, in order to be relevant to either the Northern or Southern Parkland areas, rather than simply the open space areas of St Michael's Mead as a whole. These draft byelaws were set out in the report now submitted.

A number of Members commented and various issues were raised, including:

- the need to maximise consultation as far as possible

ACTION

by advertising the draft byelaws on the Council's website and sending them to all relevant Parish Councils and Resident Associations;

- clarifying the wording relating to cycles, cricket/ball games and missiles;
- the need for adequate enforcement (it was noted that the Council's wider enforcement strategy would be the subject of an Executive report in the Autumn 2005); and
- clarifying which areas of land had now been adopted by the Council.

In response to a Member's request, Officers undertook to advise local Members of the consultation period.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that the draft byelaws, as now submitted, be approved for the purposes of consultation with local associations, Town and Parish Councils and the St Michael's Mead Residents Association.

DCG

236 PUBLIC CONVENIENCE PROVISION AND MAINTENANCE

The Executive Member for Environmental Management submitted a report seeking improvements to the overall quality of public conveniences in the District.

He detailed current provision, locations and who managed and cleaned them. Also, he reminded the Executive that, as part of the Best Value Review of Town Centres in 2002, the Council had decided to remove the Automatic Public Conveniences (APCs), as these were very unpopular with customers, little used and very costly to operate. They were being phased out as contracts came to an end and

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should all be removed by November 2005.

The Executive Member stated that Gascoyne Way was not DDA compliant and required tiling on floors and walls, estimated to cost a minimum of £20,000. As the building was relatively small, bringing it up to DDA standards would substantially reduce the area available for non-disabled users. The convenience had a low level of usage and was in a poor location. The building of an extension would reduce the size of the adjacent recycling point. Therefore, in accordance with the 2002 Best Value Review recommendations, he proposed that this convenience be closed once the new convenience at The Wash was opened.

The Riverside Walk public convenience in Bishop's Stortford required tiling on floors and walls and general updating e.g. cubicle partitions. It was estimated that this would cost around £20,000. However, the new convenience to be provided as part of the Jackson Square redevelopment would be closer to this site and provide additional capacity. Therefore, he proposed that the Riverside Walk site be closed on completion of the Jackson Square redevelopment.

The Executive Member referred to the need for regular general decoration to maintain standards. This could be achieved through a 'deep cleansing' schedule which would involve regular cleanses using stronger cleansing materials and the use of machines where possible e.g. buffers on floors. Details were set out in the report now submitted. It was proposed that these operations were scheduled to occur once every 6 months initially.

In 2005/06, the Executive Member proposed to install baby change facilities into the conveniences that did not currently have this facility. Also, he proposed to extend the provision of sanitary containers to all sites.

Finally, the Executive Member stated that the opening hours for existing facilities had been reviewed. Last year,

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opening had been extended to seven days per week including bank holidays. He proposed extending opening hours to 8pm in the summer months at a cost of an additional £8,000 per annum. As this increased the risk of vandalism and anti-social behaviour, it was proposed that this be introduced for one year on a trial basis.

The Executive Member detailed the financial implications of these proposals in the report now submitted. The Executive noted that the net effect would be a saving to the Council of £19,250 in 2005/06 and ongoing savings of £22,800 per annum.

In response to a Member's comment that the withdrawal of APCs would be a retrograde step, the Executive Member stated that all the evidence revealed them to be very unpopular with the public.

In respect of the new convenience to be provided in Jackson Square, Bishop's Stortford, a Member requested that the need to ensure that entrances were wide enough for a pram to get through be taken on board.

The Executive agreed the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) as recommended in the 2002 Best Value Review, the convenience at Gascoyne Way, Hertford be closed following the rebuild of the nearby convenience at The Wash; DDCS

(B) following the completion of the Jackson Square redevelopment in Bishop's Stortford, the convenience at Riverside Walk be closed; DDCS

(C) the quality and cleanliness of existing Council facilities be improved by introducing a programme of six monthly deep cleanses, and minor redecoration of each public convenience be carried out on an ongoing basis, to be funded from revenue savings arising from the removal of the Automatic Public DDCS

ACTION

Conveniences;

(D) the existing service be enhanced by providing additional nappy bins and sanitary waste containers and baby changers (to be funded from existing budgets); and

DDCS

(E) opening hours be extended to 8pm from 1 April to 31 September, on a trial basis in 2006/07 at a cost of £8,000 per annum.

237 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
STATEMENT 2004/05 REVIEW

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance submitted a report providing an annual review of the Council's 2004/05 Treasury Management arrangements.

The Executive noted that the annual review covered:

- the Council's current treasury position;
- the strategy for 2004/05;
- the economy in 2004/05;
- borrowing and investment rates in 2004/05;
- the borrowing outturn for 2004/05;
- compliance with treasury limits and Prudential Indicators;
- investment outturn for 2004/05; and
- debt rescheduling.

The Executive agreed that the report be received.

ACTION

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

238 QUARTERLY BUDGET MONITORING

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance submitted a quarterly monitoring report on the 2005/06 budget.

He detailed the main variances and stated that the net summary position revealed that, subject to all other budgets being equal, an overall overspend on the General Fund was projected at £83,000. However, this was based on information for the first three months of the financial year and as such, it was too early in the year to predict with any certainty the outturn in those areas highlighted.

Directors Board would continue to monitor budgets on a monthly basis.

The Executive agreed to receive the report and to continue to monitor all items.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received as required under the Council's Financial Procedures Quarterly monitoring arrangements, and

(B) all items continue to be monitored.

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239 FORWARD PLAN: OCTOBER 2005 – JANUARY 2006

The Executive Member for Public Engagement submitted a report seeking approval for the publication of the Forward Plan for the period October 2005 - January 2006.

He advised that the item relating to the Market Towns Health Check, which had been scheduled for September 2005, would now be reported in October 2005, in order that further consultations could take place.

ACTION

The Executive agreed that the Forward Plan, as now detailed and amended, be approved.

RESOLVED - that the Forward Plan for October 2005 - January 2006, as set out at Appendix 'A' to these Minutes, be approved for publication.

DCG

The meeting closed at 4.55 pm

nps\executive\16 aug 2005\minutes 16 August 2005

Chairman
Date



Forward Plan

Published for October 2005

**FORWARD PLAN
(Council and Executive)**

No	Subject	Decision Maker (Date)	Consultation (who will be consulted and by what method)	Contact Executive Member	Contact Lead Officer
1.	Provisional Revenue Support Grant Settlement 2006/07	Executive – 6 December 2005	None	Councillor Tony Jackson	Dave Tweedie
2.	Budget 2006/07 Round 1 Estimates	Council – 14 December 2005 on recommendation from Executive – 6 December 2005	Members via Budget Scrutiny Panel. Representatives of trade and industry.	Councillor Tony Jackson	Dave Tweedie
3.	External Auditors Letter Annual management letter	Council – 26 October 2005 on recommendation from Performance Scrutiny Committee – 19 October 2005	Internal consultation.	Councillor Deborah Clark	Miranda Steward

No	Subject	Decision Maker (Date)	Consultation (who will be consulted and by what method)	Contact Executive Member	Contact Lead Officer
4.	Enforcement Policies - Environmental Health, Community Protection & Development Control	Council – 26 October 2005 on recommendation from Executive – 19 October 2005	Business Customer Consultation Panel, Taxi Trade Representatives Panel, Licensed Victuallers Association.	Councillors Nicola Burdett/Malcolm Alexander	Neal Hodgson
5.	Meals on Wheels Report on outcome of tenders	Executive – 8 November 2005	Service providers, LSP partners and Members.	Councillor Bob Parker	Mary Orton
6.	Implementing Electronic Government Strategy Update submission to Government - December 2005	Executive – 6 December 2005		Councillor Terence Milner	Georgina Stanton
7.	Growing Stansted Airport on the existing Runway and Stansted Airport Interim Master Plan British Airports Authority Consultation Documents (July 2005)	Executive – 11 October 2005		Councillor Deborah Clark	Mary Orton

No	Subject	Decision Maker (Date)	Consultation (who will be consulted and by what method)	Contact Executive Member	Contact Lead Officer
8.	Market Towns Health Check Final report	Council – 26 October 2005 on recommendation from Executive – 11 October 2005	Local stakeholders and Members	Councillor Malcolm Alexander	Mary Orton

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

No.	Subject	Committee (Date)	Contact Member	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Support Officer
1.	Performance Indicators Quarterly monitoring – April – June 2005	Performance Scrutiny – 19 October 2005	Cllr Diane Hollebon	Councillor Tony Jackson	Mary Orton

No.	Subject	Committee (Date)	Contact Member	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Support Officer
2.	Internal Audit Activity Additional report on activity in 2004/05 (October 2004 – March 2005)	Performance Scrutiny – 19 October 2005	Cllr Diane Hollebon	Councillor Deborah Clark	Simon Drinkwater
3.	Performance Indicators Quarterly monitoring – July – September 2005	Performance Scrutiny – 6 December 2005	Cllr Diane Hollebon	Councillor Tony Jackson	Mary Orton
4.	CPA Improvement Plan Monitoring (April – September 2005)	Performance Scrutiny – 6 December 2005	Cllr Diane Hollebon	Councillor Mike Carver	Rachel Stopard
5.	Strategic Plans 2005/06 April – September 2005	Performance Scrutiny – 6 December 2005	Cllr Diane Hollebon	Councillor Tony Jackson	Mary Orton
6.	Best Value Action Plan Monitoring (April – September 2005)	Performance Scrutiny – 6 December 2005	Cllr Diane Hollebon	Councillor Tony Jackson	Mary Orton

No.	Subject	Committee (Date)	Contact Member	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Support Officer
7.	Strategic Risks Monitoring (April – September 2005)	Performance Scrutiny – 6 December 2005	Cllr Diane Hollebon	Councillor Mike Carver	Simon Drinkwater
8.	Protecting and providing support to the most vulnerable in partnership with others	Policy Development Scrutiny – 15 November 2005	Cllr Jim Ranger	Councillor Bob Parker	Bernard Perry/ Neal Hodgson/ Mary Orton
9.	Create opportunities for improving access to services and public involvement in Council business	Policy Development Scrutiny – 17 January 2006	Cllr Jim Ranger	Councillor Terence Milner	Simon Drinkwater/ Georgina Stanton