

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
ON TUESDAY 30 MAY 2006 AT 7.30 PM

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors W Ashley, P R Ballam, H G S Banks,
J Demonti, R Gilbert, M P A McMullen,
D A A Peek, N C Poulton, J O Ranger,
S Rutland-Barsby and J P Warren.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Philip Thomas	- Interim Executive Director
Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Corporate Governance
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Lorraine Kirk	- Senior Communications Officer
Mary Orton	- Director of Policy and Performance
Ceri Pettit	- Head of Performance

21 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Leader stated that he had agreed to accept two items of urgent business onto the agenda as urgent matters. The first item related to the Single Non-Emergency Number, which was urgent on the basis that a bid for funding had to be submitted by 2 June 2006. The second item related to the Decisions of the Human Resources Sub-Committee

held on 12 May 2006, which was urgent on the grounds that it was necessary to avoid any undue delay in resolving the issue.

22 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Executive passed a resolution pursuant to Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public during consideration of the business referred to in Minutes 29 and 30 below on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

ACTION

23 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2006/07

The Leader of the Council submitted a report on the Best Value Performance Plan 2006/07. This was a statutory plan that had to be published by the end of June 2006.

The Leader presented the draft text for the Plan and referred to the additional document that had been circulated, which detailed updated information, a number of suggested amendments and various comments including those from the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader stated that the additional comments and amendments would be incorporated into a consolidated version that would be issued to all Members for approval by Council before the end of June 2006.

In respect of LPI 1.1 (playschemes), the Executive noted the impact of the new requirements of Ofsted, which would affect attendances of under 8's. It was agreed that lobbying and a press release on this issue would be undertaken if appropriate.

The Executive Member for Community Development undertook to clarify the position in respect of Standon Community Centre, in order that the target for LP 1.1 could be clarified at Council.

In respect of BV 199a (litter), BV 199b (graffiti) and BV 199c (fly posting), the Executive noted the comment of the Performance Scrutiny Committee that the targets should be reviewed to demonstrate continuous improvement. The Leader suggested that the proposed targets represented a realistic approach, particularly as the “goal posts had been moved”, in respect of road dirt on un-kerbed roads.

In respect of LPI 7.20 (targets) and LPI 7.22 (improvement), the Leader proposed that, to reflect the 2% increase year on year as set in the new corporate objectives, targets of 72% (2006/07), 74% (2007/08) and 76% (2008/09) be set for LPI 7.20 and 61% (2006/07), 63% (2007/08) and 65% (2008/09) be set for LPI 7.22.

In respect of LPI 5.16a (public attendance at Council meetings), the Executive Member for Public Engagement proposed that, in the light of the new decision-making arrangements adopted by the Council which would result in fewer meetings, the targets be amended to 300 (2006/07), 350 (2007/08) and 400 (2008/09). This was supported by the Executive.

The Executive supported the Best Value Performance Plan, as now amended.

RECOMMENDED - that (A) the format and content of the Best Value Performance Plan for 2006, in particular the outturn performance for 2005/06, as now amended, be approved;

ED/CE

(B) the targets for BV225, LPI 2.7 and LPI 7.12b as detailed in paragraph 4.7 be agreed;

(C) the Interim Executive Director and from 5

ED/CE

June 2006, the Chief Executive be authorised to make any additional changes to the text appended to this report as required to satisfy Government and audit requirements; and

(D) for the following year (2007/08), the Council utilises the Corporate Strategic Plan to meet the statutory requirement to prepare a Performance Plan.

CE

24 ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME ENFORCEMENT

The Executive Member for Environmental Management submitted a report on the implications of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

The Executive Member stated that the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005 had been introduced in order to give local authorities new powers to improve and protect environmental quality. Final Government guidance had been published in March 2006 and many of the measures were effective from April this year. The Act impacted upon the work of a number of different agencies and tiers of local government. A primary objective of the legislation was to resolve some of the issues which prevented local authorities from conducting effective enforcement and strengthened the law to make fines and prosecutions easier to achieve. The Executive Member focused on the parts of the legislation that had a relevant impact upon East Herts Council.

The Executive noted that the Council conducted all enforcement in accordance with its own corporate policy. This was based on national best practice and had signed up to the Central and Local Government Concordat on Good Enforcement (the Enforcement Concordat). This lay down the rules and standards to which officers should comply when undertaking enforcement action.

In East Herts, enforcement was conducted by a number of Council services, but primarily by Regulatory Services (Development Control, Building Control, Community Protection and Environmental Health) and Direct and Contract Services (by Contract Services and Parking Services). The policy and practice changes impacted primarily on Contract Services which dealt with street cleansing and waste collection operations and enforcement; Development Control, which undertook planning enforcement matters including flyposting; and Environmental Health, which dealt with health, pollution and statutory nuisances such as noise, light and insects.

The Executive Member detailed the main legislative changes impacting upon the Council. He also detailed the Council's existing policy and practice under each of these areas, considered the implications for the District and proposed policy changes. The Executive considered and supported these draft proposals.

The Executive Member also referred to statutory guidance accompanying the Act, which recommended that the Council developed and consulted on an enforcement policy for environmental crime. A draft policy was proposed at Appendix 'B6' of the report now submitted. This document would sit beneath the Council's corporate Enforcement policy and would ensure that resources were focused on priority areas and appropriate and proportional action was taken in different circumstances. The Executive supported the draft policy for the purposes of public consultation.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the enforcement measures, as now detailed and amended by Policy Development Scrutiny Committee, be approved, subject to consultation with partners and the public as required; and

DDCS

(B) the Draft Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy, as set out at Appendix B6 of the report now submitted, be approved, subject to public consultation.

DDCS

RESOLVED ITEMS

25 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 2 May 2006 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

26 PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT MONIES

The Executive Member for Environmental Management submitted a report seeking approval for the amendment of the Capital Programme, in the light of the award of Planning Deliver Grant funds.

The Council had received a sum of £392,500 in the form of Planning Delivery Grant for the year 2006/07. 25% of these funds, £98,100, had to be spent on capital schemes. There had been an underspend in capital Planning Delivery Grant funds for 2005/06 of £22,000 giving a total of £120,100 to spend on capital grant schemes.

The Executive Member proposed that £60,000 be allocated to the Listed Building Grants Capital Programme over the next 2 years increasing the budget to £65,000 in years 2006/07 and 2007/08. Also, a further £60,000 be included within this year's Capital Programme to extend the Remote Working pilot studies.

The Executive agreed the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that capital provision in the sum of £60,000 be provided in the Capital Programme for 2006/07 and 2007/08 for listed building grants and also, a sum of £60,000 for 2006/07 be provided within the Capital Programme to enable the

DRS/DR

extension of the Remote Working pilots.

27 CONTRACT SERVICES – ESTABLISHMENT OF SERVICE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER POST

The Executive Member for Environmental Management submitted a report seeking approval to a change in the staffing establishment.

The Executive Member referred to the increase in workload over the past three years within Contract Services, particularly in Refuse and Recycling, Grounds Maintenance and in those areas of new initiatives to meet new legislative requirements and the Council's corporate priorities.

The resignation of the former Head of Direct Services had given senior management the opportunity to review the structure of the service teams within the Direct and Contract Services Division and to re-evaluate the strategic fit of these service areas within the Council's corporate management framework. The Executive Member detailed the subsequent changes that had taken place.

As part of this restructuring, it was proposed to introduce a new staff post into the Contract Services Business Support team of Service Development Officer. This post would be responsible for leading on service projects, researching best practice and reviewing the Council's service delivery mechanisms and procedures. Also, this post would play a key role in the forthcoming contract reviews, as well as the roll-out of the recycling programme expansion and in preparing for the move to fortnightly collections. In addition, the postholder would be responsible for ensuring that the systems and processes were in place to undertake enforcement activity under the Clean Neighbourhoods Act.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that the creation of a new staff post of Service Development Officer in the Contract Services staff team be approved.

DDCS

28 SINGLE NON-EMERGENCY NUMBER

The Executive Member for Community Safety submitted a report seeking approval for the Council to join a newly formed partnership, which would deliver the Single Non-Emergency Number (101) service in Hertfordshire from 2007. She also detailed the service that the Single Non-Emergency Number (SNEN) would provide to the residents of Hertfordshire.

The Executive Member stated that the Government had made a commitment to introduce a SNEN as part of a package of measures to improve community safety. The SNEN was defined as a new service that would provide the public with direct access to advice, information and action for community safety issues, including non-emergency crime, policing and anti-social behaviour. Ofcom had set the number 101 for the service nationally.

The service had been designed to improve the delivery of non-emergency services by ensuring a better co-ordinated response by local agencies and releasing the 999 service to handle emergency incidents. The 101 number would be a 24-hour service, have multi language features and be accessible via the internet. It would cover as a minimum the following areas:

- Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property
- Noisy neighbours
- Intimidation and harassment
- Abandoned vehicles
- Rubbish and litter, including fly tipping
- People being drunk and rowdy in public places
- Drug related anti-social behaviour
- Street lighting

The first wave of SNENs had been carried out in five areas

across England and Wales and would go live this summer. There would be two other Waves of implementation in 2006/7 and 2007/8, which would complete coverage across the country. The Government had now invited bids from areas for Wave 2, to be submitted by 2 June 2006. All bids required the support of all key partners to be eligible. In Hertfordshire, these partners were the Constabulary, the County Council and the 10 District and Borough Councils.

The Executive Member detailed the benefits of the scheme and outlined the governance of the programme by a Partnership Board.

The Executive supported the proposals and noted the challenges in preparing a full operational scheme by October 2006. It was further noted that should the Council not be satisfied with the final operational scheme, then the opportunity to withdraw was still available up to the October deadline.

RESOLVED - that the Council joins the Hertfordshire Single Non-Emergency Number Partnership to bid for Wave 2 Implementation in 2006/07, subject to satisfaction with the operational specification to be drawn up.

DPP

29 SOCIAL HOUSING GRANT CAPITAL PROGRAMME – PURCHASE OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY

The Leader and the Executive Member for Community submitted a joint report seeking authority for the purchase of a residential property from the current owner in order to avoid a difficult rehousing problem. The owner had special housing needs and a family, but was threatened with repossession and homelessness for mortgage arrears.

The Executive noted the various options that had been considered by the Capital Strategy Group and the latest information in respect of discussions with the owner. In considering the wider interests of the Council, it was suggested that officers should seek to ensure that the property was let on a similar basis to those included within

the Frays scheme. This was supported by the Executive.

The Executive approved the recommendations as now detailed.

- | | |
|--|-----|
| <p><u>RESOLVED</u> - that (A) purchase of the freehold interest in 26 Aston Road, Standon for the cost of redeeming the mortgage of the current owner; £216,000 or thereabouts, be approved;</p> | DR |
| <p>(B) a tenancy of the property referred to in (A) above be granted to the current owner;</p> | DPP |
| <p>(C) Papworth Trust be engaged to undertake:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the adaptation of the property to cater for the needs of the tenant; • repair of the property to meet Decent Homes Standards; • the ongoing management of the property and tenancy; <p>at 26 Aston Road, Standon; and</p> | DR |
| <p>(D) officers explore the means to ensuring that the property was let on a similar basis as the Frays Housing Association scheme.</p> | DR |

30 HUMAN RESOURCES SUB-COMMITTEE DECISION

The Leader of the Council submitted a report detailing the decisions of the Human Resources Sub-Committee meeting held on 12 May 2006. He sought authority to fund the redundancy, early retirement and settlement of outstanding claims from the salaries budget.

The Executive approved the funding as detailed in the report now submitted.

RESOLVED – that the decision of the Human Resources Sub-Committee meeting held on 12 May 2006, be funded from the salaries budget.

DCG/DOD/
DR

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm

K:\BSWP\NPS\Executive\30 May 2006\Minutes 30 May 2006.doc

Chairman
Date