

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
ON TUESDAY 29 MAY 2007 AT 7.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A P Jackson (Chairman/Leader).
Councillors M R Alexander, M G Carver,
L O Haysey, R L Parker and M J Tindale.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors J Demonti, R Gilbert, J O Ranger,
P A Ruffles and J P Warren.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Steve Adelizzi	- Home Energy Efficiency Officer
Cliff Cardoza	- Head of Environmental Services
Simon Chancellor	- Head of Accountancy Services
Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Nick White	- Communications Officer
Sheila Winterburn	- Environmental Health Manager (Residential)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George Robertson - Director of Customer and
Community Services
(designate)

48 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of
Councillor T Milner.

49 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Leader welcomed and introduced George Robertson, who would be joining the Authority as Director of Customer and Community Services in August 2007.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

ACTION

50 **EAST HERTS LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP (LSP) COMMUNITY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN**

The Leader of the Council submitted a report detailing the Community Strategy Action Plan for 2007/08, which had been adopted by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Board on 16 March 2007.

The Executive recalled that, in 2003 the East Herts LSP, known as East Herts Together, had produced its first Community Strategy. The first action plan under the strategy ran from 2004 to 2007 and was structured around the ten priorities of the strategy. 52 of the 57 actions within this plan had been delivered (as reported to the joint Performance and Policy Development Scrutiny Committees on 22 May 2007) with two more on target and one no longer a target.

In developing a new action plan for 2007 and beyond, the LSP had been mindful of one of the findings of an independent review of the LSP and its work, that there had been too many priorities. Furthermore, the LSP had taken the view that the next action plan should consist of actions that would be focused on one year, rather than three, in order to increase focus and to allow for greater responsiveness to the changing environment and opportunities.

The Leader stated that the action plan attached at Appendix 'A6' of the report now submitted, was in the form of a work plan for 2007/08 and was structured around a simplified framework of six local themes:

- **Neighbourhood and environmental management**
- **Economic development and learning**
- **Leisure and cultural development**
- **Services for vulnerable people**
- **Healthier lifestyles**
- **Community Safety**

The Leader commented that a seventh county-wide 'theme', the Local Area Agreement 'stretch' targets, had also been included. These had been cross referenced against the East Herts local priorities (and vice versa).

In response to comments by Councillor R Gilbert in respect of mental health services, the Leader suggested that the Executive Member for Housing and Health was responsible for making representations to the LSP and the County Scrutiny Committee. The Executive Member welcomed Councillor Gilbert's comments and invited all other Members to provide him with such details in order that he could make the appropriate representation.

The Executive noted that the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee would be reviewing the LSP during 2007/08.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED - that (A) the Community Strategy Action Plan 2007/08 be approved; and

(B) the scrutiny review to be undertaken in 2007/08 be noted.

51 **CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN 2007/08**

The Leader of the Council submitted a report seeking approval for the Corporate Strategic Plan 2007/08. He advised that the draft text, detailed at Appendix 'A8' of the report now submitted, was still a working draft and that further amendments would be made when the latest financial and performance indicator information became available.

The Leader detailed verbally the latest updates to various performance indicators and targets. He also outlined the arrangements for disseminating the Plan when it was finalised.

The Executive noted that an early draft of the Plan had been considered by the Performance Scrutiny Committee on 27 February 2007. A further version of the Plan had been considered on 22 May 2007.

The Executive endorsed the recommendation as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED - that (A) the draft 2007/08 Corporate Strategic Plan and the current position regarding the 2006/07 outturns for all national and 'external' local performance indicators be approved; and

(B) the Chief Executive be authorised to publish the Corporate Strategic Plan within the statutory deadline, and to make any additional changes to the text or performance indicator information as required.

CE

RESOLVED ITEMS

52 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 3 April 2007 be confirmed as a

correct record and signed by the Chairman.

53 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY

The Executive received a report detailing those issues referred to the Executive by the Scrutiny Committees. Issues relating to specific reports for the Executive were considered and detailed at the relevant report of the Executive Member.

The Executive agreed that the report be received.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

54 A120 LITTLE HADHAM BYPASS CONSULTATION ON ROUTE OPTIONS BY HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

The Executive Member for Planning Policy and Transport submitted a report seeking the views of the Executive on Hertfordshire County Council's consultation regarding route options for a bypass on the A120 at Little Hadham, in order that the District Council's formal response could be given.

The Executive Member detailed the outcome of the consultation undertaken, the seven options for the bypass route and the views of the Parish Council.

He referred to the consultation, during which a total of 470 responses were received from local residents. Of the responses received on preferred options, only 8% had favoured option 1 - a do minimum approach, with 92% favouring some kind of bypass solution to the current situation. 73% of respondents had preferred a northern option while only 19% favoured a southern scheme. The most popular proposal was for option 5, which had attracted 41% of responses. This scheme was the most expensive of all the options, being the outermost and longest of the routes.

The Executive Member detailed the proposed response, which supported the views expressed by residents in the

consultation.

The Leader commented that he would be disappointed if the British Airports Authority did not at least engage in a process for contributing to the funding of an agreed scheme.

Councillor R Gilbert expressed his concern over a number of issues, such as the loss of countryside from an agreed scheme, the impact on water supplies and whether this was part of a wider strategic east-west route. He also referred to the cohesiveness of the village and whether this would be improved by any of the proposed routes.

The Executive Member responded to these concerns by stating that detailed studies on the impact on water supply would be carried out once a preferred route had been identified. He believed the proposed response represented a sensitive approach towards resolving a serious traffic issue for the residents of Little Hadham. In respect of overall highways decisions, he commented that he was unaware of any master plan for a strategic east-west route.

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support acknowledged the concerns raised, but as the local ward Member, believed that option 5 would increase the cohesiveness of the village. He referred to the consultation and expressed his pleasure that a clear majority of consultees, including the Parish Council, had supported one particular option, namely option 5.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that Hertfordshire County Council be informed that East Herts Council:

DNS

- (A) supports, in principle, an environmental road bypass for the A120 at Little Hadham;
- (B) objects to any proposal for a southern bypass because of the effect of separating the communities of Little Hadham and Hadham Ford; proximity of the schemes to existing

properties; increased noise for the residents of southern Little Hadham and Hadham Ford; the visual impact of the associated viaduct across the road to Much Hadham; environmental harm; and the loss of opportunity to provide flood alleviation measures;

- (C) supports a northern bypass solution in principle, provided that flood alleviation measures are included; the selected route maintains the potential to be increased from single to dual carriageway (should a need be identified in the future); and the protection of the Hadham Water source is included;
- (D) of the four northern options, supports Option 5 as it provides the greatest benefits to the residents of Little Hadham and Hadham Ford; maintains the village as one community; and provides the potential to allow for future linking into the existing A120 Bishop's Stortford northern bypass should an overall scheme be required in the future;
- (E) supports Option 4 as a second choice should Option 5 not prove to be a viable scheme; and
- (F) encourages Hertfordshire County Council to vigorously pursue the British Airports Authority with regard to seeking major contributions towards the funding of an environmental bypass scheme for Little Hadham.

55 CHANGE TO ALLOCATION OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY GRANTS

The Executive Member for Housing and Health submitted a report reviewing the existing energy efficiency grant policy and recommending changes in order to meet changing demands in this field.

The Executive Member advised that it had been necessary to review the current policy following unprecedented demand for the grants in 2006/07, when the budget had been fully committed within six months and left a large number of disappointed residents. He recommended reducing the maximum grant available in order to increase the number of grants that could be made available to residents. He proposed that the grant be reduced from a maximum of £300 to £150 per household.

The Executive noted that the grant was available to all private sector residents and demonstrated the Council's commitment to energy efficiency and carbon reduction. Although reducing the grant award might dissuade some residents from carrying out the work, the Executive Member suggested that with demand so high and the obvious benefits, the grant would still offer an incentive to carry out energy efficiency work.

The Executive Member also recommended various other changes to the policy, which would improve the administration of the grant and benefit the applicant through an easier application procedure.

In response to a comment from Councillor J O Ranger, the Executive Member confirmed that similar grants were also available from other sources and that the role of the Home Energy Efficiency Officer included raising awareness and giving appropriate advice to residents.

The Executive approved the policy changes as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that the following changes to the energy efficiency grant scheme be adopted:

DNS

- (A) In order to increase the number of grants that can be approved from the existing budget the maximum grant should be reduced from £300 to £150 per household at that property.
- (B) To improve administration of the grant a fixed sum of £50 per measure or 50% of the cost

sum of £50 per measure or 50% of the cost, which ever is the least, be adopted.

- (C) To ensure the work is carried out competently and reduce administration costs, the grant will only be available to people using contractors. i.e. no DIY installations.
- (D) The applicant will require only one quote. This will ease administration and save time on behalf of the applicant and the council.
- (E) To ensure the grant is relevant to current market conditions the scheme amounts offered can be varied with Director approval.

56 CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK – QUARTERLY MONITORING (JANUARY – MARCH 2007)

The Leader of the Council submitted a report setting out an exception report on the finance, performance and risk monitoring for the Council for January - March 2007.

The Performance Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 22 May 2007, had noted the report. The Leader advised that for this quarter only, no financial data had been included, as this information would be detailed in the General Fund Outturn report that would be submitted to the Executive on 17 July 2007.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the corporate healthcheck for the quarter period relating to January – March 2007, be approved; and

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(B) the absence of financial data for this quarter only be noted.

57 2007/08 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTERS

The Leader of the Council submitted a report seeking approval for the 2007/08 Strategic Risk Registers.

The Executive recalled that the Risk Management Strategy had been approved in November 2005, since when, the Authority had undertaken a number of Officer and Member workshops to identify key strategic risks facing the Council and to raise awareness generally.

Following risk management training in 2006, Heads of Service had undertaken risk assessments as part of the 2007/08 service planning process. On 2 April 2007, risks identified from service planning, the External Auditor and 2006/07 risk registers had been considered by the Risk Management Group. On 1 May 2007, Corporate Management Team had considered the findings and recommendations of the Risk Management Group. Twenty four strategic risks had been identified which required the preparation of risk registers and mitigating action plans for 2007/08. These were detailed at Appendix 'A11' of the report now submitted. The Leader also detailed Strategic Register (SR) 29 and recommended suspending this as the risk had been incorporated into other registers.

In response to a query from Councillor R Gilbert, in respect of SR11h, the Leader referred to a special meeting of the Executive that would be held on 12 June 2007, to consider leisure issues.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) in accordance with the Authority's Risk Management Strategy, the twenty four 2007/08 Strategic Risk Registers as detailed at Appendix 'A11', be approved; and

DIS

(B) Strategic Register 29 be suspended.

DIS

58 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

The Executive Member for Environment and Conservation submitted a report seeking approval of the arrangements for tendering the grounds maintenance contract. In his absence, the Executive Member for Community Safety and Protection detailed the proposals.

The Executive noted the procurement timetable and that the new contract would be in place in April 2008. A Task and Finish Group had been established in March 2007 to consider and inform the specification of the new contract. This had reported to the Performance Scrutiny Committee on 22 May 2007 and its recommendations had been accepted. The Executive Member expressed his thanks to the Group for their work.

The Executive Member drew attention to the selection criteria proposed for use for the tender evaluation. This was based on a 50:50 price/quality weighting, the details of which were set out at paragraph 4.4 of the report now submitted.

In response to various queries, the Executive Member and the Head of Environmental Services advised that it would be proposed that the contractor would need to demonstrate each year how it was improving the service. In respect of evaluating the tenders objectively, a range of questions would be asked of each tenderer, in order to ascertain an appropriate score for all of the criteria. Finally, the length of contract proposed was to ensure that the following contract commenced in the winter months rather than at peak growing season.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the grounds maintenance contract be tendered for a period of 6 years and nine months, with a possible extension for a further 7 years; and

DCCS

(B) the selection criteria outlined in paragraph 4.4 of the report now submitted, be approved

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of the report now submitted, be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.42 pm

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Chairman
Date