

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
ON TUESDAY 29 JANUARY 2008 AT
7.30 PM

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, W Ashley, N Clark,
R N Copping, J Demonti, A M Graham, P Grethe,
J Hedley, J O Ranger, M Wood and B Wrangles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Anne Freimanis	- Chief Executive
Tony Hall	- Interim Head of Business Support Services
Philip Hamberger	- Director of Internal Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Will O'Neill	- Head of Community and Cultural Strategy
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services
Nick White	- Communications Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Jane Sharp	- Unison
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499 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of
Councillor M G Carver.

RESOLVED ITEMS500 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 18 December 2007 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

501 LEISURE CONTRACT SPECIFICATION

The Executive Member for Community Development, Leisure and Culture submitted a report detailing the proposed approach to be taken in seeking tenders for the next leisure contract.

The Executive recalled that the outline governing principles of the leisure tender specification and the desired outcomes had been considered at its previous meeting (Minute 436 refers). The Executive Member advised that seven expressions of interest had been received and that following assessment by Officers from a number of disciplines, it was intended that all would be invited to tender for the three Lots.

The Executive Member detailed the tender timetable in the report now submitted. She also advised that the Capital Strategy Group had considered the specific issue of potential capital investment that might be employed to deliver improvements to the facilities and/or reduce the net revenue cost subsidy of the service. The Group had recommended funds to be made available for an investment of up to £3.84m. The indicative options were detailed at Appendix 'A5' of the report now submitted.

The Executive Member detailed the progress in the development of the design of the specification for each Lot. Finally, she expressed her gratitude to the Community Scrutiny Committee for its comments, which had been supportive and had been incorporated into the report now submitted. An extract from the Minutes of the Community

Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 January 2008, had been tabled for Members' information.

Members sought clarification on a number of issues and the following assurances were given:

- a professional team of legal, procurement, financial and audit Officers had worked on this throughout the process;
- the seven expressions of interest had been submitted from recognised leisure providers;
- discussions with Sawbridgeworth Town Council were ongoing;
- tenderers had the flexibility to submit their own ideas on the provision of a playscheme service;
- Officers would take on board the comments in respect of ensuring that Lot 3 contained aspirations beyond Hertford town centre and that, community partnerships were encouraged;
- tenderers would be encouraged to consider the potential of Castle Hall and in particular, its riverside frontage; and
- consultation with staff and Unison had commenced.

The Executive approved the recommendations as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the comments of the Community Scrutiny Committee be received as follows:

- (1) the approach as articulated for each of the three Lots in the report now submitted, be endorsed; and
 - (2) the principles are included as the basis for the specification documents to be sent to prospective bidders at the end of January 2008; and
- (B) the approach set out in the report now submitted, be approved.

502 REVIEW OF WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report seeking authority for Officers to negotiate with the Council's landlord to evaluate and consider options for the future of The Causeway site, Bishop's Stortford.

The Executive recalled that, at its meeting held on 4 September 2007, it had adopted an approach to the accommodation needs of the Council, which recognised the efficiencies that could be achieved through the introduction of new working practices (Minute 219 refers).

From discussions to date, Officers believed that an agreement to surrender the existing lease was a feasible option, subject to the agreement of satisfactory terms. Another alternative to consider was for the Council to retain the current lease of the Causeway Offices and undertake the refurbishment of the building for occupation or letting. The options available to the Council would be appraised using whole life costing and cost/benefit analysis techniques, which would be reported for consideration alongside the Working Arrangements review outcome.

In response to Members' queries, the following assurances were given:

- the Council’s consultants, Paragon, had a great deal of experience in carrying out similar work in other local authorities;
- staff questionnaires would be distributed shortly; and
- an initial cost benefit analysis of the working arrangements project would be carried out by Paragon, but beyond that, it was not appropriate at this stage, to consider future allocations of work.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that the Director of Internal Services be authorised to negotiate with the Council’s landlord at the Causeway offices to enable the Council to evaluate and consider the following options:

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- (A) the surrender of the Council’s lease of the Causeway offices; or
- (B) continue to lease the Causeway offices and prepare for refurbishment to be undertaken.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

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Chairman
Date