

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
ON TUESDAY 14 OCTOBER 2008 AT
7.30 PM

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, D Clark, N Clark,
R N Copping, Mrs D L E Hollebon, N C Poulton,
J P Warren, B Wrangles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Anne Freimanis	- Chief Executive
Mike Collier	- Acting Director of Internal Services
Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Philip Hamberger	- Programme Director
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Lorraine Kirk	- Senior Communications Officer
Andrew Pulham	- Parking Manager
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services
Sally Smallwood	- Housing Development Manager

319 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised of forthcoming opportunities to engage with Sport and Leisure Management (SLM), the new leisure providers from 1 January 2009.

He congratulated the Director of Neighbourhood Services and his team for their work in achieving a highly commendable inspection by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners.

Finally, the Leader referred to the Executive taking a lead in new ways of working and stated that he had asked Officers to consider how Minutes of meetings could be more concise.

320 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor T Milner declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the matter referred to at Minute 326 – Review of Affordable Housing Provision and the Effects on Future Social Housing Grant, in that he was a Riversmead Housing Association Board member. He left the chamber whilst this matter was considered.

Councillor D Andrews asked Members to note that, in respect of the matter referred to at Minute 326 – Review of Affordable Housing Provision and the Effects on Future Social Housing Grant, he was exempt from the need to declare an interest, as he was a Council appointee to the South Anglia Housing Association Board.

Councillor R N Copping declared a personal interest in the matter referred to at Minute 326 - Review of Affordable Housing Provision and the Effects on Future Social Housing Grant, in that he was a former owner of one of the proposed sites for development.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS**ACTION****321 MODIFICATIONS TO JACKSON SQUARE
MULTISTOREY CAR PARK – PROGRESS
REPORT AND CAPITAL BID**

The Executive Member for Planning Policy and Transport submitted a report seeking approval for measures to improve parking arrangements in Jackson Square multistorey car park.

Officers had identified that there was no single cause of the occasional problems experienced in Jackson Square. Indeed, some of the causes originated on the highway, which was under the jurisdiction of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).

Officers had identified a number of improvements that could be made within the car park. These had been funded from within existing capital budgets and had commenced in August 2008, with revisions to the signing and lining of the upper floor. By virtue of the management agreement in operation, East Herts Council would recharge 50% of the cost of these works to the owner of the shopping centre, Kandahar.

The Executive Member drew attention to the most significant proposal, which was the creation of a new vehicular exit (and linked pedestrian access) onto Riverside. Officers believed that this new exit would be the single best action the Council could take within the limitations posed by the building and its environment, to ameliorate the current problems. Under normal circumstances, upper floor traffic would then leave the car park using the current exit onto Adderley Road and lower floor traffic would leave from the new exit. The Council had worked with HCC to model the likely effects on the road network and to achieve a new balance between the needs of users of the highway and of the car park.

The Environment Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 16 September 2008, had considered and supported the proposals (Minute 287 refers).

It was suggested that as discussions with relevant parties were still ongoing, the recommendation for the capital bid be amended by inserting “up to” before the sum of £120,000. It was further suggested that authority be delegated to the Director of Community and Customer Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Policy and Transport to progress these negotiations. An updated position could be reported when these recommendations were considered by Council.

The Executive supported the proposals as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED - that (A) the Environment Scrutiny Committee’s support for modifications already made and those proposed in respect of Jackson Square multi-storey car park be noted and endorsed;

(B) a capital bid of up to £120,000 to fund the creation of new vehicular and pedestrian exits from the car park onto Riverside, be approved; and

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(C) the Director of Community and Customer Services, in conjunction with the Executive Member for Planning Policy and Transport, be authorised to progress negotiations with relevant parties.

DCCS

322 **ASSET MANAGEMENT CAPITAL PROGRAMME ADJUSTMENTS**

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report seeking authority to adjust financial allocations in the Capital Programme to take account of additional costs and compensating savings.

The Capital Programme for 2008/09 included provision for expenditure of £2,300 to complete dilapidations work at The Castle, Hertford and £100,000 to undertake reconstruction of North Drive, High Cross. The completion of work at The Castle including all associated fees, had incurred expenditure of £28,350 in 2008/09 with a further £3,500 retention anticipated, thus requiring a final provision of £31,850 in the current financial year.

In respect of North Drive, High Cross, a provision of £100,000 had been included in the programme several years ago, anticipating an opportunity to secure the improvement and adoption of this private road as potential housing land in High Cross came forward for development. As there was currently no prospect of land being considered for development in this location before 2011 at the earliest, a reduced budget of £20,000 would enable patch reconstruction of the most vulnerable areas to be achieved and reduce the need for frequent maintenance.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED - that (A) the capital allocation for the Leased Properties Termination Contingency in 2008/09 be increased from £2,300 to £31,850; and

DIS

(B) the provision for North Drive, High Cross – DIS
Reconstruct road and drainage in 2008/09 be
reduced to £20,000 from £100,000.

**323 COUNCIL BUDGET AND INTEGRATED SERVICE
PLANNING PROCESS 2009/10 – 2012/13**

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report updating Members on the 2009/10 – 2012/13 Integrated Service Planning (ISP) process.

It was noted that the Acting Director of Internal Services had determined appropriate efficiency savings targets and options for their delivery were being identified by Directors and Heads of Service. These options would be submitted to Scrutiny Committees and the Executive for consideration in line with the agreed timetable.

The Executive noted that the financial model was based upon a range of assumptions. Key areas included expectations in respect of future pay and price increases and investment returns. Views on interest rate movements were particularly significant, given the level of investments held by the Council and the current uncertain economic climate. Changes would almost certainly be needed to the model before the estimates were submitted to the Executive in January 2009. Therefore, it was proposed that authority be delegated to the Acting Director of Internal Services, in conjunction with the Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support, to determine appropriate levels of indexation for preparation of the 2009/10 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan. Full details of assumptions would be provided to Members when the estimates were submitted in January 2009.

It was clarified that the model, as detailed at Appendix 'A15' of the report now submitted, had not been

updated and was the current version available.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the report be received; and

(B) the Acting Director of Internal Services in conjunction with the Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support be given delegated authority to determine appropriate pay and price increases and interest rate assumptions for preparation of the Council's 2009/10 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan. DIS

RESOLVED ITEMS

324 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 9 September 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

325 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.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

326 REVIEW OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVISION AND THE EFFECTS ON FUTURE SOCIAL HOUSING GRANT

The Executive Member for Housing and Health submitted a report seeking approval for capital allocations of future social housing grant to affordable housing schemes.

The Executive Member detailed four potential housing projects that had been proposed by Registered Social Landlords as follows:

- Conversion of 10 Circle Anglia fixed equity units;
- Conversion of 2 Aldwyck Housing Association fixed equity units;
- Marshgate Drive, Hertford;
- London Road, Buntingford

The Executive approved the proposals that future social housing grant totalling £182,000 be allocated to the Circle Anglia and Aldwyck schemes, but that the other schemes be not supported for the reasons detailed in the report now submitted.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the review of affordable housing provision in light of the current economic climate, be received;

(B) the allocation of Future Social Housing Grant to the following schemes be supported: DNS

- (1) Converting of 10 of Circle Anglia's Fixed Equity Units to shared ownership units for the sum of £120,000 (at £12,000 Social Housing Grant per unit) by the end of this financial year;
- (2) Converting 2 of Aldwyck Housing Association Fixed Equity units to general need rented for the sum of £62,000 (at £31,000 Social Housing Grant per unit) by the end of this financial year;

(C) the allocation of Future Social Housing Grant to the following schemes be not supported:

- (1) Network Housing Group's proposal to purchase Marshgate Drive scheme in Hertford, all 182 units, for a grant allocation of £3,204,000 (at £44,500 Social Housing Grant per unit) to secure the affordable housing provision of 72 units, the remainder being 'rent to buy' and market rent. The first payment of £1,602,000 to be made in 2009/2010 and the remainder (£1,602,000) in 2011/2012; and
- (2) Network Housing Group's bid to secure the contract to provide the affordable housing provision (59 units in total) at London Road, Buntingford, with a grant allocation of £2,070,000 (at £35,085 Social Housing Grant per unit). The first payment of £1,035,000 to be made in 2008/2009 and the remainder (£1,035,000) in 2011/2012.

327 PROVISION OF YOUTH ACCOMMODATION IN HERTFORD

The Executive Members for Housing and Health and Community Development, Leisure and Culture submitted a joint report seeking support for the provision of a Supported Housing Scheme for young people.

The Executive Members detailed a number of sites which had been considered by Officers on their merits as follows:

- the affordable housing provision from the Sainsbury's planning application site in Hertford;
- the affordable housing provision from the Tesco's planning application site in Hertford;

- the affordable housing provision from the planning application for the Cintel site, Watton Road, Ware;
- a site owned by East Herts - part of the asset management portfolio at Braziers Field, Hertford;
- the car park site at London Road, Hertford; and
- the car park site at Baker Street, Hertford.

Having considered these, the Executive approved the use of the Baker Street, Hertford site, as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the development of a Supported Housing Scheme for Young People be supported; DNS

(B) the use of Baker Street Car Park, Hertford to provide accommodation for up to 24 people between the ages of 16 and 25 years old with a permanent management presence, be supported; and DNS

(C) subject to achieving planning consent and the RSL receiving necessary funding, the land hatched on the plan detailed at Appendix 'A9' of the report now submitted be transferred for £1 to Aldwyck Housing Association in exchange for 100% nomination rights to initial lettings and 75% thereafter. DNS

328 STREET RECYCLING BINS – PILOT SCHEME

The Executive Member for Environment and Conservation submitted a report seeking approval for a pilot scheme to install “litter bin” sized street recycling bins.

As part of a programme to investigate more innovative ways of encouraging behaviour change on recycling, the Herts Waste Partnership had been looking at the provision of smaller recycling bins in busy pedestrian areas within

town centres. The Executive Member detailed a pilot scheme for such recycling bins in East Herts. He confirmed that specific locations were still being looked at.

The Executive approved the pilot scheme as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that the pilot scheme for street recycling bins be approved.

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329 RESPONSE TO THE COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT CONSULTATION

The Leader of the Council submitted a report seeking approval for a response to the Audit Commission's consultation on Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

The consultation paper set out proposals for what CAA and organisation assessments would look like and the issues that would be covered. A proposed response was detailed at Appendix 'B11' of the report now submitted.

The Executive approved the response as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that the draft response detailed at Appendix 'B11' of the report now submitted, on the current Comprehensive Area Assessment consultation, be approved.

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330 RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION "IMPROVING LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY" ARISING FROM THE WHITE PAPER "COMMUNITIES IN CONTROL"

The Leader of the Council submitted a report seeking approval for a response to the Government's consultation on local accountability.

The Leader referred to the comments made by the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 7 October 2008. He proposed various additions to the

proposed response and asked Officers to submit a covering letter outlining the many examples of the Council's engagement with the public.

The Executive approved the proposed response as now amended, for submission with a covering letter.

RESOLVED – that the draft response on the current 'Improving Local Accountability' consultation, as amended, be submitted with a covering letter, as discussed. CE

331 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK
– AUGUST 2008

The Leader of the Council submitted an exception report on the finance, performance and risk monitoring for the month of August 2008.

In respect of the Business Support Services efficiency saving of £63k, the Acting Director of Internal Services undertook to clarify which year's budget these applied to.

The Executive approved the healthcheck as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Corporate Healthcheck for the August 2008 period be approved; and

(B) the Head of Planning and Building Control be requested to report to Development Control Committee on actions being taken to address performance of EHPI 204. DNS

332 OPERATIONAL AND STRATEGIC RISK
MONITORING REPORT (1 APRIL – 30 JUNE 2008)

The Leader of the Council submitted a report on action taken to mitigate and control risks tracked by operational and strategic risk registers during the period April – June 2008.

The Executive noted the report.

RESOLVED – that the progress in taking action to mitigate and control risks tracked by operational and strategic risk registers during the period 1 April to 30 June 2008 be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm

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Chairman
Date