

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
ON TUESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2009 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, S A Bull, N Clark,
R N Copping, J Demonti, M P A McMullen,
J Mayes, J O Ranger, P A Ruffles, J P Warren.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Anne Freimanis	- Chief Executive
Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Philip Hamberger	- Programme Director of Change
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services
Lorraine Kirk	- Senior Communications Officer
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services
John Woodham	- Deputy Section 151 Officer

548 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Leader referred to recent spells of countrywide severe weather and expressed appreciation, on behalf of the Executive, to Council staff who helped to ensure the

continued provision of the Authority's services during the adverse conditions.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

ACTION

549 DEVELOPING THE COUNCIL'S EQUALITIES AGENDA

The Executive Member for Community Development, Leisure and Culture submitted a report detailing the measures currently undertaken and proposed in relation to the issue of equalities.

The Executive Member drew attention to a proposed Equality Policy, Scheme and Action Plan appended to the report now submitted.

The Executive noted that Community Scrutiny Committee meeting on 21 October 2008 had supported adoption of the Policy, Scheme and Action Plan, subject to referring the workforce elements to Human Resources Committee (Minute 347 refers). It further noted that comments made by the Local Joint Panel had been incorporated.

The Executive Member undertook to liaise with Officers to ensure all councillors were afforded an opportunity to receive appropriate equalities training.

The Executive supported adoption of the Policy, Scheme and Action Plan.

RECOMMENDED - that the Equality Policy, Scheme and Action Plan, as now submitted, be adopted for implementation.

DCCS

550 HERTFORDSHIRE WASTE PARTNERSHIP – INTER-AUTHORITY INTERMEDIATE AGREEMENT ON WASTE

The Executive Member for Environment and Conservation submitted a report on a proposed Inter-Authority Intermediate Agreement (IIAA) on Waste.

The Executive Member stated that the IIAA would form part of Hertfordshire County Council’s bid for £100 million of Government funding, under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), to secure new waste processing facilities for Hertfordshire. New facilities were required due to the decreasing availability of landfill disposal sites.

It was envisaged that all 11 principal local authorities in Hertfordshire would sign the IIAA. The IIAA would help to demonstrate how the PFI bid met the following Government funding criterion:

“... in two-tier areas, proposals should demonstrate how the two tiers of local government will work together to deliver their targets under a legally binding agreement ...”

The Executive noted the outline details of the Council’s commitments under the IIAA.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership Intermediate Inter-Authority Agreement be approved, and

**DCCS/
DIS**

(B) the Executive Member for Environment and Conservation be authorised to agree any minor changes on behalf of the Council as part of the process of finalising the document to the satisfaction of all 11 Hertfordshire Local

**DCCS/
DIS**

Authorities.

551 RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

The Leader of the Council submitted a report detailing a proposal to approve a revised Risk Management Strategy and Strategic Risk Register.

The Executive noted that Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee meeting on 20 January 2009 had supported the revised documents, subject to an amendment to the matrix as now detailed (Minute 529 refers). The matrix had been updated to take account of the suggested amendment.

The Executive supported the recommendation as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that the Risk Management Strategy and Strategic Risk Register, as now submitted, be approved.

DNS

552 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2009/10

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report seeking approval for the 2009/10 Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy, as now detailed.

The Local Government Act 2003 (the Act) required the Council to have regard to the Prudential Code and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable.

In accordance with the Act's provisions, Council must set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy, setting out its policies for managing its investments and for giving

priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.

The Executive noted the Executive Member's comments concerning the predicted level of future bank interest rates and the impact this would have in relation to the Authority's investment income.

The Executive further noted that the 2009/10 Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy had been considered by Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee meeting on 20 January 2009 (Minute 531 refers). The Scrutiny Committee had supported the strategies and requested Officers to submit a further report to it on treasury management policies early in the next civic year.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

<u>RECOMMENDED</u> – that (A) the 2009/10 Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy and Prudential Indicators for East Herts Council be approved;	DIS
--	------------

(B) delegated powers be given to the Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support, in conjunction with the Section 151 Officer, to enable some of the gains made within the Managed Funds to return “in-house”, and	DIS
--	------------

(C) the Policy on Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) be approved.	DIS
--	------------

553 CAR PARK FEES AND CHARGES

The Executive Member for Planning Policy and Transport submitted a report detailing proposals for car park tariffs for 2009/10, the introduction of discounts for motorists using the parking Smartcard and the treatment of the VAT element of pay and

display income for the period April – December 2009.

Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 20 January 2009, had supported the proposals (Minute 533 refers).

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the 2009/10 car park charges proposed in the report now submitted be approved; DCCS

(B) the introduction of a 10% discount on use of the parking Smartcard in respect of five hour and all day parking tariffs only be approved for implementation as soon as is practicable, and DCCS

(C) the treatment of the VAT element of pay and display income for the period April – December 2009, as proposed in the report now submitted, be approved. DCCS/
DIS

554 CONSOLIDATED BUDGET REPORT – PROBABLE OUTTURN 2008/09: REVENUE BUDGET 2009/10 AND (MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN) 2009/10 TO 2012/13

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report detailing the Probable Outturn for 2008/09 and the proposed Revenue Budget for 2009/10.

The Executive Member detailed the background and process adopted in arriving at the proposals now submitted. The Revenue Support Grant settlement had been set by the Government at 0.5% for 2009/10 and 2010/11. He detailed the key principles of the strategy and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 2012/13.

The Executive Member stated that the Probable Outturn 2008/09 indicated a potential underspend of

£823,580 and details of the major variances were set out in the report now submitted.

Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 20 January 2009, had agreed to support the budget proposals now detailed for 2009/10, subject to consideration being given to:

- freezing the budget for Members' Allowances at their 2007/08 level for three years up to and including 2010/11;**
- including a sum of £15,000 within the capital programme for the provision and installation of a digital "What's on?" board in Jackson Square, Bishop's Stortford;**
- the percentage figure assumed for staff pay increments and the local award being checked by Officers.**

The Executive Member advised that following a review, it was now proposed to reduce the 2009/10 pay award provision in the budget by 0.25%. As a consequence, there would be a favourable impact on the proposed net expenditure level for 2009/10 of £8,000 with a further £24,000 allocated as a corporate contingency provision.

The Executive welcomed the suggestions made by the Scrutiny Committee. It agreed to recommend that the MTFP be amended to take account of these suggestions.

The Executive Member advised that the MTFP, as amended, would result in an estimated net revenue expenditure position for 2009/10 of £8,972,402. This represented an increase in net expenditure of 3.4% compared to the previous year and indicative increases of 3.4% in 2010/11 and 3.8% in 2011/12 and 2012/13.

Details of the consultation undertaken on the Council's budget for 2009/10 were set out in the report now submitted.

The Executive Member highlighted proposals in relation to the use and establishment of reserves and balances.

The Leader commented that the budget proposals, as now submitted, yet again represented a significant step forward for the Council to achieve service improvements and improve the quality of life of residents. The budget took account of approximately £1.8 million of savings and reflected the Authority's prudence to establish various reserves in past years, particularly an Interest Equalisation Reserve.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

- | | |
|--|-----|
| <u>RECOMMENDED</u> – that (A) the draft Medium Term Financial Plan for 2009/10 to 2012/13, as now amended (see Appendix to these Minutes), be approved; | DIS |
| (B) £900,000 additional income in 2008/09 from interest on investments be added to the Interest Equalisation Reserve; | DIS |
| (C) the revenue budget for 2009/10 be approved; | DIS |
| (D) the proposed council tax increase of 3.4% for 2009/10 and indicative increases of 3.4% in 2010/11 and 3.8% in 2011/12 and 2012/13 be approved; | DIS |
| (E) the proposals for reserves and balances, as now detailed, be approved; | DIS |

(F) representations received under Section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as detailed in the report now submitted, be noted, and **DIS**

(G) the estimated net revenue expenditure for 2009/10, amounting to £8,972,402, be approved. **DIS**

RESOLVED ITEMS

555 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 6 January 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

556 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.

557 RESPONSE TO THE RECESSION

The Leader of the Council submitted a report detailing the actions and plans of the Authority to help cushion residents from the negative impact of the current economic climate.

The Leader highlighted the activities that were already in place and areas that would be further developed in relation to the Benefits, Revenue and Housing services. Further, the Leader detailed the Council's activities and plans in relation to Community and Economic development and how it was working with partner organisations to provide, amongst other things, a co-ordinated response to the challenges posed by the economic recession.

The Executive noted the Authority's sponsorship of a new Credit Union service, supported by a number of housing, voluntary and statutory agencies.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

558 NNDR – DISCRETIONARY CHARITABLE RATE RELIEF
PROPOSED CHANGES AND ADDITIONAL POWERS TO
ASSIST BUSINESS

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report on proposed changes to the granting of Discretionary Rate Relief (DRR) and to refine the definition of entitlement to organisations that have a direct benefit to the local community.

The Executive Member highlighted the reasons for the proposed changes and the criteria that would be applied to determine whether or not a DRR application was approved.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that the following changes to the granting of Discretionary Rate Relief (DRR) be approved:

DIS

(A) that DRR be granted on an annual basis;

(B) that delegated authority is given to the Director of Internal Services and Head of Revenues and Benefits to approve both the annual granting of DRR and new individual cases where the specified criteria are met (subject to budgetary provision); and

(C) to incorporate in the policy for 2010/11, the previous exceptions which have been granted by the Council.

559 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK –
DECEMBER 2008

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

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be noted, and

(B) the Royal British Legion be thanked for their generous contribution towards a Disability Facility Grant (as now detailed).

The meeting closed at 8.33 pm

Chairman
Date