

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
ON TUESDAY 6 JANUARY 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, P R Ballam, R Beeching,
S A Bull, A L Burlton, D Clark, N Clark, J Demonti,
A D Dodd, R Gilbert, P Grethe, M P A McMullen,
J Mayes, N C Poulton, J O Ranger, R Taylor,
J P Warren M Wood, C B Woodward and
B Wrangles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Anne Freimanis	- Chief Executive
Cliff Cardoza	- Head of Environmental Services
Mike Collier	- Acting Director of Internal Services
Caroline Goss	- Communications Officer
Philip Hamberger	- Programme Director of Change
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Will O'Neill	- Head of Community and Cultural Services
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services
Gavin Rogers	- Communications and Reputation Coordinator
Trevor Watkins	- Waste Services Manager

478 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader welcomed the press and public to the meeting. He also welcomed Jenny Goodyear, a graduate trainee, who was 'shadowing' the Chief Executive.

479 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor B Wrangles declared a personal interest in the matter referred to at Minute 493 – Options for the Community Meals Service, in that she was a volunteer for WRVS.

Councillor M Wood declared a personal interest in the matter referred to at Minute 493 – Options for the Community Meals Service, in that he was a trustee for Age Concern.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

ACTION

480 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/09
(REVISED) – 2011/12 (1)

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report setting out proposals for the Council's Capital Programme for the period 2008/09 (revised) to 2011/12.

The Executive noted that the revised budget for the current year of £6.0m reflected slippage of £2.4m compared to the "current approved" position of £8.4m. Proposed new schemes were detailed in the report now submitted. The Executive Member advised that the impact of the Changing the Way We Work (C3W) programme had yet to be included.

It was noted that the proposed Programme would be funded substantially from available Capital Receipts. However, it was likely that the Council would need to undertake Prudential borrowing in the Medium term to

fund the programme as set out. This would require the Council having to make provision for the repayment of the associated debt which would increase the revenue cost of funding in the Medium Term. Alternatively, the programme could be reduced by £0.7m to fit within the projected available resources.

It was noted that the report would be submitted to the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee on 20 January 2009 and its comments would be referred back to the Executive meeting on 10 February 2009.

The Executive supported the proposal as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED - that the new Programme for the period 2008/09 (Revised) to 2011/12 be approved.

**481 SERVICE ESTIMATES – REVENUE BUDGET
PROBABLE 2008/09 – ESTIMATES 2009/10 (1)**

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report on the Probable Revenue Estimates 2008/09 and the draft Revenue Estimates for 2009/10.

Overall, the Probable Estimates showed an approximate adverse variance of £418k from the original 2008/09 Estimate. However, after allowing for appropriations from Reserves including £212k of budgets brought forward from 2007/08 and approved Supplementary Estimates, there was an underlying underspend of £8k.

The draft 2009/10 Estimate, excluding capital financing costs, showed an increase of £2.007m over the 2008/09 Estimate. However, after allowing for appropriations from reserves and actuarial changes there was an underlying increase of £1.267m.

The Executive Member highlighted the significant underlying movements within the service budgets that supported the Estimates presented.

It was noted that the report would be submitted to the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee on 20 January 2009 and its comments would be referred back to the Executive meeting on 10 February 2009.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED - that the probable Revenue Estimates for 2008/09 and the draft Revenue Estimates for 2009/10 be amended/approved.

482 FEES AND CHARGES 2009/10 (1)

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report outlining proposed increases in fees and charges for various services.

The Executive recalled that Council, at its meeting held on 1 October 2008, had agreed a new Fees and Charges Strategy. All fees and charges would need to be reviewed in line with this Strategy by the end of September 2009.

It was noted that following the Government's recent VAT announcement, it would be necessary, in some cases, for two charges to be levied in 2009/10. Details of the proposed charges excluding VAT and including VAT at 15% and at 17.5% were detailed in the report now submitted.

Some Members expressed concern with the proposed increases in off-street resident season tickets. It was agreed that these would be considered further.

It was noted that the report would be submitted to the

Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee on 20 January 2009 and its comments would be referred back to the Executive meeting on 10 February 2009.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the increases in fees and charges (excluding Hackney Carriage) for 2009/10, as set out in Appendix ‘A14’, be approved, subject to further review of proposed charges for off-street resident season tickets; and

(B) the proposed increases in fees and charges for Hackney Carriage for 2009/10 as set out in Appendix ‘A14’, be approved, subject to consultation.

483 BUDGET REPORT – PROBABLE OUTTURN 2008/09: BASE REVENUE BUDGET 2009/10 AND UPDATE ON BUDGET PROCESS (MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN) 2009/10 – 2012/13 (1)

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report updating Members on the budget process and the medium term financial plan for 2009/10 – 2012/13.

The Executive Member referred to the current economic climate and the challenges this posed in forecasting investment rates, inflation indices and income streams. He proposed that budget managers be tasked with identifying avoidable growth and savings on the basis that growth would only be approved if it was required for statutory purposes, or would result in savings, that is “invest to save”.

It was noted that a consolidated budget report, setting out proposals for a Medium Term Financial Plan for 2009/2012, incorporating the outcome of the work

outlined above, would be submitted to the meeting of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee on 20 January 2009. Its comments would be referred back to the Executive meeting on 10 February 2009.

In response to a question from Councillor N Clark, the Executive Member commented that in view of fluctuating interest rates, it was not possible to state how many years cover there was in the Interest Equalisation Reserve.

In response to a question from Councillor A L Burlton, the Acting Director of Internal Services commented that the 5% increase for staffing budgets would cover provision for the Pay Award, pension contributions and loyalty payments in accordance with national and local terms and conditions.

The Executive supported the recommendation as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that the change to the budget process and reports for 2009/10 to 2012/13 be approved.

RESOLVED ITEMS

484 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 25 November 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

485 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.

486 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/09
(REVISED) – 2011/12 (2)

The Executive approved the proposal as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that any comments made by the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee on 20 January 2009 be considered by the Executive on 10 February 2009.

(see also Minute 480 above)

487 SERVICE ESTIMATES – REVENUE BUDGET
PROBABLE 2008/09 – ESTIMATES 2009/10 (2)

The Executive approved the proposal as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that any comments made by the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee on 20 January 2009 be considered by the Executive on 10 February 2009.

(see also Minute 481 above)

488 FEES AND CHARGES 2009/10 (2)

The Executive approved the proposal as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that any comments made by the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee on 20 January 2009 be considered by the Executive on 10 February 2009.

(see also Minute 482 above)

489 BUDGET REPORT – PROBABLE OUTTURN 2008/09:
BASE REVENUE BUDGET 2009/10 AND UPDATE ON
BUDGET PROCESS (MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL
PLAN) 2009/10 – 2012/13 (2)

The Executive approved the proposal as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that any comments made by the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee on 20 January 2009 be considered by the Executive on 10 February 2009.

(see also Minute 483 above)

490 ALTERNATE REFUSE COLLECTION SCHEME –
IMPLEMENTATION

The Executive Member for Environment and Conservation submitted a report detailing proposals for the implementation of the Council's recycling strategy, including the roll out of kerbside food waste and plastic bottle collections, as part of an Alternate Refuse Collection (ARC) scheme.

The Executive Member detailed the implementation plan and referred to the provision of recycling boxes and kitchen caddies. He proposed that an opt-out approach be adopted in order to maximise recycling levels.

In response to a number of questions, the Executive Member provided reassurance that recycled materials were not being stockpiled as reported in the national press recently. He referred to the educational role that would be played by advisors in helping residents to become familiar with the new arrangements. He also clarified the position in respect of the types of plastic that would be collected and the use of plastic liners and biodegradable bags.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the proposed approach and action plan for the implementation of the Council's agreed recycling strategy, be endorsed;

(B) the new collection scheme commence in October 2009; and

(C) the approach outlined in paragraph 4.10 of the report submitted, which recommended an opt-out approach, be endorsed.

491 ALTERNATE REFUSE COLLECTION SCHEME – COMMUNICATIONS

The Executive Member for Environment and Conservation submitted a report seeking approval for various communication issues that would support the implementation of the Alternate Refuse Collection (ARC) scheme (see Minute 490 above).

The Executive Member detailed the proposed Communications Plan as set out in the report submitted. He also referred to the name, logo, branding and strapline as the foundation stone for the Communications Plan.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that the 'ARC' name, logo, strapline and communications plan now submitted, be approved and used as the basis for the rollout of alternate refuse collections when that becomes possible (anticipated Autumn 2009).

492 PRESDALES CHANGING ROOMS

The Executive Member for Community Development, Leisure and Culture submitted a report updating the Executive on the funding position in the light of the latest tender returns for the works associated with the building of a new clubhouse and changing room facilities at Presdales.

The Executive Member detailed the background to the scheme and the efforts to secure sufficient funding for the scheme in partnership with Bury Rangers FC. Following a second round of tenders, there remained a funding shortfall of £255,500. She outlined the two options for the Executive to consider:

- Recommend to Council the provision of an additional £255,500 capital funding for the scheme; or
- Proceed with a scaled-down scheme within the existing budget.

The Executive agreed that the scheme should proceed within existing resources.

RESOLVED – that due to a capital funding shortfall of £255,500 or more and potential unclear future revenue liabilities, the proposal for a new clubhouse and changing rooms at the Council's football playing fields at Presdales, in partnership with the Football Foundation and Bury Rangers Football Club, is withdrawn and Officers be requested to develop a scheme that delivers the best possible scheme within the Council's existing cost envelope.

493 OPTIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY MEALS SERVICE

The Executive Member for Housing and Health submitted a report outlining future options for the provision of the community wheels service.

The Executive Member reminded Members that the statutory responsibility for the provision of community meals lay with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). He advised that the current contract with WRVS was due to terminate on 30 July 2009, and detailed four options for the Executive to consider:

- Option A: re-tender the service;

- Option B: extend the existing contract;
- Option C: let the current contract terminate and make no alternative arrangements for the provision of the service;
- Option D: accept HCC's offer to take responsibility for the provision of Community Meals in the District and to enter into a three-year tapered subsidy arrangement for the handover of the service.

He proposed that option 'D' should be approved, subject to a contingency being put in place that, in the event that HCC was unable to assume responsibility for the contract on 1 August 2009, the current contract with WRVS be extended for three months or until such time as HCC was able to commence the new arrangement.

A number of Members expressed their appreciation for the quality of the service provided by WRVS. In response to a question by Councillor M Wood on HCC's food supplier, the Executive Member undertook to provide a written response.

In respect of pricing issues of the meals in the new arrangement, the Executive Member commented that the Council, as a partner in Hertfordshire Community Meals, would be able to exert its influence in discussions.

The Executive approved the Executive Member's preferred option as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) option 'D', as outlined in the report submitted, that is to accept Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) offer to assume responsibility for the provision of Community Meals in the District, be approved for implementation after the end of the current contract with WRVS on 30 July 2009;

(B) in the event that HCC is unable to assume responsibility for the contract on 1 August 2009, the current contract with WRVS be extended for three months or until such time as HCC is able to commence the new arrangement; and

(C) Officers be requested to submit a report to the Community Scrutiny Committee on 27 January 2009 and to the Executive on 17 March 2009 updating on progress and providing detail on the preferred option.

494 COUNCIL TAX COLLECTION FUND

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report seeking a determination, under Section 99 of the Local Government Act 1988, to be made regarding the future use of any surplus/deficit accrued on the Council Tax Collection Fund.

The Executive approved the proposal now detailed.

RESOLVED – that a deficit balance of £897,808 is declared on the Council Tax Collection Fund of which £131,080 be recovered from East Hertfordshire's 2009/2010 Council Tax.

495 CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2009/10

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report on the calculation of the Council Tax base for 2009/10.

The Executive approved the proposals now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the calculation of the Council's tax base for the whole District, and for the Parish areas, for 2009/10 be approved, with the continuation of the 90% of the full charge for second homes and long term empty properties, and

(B) pursuant to the report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the amount calculated by East Hertfordshire District Council as its Council Tax Base for the whole area for 2009/10 shall be 57734.57 and for the Parish areas 2009/10 as listed in the report submitted.

496 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK –
OCTOBER 2008

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

RESOLVED – that the budget variances set out in Paragraph 4.2 of the report submitted be noted.

497 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK –
NOVEMBER 2008

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

RESOLVED – that (A) the budget variances set out in paragraph 4.2 of the report be noted;

(B) the underspend of £128,000 in implementing Alternate Weekly Collections (AWC) be carried forward as an earmarked reserve at 31 March 2009 to support AWC funding in 2009/10 (as set out in paragraph 4.23 of the report); and

(C) £7,000 be given for funding of the release of retention monies relating to the Skate Park (as set out in paragraph 4.35 of the report).

498 BISHOP’S STORTFORD 2020 – AN UPDATE REPORT

The Leader of the Council submitted an update report on the work undertaken by the Bishop’s Stortford 2020 Group in overseeing the development of a long term vision and strategy for the future shaping of Bishop’s Stortford.

RESOLVED - that the work of the Bishop’s Stortford 2020 group be noted.

499 OPERATIONAL AND STRATEGIC RISK MONITORING REPORT (1 JULY – 30 SEPTEMBER 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 July – September 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 July to 30 September 2008, be noted.

The meeting closed at 9.23 pm

Chairman
Date