

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD,
ON TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2009 AT
7.00 PM

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors R Beeching, S A Bull, D Clark,
N Clark, R N Copping, J Demonti, A D Dodd,
R Gilbert, Mrs M H Goldspink, M P A McMullen,
J Mayes, N C Poulton, S Rutland-Barsby,
V Shaw, M Wood.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Anne Freimanis	- Chief Executive
Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Philip Hamburger	- Programme Director of Change
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Lorraine Kirk	- Senior Communications Officer
Alan Madin	- Director of Internal Services
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services

378 APOLOGY

An apology for absence for lateness was submitted on
behalf of Councillor M J Tindale.

379 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor N Clark declared a personal interest in the matters referred to at Minutes 382 - 385, 389 and 392 in that they all related to Local Development Framework issues and he was the Secretary of the Stop Harlow North Campaign.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

380 INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF THE REVENUES AND BENEFITS SERVICE

The Executive Members for Resources and Internal Support and Housing and Health submitted a joint report proposing to enhance the Council's current software application in Revenues and Benefits to enable better customer service and deliver efficiency savings.

As part of the C3W Programme, Capita, the Council's current software supplier for Revenues and Benefits, was asked to submit proposals by which the Council would gain efficiencies and service improvements by implementing further modules of the integrated revenues and benefits software application, which had become available since the current system was implemented in East Herts. Officers had worked with Capita to identify and quantify the scope and value of potential efficiency gains and service improvements in a series of workshops. The outcome from those workshops was the proposal detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'C9' of the report now submitted. This proposal had the potential to realise annual savings of £230,000 gross (or £190,000 net of annual licences for the software) by the end of a five year period of transition. The initial set up cost was £223,000, of which one-off software costs were £153,000 and implementation support would be £70,000.

As a result of Officers challenging Capita's expectations for the pace of transition by customers to the electronic options, Capita had agreed to share the risk around the assumptions made on customer take up of the 'e business' option. Therefore, £52k of the £223k would only become payable once certain performance profiles had been met. These were detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'C9' of the report now submitted.

The Executive Members detailed the customer benefits from each of the main modules proposed in Essential Reference Paper 'D9' of the report now submitted. These were summarised as accessing information more quickly and simply, a choice about how to access information, speed of transacting, certainty about information being received by the Council, enhanced security and for multiple account holders, easier transfer of electronic data to their systems. The Executive Members also referred to the Hertfordshire Pathfinder, within which the Council was looking at options for joint working and other options for service delivery. These proposals would be consistent with taking forward these options.

In response to Members' questions, the Executive Members gave assurances that vulnerable people, who might require help in completing any forms, would still have access to Officer assistance. Furthermore, it was clarified that the proposals were subject to debate at the next Council meeting.

The Executive recommended the proposals as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED - that (A) a capital investment of £153,000 in further software be made together with purchase of implementation support from Capita of £70,000 to improve customer service and to gain efficiencies in the Revenues and

DIS

Benefits service; and

(B) the negotiation of the performance profiles relating to the fee at risk element of the contract be delegated to the Director of Internal Services in consultation with the appropriate portfolio holders.

DIS

381 BISHOP'S STORTFORD 20 20 VISION

The Leader of the Council submitted a report presenting the draft vision for Bishop's Stortford, as developed by the Bishop's Stortford 20 20 Group. He sought agreement that the Council would refer to the 20 20 Vision when making significant decisions that might impact on the town.

The Leader advised that the Bishop's Stortford 20 20 Group had now made available a draft document, which it believed captured the key principles for the future of the town and expressed the shared wishes and ambitions of the residents of the town. The document sought to establish an overall strategic vision for the town, which articulated the challenges, desired outcomes and possible solutions for the range of themes which had been identified as important.

The Leader further advised that copies of the draft had been sent to a number of important stakeholders in the town, asking them to recognise the 20 20 Vision as a document that will be referred to when making significant decisions impacting on the town. The Group was asking stakeholders to confirm their commitment by signing a letter of intent to that effect.

The Leader stated that the final colour version of the document would be delivered to every household in Bishop's Stortford.

The Executive endorsed the proposals as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED - that (A) the principles set out in the Draft Vision Document produced by the Bishop's Stortford 20 20 group be adopted as being consistent with its ambitions for the Town;

(B) the Council affirms its commitment to refer to the 20 20 Vision when making decisions that will impact on the town; and

(C) authority to agree minor changes in the text of the vision document be delegated to the Director of Customer and Community Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

DCCS

382 EAST HERTS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY – DRAFT SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL SCOPING REPORT (OCTOBER 2009)

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the Local Development Framework Executive Panel, made at its meeting held on 11 November 2009, in respect of the East Herts Local Development Framework Core Strategy – Draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (October 2009).

RECOMMENDED - that (A) the draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report be agreed for consultation purposes, commencing in December 2009, with the three statutory consultees – Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage; and

DNS

(B) interested parties including Town and Parish Councils, the County Council, other adjoining authorities, other local associations, amenity groups, and others on the LDF database who have requested to be kept informed, be advised that the draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report is available for comment.

DNS

383 HERTFORDSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY (OCTOBER 2009)

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the Local Development Framework Executive Panel, made at its meeting held on 11 November 2009, in respect of the Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Investment Strategy Report (October 2009).

RECOMMENDED - that (A) the Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Investment Strategy (October 2009) be agreed as a technical study, forming part of the evidence base, to inform and support the East Herts Local Development Framework; **DNS**

(B) the findings of HHS be used to reiterate to the East of England Regional Assembly and Government that growth in the County must be conditional on the adequate delivery of public funding for infrastructure; and **DNS**

(C) the conclusions of the study confirming the historic infrastructure deficit in the County be noted with concern, and it be agreed that East Herts Council should work together with the other key service providers in the County to attempt to address these issues. **DNS**

384 RYE MEADS WATER CYCLE STRATEGY DETAILED STUDY REPORT (OCTOBER 2009)

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the Local Development Framework Executive Panel, made at its meeting held on 11 November 2009, in respect of the Rye Meads Water Cycle Strategy Detailed Study Report (October 2009).

RECOMMENDED – that the Rye Meads Water Cycle Strategy (October 2009) be agreed as a technical study, forming part of the evidence base, to inform and support the East Herts Local Development Framework but the need for a considerable amount of further work be acknowledged.

DNS

385 HERTFORDSHIRE CLIMATE CHANGE STUDY: REPORT ON COMPLETION OF STAGE 1 AND PROGRESS TOWARDS STAGE 2

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the Local Development Framework Executive Panel, made at its meeting held on 11 November 2009, in respect of the Hertfordshire Climate Change Study: Report on Completion of Stage 1 and Progress Towards Stage 2.

RECOMMENDED – that the Hertfordshire Climate Change Study Scoping Report be agreed and published as a technical study, forming part of the evidence base, to inform and support the East Herts Local Development Framework.

DNS

RESOLVED ITEMS

386 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 13 October 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

387 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.

388 RESULTS OF THE 2009 RESIDENTS SURVEY

The Leader of the Council submitted a report detailing the outcome of the Residents Survey 2009.

The Leader drew attention to the key headlines and commented that the pleasing results demonstrated that the Council was moving in the right direction. He referred to the importance of working with partners and sought approval for the action plan, detailed in the report now submitted, which had been combined with the Place Survey action plan to create one holistic tool.

The Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 17 November 2009, had considered the report and had submitted a number of comments. A main point of concern had been around the complaints system and the Executive noted that the Scrutiny Committee's work programme had been updated to include this matter.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the comments of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee be received;

(B) the 12 actions (4, 6, 7, 8, 9,10, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22) requiring input from the LSP be noted; and

(C) the Action Plan set out at Essential Reference Paper 'C9', of the report now submitted, be approved.

389 EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN > 2031 - SCENARIOS FOR HOUSING AND ECONOMIC GROWTH CONSULTATION SEPTEMBER 2009

The Executive Member for Planning Policy and Transport

submitted a report seeking approval for the Council's proposed response to the East of England Regional Assembly's (EERA) consultation on the East of England Plan > 2031 - Scenarios for Housing and Economic Growth Consultation September 2009.

The Executive Member detailed the views on four regional growth scenarios being sought by the consultation and highlighted the key features of the proposed response.

In response to a Member's suggestion that recommendation (B) should include reference to the green belt, the Executive Member advised that this would be best avoided, as the Council's position was to oppose Harlow's implied continual growth into any area of East Hertfordshire. He suggested that the green belt reference could be incorporated into the formal response.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) in respect of the East of England Plan >2031 – Scenarios for Housing and Economic Growth - Consultation September 2009, East Herts Council submit the response contained at Essential Reference Paper 'B7' to the report now submitted, to the East of England Regional Assembly;

DNS

(B) East Herts Council maintains its total opposition to any development north of Harlow, in East Hertfordshire District, as contained in the approved East of England Plan, and Harlow's implied continual growth into East Hertfordshire, as set out in the Regional Plan Review Consultation document; and

(C) in order to facilitate a joint Hertfordshire local authority response and provide opportunity to amend the Council's submission as a result of continued joint working with Hertfordshire local authorities, the Head of Planning and Building

DNS

Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport, be given delegated authority to agree a joint Hertfordshire response and amend the Council's submission where this is consistent with the response contained at Essential Reference Paper 'B7' to the report now submitted.

390 PARKING FEES AND CHARGES 2010/11

The Executive Member for Planning Policy and Transport submitted a report seeking approval for car parking and ancillary parking charges for 2010/11.

He proposed ending the fixed policy of annual 5% increases and sought to allow Officers more discretion to be flexible when setting car parking charges. This would enable the utilisation of additional software that enables Officers to better model income projections by location, date, ticket price etc, thus providing a more sophisticated prediction of income streams relative to price.

The Executive Member referred to three charging models set out in the report now submitted, based on increases of approximately 2.6%, 5.9% and 9.9%. He proposed option 2, as detailed in the report now submitted, which would result in increases of approximately 5.9%.

The Environment Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 15 September 2009, supported the ending of the fixed policy of annual 5% increases, so that Officers would have more discretion to be flexible when proposing car parking charges. However, the Committee declined to offer a recommendation in respect of the tariff options.

Councillor R Gilbert expressed concern that increasing charges might result in lower occupancy, thus impacting on income streams. He referred to previous such reports providing details on revenue streams and also sought information on the rebate arrangements with Sainsburys at Jackson Square.

In response, the Executive Member commented that Officers would be looking at using the new software to set revenue targets for future charges, which might involve differential rates between and within towns. There was a difficult balance to achieve and charges should not be seen in isolation from wider transport issues, such as bus services and concessionary fares. In respect of the Jackson Square arrangements, he undertook to provide a written response.

Councillor M Wood congratulated Officers on the refurbishment works carried out at Crown Terrace car park, but pleaded for surplus car parking income to be used to fund additional bus services, particularly in Bishop's Stortford.

In response, the Executive Member detailed the car parks refurbishment programme and referred to the long term objectives of increasing bus usage at the expense of the car. He believed that achieving additional bus services would be unlikely from the private operators, but that community solutions involving a range of partners, would need to be sought.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Environment Scrutiny Committee of 15 September 2009, be thanked for its comments and its view that Officers be encouraged to be more flexible in proposing options for parking fees and charges across the District, be endorsed; and

(B) pay and display charges as proposed in Option 2 of Essential Reference Paper 'B8' and ancillary parking charges as set out in Essential Reference Document 'C8', be approved, to come into effect on 29 March 2010.

DCCS

391 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK –
SEPTEMBER 2009

The Leader of the Council submitted an exception report on the finance, performance and risk monitoring for the month of September 2009.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the budgetary variances set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report, be noted;

(B) no action is taken in relation to EHPI 2.10(3) pending assessment of the service through the C3W process;

(C) the Capital Programme be re-profiled as set out in paragraphs 2.37 to 2.44 of the report; DIS

(D) £15k of the Decent Homes Grant budget be used to carry out works to support a vulnerable resident as set out in paragraph 2.45 of the report; DIS

(E) the Capital Programme be re-profiled as set out in paragraph 2.45 of the report, to fund a thermal imaging project; and DIS

(F) £14.5k of new funding is provided for security fencing at Hartham Bowls Pavilion as set out in paragraph 2.46 of the report. DIS

392 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK EXECUTIVE
PANEL – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11
NOVEMBER 2009

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Local Development Framework Executive Panel meeting held on 11 November 2009, be received and where necessary the recommendations contained therein, be approved.

(See also Minutes 382 - 385 above)

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Chairman
Date