

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 5 MARCH 2013, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A Jackson (Chairman/Leader)
Councillors M Alexander, M Carver,
L Haysey, P Phillips and M Tindale.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, W Ashley,
E Buckmaster, S Bull, K Crofton, P Moore,
M Pope, J Ranger, P Ruffles, S Rutland-
Barsby, J Wing and B Wrangles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Claire Bennett	- Manager of Housing Services
Cliff Cardoza	- Head of Environmental Services
Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

629 DRAFT REVISED EAST HERTS HOUSING REGISTER

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report proposing a revised Housing Register and Allocations Policy. She referred to the policy issues raised by the implementation of the Localism Act 2011 and outlined the consultation to date on the proposed changes.

The Executive Member highlighted the main policy changes and stated that the purpose was to ensure that the Council was clear and transparent in dealing with applicants. She proposed amending one of the qualification criteria for accessing the register, namely the salary threshold for total household income being raised from £45k to £48k per annum.

Some Members queried the changes in respect of local connection and the impact this could have on family ties. It had been proposed to reduce the District Connection from 50 points to 20 points for applicants with a family member living in the District who were not resident in the District themselves. Applicants resident within the District with a family connection would retain 50 points.

Questions were also raised in respect of the proposed threshold on settlements with over 1000 residents (defined as electors). It was suggested that this might exclude a number of settlements from benefitting from the intended promotion of community cohesion.

The Executive Member for Finance suggested that the salary threshold, whether £45k or £48k, was too high and should be lower, so that residents on lower incomes were prioritised.

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support responded to a number of the matters raised and queried whether the report could be deferred. Officer advised that a new policy needed to be in place by April 2013. The Executive Member, therefore,

suggested that in addition to reviewing the policy in 12 months, a review of the impact of the issues of concern be undertaken in 6 months.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the East Herts Housing Register and Allocations Policy as now submitted at Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ of the report submitted, be adopted;

(B) authority be delegated to the Director of Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, for any future minor procedural or process changes to be included in the policy; and

(C) a review of the impact of the specific issues now detailed be undertaken in 6 months, with a full review of the policy being submitted to Community Scrutiny Committee in March 2014.

630 **RECYCLING OPTIONS (REMOVING CARDBOARD FROM THE ORGANIC WASTE STREAM)**

The Executive Member for Community Safety and Environment submitted a report detailing options for removing card from the organic stream and how recycling performance could be increased.

The Executive recalled that, a report advising of the current problems being experienced at ‘In-Vessel’ composting sites with the treatment of cardboard collected with food and garden waste had been considered at its meeting held on 4 December 2012. The issues had been extensively investigated by the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership, which had recommended the removal of card from the organic waste stream. As such, all Hertfordshire Authorities were working on plans to remove card and

each had different collection arrangements.

The Executive Member detailed 5 options as follows:

- 1 – Do nothing
- 2 – Cardboard collected in the black bin
- 3 – Cardboard Bring Banks
- 4 – Collecting Car with Dry Recycling – Kerbside Sort
- 5 – Collecting Card with Dry Recycling – Comingled

The Environment Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 26 February 2013, had considered the range of options and financial implications. The Committee had appreciated the need to make changes to the organic waste stream collection and felt that the initial costs associated with adopting Option 5 would be worth it for the additional and improved recycling service it would then offer to residents. Members were aware of space limitations for some properties and were interested in the idea of an insert basket for separate collection of paper which could do away with the need to keep any recycling boxes. The Committee had asked if Option 5 could be amended to offer the baskets as standard or as an option to residents subject to an amended schedule of costs being available for consideration by the Executive. The Executive Member referred Members to this schedule, which had been tabled at the meeting.

The Executive Member proposed that the additional basket option be supported on the “opt-in” basis and referred to the additional costs assuming a 50% take up by residents.

In response to a question on whether the inner basket option could be deferred for a year, the Executive Member stated that a phased implementation would result in additional costs and that economies of scale would be achieved by reducing the number of deliveries.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now

detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the comments of Environment Scrutiny Committee be received;

(B) the options and costs for addressing the issue with cardboard collection and increasing recycling collections in the context of Council’s environmental and financial objectives be noted;

(C) Option 5 (part-commingled collections with an inner basket being supplied on an “opt-in” basis) be adopted and a provision in the Capital Programme for 2013/14 of £2,200,000 and a one off Revenue Supplementary Estimate of £420,000 for 2013/14 only to allow for necessary changes to recycling services, be approved; and

(D) an appropriation of £280,000 (or balance held on the waste contract reserve at 31 March 2013) in 2013/14 in order to part fund the Supplementary Estimate of £420,000 referred to in (C) above, be approved.

631 **DISTRICT PLAN PART 1 – UPDATE REPORT**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel meeting held on 21 February 2013, in respect of the District Plan Part 1 – Update Report.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) recent interpretation of ‘objectively assessed housing need’ by the Planning Inspectorate be noted, which suggests that East Herts Council may need to plan for the upper end of the range 10,000-17,000 dwellings over 20 years; and

(B) a further delay to the finalisation of the District Plan Part 1: Strategy be approved, until such time as a resolution to the outstanding

strategic issues can be found.

632 **DISTRICT PLAN PART 1 – STRATEGY SUPPORTING DOCUMENT: MEMBER COMMENTS AND ADDITIONAL AMENDMENTS TO TEXT**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel meeting held on 21 February 2013, in respect of the District Plan Part 1 – Strategy Supporting Document.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the responses made by Members in respect of agenda item 11 of the District Planning Executive Panel on 28 November 2012 be noted;

(B) the Officer responses to the comments made and any consequent amendments to the District Plan: Part 1 - Strategy Supporting Document be approved; and

(C) the proposed amendments to the District Plan: Part 1 - Strategy Supporting Document at paragraphs 5.3.116 and 5.3.123 to be made as a result of the receipt of updated information, be approved.

633 **HABITATS REGULATION ASSESSMENT STAGE 1 – SCREENING REPORT (DECEMBER 2012)**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendation of the District Planning Executive Panel meeting held on 21 February 2013, in respect of the Habitats Regulation Assessment Stage 1 – Screening Report.

RECOMMENDED - that the Habitat Regulations Assessment Stage 1 – Screening Report (December 2012) be approved as part of the evidence base to inform the District Plan Part 1: Strategy.

634 **TRANSPORT MODELLING UPDATE AND DIAMOND RESULTS**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel meeting held on 21 February 2013, in respect of the Transport Modelling Update and DIAMOND results.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the DIAMOND transport modelling work be approved as part of the technical evidence base to inform the District Plan Part 1 - Strategy; and

(B) East Herts Council implores the relevant transport authorities, including Essex County Council, Hertfordshire County Council, and the Highways Agency, to urgently work to identify a pragmatic solution to the evidence base for long-term transport planning issues, to enable East Herts Council to finalise a consultation draft of its District Plan and enable it to comply with its responsibilities as Local Planning Authority.

635 **FINANCIAL VIABILITY UPDATE AND STAGE 1 RESULTS**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel meeting held on 21 February 2013, in respect of the Financial Viability Update and Stage 1 Results.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the Stage 1 Financial Viability technical work, be approved as part of the evidence base for a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and for the District Plan Part 1 - Strategy; and

(B) the stepped approach to infrastructure planning outlined in this report, including a separate consultation on matters relating to financial viability, be approved.

636 **GREATER ESSEX DEMOGRAPHIC FORECASTS - PHASES 1 TO 4 (MARCH 2012 - DECEMBER 2012)**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendation of the District Planning Executive Panel meeting held on 21 February 2013, in respect of the Greater Essex Demographic Forecasts – Phases 1 to 4.

RECOMMENDED - that the Greater Essex Demographic Forecasts Phases 1 to 4 (March 2012 - January 2013) technical study, be approved as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan.

637 **ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2011/12**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendation of the District Planning Executive Panel meeting held on 21 February 2013, in respect of the Annual Monitoring Report 2011/12.

RECOMMENDED - that the Annual Monitoring Report 2011/2012 contained as Essential Reference Paper 'B' and Essential Reference Paper 'C' to the report now submitted, be approved for publication.

638 **EAST HERTS LOCAL PLAN SECOND REVIEW (APRIL 2007) – NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) COMPATIBILITY SELF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel meeting held on 21 February 2013, in respect of the East herts Local Plan Second Review (April 2007) – National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Compatibility Self-Assessment Checklist.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the NPPF Compatibility Self Assessment Checklist at Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report submitted, be noted; and

(B) the policies in the East Herts Local Plan Second Review (April 2007) continue to be given due weight in accordance with paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

639 **STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI):
DRAFT DOCUMENT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendation of the District Planning Executive Panel meeting held on 21 February 2013, in respect of the Statement of Community Involvement: Draft Document for Public Consultation.

RECOMMENDED – that the Draft Statement of Community Involvement, as now submitted, be approved for public consultation.

640 **COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS AND PREMIUMS**

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report seeking to confirm the qualifying conditions for new Council Tax discounts. The Executive recalled that, Council had approved this matter at its meeting held on 12 December 2012, but that some Regulations had yet to be published.

The Executive supported the recommendation as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED - that the qualifying conditions for discounts, as now submitted, be approved.

641 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 5 February 2013, be approved and signed by the Leader as a correct record.

642 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY

The Executive received a report detailing those issues referred to it 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.

643 SERVICE PLANS 2013/14

The Leader of the Council submitted a report setting out planned service activity for 2013/14. He referred to the comments submitted by the joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees held on 12 February 2013, which were supportive of the planned activity.

The Executive approved the recommendation as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that the service plan activity for 2013/14, as now submitted, be agreed.

644 2012/13 ESTIMATES AND FUTURE TARGETS

The Leader of the Council submitted a report setting out the performance indicators the Council was required to publish in its Annual Report. He advised the Executive of estimated performance for 2012/13 and the proposed targets for the next three years.

The Executive also noted the comments of the joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees held on 12 February 2013. In respect of the comment on NI 181 (time taken to process housing/council tax benefit claims), the Executive acknowledged the pressures on the service arising from legislative changes and the need for Officers to continually monitor the situation.

In respect of EHPI 64 (vacant dwellings returned to occupation or demolished), the Executive asked Officers to

provide more information to establish what additional resources would be required to deliver an increased target.

The Leader referred to the indicators EHPI 16a (% staff with disabilities), EHPI 16b (% of top 10% of earners with a disability) and EHPI 17 (% of top 10% earners from black minority ethnic) and suggested that these should be treated as a benchmark rather than a target. He stated that it was far more important to have the policies in place to ensure equal opportunities were there for disadvantaged groups. The Human Resources Committee monitored this data on a regular basis.

The Executive approved the recommendations as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the 2012/13 estimated outturns be noted and the future targets for 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16 be agreed;

(B) the indicator EHPI 2 - Net cost/subsidy per visit (Swims and Gym) be deleted and replaced with a more meaningful measure the 'Net cost of the Leisure Service per user', as detailed at paragraph 5.1 of the report; and

(C) indicators EHPI 16a, EHPI 16b and EHPI 17 be treated as benchmarks rather than targets and be monitored by the Human Resources Committee on a regular basis.

645 DRAFT PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report introducing a new Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2013 – 2018. This had updated the previous Strategy and had been prepared for a period of public consultation, after which, the Strategy would be submitted to Council for approval.

The Environment Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on

26 February 2013, had supported the Draft Strategy for public consultation.

The Executive approved the Draft Strategy for the purposes of public consultation.

RESOLVED - that the Draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, as now submitted, be approved for public consultation.

646 TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER – LINK ROAD AND NORTHGATE END, BISHOP’S STORTFORD

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report seeking approval to the making of a Traffic Regulation Order in respect of two town centre car parks in Bishop’s Stortford. The re-designation of the Link Road and Northgate End car parks had been a Medium Term Financial Plan and Service Plan commitment for the Council since 2011/12. This would establish more town centre spaces for short-stay parking, which was a key component of the Parking Strategy to boost economic vitality in town centres.

The Executive noted the objections received to the advertising of the Traffic Regulation Order and supported the Officer responses as detailed.

In response to a Member’s comment, the Executive Member reminded Members that cheaper long stay parking would still be available at Grange Paddocks and Elm Road car parks.

The Executive approved the recommendation as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the officer decisions in respect of objections to a recently advertised Traffic Regulation Order be upheld, and

(B) the pay and display charges for 2013/14, as detailed in this report, be approved.

647 LISTED BUILDINGS AT RISK

The Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport submitted a report updating the register of Buildings at Risk in the District.

Detailed survey work undertaken had identified that there were about 110 buildings considered to be 'At Risk', which was a significant decrease on the numbers identified in a survey undertaken in 2006. The Executive Member detailed the proposed action to be taken in the report now submitted.

The Executive approved the recommendations as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the updated Register of buildings 'At Risk' be made publicly available, following notification to the owners of buildings so identified;

(B) a list of Grade I and Grade II* candidate buildings be forwarded to English Heritage for that organisation's consideration for inclusion on their national list of buildings 'At Risk'; and

(C) Officers, in consultation with the portfolio holder and within resources available, continue to approach the owners of buildings 'At Risk' to explore the potential for solutions to the condition of each building and consider formal action where other approaches do not appear to be achieving a satisfactory solution.

648 DISTRICT PLAN EXECUTIVE PANEL: MINUTES - 21
FEBRUARY 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the District Planning Executive Panel meeting held on 21 February 2013, be received.

(see also Minutes 631 – 639)

649 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - JANUARY 2013

The Leader of the Council submitted an exception report on finance and performance monitoring for January 2013.

RESOLVED - that (A) the budgetary variances set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report be noted;

(B) £4,700 of the Scotts Grotto Renovation capital budget is re-profiled from 2012/13 into 2013/14, as set out at paragraph 2.22 of the report submitted;

(C) £50,000 of the Private Sector Improvement grants capital budget is re-profiled from 2012/13 into 2013/14, as set out at paragraph 2.23 of the report submitted;

(D) £4,350 of the Drill Hall capital budget is re-profiled from 2012/13 into 2013/14, as set out at paragraph 2.24 of the report submitted;

(E) £19,700 of the Hertford Theatre capital budget is re-profiled from 2012/13 into 2013/14, as set out at paragraph 2.25 of the report submitted;

(F) £45,000 of the Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction Measures capital budget is re-profiled from 2012/13 into 2013/14, as set out at paragraph 2.26 of the report submitted; and

(G) £66,240 of the Bircherley Green multi storey car park capital budget is re-profiled from 2012/13 into 2013/14, as set out at paragraph 2.27 of the report submitted.

650 URGENT BUSINESS

The Leader agreed to accept onto the agenda a report on Council Tax Discounts and Premiums (see Minute 640) as an urgent matter, on the grounds that consideration of this matter was necessary before the Council Tax for 2013/14 would be

agreed at the Council meeting on 6 March 2013.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm

Chairman
Date