

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 1 OCTOBER 2013, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A Jackson (Chairman/Leader)
Councillors M Alexander, M Carver,
L Haysey and S Rutland-Barsby.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, E Buckmaster,
S Bull, M McMullen, P Moore, M Newman,
N Symonds and J Thornton.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Claire Bennett	- Manager of Housing 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

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PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY 2013-18

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report reviewing the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and proposing a new Strategy for 2013 – 18. She explained that the results and

achievements against the existing Strategy had been considered by Environment Scrutiny Committee in September 2011, where it had been requested that a thorough review should be undertaken in order to update the Strategy.

The Executive Member detailed the outcome of the public consultation in the report now submitted and thanked the friends groups whose role had been fundamental to the success of the Strategy.

Councillor M Newman commented on the need to ensure that small open spaces in villages did not get lost in the process and that parish councils should be encouraged to take on more responsibility. The Executive Member responded by complimenting the many parish councils that managed open spaces and stating that dialogue with Officers was ongoing. She also commented that some parish councils would have access to New Homes Bonus funds, which could be used to fund open spaces management.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the Parks & Open Spaces Strategy 2013 – 2018 be formally adopted, and

(B) the draft High Level Action Plan be agreed.

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EAST HERTS HEALTH & WELLBEING STRATEGY 2013 – 18

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report seeking approval for a new five year Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Following the success of the Council's first Strategy and work associated with it as part of an annual action plan, there was now a need to review it to ensure it still met the needs of the residents of East Herts and that it supported

the objectives of the Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board's Strategy.

The Executive Member detailed the outcome of the public consultation in the report now submitted and advised that various changes arising from the consultation still needed to be made. Therefore, she suggested an additional recommendation authorising Officers, in consultation with her, to make final amendments to the Strategy, before submission for approval by Council. This was supported by the Executive.

The Executive Member referred to the important role played by various partners and their significant input into reviewing the Strategy. She thanked them and various Officers for their hard work in carrying out the review.

Councillor, N Symonds, as Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Panel, echoed these thanks and expressed slight disappointment that the Panel had not been given an opportunity to consider the Strategy first. The Executive Member commented that the draft high level action plan, as now submitted, would be scrutinised by the Panel.

In response to a comment by Councillor J Thornton commending the work of the New Economics Foundation on individual wellbeing, the Executive Member stated that this would be taken on board and considered for incorporation into the action plan.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the East Herts Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2013-2018, as now submitted, be adopted; and

(B) authority to make final amendments to the Strategy, be given to Officers, in consultation with the Executive Member for Health, Housing and

Community Support.

262 **REVIEW TO UPDATE EAST HERTS PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report reviewing the Council's Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy and seeking approval for the draft revised policy.

The Executive Member detailed the proposed changes to the policy and explained that consultation was still ongoing. As a result of a comment received from a neighbouring local authority, she suggested an amendment to paragraph 14.8 of the policy relating to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing, so that it read as follows:

Licences will normally be valid for 5 years from the date the licence was required i.e. from when evidence has demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that the property first became a licensable HMO with the current owner. To avoid impractically short licence periods, the minimum period of such a licence will normally be 2 years. Where an HMO has been operating without a licence we will, depending on the circumstances, normally give the opportunity to apply for a licence before considering formal action, in the form of a Simple Caution or prosecution. If the Landlord has pro-actively approached the Council for a licence an informal approach will be adopted so long as the application is duly made within 21 days. Exceptional circumstances that have resulted in a delayed application will be considered by the Environmental Health Manager.

The Executive supported the revised policy as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that the draft revised policy for

private sector housing enforcement, as now detailed, be adopted.

263 **RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The Leader of the Council submitted a report seeking approval for the updated Risk Management Strategy. He advised that both Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee, at their meetings held on 27 August and 18 September 2013 respectively, had supported it.

The Leader drew Members' attention to the revised risk matrix detailed in the Strategy, which detailed revised impact and likelihood scoring criteria for 2013/14.

The Executive recommended the Strategy as now submitted.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the comments of Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee be received; and

(B) the updated Risk Management Strategy be approved.

264 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors P Phillips and M Tindale.

265 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 3 September 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

266 **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.

267 HOMELESS AND HOMELESS PREVENTION STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report seeking approval for the East Herts Homeless Strategy 2013 – 18 for the purposes of public consultation. The Executive noted that, since the last Homeless Strategy had been adopted, significant changes had given rise to the need for a review. The most significant recent changes impacting on homelessness had been the Localism Act 2012 and the significant welfare reform changes primarily affecting benefit eligibility. The updated Strategy provided more detail on the actual changes resulting from these two pieces of legislation which were likely to have a direct and indirect effect on homelessness.

In response to comments of Members, the Executive Member referred to the “Here to Help” element of the Council’s Corporate Priorities and the role all Members had in reminding residents of the advice available to them.

The Community Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 24 September 2013, had supported the Strategy. Following the consultation period, it was noted that the Strategy would be submitted to the Council meeting in December 2013, via the Executive, for approval.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the comments of Community Scrutiny Committee be received; and

(B) the East Herts Homeless Strategy 2013-18 be approved for the purposes of consultation.

268 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - AUGUST 2013

The Leader of the Council submitted an exception report on finance and performance monitoring for East Herts Council for August 2013. He provided a verbal update in respect of waste indicators NI191 and NI192.

In respect of the Castle Weir Micro Hydro capital scheme, the Executive noted that positive progress was being made and that a planning application was about to be submitted.

In respect of performance indicator EHPI 2.4 relating to fly-tips removal, the Chief Executive and Director of Customer Services undertook to provide Councillor M Newman with a written response on the meaning of the value used.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the budgetary variances set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report submitted, be noted; and

(B) the re-profile of £45,000 for the Capital – Energy Efficiency & Carbon Reduction Measures budget to 2014/15, as detailed at paragraph 2.26 of the report submitted, be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.41 pm

Chairman
Date