

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 5 AUGUST 2014, AT 7.00 PM

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors P Ballam, J Jones, M McMullen,
P Moore, J Ranger, P Ruffles, J Thornton,
G Williamson and J Wing.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
Kevin Steptoe	- Head of Planning and Building Control Services
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

159 **LITTLE HADHAM CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport submitted a report on the Little Hadham, Bury Green and Hadham Ford Conservation Area Appraisal following public consultation. He detailed the outcome of the public consultation in the report now submitted and

advised that some comments had been taken on board.

The Appraisal identified the special character of the Conservation Area together with the elements that should be retained or enhanced and those which detracted from the identified character. Once adopted by the Council, the Appraisal would become a 'material consideration' in the process of determining planning applications. It would also link into the development of neighbourhood planning.

The Executive Member for Finance, as the local ward Member, supported the proposals and thanked the Officers involved for engaging with local residents.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Little Hadham, Bury Green and Hadham Ford Conservation Area Appraisal be agreed;

(B) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, to make any further minor and consequential changes to the Appraisal which may be necessary; and

(C) the Little Hadham, Bury Green and Hadham Ford Conservation Area Appraisal be adopted.

160

HIGH WYCH CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport submitted a report on the High Wych Conservation Area Appraisal following public consultation. He detailed the outcome of the public

consultation in the report now submitted and advised that some comments had been taken on board.

The Appraisal identified the special character of the Conservation Area together with the elements that should be retained or enhanced and those which detracted from the identified character. Once adopted by the Council, the Appraisal would become a 'material consideration' in the process of determining planning applications. It would also link into the development of neighbourhood planning.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the High Wych Conservation Area Appraisal be agreed;

(B) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, to make any further minor and consequential changes to the Appraisal which may be necessary; and

(C) the High Wych Conservation Area Appraisal be adopted.

161

EAST HERTS GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE ACCOMMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT APRIL 2014

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 17 July 2014, on the East Herts Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment, April 2014.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the East Herts Gypsies

and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment, April 2014, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan; and

(B) the East Herts Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment, April 2014, be agreed to inform Development Management decisions.

(see also Minute 176)

162 **DISTRICT PLAN UPDATE REPORT**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 17 July 2014, on the District Plan Update Report.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the record of consultation activity, together with the analysis of comments logged, as contained at Essential Reference Papers ‘B’ and ‘C’ respectively, be noted; and

(B) explanation of the Duty to Co-Operate, together with the letter from the Planning Minister in relation to Green Belt policy contained at Essential Reference Paper ‘D’, be noted.

(see also Minute 176)

163 **DELIVERY STUDY UPDATE REPORT**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 17 July 2014, on the Delivery Study Update Report.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the specification for the District Plan Delivery Study contained at Essential

Reference Paper 'B', be noted; and

(B) the presentations to site promoters and subsequent meeting notes contained at Essential Reference Papers 'C' and 'D', be noted.

(see also Minute 176)

164 **GREATER ESSEX DEMOGRAPHIC FORECASTS 2012 – 2037 PHASE 5 MAIN REPORT – APRIL 2014**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 17 July 2014, on the Greater Essex Demographic Forecasts 2012 - 2037 Phase 5 Main Report – April 2014.

RECOMMENDED – that the Greater Essex Demographic Forecasts 2012 - 2037 Phase 5 technical study, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan.

(see also Minute 176)

165 **EAST HERTS EMPLOYMENT LAND REVIEW UPDATE 2013**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 17 July 2014, on the Employment Land Review Update 2013.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the Employment Land Review Update 2013, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan; and

(B) the Employment Land Review Update 2013, be agreed to inform Development Management decisions.

(see also Minute 176)

166 **BUNTINGFORD EMPLOYMENT STUDY 2014**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 17 July 2014, on the Buntingford Employment Study 2014.

RECOMMENDED – that the Buntingford Employment Study, June 2014, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan and for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications.

(see also Minute 176)

167 **STRATEGIC LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SLAA)
ROUND 3 UPDATE REPORT**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 17 July 2014, on the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) Round 3 Update Report.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the full list of identified sites being assessed through Round 3 of the SLAA, attached at Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ of the report submitted, be noted; and

(B) any future Call for Sites suggestions be included and assessed as part of the annual monitoring and review of the SLAA.

(see also Minute 176)

168 **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING UPDATE REPORT**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 17 July 2014, on the Neighbourhood Planning Update Report.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the roles and responsibilities of the Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and outlined in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.13 of this report submitted be noted; and

(B) the growing level of interest in Neighbourhood Planning in the District, together with the requirement to ensure that this area of work is adequately and appropriately resourced, be noted.

(see also Minute 176)

169 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor P Phillips.

170 **LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader referred to the Agenda Item on the Hertfordshire Building Control Project and stated that this would be considered as the last item of business, in case it would be necessary to exclude the press and public from the meeting.

The Leader gave advance notice that the Executive Member for Community and Partnership Liaison was working with Officers on organising an Urban Forum to look at specific town based issues that would operate in a similar way to the Rural Conference. Further details would emerge in due course.

171 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 1 July 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

172 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY

The Executive received a report detailing those issues referred to it by the Scrutiny Committees, which were noted. The issue relating to the increased workload caused by the need for frequent recalculations of benefit entitlement would be picked up. 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.

173 HOUSING REGISTER POLICY - REVIEW

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report reviewing the Housing Register and Allocations policy.

The Executive recalled that the policy had been agreed in March 2013, on the basis that two specific issues be reviewed after a year. These issues related to village priority/community cohesion in respect of the proposed threshold on settlements with over 1000 residents and the salary threshold of £48,000 for accessing the register.

The Community Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 24 June 2014, reviewed these issues and concluded that no policy changes were needed at this time.

The Executive Member for Finance expressed his disappointment with the conclusion reached by the Community Scrutiny Committee. He reiterated his previous view that the salary threshold was too high and that it should be reduced, in order to give greater priority for applicants on a lower income. He suggested that a scaled threshold of £35k

for a one-bed property, £40k for a two-bed property and £48k for a three-bed property would be more appropriate.

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support questioned whether such a scaled threshold would be too complicated to administer. However, she undertook to ask Officers to consider this further. The Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport reminded Members that the policy included a Limited Means Points award for applicants on benefits or low incomes.

In response to a question from Councillor J Wing relating to the impact of the spare room subsidy, The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support commented that additional properties would be coming on stream this year which should ease the problem of “bedroom blockage”

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support undertook to respond to Councillor J Ranger’s question on whether working in a village qualified as a village connection.

After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the recommendation now detailed, were approved.

RESOLVED - that the views of Community Scrutiny Committee be supported in that no policy changes in respect of ‘village priority procedure’ or ‘salary threshold’ be made at this time.

174 CAR PARKING PAY AND DISPLAY CHARGES - OBJECTIONS TO TRO

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report on the outcome of public consultation on four Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) that had been advertised. This detailed the objections made, including the petition submitted and debated at the Council meeting on 30 July 2014. A note summarising this debate had been tabled at the meeting.

In the absence of the Executive Member for Economic

Development, the Leader outlined the basis for the proposals in the TROs and reminded Members of the principles underpinning the car parking service. As indicated at the Council meeting on 30 July 2014, he proposed deferring the evening charge proposal, but that the £1 flat rate charge be retained for the hours of 4.00 pm – 6.30 pm. Also, the proposal for a 30 minute free period should also be retained. The Leader corrected the figures in Essential Reference Paper 'E' relating to the one-off costs of the alternative proposal for the flat rate evening charge between 4.00 pm – 6.30 pm.

The Leader commented on the potential impact of the changes for improving footfall in the town centres and on the Council's car parking income. He suggested that Officers would need to gauge the impact, seek feedback from retailers, the business community and the public and report back to the Executive in June 2015.

Notwithstanding these proposals, the Leader reiterated the moral justification for evening charges and the principle of the user pays. He referred to further considerations in the pipeline and advised that Officers were looking at a number of issues that utilised new technology in areas, such as pay on exit and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR). This review would also pick up the points made in the petition relating to town centre resident parking and in the context of the emerging District Plan.

The Executive Member for Finance referred to the financial implications of amending the TROs as suggested by the Leader and advised that they would cost the Council. Despite this, he supported the revised proposal.

Councillor J Wing repeated the concern he expressed at the Council meeting in respect of evening charges impacting on volunteers in community groups. He also expressed his concern on the displacement effect of evening charges and resident parking zones.

The Executive approved the revised proposals as now

detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the objections received in respect of the Traffic Regulation Orders be received;

(B) the summary of the petitioner's address to the Council meeting on 30 July 2014, as now tabled, be received;

(C) the making of the East Herts Rural Order be authorised;

(D) in respect of each of the Bishop's Stortford, Hertford and Ware Traffic Regulation Orders, these be implemented subject to the following modifications:

- (i) no evening charges beyond 6.30 pm;
- (ii) a £1 flat rate charge be retained for the 4.00 pm - 6.30 pm time band; and

(E) a further report reviewing the impact of these changes for the Council's finances and, in particular, for town centre retailers, be submitted to the Executive in June 2015.

175 REQUEST FOR AREA DESIGNATION FOR
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING: BISHOP'S STORTFORD
CENTRAL, SOUTH AND ALL SAINTS AND PART OF
THORLEY

The Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport submitted a report seeking approval for the designation of a neighbourhood area for Bishop's Stortford Central, South and All Saints and part of Thorley, as detailed on the plan attached to the report submitted.

The Executive considered the application and the consultation undertaken. The report submitted detailed the main areas of consideration in determining the application in accordance with Schedule 9 of the Localism Act 2011.

The Executive supported the application.

RESOLVED - that the application for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area, submitted by Bishop's Stortford Town Council, and to cover the Bishop's Stortford wards of Central, South, All Saints and part of Thorley Parish, be supported.

176 DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL: MINUTES - 17 JULY 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the District Planning Executive Panel meeting, held on 17 July 2014, be received.

(see also Minutes 161 - 168)

177 HERTFORDSHIRE BUILDING CONTROL PROJECT PROGRESS

The Leader reminded Members that Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report submitted contained exempt information, as defined by paragraph 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. He stated that the press and public could be excluded from the meeting if Members wished to discuss any of its detail.

The Executive Member for Community Safety and Environment submitted a report updating Members on the progress of the Hertfordshire Building Control project. He detailed the background to the work that had been undertaken to date by those Authorities that had expressed an interest.

In response to Members' comments and questions, the Executive Member stated that doing nothing was not an option as the future of the Building Control service needed to be secured. The proposed partnership would provide resilience and enable the service to remain competitive.

The Head of Planning and Building Control referred to the scoping work of the Solutions Centre and advised that the

business case to be developed would provide the necessary detail to justify the proposal. He advised Members that professional standards would be ensured by the usual competent bodies. Also, the management structure of the proposed arm's length company would include senior Officer and Member representation from all of the participating Authorities.

The Executive approved the proposal now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the report be noted; and

(B) in principle, the project move forward and a full business case be submitted for approval in the autumn of 2014.

178 NEW PROPOSALS FOR SUPPORTING MEMBERS' ICT

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report proposing a new policy for supporting Members' use of ICT and new support arrangements.

The Executive noted that the proposed new policy would take effect in May 2015, and would provide more flexibility, as detailed in the report submitted. The new support arrangements would be put in place as soon as possible following the forthcoming restructuring of the ICT service.

Councillor J Ranger expressed concern over the recycling of old laptops for new Members in 2015. The Executive Member for Community and Partnership Liaison referred to such arrangements working well with Members in Stevenage.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the policy detailed in the report now submitted requiring Members to access ICT systems using their own equipment with effect from May 2015, be approved;

(B) the ownership of existing laptops be transferred

to re-elected Members that wish to continue using them from May 2015 onwards;

(C) Members who are not elected in May 2015 return their laptops to provide a stock of equipment to be transferred to new Members should they wish to use them;

(D) the new arrangements for supporting Members set out in section 4 of this report be approved;

(E) the new Members' ICT support arrangements referred to in (D) above be put in place prior to May 2015 for those Members who wish to pilot such arrangements; and

(F) the new ICT Support Arrangements be formally reviewed post May 2015 to a timeframe to be agreed with the Executive Member for Economic Development.

179 GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN
2013-14

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report advising the on the General Fund Revenue Outturn for 2013/14. He also detailed the capital outturn for 2013/14 and the planned financing of the capital programme for 2014/15.

The Executive approved the proposals now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the General Fund Revenue Outturn for 2013/14 be approved;

(B) the level of Reserve Balances at 31 March 2014 as set out within the report, be noted;

(C) the Capital Outturn for 2013/14 be noted; and

(D) the Capital Programme for 2014/15 be noted.

180 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - JUNE 2014

The Leader submitted an exception report on performance, finance and risk monitoring for East Herts Council for June 2014.

The Executive approved the recommendations now detailed.

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

(B) the virement of £15,000 from the merging of IT systems Capital budget within the Licensing and Environmental Health divisions to the Funding for Applications budget as detailed in paragraph 2.19 of this report, be approved; and

(C) the controls and scores listed in the strategic risk register for the period April to June 2014, as detailed at paragraph 2.22, be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm

Chairman
Date