

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 2 DECEMBER 2014, AT 7.00 PM

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors R Beeching, E Buckmaster,
S Bull, M McMullen, P Moore, P Ruffles,
N Symonds, J Thornton and J Wing.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

387 **COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME**

The Executive Member of Finance submitted a report proposing a local Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS) from April 2015. He detailed the financial and equality impacts of the recommended CTS scheme for East Herts' residents. He also stated that there were no proposed changes to the scheme from last year and that the Council would be supporting the same number of people.

It was noted that the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 25 November 2014,

had supported the proposed scheme. Councillor J Wing referred to the Committee's suggestion that the proposal should be submitted for consideration earlier in the meetings cycle. The Director of Finance and Support Services advised that this had been taken on board and that the work programme had been amended accordingly, so that the matter would be submitted to the July 2015 meeting.

The Executive supported the proposed CTS as now detailed.

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

(B) the forecasted financial implications arising from the recommended scheme for the Council Tax reduction scheme (CTS) with effect from 1 April 2015 and the risks and assumptions attached to these, be noted; and

(C) the proposed CTS Scheme be approved.

388 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor M Carver.

389 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader welcomed the press and Members to the meeting. He referred to the supplementary agenda and advised that replacement copies had been laid around the table as some pages in the original had not been reproduced clearly.

390 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 4 November 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

391 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY

The Executive received a report detailing those issues referred to it by the Scrutiny Committees, which were noted. 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.

392 POSSIBLE JOINT WORKING ON WASTE & STREET
CLEANSING CONTRACTS WITH NORTH HERTS DISTRICT
COUNCIL

The Executive Member for Community Safety and Environment submitted a report seeking authority for Officers to produce an outline business case to evaluate the possibility of a joint Waste Collection and Street Cleansing contract with North Herts District Council. This would assess the implications to both Authorities in improving the cost effectiveness of these services.

The Executive Member referred to continuing financial pressures and the need to explore all avenues to achieve the best possible service for the least cost. To this end, he proposed that Officers explore a joint arrangement with North Herts District Council and referred to the window of opportunity that current contract cycles presented. He emphasised that current standards of service would not be compromised.

The Executive approved the recommendations as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the development of an outline Business Case with North Herts District Council as detailed in paragraphs 2.10 - 2.11 of the report submitted, be approved; and

(B) a report be brought back to the Executive in Spring 2015 to include an outline Business Case with

the objective of obtaining approval of both Councils to proceed to the next stage of jointly procuring these services and specifically on how this joint project will be controlled and managed and the governance arrangements once the joint contract has been awarded.

393 SHARED ANTI-FRAUD SERVICE PARTNERSHIP

The Executive Member of Finance submitted a report seeking approval for the participation in and establishment of a Shared Anti-Fraud Service for non-benefit and corporate fraud by means of a partnership with five other Authorities – Broxbourne Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertsmeire Borough Council, North Herts District Council and Stevenage Borough Council.

He suggested that this would be a natural extension of the existing Shared Internal Audit Service, but that there were other drivers. In particular, the significant cost of fraud to the public purse, estimated against local government at £2.1 billion annually of which only 2.7% was detected. He also detailed a number of national developments at paragraph 2.1.2 of the report submitted. Finally, he advised that the bid for set-up costs to the Department for Communities and Local Government had been successful.

In response to Members' comments and questions, the Director of Finance and Support Services confirmed that the proposed service would manage their own IT systems. Each area would receive a fixed element of resources on preventative work but that other resources would need to be allocated to wherever fraud had been identified.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) East Herts Council becomes a partner in the Shared Anti-Fraud Service for non-benefit and corporate fraud between the Councils now identified;

(B) the Director of Finance and Support Services be authorised to make the detailed arrangements to establish the Shared Anti-Fraud Service; and

(C) funding arrangements will be finalised through a growth bid for 2015/16, following the outcome of the bid for set-up costs to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

394 REALLOCATION OF ANPR ENFORCEMENT FUNDING

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report seeking approval for the redeployment of an existing revenue budget for the employment of an additional Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO). This resource would be deployed in certain “hotspots”, such as on school zigzag lines.

The Executive recalled that on 7 February 2012, it had agreed to extend its Civil Parking Enforcement powers to permit enforcement of specified parking contraventions using an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) equipped vehicle. Annual funding of £29,000 had been agreed, effective from 2012/13 and an enforcement policy framework was subsequently by the Executive on 4 December 2012. However, the Government had since threatened to outlaw the use of ANPR cameras for parking enforcement, thus resulting in East Herts suspending the implementation of its mobile, ANPR based enforcement service. Further legislation was awaited.

In the meantime, the Executive Member proposed using the funding to employ an additional Civil Enforcement Officer as detailed in the report submitted. He emphasised that the priority was safety and invited Members to identify any areas of concern requiring greater enforcement.

In response to a Member’s question, the Executive Member suggested that an electric car might be cost prohibitive, but that he would raise with Officers.

The Executive approved the proposal on the basis that the

CEO would have a car and not a scooter.

RESOLVED - that the redeployment of an existing revenue budget for the employment of a Civil Enforcement Officer and car, be approved.

395 EXTENSION OF PARKING ENFORCEMENT CONTRACT

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report seeking approval to a two year extension to the contract between East Herts Council and NSL Ltd for the provision of parking enforcement and related services. The Executive Member detailed the good performance of NSL Ltd to date and outlined the major projects planned for 2015-17 that could be compromised by resources being diverted to new procurement activities.

The Executive approved the proposal as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that the two year extension to the NSL parking enforcement contract as detailed in this report, be approved.

396 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - OCTOBER 2014

The Leader of the Council submitted an exception report on finance and performance monitoring for October 2014.

In response to a question from Councillor J Wing, the Executive Member for Economic Development clarified that the Sawbridgeworth toilet refurbishment would be carried out on the basis that the Town Council would be assuming responsibility for its maintenance. The Executive Member for Finance added that the Council retained its responsibilities for providing public conveniences by working in partnership with others and cited those provided in conjunction with Wetherspoons in Hertford as a good example.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the budgetary variances set out

in paragraph 2.1 of the report be noted;

(B) a further drawdown of £6,500 from the Local Plan Reserve to fund the extension of hours and overtime arrangements in the Development Plans Section to support District Plan preparation work as set out in paragraph 2.6 of the report submitted, be approved;

(C) the current position and action proposed to address three performance indicators that are currently off target of which EHPI 181 had been off target for the third consecutive month, be noted, and the Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support, in conjunction with Officers, continue to monitor the situation;

(D) the use of £40,000 of the contingency budget to fund a housing needs survey to determine the future needs of social housing tenants, as detailed at paragraph 2.27 of the report submitted, be approved;

(E) the use of £75,000 of the contingency budget to fund the filling of a sink hole in Cherry Tree, Hertford, as detailed at paragraph 2.28 of the report submitted, be approved;

(F) changes to the capital programme as detailed in paragraphs 2.32 to 2.42 of the report submitted, be approved; and

(G) a request for a £30,000 capital bid to carry out the initial stages of a survey of gas emissions at the Pole Hole Landfill Site, as detailed in paragraph 2.44 to 2.45 of the report submitted, be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.45 pm

Chairman
Date