

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 21 JANUARY 2020, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor (Chairman/Leader)
Councillors L Haysey, P Boylan,
E Buckmaster, G Cutting, J Goodeve,
G McAndrew, S Rutland-Barsby and
G Williamson.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors Curtis, D Andrews, S Bull,
M Goldspink, T Page, P Ruffles and
T Stowe.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Richard Cassidy	- Chief Executive
Helen Standen	- Deputy Chief Executive
Alison Stuart	- Interim Monitoring Officer
Rebecca Dobson	- Democratic Services Manager
Bob Palmer	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property
George Pavey	- Principal Planning Officer
Jenny Pierce	- Principal Planning Officer
Kay Mead	- Principal Planning

Sara Saunders

Officer
- Head of Planning
and Building
Control

304 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader welcomed all present, and wished them a Happy New Year.

305 MINUTES – 3 DECEMBER 2019

Councillor Buckmaster proposed and Councillor Williamson seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader. The motion being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 3 December 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

306 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor G McAndrew declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to the item on Bishop's Stortford High School Site (BISH6) Masterplanning Framework, as he was a Governor of The Bishop's Stortford High School.

Councillor T Page declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to the item on East of Manor Links Masterplanning Framework, in that his wife was a member of the Golf Club.

307 UPDATE FROM PERFORMANCE, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

The Leader asked for confirmation that there was no report from the Performance, Audit and Governance Oversight Committee.

The Democratic Services Manager said the budget and corporate plan items had been considered by the Performance, Audit and Governance Oversight Committee at its meeting on 14 January 2020. The Committee had endorsed these items for submission to the Executive. As the Committee's comments had been taken into account in the reports now before the Executive, there was no separate report from the Committee.

308 BISHOP'S STORTFORD HIGH SCHOOL SITE (BISH6) MASTERPLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Leader submitted a report on the Masterplan Concept Document for the Bishop's Stortford High School site.

Councillor Haysey said an earlier version had not been satisfactory, but had been improved and now Members and Officers considered this Appendix to the report to be a good Masterplan document.

Councillor Goldspink asked why the number of houses

had increased from 150 to 223, and questioned the capacity of the site for this number of dwellings.

The Senior Project Officer said originally 150 houses had been proposed. Following initial consideration during the discussions regarding the District Plan, the council had been advised there was an opportunity to expand the Thorley Hill School, as a result of which there was no longer a need for a separate Primary School to be accommodated. Accordingly, there had no longer been a need for a specific retention of land, and thus a greater area was available. Any increase in the number of houses had to work for the design, layout and impact. Officers were working on those aspects, prior to further consultation with the applicant.

Councillor Goldspink thanked the Senior Project Officer for this explanation, but said she remained dissatisfied with the increase in housing numbers at the site.

Councillor Haysey said these comments would be noted.

Councillor Haysey proposed and Councillor Goodeve seconded, a motion to support the recommendations detailed in the report. The motion being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RECOMMENDED to Council that (a) the Masterplan Concept Document for the Bishop's Stortford High School site, as detailed at Appendix A to the report, be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.

309 SOUTH OF HERTFORD (HERT5) MASTERPLANNING
FRAMEWORK

The Executive considered a report by the Leader and the Executive Member for Planning and Growth regarding the Masterplanning Framework for Mangrove Road, Hertford.

Councillor Goodeve said this was another example of the collaborative approach taken under the Masterplanning process. She proposed a motion to support the recommendations set out in the report.

Councillor Haysey seconded the motion. On being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RECOMMENDED - that the Masterplanning Framework for the Mangrove Road (HERT5) site, Hertford, as detailed at Appendix A to the report, be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.

310 EAST OF MANOR LINKS (BISH9) MASTERPLANNING
FRAMEWORK

The Executive considered a report submitted by the Leader regarding the Masterplanning Framework for the East of Manor Links site, Bishop's Stortford.

Councillor Haysey said there was a minor factual error in the report, in that the public exhibition in November 2019 had in fact been at the Bishop's Stortford Football

Club, and not Birchwood High School. Public engagement had been very good, as 120 people had attended, and comments had been positive. There had been requests for single storey dwellings and for measures to prevent airport parking.

Councillor Goldspink noted the number of houses which had been proposed had slightly increased, and expressed concern that parking management was to be carried out by a private company.

Councillor Haysey said this provision was necessary as Highways would not adopt the roads at this site. Management companies, working with residents appointed to roles on their management committees, would manage the upkeep of these roads. This was the case for all such sites where roads were unadopted.

In answer to a further question from Councillor Goldspink, Councillor Haysey said the road management companies' remit would be as approved in the planning application. Their role would be to maintain the site and monitor parking.

Councillor Buckmaster said, in response to Councillor Goldspink's query regarding increased housing numbers, that it was density which should be considered. Density for the site was relatively low, which was an important aspect as the council wished to ensure quality, as well as having regard to technical aspects.

Councillor Haysey said the developer had proposed

some bungalows, and houses would not be higher than two storeys. The council was aware that permanent development rights could sometimes allow owners to turn bungalows into houses, and the council would take measures wherever possible to prevent this.

Councillor Haysey proposed and Councillor P Boylan seconded, a motion to support the recommendation in the report. The motion being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RECOMMENDED - that the Master Plan Document for the East of Manor Links site, Bishop's Stortford, as detailed at Appendix A to the report, be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.

311 BIRCHERLEY GREEN – HERTFORD TOWN CENTRE URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY UPDATE

The Executive considered a report on the findings of the Hertford Town Centre Urban Design Strategy (HUDS) Update, which included two reports, a Retail Healthcheck, and a Bircherley Green Property Market Report.

Councillor Haysey said these reports followed, and updated part of the evidence behind, the 2016 HUDS report. As there had been a delay in bringing forward the Bircherley Green development, which was not owned by the council and had been acquired by Chase in August 2019, the reports had been commissioned to

ensure the council was aware of the implications of any market changes during the intervening time. The reports sought to detail current circumstances at local and national levels and to advise on appropriate uses for the new development. While difficulties in trading were reported, the facilities in Hertford were good. Bircherley Green was key to the Town Centre, but it was clear the Town Centre itself also had many strengths to build on.

The evidence was that mixed use was required in any redevelopment of the Bircherley Green site, and the council looked forward to this development completing the planning application process.

Councillor Haysey proposed an alteration to the recommendation, to include a provision to review the HUDS Steering Group as detailed below.

Councillor Stowe said he was aware of people's concerns, as Chase was known for residential development.

Councillor Haysey said the plans were being considered by the Steering Group, which comprised representatives from the public, retail, offices, cafes and river front businesses.

Councillor Haysey proposed a motion to support recommendations (a) and (b) as set out in the report, and recommendation (c) as altered. Councillor Rutland-Barsby seconded the motion, which, on being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, was declared CARRIED.

RECOMMENDED - that (A) the findings of the Hertford Town Centre Urban Design Strategy Update reports, Hertford Town Centre Retail Health Check (The Retail Group), October 2019, and Bircherley Green Property Market Report (AspinalVerdi), October 2019, be noted;

(B) the Hertford Town Centre Urban Design Strategy Update reports, Hertford Town Centre Retail Health Check (The Retail Group), October 2019, and Bircherley Green Property Market Report (AspinalVerdi), October 2019, be agreed as material considerations in respect of informing Development Management decisions taken regarding Bircherley Green, or other Hertford Town Centre sites, as appropriate; and

(C) the Council works in partnership with Hertford Town Council, Hertfordshire County Council and other key stakeholders to agree the appropriate mechanism to support the improvement of economic/retail performance and environmental considerations within Hertford Town Centre, to include reviewing the membership of the HUDS Steering Group.

312 CORPORATE PLAN 2020/21

The Executive considered a report on the development of a new Corporate Plan, which sought Members' approval to recommend a draft Corporate Plan to Council.

Councillor Haysey said the aims had changed since the last corporate plan in 2016, to reflect external changes regarding sustainability in the context of climate change, and the continued importance of digital transformation. There were four cross-cutting themes, “sustainability at the heart of everything we do, enabling our communities, encouraging economic growth, and digital by design”, which could be summarised as an appropriate acronym, “SEED”. The Corporate Plan set out high level ambitions, in a concise format. An annual action plan would be brought before Members, to enable monitoring of the work done against these strategic aims.

Councillor Haysey thanked the Members of the Performance, Audit and Governance Oversight Committee for their comments, which had been incorporated where feasible. She thanked the Hertford Sustainability Climate Group which had acted as a critical friend.

Councillor McAndrew welcomed the Corporate Plan and in particular its emphasis on sustainability. The Council’s Environment and Climate Change Forum had taken place last week, attended by 120 people representing a range of groups including Extinction Rebellion, residents, community groups and local businesses. Further events were planned, and contributions from the ideas put forward would inform the development of a Masterplan document.

Councillor Curtis said he was a Member of the Performance, Audit and Governance Oversight Committee. This was a good plan, and he supported

the fact that the environmental sustainability aspect was also a cross-cutting element of the other aims. He sought confirmation that there was an intention to maintain the character of the area, via the District Plan.

Councillor Haysey agreed that sustainability would run through everything the Council did, but the District should also continue to value and enjoy the qualities of its heritage. She was pleased that Councillor Page was present, as he would be taking on the role of Heritage Champion.

Councillor Haysey proposed, and Councillor Cutting seconded, a motion to support the recommendations as set out in the report. The motion being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RECOMMENDED – that the new Corporate Plan is adopted.

313 SUSTAINABLE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2020/21 - 2023/24

The Executive considered a report by the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability on the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2020/21 – 2023/24.

Councillor Williamson introduced the report. He said there was a budget gap and therefore much work had been undertaken to identify savings proposals. He highlighted the main points in the report, including the fact that the new homes bonus had been scaled back; the fact that the Council would propose increasing its share of the Council Tax by £5 per year; and that fees

and charges would increase by 2.5%, which was generally in line with inflation. The budget took account of additional income from Millstream and the acquisitions made by the Financial Sustainability Committee. These latter sources of income illustrated the real need for reliance on such initiatives.

Councillor Williamson proposed a further recommendation, in addition to those set out in the report, that authority to determine the most appropriate amendments to car parking charges to achieve the increased income included in the MTFP be delegated to the Head of Operations, acting in consultation with the Head of Strategic Finance and Property and the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability.

Councillor Haysey proposed and Councillor Williamson seconded, a motion supporting recommendations a) to e) in the report and new recommendation f). The motion being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the East Herts share of Council Tax for a band D in 2020/21 be set at £174.09;

(B) the updated position on the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget for 2020/21 including the budget pressures and risks be approved;

(C) the new savings and income generating proposals for 2020/21 onwards as shown in Appendix 'B' be approved;

(D) the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 'C' be implemented;

(E) the schedule of charges set out in Appendix 'D', each with an average increase of 2.5% for 2020/21, be approved; and

(F) that authority to determine the most appropriate amendments to car parking charges to achieve the increased income included in the MTFP be delegated to the Head of Operations acting in consultation with the Head of Strategic Finance and Property and the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability.

314 CAPITAL STRATEGY 2020 ONWARDS

The Executive considered a report presenting the Council's second capital strategy since revisions to the Government guidance on Investment and Minimum Revenue Provision in February 2018.

Councillor Williamson, presenting the report, said the guidance had been strengthened to combat the actions of some authorities which had taken disproportionate risks. By contrast, this council, via Millstream and the Financial Sustainability Committee, took an approach which was prudent and proportionate. The focus was on statutory duties, and the investments were a means to an end. The capital strategy had been debated at the meeting of the Performance, Audit and Governance Oversight Committee on 14 January 2020, and no amendments

had been proposed.

Councillor Haysey welcomed the fact that this report was now brought to Council.

Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Haysey seconded, a motion to support the recommendations in the report. The motion being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RECOMMENDED - that the Capital Strategy 2020 Onwards, as shown in Appendix A to the report, be approved.

315 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2020/21

The Executive considered a report setting out the proposed Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategy 2020/21.

Councillor Williamson, presenting the report, said the report aimed to ensure the Council's cash flow was adequately planned, that capital plans were funded, and to provide for security of sums invested. The primary concern was that there be no loss of capital, and that maximum yield would be sought only as long as the investment was secure and matched the investment requirements.

Councillor Williamson highlighted further points set out in the report, including the fact that the Council had an interest rate of 3.5% for invested reserves, and that the Financial Sustainability Committee had acquired one property and would receive an additional

allocation in the next year. There was no over reliance on one source of income. He referred to prudential indicators and to an updated version of the core funds and expected investment balances table in appendix A, to reflect a correction. He confirmed this correction had been identified before the meeting of the Performance, Audit and Governance Oversight Committee, and that it did not change the prediction.

Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor McAndrew seconded, a motion to support the recommendations in the report. The motion being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RECOMMENDED - that (A) the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy set out at Appendix A, including the prudential indicators discussed in paragraphs 3.6 of the report, be approved; and

(B) The credit and counterparty risk management and approved countries list discussed in paragraph 3.7 of the report be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm

Chairman
Date

