

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING
ON TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2020, AT 7.00
PM

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors R Bolton, M Brady, B Crystall,
H Drake, M Goldspink, M McMullen,
T Page, M Pope, C Redfern, P Ruffles,
J Wyllie and S Newton.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Scrutiny Officer
Richard Cassidy	- Chief Executive
Helen Standen	- Deputy Chief Executive
James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Chloe Hipwood	- Service Manager - Waste, Recycling and Street Cleaning
Jess Khanom- Metaman	- Head of Operations

Karen Page	- Planning Officer
Sara Saunders	- Head of Planning and Building Control
Steven Linnett	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property

250 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

251 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader welcomed all to the meeting including those who were watching via YouTube.

She explained that the legislative arrangements under the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 came into force on Saturday 4 April 2020 enabled councils to hold remote committee meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic period. This was to ensure local authorities could conduct business during this current public health emergency. This meeting of the Executive was being held remotely under these regulations, via the Zoom application and is being recorded and live streamed on YouTube.

The Leader referred to Covid-19 the fact that it was still with us and that on 26 November 2020 the Government would be announcing what tier

Hertfordshire county would fall into. She stressed that everyone needed to obey the rules of keeping distance, and wearing face coverings otherwise there would be a major surge in some areas and across the country. She said that we want to keep the population safe.

The Leader said that the agenda contained some very interesting papers which were necessary for the Council to move forward on.

252 MINUTES - 6 OCTOBER 2020

The Leader proposed, and Councillor Rutland-Barsby seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Leader. The motion, on being put to the meeting and a vote taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

253 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Leader declared an interest in Agenda item 11 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Programme – Launchpad 2) by virtue of the fact that she chaired the European Structure Fund of which the ERDF was a part. It was noted that the Leader would be placed in a virtual “break out room” during consideration of the item which would be presented by

Councillor Goodeve.

254 SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL TOWN BIDS

The Executive Member for Sustainability submitted a report which set out the Council's aspirations within Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) and the principles relating to the conditions for achieving Sustainable Travel Town status. The Executive Member said that the Council championed sustainability and that it would influence and encourage others to be more environmentally sustainable. He referred to the criteria developed by HCC which was being introduced to support travel towns sustainability.

The Executive Member said that meeting the criteria would be challenging. He said that the principles fitted those of this Council and that he would be recommending to full Council that East Herts supported the aspirations of the LTP4 and the Sustainable Travel Town criteria and would support towns who wished to submit bids to achieve this status.

The Leader said that the report set out our aspirations and that the Council would support towns who wished to do this as a way forward as it supported the Council's commitment to the "green" agenda.

Councillor Goldspink queried the authority of "Shaping Stortford" to submit a bid on Bishop's Stortford behalf, and whether this committee reported to East Herts Council. She felt that it should report to Overview and

Scrutiny Committee. Councillor McAndrew explained the group's composition. The Deputy Chief Executive further expanded on this information including the remit of the group. She explained that any entity could submit a sustainability travel bid. She said that the minutes and any other documents of their meeting were transparent and were publically available and on their website. The Leader asked that the Member be provided with a link to the "Shaping Stortford" website Minutes.

Councillor Crystall said that of the three towns only Bishop's Stortford Town was directly supported by East Herts in the report. He queried whether Officers had looked at the three towns and whether the Council should support any of the other towns to help them achieve travel town sustainability status? The Executive Member for Sustainability explained that 10 applications had been submitted, three from East Herts, none had gone through the District Council. He said the first week of December would determine who had been successful but for those who had not been successful, HCC would work with the applicants to get them further along to match the criteria.

Councillor Buckmaster said that he did not feel that it was necessary to show preferential support as this was inherent within the principle and recommendation.

Councillor McAndrew then proposed and Councillor Goodeve seconded a motion to support the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – to recommend to Council that (A) East Herts Council supports in principle, the aspirations of the LTP4 and the Sustainable Travel Town criteria; and

(B) East Herts supports, in principle, towns wishing to submit bids for Sustainable Travel Town Status.

255 REVIEW OF OUTCOMES OF THE PARKING TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability submitted a report on the outcome of the work of the Parking Task and Finish group in the context of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Councillor McAndrew provided a summary of the background to the report in terms of the establishment and remit of the Task and Finish Group and that the Executive had last considered the matter on 11 February 2020. At that meeting the Executive agreed a further recommendation, that authority be delegated to the Head of Operations in consultation with the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Chairman of the Parking Task and Finish Group and the Executive Member, to assess the full viability of the recommendations and bring a further report to the Executive setting out the cost implications. He said that work had been carried out to consider the cost implications in the context of the corporate plan, but that the Council had been impacted by Covid-19 both economically and in terms

of parking behavior particularly, in relation to long stay parking.

The Head of Operations explained that the report before Members had taken a pragmatic approach to ensure that the Council did not invest too much money too soon and that this would be monitored. She added that the amendment to the Residential Parking Zone would be recommended to Council for adoption and a handful of items would be deferred as soon as Officers could establish what parking looked like on a long term basis.

Councillor Drake explained that decisions had to be made around the categorisation of the Task and Finish Group's aspirations in terms of the budget and Covid-19 and those issues needed to be future proofed.

The Leader suggested that the recommendations be taken separately as A, B, C, D and E. Councillor McAndrew then proposed and Councillor Boylan seconded a motion to support the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the group recommendations be received and considered.

(B) To approve the cessation of the following recommendations within the Parking Task and Finish group report:

- a. Recommendation 3: improve the accessibility and availability of short stay

parking including an increase to the number of limited waiting, free bays where possible, throughout the town.

- b. Recommendation 10: Support Watton at Stone Parish Council in lobbying for an increase in the number of parking spaces in the station car park.
- c. Recommendation 17: The Council to challenge station car park operators to reduce their charges to reflect closer to the all-day charge in East Herts Town Centre station car parks.

(C) To approve the following recommendations for deferral:

- a. Recommendations 1: Design and implement measures to encourage rail commuters to park in station car parks
- b. Recommendation 16: Revise the designation of Council owned car parks

(D) To note that the following recommendations will be incorporated in service plans for officers to monitor, reporting periodically to the portfolio holder for parking:

- a. Recommendation 2: Revise the designation of Council owned car parks
- b. Recommendation 6: Review Blue Badge provision in Council-owned car parks
- c. Recommendation 9: Implement a permit

- parking scheme for Town Centre workers
- d. Recommendation 11: Lobby for improved cycle parking facilities and improved public transport
 - e. Recommendation 13: Establish EV charging bays in EHDC car parks
 - f. Recommendation 15: Implementing and lobbying for sustainability improvements including solar canopies, on-street EV charging and car clubs.

RESOLVED – to recommend to Council

(E) The amendment in the Residential Parking Zone Policy as described in Paragraph 2.24 and Appendix A for adoption.

The Leader thanked the Task and Finish Group for their efforts in moving this matter forward.

256 SHARED WASTE SERVICE – ALIGNMENT OF COMMERCIAL WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICES

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability submitted a report which sought to create efficiencies within the shared waste service aligning elements of waste and recycling services with North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) in particular, in relation to pricing for services whereby the contract pricing allowed this. Councillor McAndrew outlined the background around the development of the shared waste service commenting that there was an alignment of policies in relation to collection services but not in relation to administrative functions

and charging.

There being no comments, Councillor McAndrew proposed and Councillor Haysey seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - that (A) the alignment in pricing and a common pricing structure for the shared waste service, for residual commercial and chargeable household waste; within the 2020-21 financial year be agreed, including the introduction of charges for recyclable commercial and recyclable chargeable household waste in line with existing shared waste service charging; within the 2020-21 financial year;

(B) a new pricing structure for chargeable household bulky waste collections; within the 2020-21 financial year be agreed;

(C) the introduction of event waste management charges to align procedures in the shared service; within the 2020-21 financial year be agreed;

(D) the introduction of new procedures for the management of fly-tipping, residual waste and recycling at flats to align procedures and charging within the shared service; within the 2020-21 financial year be agreed;

RESOLVED – to recommend to Council

(E) decision making for setting the fees and charging regarding waste services, as set out in this report, be delegated to the Head of Strategic Finance and Property in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment Sustainability, through the Shared Service Waste Partnership Board be agreed as endorsed by the Executive.

257 GARDEN WASTE SERVICE - POLICY

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability submitted a report which sought to approve the key policies, principles and service standards for the charged garden waste service which was approved by Council on 29 January 2020 as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan which identified that an income of £400,000 could be achieved for 2021.

Councillor McAndrew said that the coronavirus had had a significant impact on the Council's budget and there was a greater challenge to balance the budget and to provide statutory services and services to those who needed them. The report set out a proposed approach as a basis for consultation before the matter was considered by Council in January 2021. He explained that charging for garden waste which was currently free, would be a difficult decision but collection of garden waste was a non-statutory function.

Councillor McAndrew said that a charged service would enable the Council to provide a service to residents who needed it and not charge those residents who did not need the service, such as those living in flats. He explained that many Local Authorities throughout the country charged for the collection of garden waste including the Council's Hertfordshire neighbours. He asked Members to approve the key principles of the scheme out outlined in the report, for the purpose of consultation, prior to a decision on implementation by Council.

There being no comments, Councillor McAndrew proposed and Councillor Rutland-Barsby seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the key principles of a chargeable garden waste scheme as highlighted in paragraph 1 for the purpose of public consultation be approved, prior to a decision on implementation by Council.

258 GILSTON AREA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Leader of the Council submitted a report which sought agreement for the Gilston Area Community Engagement Strategy and for this to be a material consideration in future planning matters associated with the development of the Gilston Area. The strategy would be published alongside other planning guidance documents that supported implementation of the District Plan. The Leader said that this would become

one of a suite of documents to be used in the Gilston Planning applications going forward and also the Garden Town.

The Leader said that it was extremely important to engage with all residents, ages and demographics including those who live here and those who may come to live in Gilston. She referred to the close collaborative working with groups and organisations including Parish Councils on such matters.

Councillor Buckmaster agreed that it was a very important paper. He referred to page 104 and GA1 of the District Plan and the development of Village Master Plans and said that a Strategic Landscaping Master Plan had been development for future consideration. He explained the private arrangement between developers and local authorities in relation to Section 106 Agreements guided by community engagement. He concluded by adding that it was important that the document recognised the timing element of the engagement processes and consultations which needed to be planned carefully.

The Leader proposed and Councillor Buckmaster seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Gilston Area Community Engagement Strategy be approved as a material consideration in the production of planning policy/guidance documents and the processing of planning applications associated

with the Gilston Area; and

(B) the Gilston Area Community Engagement Strategy be published alongside the other planning guidance documents, that support implementation of the District Plan.

259 HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD

The Leader of the Council submitted a report on proposals to establish the Hertfordshire Growth Board and Hertfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Committee as formal joint committees under the Local Government Act 1972 and Local Government Act 2000 and to set out the actions required.

The Leader referred to a briefing given on 11 November 2020 to all Members by the Chairman of the Growth Board, Patsy Dell which Members had found very interesting. She said that it had been in existence for a couple of years and comprised the 11 Leaders of the Hertfordshire Authorities who worked very well together. The aim of the Board was to make sure that growth now and in the future was “smart growth” and “good and well, co-ordinated growth” and that the projects to be submitted for funding to the Government would be important to all residents. The Leader explained that we now needed to ensure transparency and good governance of the growth board and that this report was the first step in the process to set up under Sections 101 (LGA 1972) joint committees.

The Leader said that the HGB had many projects at the

moment for submission when funding became available.

There being no comments, the Leader proposed and Councillor Goodeve seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED –that (A) the content of the report and attached joint cover report at Appendix A: “Hertfordshire Growth Board Integrated Governance Framework” be noted;

(B) the Executive agrees to recommend to Council endorsement of the establishment of the Hertfordshire Growth Board Joint Committee and Hertfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Joint Committee as Joint Committees;

(C) the Leader be nominated as the Council’s representative on the Hertfordshire Growth Board Joint Committee, should Council endorse the establishment of the joint committee and the council’s membership, with delegated authority to appoint a substitute representative as required.

RESOLVED – to recommend to Council that:

(D) it endorses the establishment of the Hertfordshire Growth Board Joint Committee and Hertfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Joint Committee (to hold their inaugural meetings in

January/February 2021 and then HGB Scrutiny aligned to confirmation of securing Government funding in 2021) and that the council becomes a member of both.

(E) adopts the Growth Board Integrated Governance Framework into its own constitutional framework.

(F) nominates a member and substitute member as the Council's representative on the Hertfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Joint Committee (note that nominees must not be members of the Executive) and

(G) to note that, subject to approval of Recommendation (d), the Leader is nominated as the council's representative on the Hertfordshire Growth Board Joint Committee with delegated authority to appoint a substitute representative as required.

260 EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (ERDF) PROGRAMME - LAUNCHPAD 2

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth submitted a report seeking approval to move ahead with a project following approval of ERDF Funding in February 2019.

The Leader, having already Declared an Interest earlier in the meeting by virtue of the fact that she was Chair of the European Structure Fund was placed in a virtual "breakout room" during consideration of the item

which was presented by Councillor Goodeve.

Councillor Goodeve said that that the ERDF funding had been secured from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government for a three year project, to support and expand Launchpad in Bishop's Stortford and Ware and local businesses. She thanked Officers for their roles in moving this along.

Councillor Redfern asked whether this funding would still be available after the UK left Europe. Councillor Goodeve explained that the Council would have funding for three years.

Councillor Goodeve proposed and Councillor Buckmaster seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that, subject to the outcome of a procurement process for awarding a contract for business support, the ERDF-supported Launchpad 2 project proceeds.

The Leader re-joined the main meeting at 19:45

261 BUDGET 2021/22 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN
2021 – 2024 PROPOSALS

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability submitted a report setting out the Budget for 2021/22 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/24.

Councillor Williamson explained that the preparatory work had commenced and that the Council had a sizeable gap in its budgets despite the financial sustainability measures which had been introduced. He explained that the gap next year was £1M, the same again for following year and a further £2M for 2023/24. Councillor Williamson said that by the time the Council reached 2023 the Council's net revenue budget will need to be net £4M lower than it is now.

It was noted that Leadership Team had been tasked to review net costs to meet the reduction targets. These proposals were set out in Appendix A of the report. It was noted that savings proposed, exceeded the amount which the Council needed to save for the next two years. Appendix B set out the Executive's initial views on what might be taken forward which still left a gap of £200K this year and a significant gap for 2023/24. Leadership Team was proposing to carry out further work in relation to the Medium Term Financial Strategy to assist in further targeting of reductions in net cost such as how the Council could adapt to different ways of working, following the impact of Covid-19.

Councillor Williamson referred to the approach taken in relation to the Council's capital projects as a project total all in one year and then rolled forward and the problems this approach had with loan and financing arrangements. He said that the capital programme would now be presented as a rolling 5 year programme reflecting phasing over those five years and the financing costs being reflected in the revenue account.

Councillor Williamson referred to the Council's approach to Council Tax and the Government's expectation that should be raised by a maximum of £5 on a Band D household which would provide the Council with £310K this year and next year. The gap would not be bridged unless the Council does the same again, next year and the following. It was noted that no comments were received when the matter was considered by Audit and Governance Committee.

Councillor Redfern was concerned about savings proposed and the assumptions in relation to Hertford Theatre i.e. an increased return of £410K. She felt that this had not been sufficiently justified in her view and that there had been no justification for the uplift of footfall. She asked if the impact of new evening parking charges had been considered.

Councillor Buckmaster said that business case reviews had been undertaken on all the capital projects and the Executive was satisfied all the capital projects going forward would be viable. He said that Hertford Theatre was subsidised and that the Council improving facilities there would offer more opportunities. Councillor Buckmaster did not believe that we needed to be pessimistic or that people would not want to socialise after Covid-19 adding that the Council was going from a position of subsidy to a breakeven. He was confident that it will be successful and contribute to the local economy.

Councillor Williamson said that many of Councillor Redfern's comments related to budgets for 2022

onwards and those impacts would be monitored, as things moved forward.

The Leader said that she felt there was cynicism that cinemas would not come back. She said that as the first vaccine was announced the share prices for Cineworld had “shot through the roof” because people wanted to go to the cinema. She referred to the fact that Netflix wanted to launch the new James Bond film and offered the promoters £300M but their offer was turned down because the promoters of that film believed that when the time was right people would go back to the cinema. She believed that the cinema still had a bright future.

The Leader said that ten years ago Hertford Theatre was in her portfolio and there was discussion about whether to change this from Castle Hall to Hertford Theatre which was later considered at a Scrutiny Committee. Shortly after, the crash happened and the Council had invested over £1M to refurbish it. She was pleased that it had taken off, showing many events including first releases and pantomimes. The Leader said that Hertford Theatre was seen as a great place to go and to look forward to this when it reopened in 2023.

Councillor Redfern commented that the Council did not have the reserves it historically had and was concerned about future borrowing which would make a difference to Council Tax payers. She urged the Executive to think more before committing the Council to such a large expenditure over the next five years.

Councillor Buckmaster said that the project would benefit residents as it would move from a subsidy to making a return and this would impact positively on the finances of the Council. Councillor Williamson supported this viewpoint.

Councillor Williamson proposed and the Leader seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) confirm the savings proposals, after consideration of the comments from Audit and Governance Committee, to be taken forward, subject to detailed impact assessments and accepting that some may need to be reconsidered in the light of the current pandemic;

(B) Agree, as guidance to officers, that the budget proposals should be based on a Council Tax increase of £5, general inflation assumption of up to 1% and that the provision for the national pay award will be up to 2%;

(C) Endorse the production of a phased capital programme over 5 years to better reflect actual phasing of delivery and more realistic revenue impacts of capital financing; and

(D) Endorse the additional programme of work to transform the Council and place it on a financially sustainable footing as set out in paragraph 4.7.

262 QUARTERLY CORPORATE BUDGET MONITOR – QUARTER 2
SEPTEMBER

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability submitted a report summarising the financial monitoring for the Council 2020/21 as at 30 September 2020. He said it was a time of considerable uncertainty throughout the lockdown, with many of the Council's funding streams affected badly. He explained that as a result of Government Grant support and funding, the impact was much less than previously envisaged. It was now predicted that the net revenue budget overspend would be £168K. He added that overspends and underspends by service, were set out in the report (these figures were net of Government funding).

He summarised the position in relation to the Council's Capital Projects of £70.499M which had been re-profiled of which £20.224M was estimated to be carried forward to future years.

There being no comments, Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillors Boylan seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) that the net revenue budget 2020/21 forecast overspend at the end of quarter 2 has been contained at £168k be welcomed; and

(B) the revised capital budget for 2020/21 of £70.499m, of which £20.224m is estimated to be carried forward to future years be endorsed.

263 2019/20 TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability submitted a report which reviewed the Council's treasury management activities for 2019/20 including the prudential indicators and identified the associated impact on the 2020/21 treasury management strategy.

There being no comments, Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Rutland-Barsby seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – to recommend to Council, that Annual Treasury Management Review 2019/20 be approved.

264 2020/21 MID-YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability submitted a report which reviewed the Council's treasury management activity for first six months of 2020/21 financial year, including the prudential indicators. He added that references to 2019/20 should be 2020/21

Appendix A contained the review and Members were

being asked to recommend this to Council. He explained that the recommendation to increase the counter party limited from £20M to £30M was brought on by the receipt of a large sum of Government funding for Covid-19 related business support grants which had briefly exceeded the current limits.

There being no comments, Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Buckmaster seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Executive recommends to Council (A) the approval of the Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2019/20;

(B) the revised Prudential Indicators as shown in Appendix A (*columns, entitled revised estimates, highlighted 'green' within tables*); and

(C) increase the counter party limit, from £20m to £30m, for the National Westminster Bank.

265 UPDATE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Wyllie, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee referred Members to the report which he had submitted which highlighted only one recommendation for Members' considerations. He said that he would be happy to answer any questions.

There being no questions, the Leader thanked the Councillor Wyllie for his report and thanked him for

the courtesy shown to both her and the Chief Executive at the last meeting when they gave a presentation on Covid-19.

266 UPDATE FROM AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Councillor Pope, the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee provided an oral update report following the last meeting. A written report could not be submitted as the Committee had not met when the agenda was dispatched. He said that the Committee had received reports on the following matters and provided an update on Audit and Governance Members' comments in relation to:

- Section 106 -
- Strategic Risk Register 2019 – 20
- Quarterly Corporate Budget Monitor – Quarter 2
- Annual Treasury Management review
- Treasury Management Mid-Year Review
- Budget and MTFP 21-24 proposals

There being no questions, the Leader thanked Councillor Pope for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.14 pm

Chairman Date
