

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 4 APRIL 2012, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor S Rutland-Barsby (Chairman)
Councillors D Abbott, D Andrews, W Ashley,
P Ballam, S Basra, E Bedford, R Beeching,
E Buckmaster, M Carver, Mrs R Cheswright,
K Crofton, J Demonti, P Gray, L Haysey,
T Herbert, Mrs D Hollebon, Mrs D Hone,
A Jackson, G Lawrence, J Mayes,
G McAndrew, M McMullen, P Moore,
W Mortimer, T Page, P Phillips, M Pope,
N Poulton, J Ranger, P Ruffles, N Symonds,
J Taylor, G Williamson, J Wing, C Woodward
and J Wyllie.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
Alan Madin	- Director of Internal Services
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services

745 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded Members that the meeting was being webcast.

The Chairman advised that she had agreed to accept onto the agenda an urgent item of business in respect of arrangements with regard to the post of Chief Executive, in order to avoid delay in considering the senior management structure of the Council.

Finally, the Chairman thanked Members for their support at the Civic Dinner in helping to raise over £2,000 for her chosen charities.

746 MINUTES

Council noted that Councillor J Taylor's attendance had been wrongly omitted from the Minutes of the previous meeting.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 7 March 2012, be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman, subject to the addition of Councillor J Taylor to the list of attendees.

747 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In respect of the Local Development Framework matters referred to at Minutes 749 – 752 below:

- Councillor M Carver declared a personal and prejudicial interest by virtue of his position as Chairman of the Board of Governors at Hertford Regional College. He stated that he would leave the chamber, in the event of there being any substantial discussion related to the College.
- Councillor J Wing declared a personal interest in that his wife was the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Governors at Hertford Regional College.

748 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 4 APRIL 2012

The Leader of the Council gave a verbal report on the proceedings of the inquorate Executive meeting held on 4 April 2012.

In response to a question by Councillor J Wing, the Leader assured Members that the Executive had not proposed any changes to the recommendations of the Local Development Framework Executive Panel, as detailed at Minutes 25 – 28 of the report submitted.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

(see also Minutes 749 – 752 below)

749 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (LDS) VERSION 3 -
MAY 2012

Council considered and approved the recommendations of the inquorate Executive meeting held on 4 April 2012, in respect of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) Version 3 – May 2012.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Local Development Scheme (LDS) version 3 – May 2012, as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report now submitted, be agreed and take effect from 1 May 2012;

(B) the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Policy and Economic Development, be given authority to make any consequential amendments to the Local Development Scheme (LDS) Version 3 following final publication of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations, as appropriate;

(C) the Local Development Framework (LDF) and associated terminology be replaced with District Plan; and

(D) the Local Development Framework Executive Panel be renamed as the District Planning Executive Panel to reflect the change in terminology.

750 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY:
APPROACH, TECHNICAL WORK AND NEXT STEPS

The Executive Member for Planning Policy and Transport urged Members to look at the detail relating to their own areas and to advise Officers of any factual errors.

Council considered and approved the recommendations of the inquorate Executive meeting held on 4 April 2012, in respect of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy: Approach, Technical Work and Next Steps.

RESOLVED – that (A) the planning process, strategic planning tools, and approach to preparing the LDF Core Strategy, as set out in Essential Reference Papers ‘B’ and ‘C’ of the report now submitted, be agreed;

(B) the draft technical work contained within Essential Reference Paper ‘D’ of the report now submitted, be agreed for the purposes of preparing the Preferred Strategy for consultation;

(C) Planning Officers be authorised to undertake such duties as necessary to demonstrate soundness at Examination in Public, including, for example, the collection of further information from landowners and developers, and conducting joint technical work with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities; and

(D) the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Policy and Economic Development, be authorised to update the draft technical work contained within Essential Reference Paper ‘D’ of the report now submitted, as necessary.

751 POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD FORECASTS AND THE
EAST HERTS HOUSING REQUIREMENT

Council considered and approved the recommendations of the inquorate Executive meeting held on 4 April 2012, in respect

of the Population and Household Forecasts and the East Herts Housing Requirement.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Population and Household Forecasts - Topic Paper, detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'C' of the report submitted, be agreed as the basis for considering a district housing target to 2031, and for inclusion as part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework (District Plan); and

(B) on the basis of the key conclusions from the Topic Paper referred to in (A) above, a range of 500 - 850 dwellings per annum be subject to further investigation, to test the feasibility and implications of such a district housing requirement, against national planning policy requirements and the physical and environmental capacity of the district.

752 STRATEGIC LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SLAA) PROGRESS

Council considered and approved the recommendations of the inquorate Executive meeting held on 4 April 2012, in respect of the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) Progress.

RESOLVED – that (A) the SLAA sites being assessed under the initial Officer assessment, as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report submitted, be noted; and

(B) the SLAA Next Steps, be amended to omit 'Stage 2: LDF Executive Panel Ratification', as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'C' of the report submitted, and stakeholders be engaged directly following completion of the initial Officer assessment.

753 ARRANGEMENTS WITH REGARD TO THE POST OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Leader of the Council submitted a report on the Council's senior management structure, which also sought to appoint

interim statutory officers. The Council's three Directors left the chamber whilst this matter was considered.

The Leader referred to the interim arrangements that had been in place in the absence of the Chief Executive and suggested that this had worked well. He had taken advice from trusted colleagues across local government and proposed a new structure as detailed in the report now submitted. He referred to the additional responsibilities the proposed Chief Executive and Director of X post would be required to perform as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report submitted.

The Leader also drew attention to the need to formalise the interim arrangements operating in respect of statutory functions. Finally, he proposed that a recruitment panel of six Members (Councillors, M Alexander, E Buckmaster, L Haysey, A Jackson, J Ranger and M Wood) be established to consider and appoint to the new position. In order to ensure the participation of Members from all political groups, he suggested that political proportionality should not apply.

Councillor J Wing commented that Members had not been given sufficient time to consider the proposals and questioned why this matter had been dealt with in this way.

In reply, the Leader commented that he had been opportunistic in submitting these proposals to this meeting rather than the next meeting in May 2012. He believed that there were benefits to staff and Members in not delaying the issue any longer. He stated that he had discussed the proposals, although not the timescales, with the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group some time ago.

In response to a question from Councillor T Page, the Leader confirmed that he expected the three Director posts to be full-time.

Council approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the current post of Chief Executive be deleted and an existing Director's post be

redesignated as “Chief Executive and Director of X”, with the Council proceeding to recruit and the Council’s Pay Policy 2012 being adjusted, as detailed at Essential Reference Paper ‘C’ of the report submitted;

(B) the Director of Customer and Community Services be appointed as acting Head of Paid Services until a permanent appointment is made, with the Director of Internal Services to act as deputy in the interim;

(C) the Director of Neighbourhood Services be appointed as acting Returning Officer in accordance with Section 35(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 and as Electoral Registration Officer in accordance with Section 8(2)(a) of the Representation of the People Act 1983, until a permanent appointment is made; and

(D) the Chief Executive and Director of X Recruitment Panel be established and formed by the following six councillors, the rules of political proportionality not applying, with authority to interview and appoint to the newly created post of Chief Executive and Director of X

Councillors M Alexander, E Buckmaster, L Haysey, A Jackson, J Ranger and M Wood.

The meeting closed at 7.36 pm

Chairman
Date