

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2013, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A Jackson (Chairman/Leader)
Councillors M Alexander, M Carver,
P Phillips and M Tindale.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, S Bull, M McMullen,
P Moore, M Newman, P Ruffles, J Thornton
and J Wing.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

315 **HUNSDON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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

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 advised that there were two outstanding issues to be resolved and for this reason, he recommended delegating authority 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.

Councillor M Newman, as the local ward Member, expressed his appreciation to Officers, local residents and the Parish Council for their contribution.

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 Hunsdon 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 Hunsdon Conservation Area Appraisal be adopted.

316 **RETAIL AND TOWN CENTRES STUDY UPDATE REPORT
(SEPTEMBER 2013)**

The Executive considered and approved the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 3 October 2013, on the Retail and Town Centres Study Update.

RECOMMENDED – that support for the East Herts Retail and Town Centres Study Update Report, September 2013, being used 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, be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport.

(see also Minute 325)

317 **STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT UPDATE
2012 (MARCH 2013): LONDON COMMUTER BELT EAST
SUB-REGION**

The Executive considered and approved the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 3 October 2013, on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update 2012 (March 2013): London Commuter Belt East Sub-Region.

RECOMMENDED – that the Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update 2012 (March 2013): London Commuter Belt East Sub-Region, be supported as part of the evidence base to inform and support the preparation of the District Plan, and for housing strategy purposes.

(see also Minute 325)

318 **DISTRICT-WIDE GREEN BELT REVIEW PART 1 (2013)**

The Executive considered and approved the

recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 3 October 2013, on the District-Wide Green Belt Review Part 1 (2013).

RECOMMENDED – that the East Herts District-Wide Green Belt Review – Part 1, September 2013, be supported as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan.

(see also Minute 325)

319 **DISTRICT PLAN – UPDATE REPORT**

The Executive considered and approved the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 3 October 2013, on the District Plan - Update Report.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the latest evidence supplied by Hertfordshire County Council in relation to schools planning, be noted, and an ongoing commitment to urgent joint working be supported;

(B) the proposed approach to the preparation of an Infrastructure Topic Paper, followed by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan based on a specially commissioned delivery study, be supported; and

(C) the latest national guidance, including that in relation to the importance of meeting housing needs within each housing market area, be noted.

(see also Minute 325)

320 **DEVELOPER/LANDOWNER QUESTIONNAIRES AND ATLAS MEETINGS**

The Executive considered and approved the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 3 October 2013, on the Developer/Landowner Questionnaire and ATLAS

meetings.

RECOMMENDED – that the responses to the Developer Questionnaires (including subsequent information supplied), and the meeting notes between ATLAS and developers and/or their representatives, be supported as part of the evidence base to inform and support the preparation of the District Plan.

(see also Minute 325)

321 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors L Haysey and S Rutland-Barsby.

322 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 1 October 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

323 DEVELOPING AN INVESTMENT STRATEGY FOR EAST HERTS

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report recommending a set of principles for developing an Investment Strategy for East Herts. This would seek to address the need to identify new and additional sources of revenue income over the medium to long term, given the context of reducing revenue streams from traditional sources including Government grants.

The Executive Member explained that having taken early expert advice, the proposition was that East Herts should develop a balanced portfolio which provided a spread of cash and property based investments which would optimise income in the context of a balanced approach to risk. This report would pave the way to take more detailed technical advice once policy decisions became clearer.

The Executive was reminded that East Herts currently had in excess of £60m capital available for investment, the majority of which was currently in short-term money markets. Initial thoughts were that a balanced portfolio should be developed across the following 3 areas:

- continued investment in the money market;
- investment in property funds; and
- investment in the purchase of private housing or commercial property potentially through joint venture activities with third parties.

The Executive Member stressed the need to improve investment performance and detailed the policy principles in the report now submitted.

Councillor J Thornton questioned the value of making direct investments in commercial properties and suggested that the risks would outweigh the return. He also referred to the care needed in identifying the expert advice needed.

Councillor J Wing asked if the level of investment return sought had been defined as this would help understand the level of risk involved. He also asked to what extent the positive impact on the District and immediate neighbouring areas would be a factor in making investment decisions.

The Executive Member accepted the points made by Members as valid considerations that needed to be made. He stressed that the purpose was to improve investment performance and that careful consideration needed to be given before any decisions were made in order to avoid the pitfalls. He was looking to achieve a 5 – 7% return over the long term, if the appropriate governance arrangements were in place. The management of investments would be one of the issues that would need careful consideration.

The Executive approved the recommendations now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the policy principles for property investment as detailed in Section 3 of the report now submitted, be approved;

(B) the draft outline of the timetable for action be noted and that a further progress report be submitted to a future Executive meeting; and

(C) the requirement for additional resources to support the development of this policy that will be funded from the 2013/14 planning contingency be noted.

324 SCRAP METAL DEALERS ACT 2013

The Executive Member for Community Safety and Environment submitted a report detailing the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013, which considered the proposed application fees and delegation of powers.

The new legislation repealed the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 1964 (as amended) and Part 1 of the Vehicle (Crime) Act 2001, and created a revised regulatory regime for the scrap metal recycling and vehicle dismantling industries. The new Act maintained local authorities as the principal regulator, but gave them the power to better regulate these industries by allowing them to refuse to grant a licence to 'unsuitable' applicants and a power to revoke licences if the dealer became 'unsuitable'.

In response to Members' questions, the Director of Neighbourhood Services stated that the proposed fees were in line with neighbouring authorities. He added that the enforcement teams had been restructured with appropriate training on the new legislation.

The Executive approved the recommendations as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the proposed fee levels as set out in Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report submitted, be adopted; and

(B) the proposed delegations for dealing with licensing and enforcement as set out in Essential

Reference Paper 'C' of the report submitted, be approved.

325 DISTRICT PLAN EXECUTIVE PANEL: MINUTES - 3 OCTOBER 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the District Planning Executive Panel meeting, held on 3 October 2013, be received.

(see also Minutes 316 - 320)

326 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - SEPTEMBER 2013

The Leader submitted an exception report on the finance, performance and risk monitoring for East Herts Council for September 2013.

The Leader referred to the Council Tax Support Scheme and the one-off assistance given to parish and town councils in 2013/14. He referred to the ongoing budget process for 2014/15 and asked Officers to explore the possibility of providing further assistance for another year only.

The Director of Finance and Support Services undertook to advise parish and town councils that, as part of the budget process, the District Council would be considering support in 2014/15 of 50% of 2013/14 levels on the basis of no support in the year after.

The Executive approved the recommendations as now detailed.

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

(B) the re-profile of Capital Scheme budgets totalling £1.08 million to 2014/15 as detailed at paragraph 2.34 of the report submitted, be approved;

(C) the virement of budget (£15,000) savings from

the Hertford Theatre: McMullen gates refurbishment to the renewal of the Theatre’s Boilers, as detailed at paragraph 2.37 of the report submitted, be noted;

(D) the 2013/14 savings position, as detailed at paragraph 2.38 of the report submitted, be noted;

(E) the controls and scores listed in the strategic risk register for the period July to September 2013, as detailed at paragraph 2.40, be approved; and

(F) in respect of support for parish and town councils under the Council Tax Support Scheme, the Director of Finance and Support Services be authorised to advise parish and town councils that, as part of the budget process, the District Council would be considering support in 2014/15 of 50% of 2013/14 levels on the basis of no support in the year after.

The meeting closed at 7.46 pm

Chairman
Date