

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 6 DECEMBER 2016, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor L Haysey (Chairman/Leader)
Councillors E Buckmaster, A Jackson,
G Jones, G McAndrew, S Rutland-Barsby
and G Williamson.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors S Bull, M Casey, M Freeman,
J Jones, M McMullen, M Pope and P Ruffles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
Jess Khanom	- Head of Operations
Andrew Pulham	- Parking Manager
Helen Standen	- Director
Kevin Steptoe	- Head of Planning and Building Control Services
Adele Taylor	- Director
Liz Watts	- Chief Executive

465 **BRAUGHING CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Executive Member for Development Management and Council Support submitted a report on the Braughing Conservation Area Appraisal following public consultation. She 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 the local ward Member had endorsed the report and the Parish Council's questions had been addressed.

The Executive supported the proposals as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Braughing Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals be supported;

(B) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Development Management and Council Support, to make any further minor and consequential changes to the document which may be necessary; and

(C) the Braughing Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals be adopted.

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EXTERNAL AUDITOR APPOINTMENT

The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services submitted a report setting out the options available for appointing external auditors from 2018/19 and the process for achieving a successful procurement of external audit services. The Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014 had abolished the Audit Commission, and required local authorities to appoint their own external auditors for the audit of the 2017/18 accounts by 31 December 2018.

The Executive Member outlined the four options for local authorities to appoint external auditors:

- establishing their own auditor panel (which may be an existing committee or sub-committee of the authority);
- jointly establishing an auditor panel with other authorities;
- using the services of an auditor panel established by another authority; or
- delegating appointment to a sector led body.

He detailed these options and suggested that the consensus amongst most local authorities was to pursue the fourth option and to delegate appointment to a sector led body. In July 2016 Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) were specified by the Secretary of State as an appointing person under regulation 3 of the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015.

The Audit and Governance Committee, at its meeting held on 23 November 2016, had considered the options and had supported this option also.

The Executive supported the recommendation now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that East Herts Council “opts in” to the appointing person arrangements made by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the appointment of External Auditors.

The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services submitted a report reviewing and updating the Risk Management Strategy.

The Executive noted that the Risk Management Strategy was reviewed annually. On 16 March 2016, the updated Strategy had been considered by the Audit Committee, who had supported the amendments in principle, but had requested that changes to the senior management structure be reflected before submission to the Executive.

The Audit and Governance Committee, at its meeting held on 23 November 2016, had considered and supported the revised Strategy as now detailed.

The Executive supported the revised Strategy as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the comments of Audit Committee be received; and

(B) the updated Risk Management Strategy, as now submitted, be approved.

468 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 25 October 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

469 GOVIA THAMESLINK RAILWAY (GTR) 2018 TIMETABLE CONSULTATION , SEPTEMBER 2016

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report detailing the public consultation by Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) on its proposed 2018 timetable and seeking approval for the Council's response. The consultation covered the Great Northern (including Metro), Gatwick Express, Southern and Thameslink lines, and would come into force following completion of the Thameslink Programme.

The Executive Member highlighted the key issues affecting East Herts, namely that, due to the provision of other services

on the East Coast Main Line coupled with the postponement of delivery of a fifth platform at Stevenage to provide a turn-back facility for the Hertford Loop service, from May 2018 there would be a cessation of rail services between Watton-at-Stone and Stevenage during all peak and most off-peak times. He emphasised that this was being challenged robustly in the proposed response.

Various Members commented on this aspect of the new timetable being unacceptable to East Herts residents.

The Executive Member referred to the Council's proposed response to this and other proposals in Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report submitted.

The Executive approved the recommendation now detailed.

RESOLVED - that Govia Thameslink Railway be informed that, in respect of its 2018 Timetable Consultation, East Herts Council submits comments at Essential Reference Paper 'B' to the report submitted as its response in respect of the questions within the consultation and other specific matters which it wishes to raise.

470 HCC TRANSPORT VISION 2050 CONSULTATION

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report detailing the public consultation by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) on its draft Transport Vision 2050 and sought approval for the Council's response to it. He highlighted the range of issues relevant to East Herts and detailed the proposed response at Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report submitted.

In particular, he noted the lack of information on connections beyond the county boundary, for example at Stansted and Luton airports. As a whole, the Vision seemed focussed on urban areas and did not address rural concerns. He also referred to the principle of a bypass around Hertford, although there was no information on a route or the impact on air

quality issues.

The Executive approved the recommendation now detailed.

RESOLVED - that Hertfordshire County Council be informed that, in respect of its Transport Vision 2050 consultation, East Herts Council:

(A) supports the principle of developing the Vision as a rationale to underpin emerging Local Transport Plan 4; and

(B) submits comments at Essential Reference Paper 'B' to the report submitted as its response in respect of the questions within the consultation and other specific matters which it wishes to raise.

471 CAR PARK FEES AND CHARGES 2017/18

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report seeking approval for proposed increases to the car parking income budget to be effective from April 2017.

The Executive Member advised that car park charges in East Herts had remained the same since 2010/11 and in some cases had been reduced. Since then, the Council had reduced its short stay tariffs in September 2014 as part of a two year trial, resulting in the erosion, in real terms, of the value of the Council's car park income by nearly 12%, since 2010/11.

The Executive Member further advised that new "pay and display" machines had been installed offering improved functionality, including the facility to pay by credit/debit card and the option to pay on exit. The Executive noted the increased operating and licensing costs.

The Executive Member also referred to alternate options for tariff changes at Essential Reference Paper 'C' of the report submitted and small changes in some car parks at Essential Reference Paper 'E' of the report submitted.

The Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 29 November 2016, had considered the proposals and had supported the proposed increases. The Committee had expressed a preference for the tariff changes set out in the option detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'C2'. Although some Members had supported the idea that there should be no increase in charges until the impact of the new machines had been assessed and a Task and Finish Group had been established to review the wider issue of car parking and Sunday charging, this had not been supported by the Committee.

Councillors S Bull and J Jones both commented on the impact of the proposed changes on Buntingford and the reduction in the free parking period. They argued that Buntingford should be treated as a special case, given it was the only town in East Herts without a train station.

The Executive Member responded by suggesting that Buntingford was being treated as a special case, as the free parking period would still be an hour longer than other towns in the District. He reminded Members of the need to meet the Medium Term Financial Plan and the equity in asking all to contribute.

The Executive supported the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the comments of Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee be received;

(B) the car parking income budget be increased by 7.5% from April 2017;

(C) the option for tariff changes as set out in Essential Reference Paper 'C2' of the report submitted, be approved;

(D) changes to a small number of the Council's car parks as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'E' of

the report submitted, be approved;

(E) the advertisement of a Traffic Regulation Order to give legal effect to these changes be authorised; and

(F) the resolution by Officers of all Traffic Regulation Order objections received using existing delegated powers, be confirmed.

472 HERTFORD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Executive Member for Development Management and Council Support submitted a report on the Hertford Conservation Area Appraisal following public consultation. She 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.

Councillor P Ruffles commended the thoroughness of the work undertaken by the Conservation Officer but suggested that further consideration be given to the proposed exclusion of some properties on Tamworth Road. He believed that residents were entitled to a better understanding of the reasons for treating apparently similar properties in a different manner. The Executive Member accepted this request for the matter to be deferred to the next meeting.

The Executive agreed to defer the report to allow for the boundary line at Tamworth Road to be reconsidered.

RESOLVED – that the report be deferred to the next meeting for the reasons now detailed.

473 QUARTERLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK, QUARTER 2
SEPTEMBER 2016

The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services submitted a report on finance, performance and strategic risk monitoring for 2016/17 as at September 2016.

The Executive approved the recommendations now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the revenue budget forecast overspend of £177k, as detailed at paragraph 2.1 of the report submitted, be noted;

(B) the capital budget forecast underspend of £1.576m, as detailed at paragraph 6.1 of the report submitted, be noted;

(C) the reported performance for the period August 2016 to October 2016, be noted; and

(D) the risk management controls detailed at paragraphs 9.1 to 9.5 of the report be submitted, be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

Chairman
Date