

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2017, AT 7.00 PM

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors S Bull, M Casey, M Freeman,
J Goodeve, J Jones, P Kenealy,
M McMullen, T Page, M Pope and P Ruffles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Philip Gregory	-Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Martin Ibrahim	-Democratic Services Team Leader
Tess Michaels	-Legal and Democratic Services Apprentice
Helen Standen	-Director
Kevin Steptoe	-Head of Planning and Building Control Services
Adele Taylor	-Director
Liz Watts	-Chief Executive
Kevin Williams	-Acting Head of Legal and Democratic Services

552 **BUDGET REPORT AND MTFP 2017/18 – 2020/21**

**The Executive Member for Finance and Support
Services submitted a report which set out proposals
in respect of:**

- the 2016/17 revenue budget forecast outturn;
- the 2017/18 revenue budget;
- the 2017/18 Schedule of Charges;
- the 2016/17 (revised) to 2020/21 Capital Programme;
- the Medium Term Financial Plan 2017/18 – 2020/21; and
- the Council's Reserves.

He informed the Executive that the joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees, at its meeting held on 17 January 2017, had supported the budget proposals, which included a council tax rise of 2%.

In response to a question, the Head of Strategic Finance and Property assured Members that although the salaries budget appeared overspent, this had been caused by planned fixed term working on specific projects that had been funded from reserves. Officers continued to monitor salaries budgets carefully.

The Leader referred to the impending departure of the Head of Strategic Finance and Property and thanked him for service.

The Executive supported the proposals now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the comments of the joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees be received;

(B) the forecast 2016/17 underspend transfer to the Transformation Reserve, as now detailed at paragraph 4.11 of the report submitted, be approved;

(C) the 2017/18 Revenue Budget, including:

- Budget Savings and Growth, set out in Section 6, paragraph 6.2 of the report submitted;
- Contingency Budget, set out in Section 8,

- paragraph 8.3 of the report submitted;
- use of Earmarked Reserves, set out in Section 9 of the report submitted;
- consideration of the advice from the Section 151 Officer on the level of reserves and the robustness of the forecasts in setting the budget as required by Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 (section 15);

be approved;

(D) the proposed 2017/18 Schedule of Charges, as detailed at section 7 of the report submitted, be approved;

(E) the East Herts Council element of the Council Tax Demand, as detailed in paragraph 11.4 of the report submitted, be approved;

(F) the Capital Programme for the period 2015/16 (Revised) to 2019/20, the funding of the programme and the consequential revenue budget implications as set out in section 12 of the report submitted, be approved;

(G) the Medium Term Financial Plan covering 2016/17 (Revised) to 2020/21 as set out in section 13 of the report submitted, be approved; and

(H) the Reserves Policy as set out in Section 14 of the report submitted, be approved.

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TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2017/18

The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services submitted a report on the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy for 2017-18 including the 2017-18 Prudential Indicators.

The Executive noted that the Scrutiny Committees, at their joint meeting on 17 January 2017, and the Audit and Governance Committee, at its meeting held on 25 January 2017, had supported the proposals without making specific comments.

The Executive supported the recommendations now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received;

(B) the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy detailed in paragraphs 2.1 – 2.2 of the report submitted be approved;

(C) the prudential indicators detailed in paragraph 2.3 of the report submitted be agreed; and

(D) the counter party listings detailed in paragraph 2.4 of the report submitted be agreed.

554 **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 its deferral at the previous meeting. She detailed the outcome of the further consultations that had taken place.

Councillor Ruffles expressed his gratitude for the additional consideration given and for the explanation which gave residents a greater understanding of the boundary line.

In response to a suggestion on using Article 4 directions, the Executive Member reminded Members that this was being tested and would need to be reviewed before any decision was made in the future.

The Executive supported the proposals now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Hertford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 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 Hertford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be supported for adoption.

555 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor E Buckmaster.

556 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader welcomed the press and public to the meeting and reminded all that the meeting was being webcast.

557 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 6 December 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

558 HERTFORD URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

The Executive recalled that, at its meeting held on 6 September 2016, it had agreed that up to £500k be allocated to fund a project to deliver key improvements to The Wash, Maidenhead Street and Bull Plain in Hertford. The project had emanated from the Hertford Urban Design Strategy, and was

a partnership project between East Herts Council, Hertford Town Council and Hertfordshire County Council. The funding allocation was subject to other partner contributions being made.

The Leader advised that Hertford Town Council had since approved £300k to fund the project. An application was currently being considered by Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to fund the £200k shortfall. She proposed that East Herts Council's funding be released on the basis set out in the report now submitted.

The Executive approved the recommendation now detailed.

RESOLVED - that East Herts Council releases its funding commitment of £500k to deliver key improvements to Hertford Town Centre, noting that the Council's funding proportion of the total budget will be either 50% or 62.5%, depending on whether the Local Enterprise Partnership funding is secured.

559 DISCRETIONARY GROWTH BUSINESS INCENTIVE SCHEME

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a proposal to set up a discretionary business growth incentive scheme funded from the New Homes Bonus. He informed the Executive that this scheme would encourage small business growth within the District, and would have a cap of £10,000 relief. He advised of a minor change in the approval process as detailed at paragraph 2.4 of the report submitted, whereby the money would be transferred to the revenues service as and when it was approved and not at year end.

In response to questions, the Executive Member and the Chief Executive outlined the proposed role of the Business Engagement Manager. In respect of the suggestion that the Council should look at taking equity stakes in start-up businesses, the Executive Member undertook to consider this further. The Leader suggested that the new Business Engagement Manager could look at this.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the proposal for a discretionary business growth incentive scheme is approved, according to the operating procedures as set out at Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report submitted; and

(B) £150,000 is allocated from the New Homes Bonus Reserve to fund the scheme.

560 OLD RIVER LANE PROJECT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report seeking approval for the initial indicative costing to commence the development of the Old River Lane Site and to confirm board and accountability arrangements.

The Leader advised that should it be necessary, the press and public could be excluded from the meeting, if Members wished to make any detailed reference to Essential Reference Paper 'E'.

In response to questions, the lead Director advised on the outline timescales for the project. She emphasised that in view of ongoing negotiations with different landowners, some dates were less firm. The Leader added that it was important to take care with the project and to get it right so that residents could look forward to a high quality development that was appropriate.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the revised governance structure, including the establishment of a Board to oversee the Old River Lane Project be approved and the allocation of Board membership be delegated to the Leader of the Council and lead Director; and

(B) the initial indicative budget requirements of

£450k be approved.

561 BUNTINGFORD COMMUNITY AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD
PLAN 2014 - 2031

The Leader of the Council submitted a report detailing the proposed modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan in part according to the Examiner's recommendations, but also with additional modifications from Officers. As well as this, she sought agreement for the Plan to proceed to Referendum.

Various Members congratulated the neighbourhood teams involved in developing this project to this stage. It was also noted that Buntingford parish had been wrongly omitted from the recommendations.

Councillor J Jones queried the settlement boundary line to the north of the Ward Freman site. In response, the Head of Planning and Building Control acknowledged a slight anomaly and suggested that this could be amended later under delegated powers. The Executive approved an additional recommendation to this effect.

The Executive approved the recommendations now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan is modified in part according to the Examiner's recommendations, as detailed at Essential Reference Papers 'C' and 'D' to the report submitted, but also with additional modifications recommended by Officers, as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'D' to the report submitted;

(B) Officers be requested to make the necessary arrangements to hold a Neighbourhood Plan Referendum for the Parishes of Aspenden, Buckland & Chipping, Buntingford, Cottered, Hormead and Wyddial on 23 March 2017; and

(C) authority to review and finalise the settlement boundary line be delegated to the Head of Planning

and Building Control, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and a local Member.

The meeting closed at 7.43 pm

Chairman
Date