

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2011, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A P Jackson (Chairman/Leader)
Councillors M R Alexander, M G Carver,
L O Haysey, R L Parker and M J Tindale

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, W Ashley,
P R Ballam, K A Barnes, E Buckmaster,
S A Bull, R N Copping, J Demonti, R Gilbert,
Mrs M H Goldspink, J Hedley, M Newman,
P A Ruffles, S Rutland-Barsby, V Shaw,
R I Taylor, J P Warren, M Wood and
C Woodward

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Anne Freimanis	- Chief Executive
Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Caroline Goss	- Communications Officer
Philip Hamberger	- Programme Director of Change
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Alan Madin	- Director of Internal Services
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services

530 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader welcomed the press and public to the meeting. He also welcomed Councillor E Buckmaster to his first meeting of the Executive since his election to the District Council.

The Leader, on behalf of the Chairman of the Council, reminded Members of the arrangements for the Civic Dinner and Dance on 12 March 2011, which would help raise funds for Isabel Hospice and Vale House, and encouraged Members to support this event.

531 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010/11 (REVISED) TO 2013/14

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report setting out proposals for the Council's Capital Programme for 2010/11 (Revised) – 2013/14. He drew attention to the wider context of diminishing capital receipts which would necessitate reducing the programme over this period.

The joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees, at their meeting held on 18 January 2011, had supported the proposals.

In response to questions by Members, assurances were given that expenditure on the maintenance of pools would only be incurred when necessary. It was also noted that a resolution to the difficulties in progressing the "What's on" sign had yet to be identified.

The Executive commended the Capital programme as now submitted.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the comments of the Joint Scrutiny Committees of 18 January 2011, be received; and

(B) the new Capital Programme for the period 2010/11 (Revised) to 2013/14 as now submitted be approved.

532 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT
2011/12 AND MINIMUM REVENUE POLICY STATEMENT**

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report setting out the 2011/12 Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy together with the proposed Prudential Indicators. He advised Members that the Council was working closely with its advisers, Sector, in monitoring interest rates in order to maximise returns.

The joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees, at their meeting held on 18 January 2011, had supported the proposals.

The Executive commended the proposals as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED - that (A) the comments of the Joint Scrutiny Committees of 18 January 2011, be received;

(B) the 2011/12 Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy and Prudential Indicators for East Herts Council be approved; and

(C) the Policy on Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) as detailed at paragraph 2.12 of the report submitted, be approved.

533 **FEES AND CHARGES 2011/12**

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report setting out proposed fees and charges for 2011/12. He referred to the comments of the joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees held on 18 January

2011. The Committees had supported the proposed fees and charges and had recommended that a concessionary rate of planning pre-application fees for charities, parish and town councils should be included. The Executive Member supported this.

The Executive Member for Community Safety and Protection referred to the proposed charges to town councils for CCTV cameras, which were currently subsidised by the District Council. He detailed the current charges and the actual cost in each town centre and proposed that the subsidy be retained for 2011/12 only, subject to further consideration as part of the scheduled Community Safety Review in 2011/12. This was supported by the Executive.

In response to questions by Members, the Executive Member confirmed that discussions with the town councils during the review would be undertaken.

The Executive commended the proposals as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the comments of the Joint Scrutiny Committees of 18 January 2011, be received;

(B) a concessionary rate for planning pre-application fees for Charities and Parish and Town Councils be approved;

(C) the subsidy towards the full cost of CCTV cameras in town centres be continued for 2011/12 only and that the issue be considered further as part of the Community Safety Review; and

(D) excepting (B) and (C) above, the increases in fees and charges as detailed in Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ of the report submitted, be approved.

534 **SERVICE ESTIMATES - REVENUE BUDGET PROBABLE
2010/11 - ESTIMATES 2011/12**

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report on the service estimates. He highlighted the summary shown at Essential Reference Paper 'B1' and congratulated Officers for their efforts in reducing expenditure.

The joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees, at their meeting held on 18 January 2011, had supported the proposals.

The Executive commended the proposals now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the comments of the Joint Scrutiny Committees of 18 January 2011 be received; and

(B) the probable Revenue Estimates for 2010/11 and the draft Revenue Estimates for 2011/12 be approved.

535 **CONSOLIDATED BUDGET REPORT: PROBABLE
OUTTURN 2010/11: REVENUE BUDGET 2011/12:
MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2011/12 TO 2114/15**

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report recommending the revenue budget for 2011/12.

The joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees, in supporting the proposals at their meeting held on 18 January 2011, had made a number of comments for the Executive to consider as follows.

They had recommended that consideration be given to the addition of a member development officer (1 day a week). The Executive Member for Community Development, Leisure and Culture welcomed this suggestion as a valuable resource towards achieving

accreditation for the Member Development Charter. The Executive recommended that £5k of the savings already agreed for deleting support for non-statutory meetings be redirected towards this for 2011/12 only.

The Scrutiny Committees had also suggested that support for PCSOs should be continued for a further year. The Executive supported this on the basis that the Community Safety Review in 2011/12 would consider a more long-term approach.

The Scrutiny Committees had also supported the aim to freeze council tax for a further year after 2011/12. The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support recommended this suggestion and further advised Members that changes to the formula grant had only been received the day before. He tabled an amendment to the recommendations and also referred to a summary of an additional consultation meeting that had been held with representatives of the business community.

In response to Members' questions and comments, the Executive Member indicated that areas where savings had been identified could be reconsidered later, if the impact on service delivery was found to be unacceptable.

The Executive commended the proposals as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED - that (A) the comments and proposals of the Joint Scrutiny Committees of 18 January 2011, be received;

(B) the probable outturn for 2010/11 be approved;

(C) the revenue budget for 2011/12 be approved as now submitted, subject to the following amendments:

	£k
PCSOs savings be deleted	46

Redirection of part savings from support for non-statutory meetings to support for member development 5

to be offset by:

Increased formula grant from £6046k to £6079k -33

Reducing the balancing figure from £4k to £0k -4

Increasing contribution from General Reserve from £38k to £52k -14

(D) the medium term financial plan to 2014/15, be approved, subject to the following amendments:

In 2012/13 only £k

Reduced formula grant from £5315k to 5306k 9

to be offset by:

Reducing the planning contingency from £169k to £161k -8

Reducing the balancing figure from £239k to £238k -1

In each year 2012/13 - 2014/15

Redirection of part savings from support for non-statutory meetings to support for member development 5

to be offset by a reduction in the balancing figure in each year:

2012/13 from £238k to £233k -5

2013/14 from £470k to £465k -5

2014/15 from £702k to £697k -5

(E) there to be no increase in council tax for 2011/12; and

(F) in respect of 2012/13, the planning assumption for council tax be amended from a 2.5% increase to nil increase with the consequential adjustments, as now submitted at Essential Reference Paper 'A' to these Minutes.

536 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2011, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

537 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY

The Executive received a report detailing those issues referred to it by the Scrutiny Committees.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

538 NATIONAL EXPRESS EAST ANGLIA: PROPOSAL TO DELIVER INCREASED CAPACITY, TIMETABLE CONSULTATION FOR WEST ANGLIA SERVICES FOR MAY 2011 AND DECEMBER 2011 TIMETABLES

The Executive Member for Planning Policy and Transport submitted a report setting out the Council's proposed response to National Express East Anglia's proposal to deliver increased capacity and amend timetables for West Anglia services for May – December 2011. The Executive noted that the proposed response had been published under the non-key decision process, but in view of the extensive interest shown by Members, had been withdrawn, so that it could be considered at a formal meeting.

Some Members opposed the suggested responses to Proposals 1 and 3 on the basis that this would disadvantage residents in Bishop's Stortford. Various concerns were raised in respect of general service issues, such as the time of the last train from Cambridge towards London, the stopping points of trains from London towards Cambridge and the poor

standard of service on the Hertford East line in respect of timings and poor quality rolling stock.

The Executive Member suggested amendments to his recommendations which the Executive agreed. He also undertook to convey the concerns raised in respect of the other service issues raised and now detailed.

The Executive agreed the proposals now detailed.

RESOLVED – that National Express East Anglia be advised that, (A) in relation to ‘the proposal to deliver increased capacity timetable consultation for West Anglia services for May 2011 and December 2011 timetables’, East Herts Council, in respect of:

- (1) Proposal 1: generally supports the plan to introduce a faster, hourly off peak service between Cambridge and London, using the new class 379 trains, which calls only at Whittlesford, Audley End, Bishop’s Stortford and Tottenham Hale;
- (2) Proposal 2: while supporting the increase in local services for stations in East Hertfordshire that a twice an hour service from Stratford would bring, would prefer that at least one of the two timetabled trains should continue to Stansted Airport, in order to ensure that the only direct link to Stansted from other Hertfordshire stations is maintained;
- (3) Proposal 3: raises concerns that the planned reduction in Stansted Express journey times by looping the Hertford East service at Broxbourne to allow a Stansted Express service to pass it, thereby adding around 3 to 4 minutes to the journey time of the Hertford East service, will be a disbenefit to users of the service in the southern-central part of East Herts, particularly those in and around Hertford, Ware and

Stansted Abbots/St Margarets; making an already relatively long journey even less attractive to users, thus potentially reducing patronage and encouraging journeys to be made by less sustainable modes;

- (4) Proposal 4: expresses no preference on the option of whether to run, in the morning peak, 3 x 12 car services with new trains from Cambridge to London or, alternatively use the same new trains to run 2 x 12 car services from Cambridge and 1 x 12 car service from Stansted Airport;
 - (5) Proposal 5: supports, in principle, the introduction of a new service either from Cambridge or Ely to Stansted Airport on the opposite half hour to the Cross Country service, as provision from either location may help engender modal shift; and
- (B) other service issues of concern, as now detailed, be referred to National Express East Anglia, as part of the Council's response.

539 SHARING SERVICES WITH STEVENAGE COUNCIL

The Leader submitted a report seeking authority to develop a strategic business case for sharing support services with Stevenage Borough Council. He also sought in principle support for closer collaboration at corporate and senior management level with Stevenage Borough Council.

The Leader set out the phased approach, which aimed to deliver live partnerships by March 2012. He referred to the expression of interest from North Hertfordshire District Council and commented that the benefits and risks of widening these discussions would need to be considered, provided that agreed timescales could be met.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) in principle, the exploration of closer corporate management arrangements with Stevenage Borough Council be supported;

(B) the development and assessment of a strategic business case for sharing support services with Stevenage Borough Council be approved;

(C) subject to agreement with Stevenage Borough Council, further discussion should take place with North Herts District Council following NHDC's expression of interest in the shared service arrangements outlined here, provided that agreed timescales can be met; and

(D) the application to Improvement East for £25,000 to fund this work, be supported.

540 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - JANUARY 2011

The Leader of the Council submitted an exception report on finance and performance monitoring for December 2010.

RESOLVED – that (A) the budgetary variances set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report be noted;

(B) in respect of NI 181, the unavailability of December 2010 performance data due to data not been released by DWP, be noted;

(C) a request for a supplementary estimate of £19,600 to modify car park Pay and Display machines to accept new 5p and 10p coins that come into circulation in April 2011, be approved;

(D) £36k of the works at the Southern Country Park scheme capital budget be re-profiled from 2010/11 into 2011/12;

(E) £95,800 of the plastic bottle and can sorting/bailing equipment capital budget be re-profiled

from 2010/11 into 2011/12; and

(F) a supplementary estimate of £80k in 2010/11 in respect of Decent Homes Grants be approved, to be funded by bringing forward this sum from the 2011/12 programme in order to offset some of the slippage on the programme.

The meeting closed at 8.52 pm

Chairman
Date