

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE ONLINE MEETING
- LIVESTREAMED ON TUESDAY 30 MARCH
2021, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillors L Haysey, P Boylan,
E Buckmaster, G Cutting, J Goodeve,
G McAndrew, S Rutland-Barsby and
G Williamson.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors S Bull, A Curtis, D Hollebon,
M Pope, P Ruffles and T Stowe.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Richard Cassidy	- Chief Executive
James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Steven Linnett	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager
Helen Standen	- Deputy Chief Executive
Kevin Steptoe	- East Herts Garden Town Lead Officer
William Troop	- Democratic Services Officer

447 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

448 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader reminded everyone that the meeting was being livestreamed via YouTube and asked that the "chat" function not be used. If anyone wished to speak, they should raise their hand. She asked Members to stay on mute and to leave their cameras on so that the public could see that everyone was an active participant.

For the benefit of those watching YouTube, the Leader asked all Members of the Executive to introduce themselves and the remit their portfolios covered.

449 MINUTES - 19 FEBRUARY 2021

Councillor Curtis raised that he was missing from the attendance list on the minutes.

Councillor Haysey proposed, and Councillor Williamson seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2021 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Leader, subject to the addition of Councillor Curtis on the attendance list.

The motion, on being put to the meeting and a vote taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the

meeting held on 19 February 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader, subject to the addition of Councillor Curtis on the attendance list.

450 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

451 QUARTERLY CORPORATE BUDGET MONITOR – QUARTER 3 DECEMBER

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability submitted a report on the Quarterly Corporate Budget Monitor which gave an update of the council's finances at the end of December 2020. The net revenue budget was predicted to have a year-end overspend of £150k which, in light of the extraordinary circumstances experienced over the year, should be viewed in a positive light. He gave credit to the diligence of the finance team. The headline figure masked a considerable loss of income, especially within Operations and the fall in car parking income. The government had provided grants of £1.8 million but this did not cover the full amount so the council have had to make up the difference. Within the capital spend, £31 million had been brought forward from last year making the total £64 million and this was a reflection of the progress of capital projects such as Grange Paddocks. The capital programme was reviewed regularly and £27 million would be carried forward into next year. Referring to paragraph 6 of the report, Councillor Williamson said all efforts had been

made to bring in all debt money but the council must take a realistic stance on old debts that are deemed uncollectable. Officers would identify old debts to be written off and they would be presented to the Executive for sign off.

Councillors Buckmaster and Pope said they supported the position on debtors and thought it was a sensible approach.

Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Cutting seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That (A) The net revenue budget forecast overspend of £159k in 2020/21 be noted (table 1); and

(B) The revised capital budget for 2020/21 is £64.323m, of which £27.401m is estimated to be carried forward to future years be noted (paragraph 5.1.1).

452 HARLOW AND GILSTON GARDEN TOWN: SUSTAINABILITY GUIDANCE AND CHECKLIST, FINAL DOCUMENT FOR ENDORSEMENT

The Leader of the Council submitted a report on the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Sustainability Guidance and Checklist which had been out for extensive consultation with residents and developers. The document puts together the council's expectation of sustainable development within the Garden Town

across all its strategic sites. The Leader said this was an extraordinary piece of work and congratulated the officers involved for all their hard work and thanked residents for their extensive comments. The Leader said this document would sit with the other Garden Town policies and documents to ensure the council can get what it wants from developers.

Councillor McAndrew said the report was an extraordinary document and made comments on the review of supplementary documents.

Councillor Haysey said the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability was a huge advocate for sustainable development and this report would complement his work on the Hertfordshire Climate Change Group.

Councillor McAndrew said the document would be shared with the climate group and it covered all four key themes: carbon, water, transport and biodiversity.

Councillor Buckmaster was also impressed with the report and said it would provide consistency across the Garden Town. He was pleased to see the link to RAG rating to determine if developers were meeting the net carbon goal.

Councillor Haysey proposed and Councillor Goodeve seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - To recommend to Council

that the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Sustainability Guidance and Checklist be endorsed as material for development management purposes.

453 REVIEW OF SCRUTINY BY THE CENTRE FOR GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY

The Leader of the Council presented a report on the Review of Scrutiny carried out by the Centre of Governance and Scrutiny. Scrutiny was absolutely critical and crucial for running a high quality council and it was important that the Executive was held to account for its decision making and policies they want to introduce. The Executive wished to endorse the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Haysey said she would invite the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny and Audit and Governance to meet the whole Executive every quarter to give them a greater understanding of their work asked the Scrutiny Officer to arrange the invitations.

Councillor Rutland-Barsby said that she had researched some bespoke training for Members of the scrutiny committees which had taken into account the recommendations of the review.

Councillor Buckmaster said that he remembered his scrutiny training when he first started as a member and it was a very important role. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be a 'critical friend' and

they should focus on less rather than more and get involved in strategic issues. He suggested that there should be a focus to scrutinising a portfolio and look at a specific aspect of policy.

Councillor Curtis said that he was a member of the Overview and Scrutiny committee and agreed that that the scrutiny function should act as a 'critical friend'. They should help and work with the Executive to improve policies and work constructively.

Councillor Haysey proposed and Councillor Williamson seconded a motion to agree the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That

(A) The final report by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) and the actions so far, to address the recommendations resulting from the review be noted; and

(B) The further actions which may be necessary as these changes develop following further scrutiny training be noted.

454 UPDATE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There was no update.

455 UPDATE FROM AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Councillor Pope, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, referred to the last meeting of the committee held on 16 March 2021. He said the committee reviewed reports from the Shared Anti-Fraud Service and the 2021-22 Internal Audit Plan. The committee received a report on the Quarter 3 financial position and noted the forecast outturn of £150k overspend. The level of debtors was discussed and it was confirmed that all services would review levels of debt that were more than 90 days old. The committee endorsed that debt write offs would be submitted to the Executive for approval. The committee also reviewed the risk management strategy and the new revised format of the risk register which represented a significant improvement on the previous version. Lastly, the committee considered the Model Code of Conduct for Members that had been released by the Local Government Association in January 2021 and recommended to Council that this be adopted into the Constitution subject to one minor amendment.

456 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm

Chairman
Date

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