

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2022, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor L Haysey (Chairman/Leader)
Councillors L Haysey, P Boylan,
E Buckmaster, G Cutting, J Goodeve and
G Williamson.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors B Crystall, M Pope, C Redfern
and P Ruffles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Helen George	- Housing Development and Strategy Manager
Tamara Jarvis	- Improvement and Insight Manager
Steven Linnett	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager
Sara Saunders	- Head of Planning

	and Building Control
Helen Standen	- Deputy Chief Executive
Su Tarran	- Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service

315 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kaye and Councillor McAndrew.

316 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council said that she had accepted an urgent item from Officers on Hertford Theatre which was a restricted report. She said that the additional funding request report had implications on Item 8 - Budget 2022/23, so would be heard first. The order of the agenda would be amended accordingly.

The Leader reminded Members that Item 14 – Introduction of Electric Vehicle Charging Tariffs had an exempt appendix so if Members wished to discuss the financial information, the meeting would again need to exclude the press and public.

The Leader said that the budgetary items were tricky at the moment and local authorities had to have a balanced Medium Term Financial Strategy. She said that the council have had to make difficult decisions but East Herts Council were in a better position than others.

317 MINUTES – 23 NOVEMBER 2021

Councillor Haysey proposed, and Councillor Williamson seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2021 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Leader. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

318 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

319 UPDATE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Leader of the Council thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their work and comments.

320 UPDATE FROM AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee had no further comments.

321 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Councillor Haysey proposed and Councillor Buckmaster seconded, a motion that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the next item, on the grounds that it

involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, in that disclosure could compromise information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).

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

RESOLVED – that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the next item, on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, in that disclosure could compromise information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).

322 ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUEST - HERTFORD THEATRE
CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Full details in the restricted minutes.

323 BUDGET SCRUTINY - BUDGET 2022/23 AND MEDIUM TERM
FINANCIAL PLAN 2022-25

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the proposed Budget 2022/22 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-25. He said that the plans were set around an increasing challenging background with less funding from government,

limited means to increase revenue and higher costs and less income due to the pandemic. He said that the Council had carried out a comprehensive spending review in 2020 which brought forward a significant level of savings. The Council Transformation Programme was underway but it was a medium to long term project and results would be noticed in 2023.

Councillor Williamson said that the Executive endorsed working assumptions in September 2021 including a £5 increase on Council Tax and a review of the Fees and Charges Policy which proposed an average increase of 5% and where a discretionary service was provided, the cost would be paid in full by the service users. He said that the budget gap still needed to be filled and further savings proposals were presented at Appendix B. The Medium Term Financial Plan and the Capital Programme appendices had been updated in relation to the Hertford Theatre funding. He thanked the Audit and Governance Committee for their comments which were included at Appendix H.

Councillor Haysey said difficult decisions had to be made but believed the proposed budget was the best way forward.

Councillor Williamson proposed, and Councillor Buckmaster 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 - (A) That the comments from Audit

and Governance Committee, as shown at Appendix H be considered, and endorse the recommended actions shown;

(B) To **recommend to Council**:

- I. that the East Herts share of the Council Tax for a Band D property in 2022/23 be set at £184.09, an increase of £5, the maximum permitted within the Council Tax Referendum principles;
- II. The Budget 2022/23 and the Medium Term Financial Plan 2022 – 2027 is approved;
- III. The savings plans summarised in Appendix B are approved for implementation and that Council require that compensating savings, delivered to the same timescales, have to be put in place and reported to the next Council meeting should the Executive decide that any savings proposals should not proceed, or are reduced by 10% or more
- IV. The capital programme set out in Appendix C is approved; and
- V. The schedule of charges for 2021/22 set out in Appendix G, with an average increase of 5%, is approved;

(C) That the results of the consultation on how the public value services that are provided

by the council be noted;

(D) That the Equalities Impact Assessment at Appendix F be noted; and

(E) That the savings due to be delivered from the Transforming East Herts Programme be noted that a full business case and benefits realisation plan will be presented to Executive in June 2022 be noted.

324 CAPITAL STRATEGY AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY 2022/23

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented a report on the Capital Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2022/23. He said that there was a need for the council to produce a strategy following a strengthening of government guidance.

Councillor Williamson proposed, and Councillor Buckmaster 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 the approval the Capital Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision policy 2022/23 onwards.

325 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2022/23

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented a report on the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2022/23. He said that the Treasury Management Strategy was an important document to help the council deliver on its programmes and provided a basis to manage funds. The Council is required to provide three reports; this was the first report looking forward. He highlighted that Appendix B had been updated and published in the supplementary agenda.

Councillor Williamson proposed, and Councillor Cutting 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 to approve the Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategy 2022/23 and Prudential Indicators for approval.

326 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2021/22 – QUARTER 2 FORECAST TO YEAR END

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented a report on the Financial Management of the Council - Quarter 2 Forecast to year end. He said that it was not unusual to have an overspend at the current point in the year and it would be managed by the Leadership Team throughout the year.

The Leader wanted to record her thanks to the Head of Strategic Finance and Property and his team for all

their hard work and their briefing to Members was well received.

Councillor Williamson 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 - That (A) The net revenue budget forecast overspend of £132k in 2021/22 be noted; and

(B) The revised capital budget for 2021/22 of £57.060m, with a forecast underspend of £15.825m, which will be carried forward to 2022/23 be noted.

327 CORPORATE PLAN REFRESH 2022/2023

The Leader of the Council presented the refreshed Corporate Plan 2022/23. She said that the Council produced a Corporate Plan annually and the plan for 2022/23 reflected the issues arising from a challenging financial situation and a continuing commitment to provide first class services to residents. She thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their comments and was happy for them to be incorporated into the final document.

Councillor Haysey proposed, and Councillor Boylan 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 One Page Plan

priorities be reviewed, as shown at Appendix A;

(B) the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as shown at Appendix B be considered, and endorse the recommended actions shown; and

(C) the One Page plan, as amended by Recommendation (B) be endorsed, and recommended to Council for approval.

328 HOUSING STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods presented a report on the Housing Strategy 2022 – 2027. He said that the strategy was a culmination of a considerable amount of work over the last 18 months. There was no statutory requirement to produce a strategy and the extent and range of housing pressures had made it imperative to set new priorities.

Councillor Boylan said that the development of the strategy was overseen by a cross party working member group who met three times to shape emerging themes. Once approved by Council, detailed action plans would be developed and reviewed regularly. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee gave detailed consideration of the strategy and Appendix A listed their comments.

The Leader of the Council thanked the team for their work on the detailed strategy with evidence based conclusions.

Councillor Boylan 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 comments put forward by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, listed in Appendix A, be considered and endorse the resulting amendments proposed by the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods as also detailed in Appendix A;

(B) the draft East Herts Housing Strategy for 2022 to 2027, as amended by Recommendation (A) be endorsed, and recommended to Council for approval.

(C) the authority to (i) determine action plans to deliver the objectives in the Housing Strategy, pending its approval by Council, and (ii) authorise periodic progress reports be delegated to the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, acting in consultation with the Head of Housing and Health.

329 DISCRETIONARY COVID-19 ADDITIONAL RELIEF FUND (CARF) SCHEME

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented a report on the Discretionary COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) scheme. He said the scheme was announced in March 2021 but the details were only published in December 2021. £3 million had

been allocated to East Herts and the scheme must be set locally and directed to businesses that had not had grants previously.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Revenues and Benefits team for their hard work on behalf of residents.

Councillor Pope asked how the scheme would be publicised.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits said there would be extensive social media coverage and the team would be contacting all businesses eligible to apply.

Councillor Williamson proposed, and Councillor Boylan 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 – That the Discretionary COVID-19 Additional Relief scheme be approved.

330 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Wellbeing presented a report on the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy. He said that the strategy was updated to reflect the feedback through the public consultation in autumn 2021. The Council's parks were an opportunity for residents to enjoy the outdoors and were central to the council's health and wellbeing offering. He said that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had provided some

comments and suggestions and wording in the strategy would be clarified.

Councillor Buckmaster proposed, and Councillor Goodeve 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 comments from Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as shown at Appendix D be considered, and endorse the recommended actions shown;

(B) the draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, as amended by Recommendation (A) be endorsed, and recommended to Council for approval.

331 INTRODUCTION OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) CHARGING TARIFFS

The Leader of the Council presented a report on the introduction of electric vehicle charging tariffs on behalf of the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability. The proposal was to introduce a tariff for electric vehicles in car parks managed by the Council in line with the Fees and Charges Policy. She said that the proposed tariff was 25ppkw and the council would be submitting a request for funding to upgrade the infrastructure.

Councillor Haysey proposed, and Councillor Williamson 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 comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as shown at Appendix C be considered, and endorse the recommended actions shown;

(B) the Electric Vehicle Charging Tariff Policy, as amended by Recommendation (A) be adopted.

332 HARLOW AND GILSTON GARDEN TOWN - FUTURE LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

The Leader of the Council presented a report on the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town – Future Leadership and Governance Report. She said that the Garden Town had received revenue funding from government for £172 million for a rolling infrastructure fund and there was a need for open and more transparent decision making processes. The Leader believed it was the best model for East Herts Council and the Garden Town.

Councillor Buckmaster said he did not have an issue with the recommendations but wanted to raise his concerns about the reference to stewardship. He said that stewardship was a complex problem to resolve and a single body would be equivalent to corporate ownership. He felt there needed to be local accountability to create a sense of community with an accountable body spread over a larger area.

Councillor Buckmaster proposed, and Councillor

Goodeve 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 Executive agrees ‘in principle’ to explore the creation of a Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Joint Committee, consisting of representation by all five Garden Town Partner Councils;

(B) subject to the outcome of A above, the details of the constitution, priorities and operating model of the proposed Joint Committee are to be returned to the Executive for further consideration.

333 UPDATED MASTERPLAN FOR THE GOODS YARD

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented a report on the updated masterplan for the Goods Yard. She said that the site already benefitted from a masterplan and hybrid planning application however a combination of events has meant the plan needs to be reviewed. Of major significance was the decision by Network Rail to retain the railway sidings which had reduced the developable area.

The Leader of the Council commended the developer involved in the process for being fully engaged in the masterplan process.

Councillor Goodeve proposed, and Councillor Cutting 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 Refined Masterplan Document for the Goods Yard, Bishop’s Stortford as detailed in Appendix A, be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.

334 MASTERPLAN FOR LAND TO NORTH WEST OF BUNTINGFORD

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented a report on the masterplan for the land to North West of Buntingford. The masterplan was for 55 units and the developer had worked with East Herts Council to produce a mix of development types and affordable housing. She gave her thanks to the Buntingford Steering Group for their help.

Councillor Goodeve proposed, and Councillor Buckmaster 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 Land North West of Buntingford Masterplan Document be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.

335 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2020/21

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the Annual Treasury Management report for 2020/21. He said the report followed on from Item 10 and it looked back and reviewed the activities for the last financial year.

Councillor Williamson proposed, and Councillor Cutting 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 the approval of the Annual Treasury Management Review and Prudential Indicators 2020/21.

336 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2021/22 MID-YEAR REVIEW

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented a report on the Treasury Management 2021/22 Mid-Year Review.

Councillor Williamson proposed, and Councillor Cutting 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 the approval of the Treasury Mid-year Review and

Prudential Indicators for the first 6 months of 2021/22.

337 EXTERNAL AUDIT NATIONAL PROCUREMENT OPT IN

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented a report on the External Audit National Procurement Opt-in. He said that the arrangements for the current audit period expired next year and the report considered options available for appointments of external auditors from April 2023 and a decision needed to be made by 31 December 2022. The report recommended opt in to Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited.

Councillor Haysey said auditing of local authorities was not as easy to procure as it used to be. She said there was a national backlog and East Herts' audit had just started. She urged CIPFA to listen to concerns raised by senior bodies and officers.

Councillor Williamson 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, under Regulation 19 of the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015, East Hertfordshire District Council opts into the sector led body for audit appointments provided by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited.

338 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8.16 pm

Chairman
Date