

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE 2011, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A Jackson (Chairman/Leader)
Councillors M Alexander, L Haysey and
M Tindale

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors E Buckmaster,
Mrs R Cheswright, N Symonds and
B Wrangles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Alan Madin	- Director of Internal Services
Lois Prior	- Head of Strategic Direction (shared) and Communications Manager

92 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor M Carver.

93 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2011, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

94 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Leader reminded Members that copies of the supplementary agenda had been laid around the table.

95 EAST HERTS/STEVENAGE REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

The Executive considered proposals for the creation of a single, shared Revenues and Benefits service with Stevenage Borough Council.

The Executive Member for Finance detailed the activities of the service, the rationale for the proposals and the role of the Interim Joint Management Team in identifying the way forward. He stated that the proposals would result in increased efficiencies and savings and referred to the detailed business case at Essential Reference Paper 'A' of the report now submitted. The Executive Member thanked all the Officers involved for their efforts.

It was noted that Stevenage Council's Executive had supported the proposals at its meeting.

In response to questions, the Director of Internal Services clarified that the proposed agreement was for a minimum of three years and that should one of the Authorities wish to end the partnership, then the agreement provided for careful planning and implementation. He also advised that Unison had expressed support for shared services and that staff were satisfied that processes were in place to deal with their concerns. The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support added that the Head of Revenues and Benefits would be holding 1-1 meetings with staff.

The Executive recommended that the proposals now detailed, be supported.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the view be supported that a shared Revenues and Benefits service with

Stevenage Borough Council is viable and will deliver benefits as described in the business case document titled 'Revenues & Benefits Shared Service for East Herts & Stevenage', at Essential Reference Paper 'A' of the report submitted and to implement the proposals set out in this document;

(B) a Joint Revenues and Benefits Shared Service Committee with Stevenage Borough Council, as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report submitted, be approved;

(C) the creation of a Joint Management Board for a shared Revenues and Benefits service be approved;

(D) as the host authority for the shared service, the proposals to discharge, on behalf of Stevenage Borough Council the administration of Council Tax, National Non-domestic Rates and the administration of the Benefits scheme, including the investigation and prosecution of Benefit Fraud, in accordance with section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, be approved, with the effective date for this arrangement to be agreed by the Chief Finance Officers at each Council;

(E) a contingency of £25,000 for unforeseen set up costs, be approved, to be met by a supplementary estimate if required;

(F) splitting set up costs and savings 50:50 for the first three years, be approved; and

(G) the Director of Internal Services be authorised to approve a partnership agreement with Stevenage Borough Council, to implement these proposals, subject to final confirmation of the business case.

The meeting closed at 7.24 pm

Chairman
Date