AGENDA ITEM NO 6

COUNCIL MEETING – 16 FEBRUARY 2006

The decisions set out in these minutes will come into force, and may then be implemented, on the expiry of three working days after the publication of the decision, unless the decision is subject to call-in.

Date of publication: 13 February 2006

CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday 9 February 2006 at 7pm at The Guildhall, Westgate, Canterbury

Present:
Councillor Cragg – Leader of the Council
Councillor Mrs Doyle
Councillor Gilbey
Councillor Lee
Councillor Patterson
Councillor Mrs Reuby
Councillor Miss Samper
Councillor Thomas

Other Members present for all or part of the meeting:
Councillor Matthews
Councillor Nee
Councillor Pepper
Councillor Perkins
Councillor Whitemore
Councillor Wright

E220 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

In accordance with the Members’ Code of Conduct, Councillor Thomas declared a personal interest in the item on Hilltop Community Design Statement, as he owned a house in Hollow Lane, Wincheap.

There were no other declarations of interests.

E221 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

(a) The Leader announced that the recent visit to Canterbury of two judges for the “Council of the Year” Award had gone well. He read a letter sent by one of the judges after the visit that thanked all those involved. Canterbury had been the only district authority that had been short-listed. A DVD prepared for viewing by the judges was shown at the end of the Announcements.

(b) The Leader announced that the UK had won the opportunity to stage the first leg of the Tour de France and on Sunday 8 July 2007 the cyclists would be making their way from London, through the Kent countryside to the finishing
line in Canterbury. He was confident that the city would benefit from both the media coverage and the expected number of visitors. The Chief Executive had been personally involved in the discussions with the organisers from the outset and the Leader took the opportunity to thank him for his hard work and efforts in obtaining this valuable opportunity.

(c) Councillor Gilbey announced that, contrary to recent media coverage, there were important developments scheduled for the city centre that countered the suggestion of retail stagnation or retreat. He went on to outline a number of exciting plans and proposals for various buildings in the city.

(d) Councillor Gilbey announced that the recent publication and distribution of a magazine type document entitled “Free Business Events in Your District” was a first for both Canterbury and nationally. It amply demonstrated the Executive’s commitment to a thriving business sector in the District with the consequence of continuing or additional employment opportunities.

(e) Councillor Mrs Reuby announced that two public meetings had been held in Herne Bay, both of which had been well attended. The first had discussed the Herne Bay festival, which would be revamped and also scheduled so that it would not overlap with other events in the district, particularly along the coast and the second had discussed the town’s entry in the “Britain in Bloom” competition, which was a particular good example of working in partnership with the people of Herne Bay.

(f) Councillor Patterson announced that one of the Council’s graduate engineers, Jonathan Clark, would be attending the 30th International Conference on Coastal Engineering in San Diego in September to present his technical research paper. He explained that the research had been carried out at Tankerton, Whitstable. This demonstrated the excellent quality of the Engineering Department and its staff.

(g) Councillor Miss Samper announced that she, along with Councillor Seath, would be attending a conference at Woking Borough Council that would be considering ways in which the Council could economise on the use of fossil fuels and look at methods of financing alternatives to such fuels.

E222 VARIATION IN THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

At the request of the Leader and as the Ward Member had attended the meeting specifically for the item, the Executive agreed to vary the order of business and the following item was dealt with as the next item if business.

E223 LAND WEST OF MILL LANE, HERNE BAY – DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

The Ward Member, Councillor Wright, attended the meeting and with the approval of the Leader spoke to this item. He expressed concern that amendments had not been made to the Development Brief despite the fact that the report accompanying it indicated that they would be. The portfolio holder accepted these comments and advised that the minor amendments suggested by Councillor Wright would be made prior to the Development Brief being considered by the full Council.

The portfolio holder reported that a Development Brief had been prepared for the land west of Mill Lane, Herne Bay in order to ensure that any future development was sustainable and in keeping with the character of the area. In light of recent planning
applications and an appeal decision, the Development Brief aimed to provide proactive guidance for any future residential development of the site. The draft Development Brief had been subjected to limited public consultation and had been considered by both the Herne Bay Area Member Panel and the Development Control Committee. A summary of all the responses had been included in an appendix to the report.

RESOLVED – That the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development be authorised to make any necessary minor amendments to the Development Brief to reflect the comments made at this meeting.

RECOMMENDED (to full Council) - That the amended version of the Land West of Mill Lane, Herne Bay Development Brief be approved and adopted as a material planning consideration.

E224 MEMBERS’ QUESTIONS

(a) Councillor Pepper asked the Leader why he had not announced the good news that the Small Business Rate Relief had resulted in some 1,100 businesses benefiting from £572,000? This information had been made known to the Scrutiny Management and Review Sub-Committee and surely such good news to the district should be made known?

The Leader replied that indeed it was good news that small businesses had benefited.

(b) Councillor Perkins asked the Leader to congratulate formally the Chief Executive and the relevant officers who had worked hard in encouraging the organisers of the Tour de France to finish a stage of the race in Canterbury.

The Leader replied that he was delighted to do so and indeed had done so during the Announcements part of the meeting.

(c) Council Perkins asked the Leader if the option of making the road around the Westgate Towers a bus lane had been considered, as this would solve the problems experienced by the bus company during the experimental period of pedestrianisation of Westgate Towers?

The Leader replied that no doubt this question would be answered during the debate on this issue later in the meeting.

(d) Council Matthews asked the Leader if, following the agreement with Land Securities over the proposed charges for the Whitefriars car park, whether such amendments to the charges should be re-advertised for public consultation?

The Leader replied that the legal advice was that the changes were not substantial so did not need to be re-advertised.

(e) Councillor Matthews went on to ask the Leader whether, following a recent tribunal decision on the payment of VAT on car park charges, car park charges would be reduced?

The Leader replied that, whilst such a ruling had been made, the Government had to the end of March to appeal against the decision and, until this was
known, the Executive would not be considering what should be done with any refund or reduction.

(f) Councillor Nee asked the Leader whether, in light of the change to the night time economy of the district, the Executive would carry out an initial survey into the number of people in the city centre during the night, how they got home and how safe the journey was, with a view to formulating an integrated night time transport initiative to address any issues arising from the survey?

The Leader replied that he would refer the question to the appropriate officers for advice and guidance on the matter and would respond to the question at a later date.

(g) Councillor Whitemore asked the Leader if he would agree that the public consultation on the Council’s budget had been minimal and that the only changes to the budget had been made in light comments made by either the press or local businesses and did not such a response undermine the public’s faith in the system?

The Leader replied that he did not agree and that the budget had been considered at the Area Member Panels but few people had responded. The Executive had consulted, listened and modified the car parking charges following the public consultation on them and had listened to the view of Funeral Directors on the proposed charges for cemeteries’ services. Some of the current complaints about the increase in parking charges arose from the increases approved last April by the previous administration.

(h) Councillor Pepper asked the Leader if there were any Departmental restructures taking place that would result in redundancies and if so how many, as Members should be fully informed?

The Leader replied that he was unaware of any at the Council, unlike other local authorities where major restructures had resulted in a number of staff changes.

At this point in the meeting twenty minutes had elapsed since the start of Members’ Questions and no more were to be heard.

E225 MINUTES

The Leader signed as a true record the minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2006.

E226 REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY (RES) REVIEW – RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

The portfolio holder presented a report prepared by the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development that set out a proposed response to the South East England Development Agency’s consultation on its Regional Economic Strategy. The purpose of the Strategy was to shape the future economic development of the South East and the consultation process gave the Council the opportunity to ensure that the key economic issues for the District were represented as strongly as possible.
RESOLVED – That the Council respond to the consultation on the draft Regional Economic Strategy as prepared by South East England Development Agency as set out in the report as now submitted.

E227 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY FOR 2006/07 INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL BORROWING LIMITS FOR 2006/07 TO 2008/09

The portfolio holder presented a report prepared by the Head of Finance that advised the Executive on the strategies to be adopted for Treasury Management and Investments for 2006/07 and gave information on the steps that should be taken with regard to the Prudential Borrowing Limits for 2006/07 to 2008/09.

RECOMMENDED (to full Council) –

(a) That the Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategies for 2006/7 be approved.

(b) That, for the purposes of Section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003, for the financial years 2006/7 to 2008/9, the Council’s Prudential Borrowing and other Limits shall be as shown in sections 3 and 1c of the report as now submitted.

(c) That the limit for fixed interest rate exposure be increased to 100% for the remainder of the current year (2005/6).

(d) That the use of AAA rated money market funds be approved for fund managers.

E228 PARISH COUNCILS’ CAPITAL GRANT SCHEME

The portfolio holder presented a report prepared by the Head of Housing and Community Development that informed Members of the Executive of the background to the parish council capital grant prioritisation exercise using the CIFT (Corporate Investment and Funding Team) appraisal and set out the outcome of the process for the Barham Downs, North Nailbourne, Chatham and Stone Street, Marshside, Harbledown, Herne and Broomfield, and Little Stour Wards. The views of the relevant Area Member Panels on the proposals were also included in the report.

RESOLVED –

(a) That the CIFT appraisal process be supported for this and future years.

(b) That those priority projects, as identified by the CIFT appraisal process and that fall within the available budget, be funded.

(c) That, due to there being a tiebreak situation, an equal proportion of funding be given to the two tied parish councils (Chatham and Littlebourne) from the budget for this financial year, and the remaining balance to each, be paid in April 2006 from the budget for 2006/07.

E229 ANNUAL REVIEW OF OFF-STREET PARKING PLACES ORDER AND ON-STREET PARKING ARRANGEMENTS
The portfolio holder presented a report prepared by the Head of Transportation and Engineering that set out the objections received to the advertised proposals for the Off-Street Parking Places Order 2006 and the Traffic Regulation Orders for on-street parking arrangements. All representations, including those received after the consultation period had closed, had been taken into account; although for those received within the statutory period and not withdrawn, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that they were bound to consider in deciding to make any variations to the proposals. Other representations could be considered in deciding how to respond to those duly made objections. He also advised that if Members made what they regarded as a substantial modification to the proposed order then the Council should reconsult and reconsider.

RESOLVED – That, having considered the objections and comments received, the proposals as advertised be approved with the following amendments:

Canterbury

Whitefriars Multi-storey Car Park

(i) The short stay premium tariffs to be £1.40 per hour, not £1.60 or £2.00 as advertised.
(ii) A minimum payment of 70p for 30 minutes to be applied Sunday to Friday.
(iii) A minimum payment of £2.80 for up to 2 hours to be applied on Saturdays.
(iv) The tariff for any period greater than 5 hours to be £20, not £7 per hour as advertised.
(v) A fixed evening charge of £1.40 to be applied each day from 6.00pm until the car park closes.

Off-street parking

(i) The overnight hotel and guesthouse visitors’ permit to remain at £1.50 and not £2 as advertised.

Coastal Towns

On-street parking

(i) Charges for residents’ on-street permits to be increased from £32 to £38, not £45 as advertised.

E230 CANTERBURY CASTLE

The portfolio holder advised that, in order to inform the Council’s long-term strategy for Canterbury Castle, an Audience Development Plan had been prepared. This Plan, together with the Conservation Plan prepared in 1999, would form part of the background documentation required by grant-giving bodies such as the lottery and the EU Interreg programme. The Castle in 1999 had been considered as an underused, and undervalued, asset that should be enhanced and developed. However, before this could happen, the audience development implications of any
RESOLVED - That the Canterbury Castle Audience Development Plan and Action Plan be approved.

(With the consent of the Leader, Councillor Pepper spoke to this item.)

E231 HILLTOP COMMUNITY DESIGN STATEMENT

The Ward Member, Councillor Perkins, with the approval of the Leader spoke to this item and congratulated the community of Hilltop for producing an excellent piece of work.

The portfolio holder advised that a Village (or Community) Design Statement (VDS) aimed to set out clear and simple guidance for all developments in a village based on its character. It was an advisory document produced by a village community as local communities had a unique appreciation and understanding of their own place and a VDS was based on this knowledge. The preparation of the Hilltop Community Design Statement (HCDS) had been launched in March 2004 at a workshop held in the village hall. The parish council and city council had supported the production of this HCDS. The Rural Area Members Panels had been consulted on the HCDS document and the comments had been included in the report.

The portfolio holder further advised that there would be a slight amendment to the section of the HCDS that provided background information on the history of the village.

RECOMMENDED (to full Council) - That the amended Hilltop Community Design Statement be approved and adopted as a supplementary planning document.

E232 EXPERIMENTAL PEDESTRIANISATION OF WESTGATE TOWERS

The Executive considered a report that reviewed the experimental pedestrianisation scheme at Westgate Towers after the first six months of operation and considered whether or not to proceed with the experiment in light of problems encountered and comments received. The Joint Transportation Board had considered the matter and had recommended abandoning the experiment. The Head of Transportation and Engineering advised that the option of providing a bus lane had been looked at but it had not been possible to identify a simple inexpensive solution.

RESOLVED -

(a) That the experimental scheme be abandoned, forthwith.

(b) That Officers continue to investigate ideas for improving the economic vibrancy of the Westgate area, and prepare proposals to be reported back to the Executive in due course.

(c) That permission for street trading on a Sunday be amended to allow the continuation within St Peter’s Street.
FORTHCOMING DECISION LIST – 1 FEBRUARY TO 31 MAY 2006

RESOLVED – That the Forthcoming Decision List for the period 1 February to 31 May 2006 be noted.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 2 March 2006 at 7pm in the Guildhall, Canterbury.

EXTRA ITEM OF BUSINESS – COUNCIL TAX 2006/07

The Director of Corporate Services had circulated this late report so that its contents could be considered in advance of the Council’s approval of the budget.

The Executive was reminded that the Council was required to set the level of Council Tax for the next financial year and considered a report that set out the various calculations needed to set the Council Tax for the district and each parish within the district. The level of Council Tax was determined by the level of spending agreed for the budget.

The Leader informed Members that the Government grant had been reduced by £47,000 and it would be necessary to amend the budget proposals slightly to maintain the Council Tax at the level planned. The proposed changes to the off-street and on-street parking charges would be within the tolerance limit planned for.

The Council Tax proposed for Canterbury City Council was £151.71. Added to this would be the Kent County Council, the Kent Police Authority, the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority and parishes’ precepts to arrive at the overall tax.

RECOMMENDED (to full Council) –

(a) That, in order to meet the shortfall of £47,000 due to the reduction in the Government’s grant, the budget proposals to Council be amended by the deletion of the provision for a Street Pedlars’ Act and by the reduction of £2,000 in the general contingency provision and thus leave the Council Tax at the level planned.

(b) Subject to the amendment as set out at (a) above,

1 That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2006/07 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:

(a) £81,966,699 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2) (a) to (e) of the Act.

(b) £61,950,449 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3) (a) to (c) of the Act.

(c) £20,016,250 being the amount by which the aggregate 1(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.

2 £11,725,161 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of re-distributed non-domestic
rates and revenue support grant adjusted by the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year to/from its general fund from/to its collection fund in accordance with Section 97(3) and Section 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

3 £163.85 being the amount at 1(c) above less the amount at (2) above, all divided by the Council Tax base (50,603) calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year.

4 £462,299 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.

5 £154.71 being the amount at (3) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (4) above by the Council Tax base (50,603) calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.

6 Part of the Council’s area

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<td>140.77</td>
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<td>180.99</td>
<td>221.21</td>
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<td>311.35</td>
<td>359.25</td>
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being the amounts given by adding to the amount at (5) above the amounts of the special item of items relating to dwellings in these parts of the City Council’s area mentioned above divided in each case by the respective Council tax base for each area, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

7 Part of the Council’s area
being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (5) and (6) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

8 That it be noted that for the year 2006/07 the Kent County Council, the Kent Police Authority (KPA) and the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

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<td>85.80</td>
<td>99.00</td>
<td>118.80</td>
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</table>

9 That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (7) and (8) above, the Council in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government
Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of council tax for the year 2006/07 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

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All other parts of the Council's area | 832.80 | 971.60 | 1,110.40 | 1,249.20 | 1,526.80 | 1,804.40 | 2,082.00 | 2,498.40 |

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.50pm.