

Public Document Pack

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of East Hertfordshire District Council will be held in the Council Chamber, Wallfields, Hertford on Wednesday 1st October, 2014 at 7.00 pm, for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the Agenda below, and you are hereby summoned to attend.

Dated this 18th day of September 2014

Jeff Hughes
Head of Democratic and
Legal Support Services

Note: Prayers will be said before the meeting commences. Those Members who do not wish to participate will be invited to enter the Chamber at their conclusion.

AGENDA

1. Chairman's Announcements

To receive any announcements.

2. Minutes (Pages 7 - 16)

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 30 July 2014.

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Members' declarations of interest.

4. Petitions (Pages 17 - 18)

To receive any petitions.

5. Public Questions

To receive any public questions.

6. Members' questions

To receive any Members' questions.

7. Executive Report - 5 August 2014 (Pages 19 - 34)

To receive a report from the Leader of the Council and to consider recommendations on the matters below:

(A) Little Hadham Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Minute 159 refers.

(B) High Wych Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Minute 160 refers.

(C) East Herts Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment April 2014

Minute 161 refers.

(D) District Plan Update Report

Minute 162 refers.

(E) Delivery Study Update Report

Minute 163 refers.

(F) Greater Essex Demographic Forecasts 2012 – 2037 Phase 5 Main Report – April 2014

Minute 164 refers.

(G) East Herts Employment Land Review Update 2013

Minute 165 refers.

- (H) Buntingford Employment Study 2014

Minute 166 refers.

- (I) Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) Round 3 Update Report

Minute 167 refers.

- (J) Neighbourhood Planning Update Report

Minute 168 refers.

- 8. Executive Report - 2 September 2014 (Pages 35 - 42)

To receive a report from the Leader of the Council and to consider recommendations on the matters below:

- (A) Corporate Strategic Plan 2015/16 - 2018/19

Minute 211 refers.

- (B) Financial Strategy 2015/16 - 2018/19 and Medium Term Financial Plan Update

Minute 212 refers.

Note – Members are asked to bring their copies of the Executive agendas to the meeting.

- 9. Human Resources Committee: Minutes - 18 August 2014 (Pages 43 - 46)

Chairman: Councillor G McAndrew

- 10. Development Management Committee: Minutes - 20 August 2014 (Pages 47 - 66)

Chairman: Councillor Mrs R Cheswright

11. Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee: Minutes - 26 August 2014 (Pages 67 - 78)

Chairman: Councillor G Jones

12. Environment Scrutiny Committee: Minutes - 9 September 2014 (Pages 79 - 88)

Chairman: Councillor M Pope

13. Development Management Committee - 17 September 2014

*Chairman: Councillor Mrs R Cheswright
(to follow)*

14. Community Scrutiny Committee: Minutes - 23 September 2014

*Chairman: Councillor Mrs D Hollebon
(to follow)*

15. Audit Committee: Minutes - 24 September 2014

*Chairman: Councillor J Ranger
(to follow)*

16. Motions on Notice

To receive Motions on Notice.

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

1. A Member, present at a meeting of the Authority, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Authority, with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in any matter to be considered or being considered at a meeting:
 - must not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting;
 - must not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting;
 - must disclose the interest to the meeting, whether registered or not, subject to the provisions of section 32 of the Localism Act 2011;
 - if the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days;
 - must leave the room while any discussion or voting takes place.

2. A DPI is an interest of a Member or their partner (which means spouse or civil partner, a person with whom they are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom they are living as if they were civil partners) within the descriptions as defined in the Localism Act 2011.

3. The Authority may grant a Member dispensation, but only in limited circumstances, to enable him/her to participate and vote on a matter in which they have a DPI.

4. It is a criminal offence to:

- fail to disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest at a meeting if it is not on the register;
- fail to notify the Monitoring Officer, within 28 days, of a DPI that is not on the register that a Member disclosed to a meeting;
- participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which a Member has a DPI;
- knowingly or recklessly provide information that is false or misleading in notifying the Monitoring Officer of a DPI or in disclosing such interest to a meeting.

(Note: The criminal penalties available to a court are to impose a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale and disqualification from being a councillor for up to 5 years.)

Audio/Visual Recording of meetings

Everyone is welcome to record meetings of the Council and its Committees using whatever, non-disruptive, methods you think are suitable, which may include social media of any kind, such as tweeting, blogging or Facebook. However, oral reporting or commentary is prohibited. If you have any questions about this please contact Democratic Services (members of the press should contact the Press Office). Please note that the Chairman of the meeting has the discretion to halt any recording for a number of reasons, including disruption caused by the filming or the nature of the business being conducted. Anyone filming a meeting is asked to focus only on those actively participating, but please also be aware that you may be filmed whilst attending a council meeting and that attendance at the meeting signifies your agreement to this.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 30 JULY 2014, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor R Beeching (Chairman).
Councillors D Abbott, D Andrews, W Ashley,
P Ballam, E Bedford, E Buckmaster, S Bull,
A Burlton, M Carver, Mrs R Cheswright,
K Crofton, G Cutting, L Haysey, T Herbert,
Mrs D Hollebon, A Jackson, G Jones,
J Mayes, G McAndrew, M McMullen,
P Moore, W Mortimer, T Page, P Phillips,
M Pope, C Rowley, P Ruffles, S Rutland-
Barsby, R Sharma, N Symonds, J Taylor,
M Tindale, A Warman, K Warnell,
G Williamson, N Wilson, J Wing, M Wood,
C Woodward and J Wyllie.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

138 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed the press and public to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was being webcast.

He also welcomed Councillor G Cutting to his first Council meeting since his by-election victory.

The Chairman did not detail any of the many events he had attended recently, but promised to provide a summary at the end of the year.

The Chairman asked Members to note the leaflet that had been laid around the chamber on the East Herts Community Chest, which outlined the grants available to charities and community groups in East Herts. The Chairman appealed to Members to help raise funds in support and suggested different ways and events that could be held.

He advised that he was hosting a coffee morning on 6 November 2014 for parish councillors in his county division at the Manor of Groves hotel. The Vice-Chairman advised that she would be hosting a dinner for women in business in Hertford town centre in October 2014.

The Chairman asked Members to advise him of any arrangements they would put in place.

139 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 14 May 2014 be approved a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

140 PETITIONS

Laura Sleight, a Hertford resident had submitted a petition, comprising 2,011 signatures, as follows:

For years, Hertford residents who rely on council run car parks have faced a parking postcode lottery. Some are issued residents' permits for only £36 per year while others are forced to buy daily tickets costing up to £1,400 a year.

Now, East Herts Council wants to introduce evening

charges (£1 from 4-10 pm, except all day tickets), costing residents and others up to £260 a year.

The changes are proposed for Hertford, Ware and Bishop's Stortford and they're due to launch a consultation in May to gather public views. We need to act NOW!

Evening charges would be BAD for visitors, BAD for local businesses and even WORSE for residents.

If you care about the rights of local people in Hertfordshire, please sign the petition to show that we have a voice.

Sign below if you want East Herts Council to SCRAP evening car park charges and provide fair parking for all.

The Council considered the petition under its petitions scheme in accordance with the provisions of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Laura Sleight highlighted the key concerns shared by residents who had signed the petition. She stated their opposition to the idea of evening charges and did not believe that half an hour's free parking would justify the impact on residents and the economy.

She also highlighted the unfairness on town centre residents who relied on car parks to deal with the difficulties of parking near to where they lived. Some residents were permitted to purchase season tickets from £36 per year whilst others were forced to buy daily car park tickets costing up to £1,400 per year. This not only discouraged town centre dwelling, it also contradicted the car parking policy of consistency in setting charges for similar services.

The petitioner also referred to the impact on the business community, including those who relied on daytime business, which suggested that the proposals would have a negative

impact on the local economy.

The Executive Member for Economic Development responded by referring to the set of principles agreed by the Executive in 2012 for the car parking service. These included the need for charging to be fair to all including council taxpayers and for the costs of car parks to be borne by users rather than the council taxpayer. The current charging structure did not reflect these principles as evening users did not contribute.

The Executive Member indicated that, having taken note of all the comments that had been submitted in response to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) advertisement, he would be recommending to his Executive colleagues, a withdrawal of the proposed evening charges beyond 6.30 pm, but that other elements of the charging proposals be implemented, so that daytime users could visit town centres for longer and for a lesser charge.

Finally, the Executive Member referred to further considerations in the pipeline and advised that Officers were looking at a number of issues that utilised new technology in areas, such as pay on exit and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR).

Various other Members spoke. Councillor P Ruffles expressed partial support for the petition in respect of the costs on town centre dwellers, but hoped that the principle of user pays and evening charges would not be lost completely. The Leader alluded to other work that was progressing and referred to the role of the emerging District Plan. Councillor J Wing congratulated the Executive Member for taking a radical approach, but expressed concern with the impact of evening charges on volunteers in community groups.

The Chairman advised that the maximum permitted time for debating petitions had been reached and concluded the debate. He thanked the petitioner for attending and advised that the TRO matter would be determined by the Executive, at its meeting on 5 August 2014.

141 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 3 JUNE 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 3 June 2014 be received.

(see also Minute 142)

142 WATTON-AT-STONE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

RESOLVED – that (A) the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area Appraisal be agreed;

(B) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, to make any further minor and consequential changes to the Appraisal which may be necessary;

(C) the Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area Appraisal be adopted.

(see also Minute 141)

143 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 1 JULY 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 1 July 2014 be received.

(see also Minutes 144 – 145)

144 STANSTEAD ABBOTTS CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

RESOLVED – that (A) the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area Appraisal be approved;

(B) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, to make any further minor and consequential changes to the Appraisal which may be necessary; and

(C) the Stanstead Abbotts Conservation Area Appraisal be adopted.

(see also Minute 143)

145 WARESIDE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

RESOLVED – that (A) the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Wareside Conservation Area Appraisal be approved;

(B) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, to make any further minor and consequential changes to the Appraisal which may be necessary; and

(C) the Wareside Conservation Area Appraisal be adopted.

(see also Minute 143)

146 JOINT MEETING OF EXECUTIVE, COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND PANELS: MINUTES - 14 MAY 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the joint meeting of the Executive, Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels held on 14 May 2014, be received.

147 CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 27 MAY 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Corporate

Business Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 27 May 2014, be received.

148 ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 10 JUNE 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10 June 2014, be received.

149 COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 24 JUNE 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Community Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 24 June 2014, be received.

150 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 25 JUNE 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Management Committee meeting held on 25 June 2014, be received.

151 CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 8 JULY 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 July 2014, be received.

152 HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 9 JULY 2014

The Committee Chairman asked Members to note that an additional meeting had been arranged for 18 August 2014 at 10.30 am, immediately after the Local Joint Panel meeting.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 9 July 2014, be received.

153 AUDIT COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 16 JULY 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 16 July 2014, be received.

(see also Minute 154)

154 REVISION TO TREASURY MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Executive Member for Finance provided an update on recent activity in seeking to invest in pooled property funds and advised that a report would be submitted to the Executive in due course.

RESOLVED – that (A) Non-Treasury Investments be included in the Treasury Management Strategy and associated criteria for selection, as now detailed within Essential Reference Papers “B” and “C” (Annex 2c) of the report submitted;

(B) the proposed steps to mitigate investment credit risk as now detailed, be noted;

(C) the credit criteria changes for the selection of investment counterparties as now detailed, be noted;

(D) the revised format for the Treasury Management strategy as now detailed, be noted.

(see also Minute 153)

155 LICENSING COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 17 JULY 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 17 July 2014, be received.

156 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 23 JULY 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Management Committee meeting held on 23 July 2014, be received.

157 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14

Councillor Mrs D Hollebon, on behalf of the 2013/14 Scrutiny Chairmen, presented the Scrutiny Annual report 2013/14. She wished to place on record her thanks and appreciation to the Scrutiny Officer for her continued support.

RESOLVED – that the Annual Report on the work of the East Herts scrutiny committees (and Health and Wellbeing Panel) during 2013/14 be received.

158 REVIEW OF THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS AND COUNCIL'S DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE

Council considered a report reviewing the allocation of seats on the Council’s Committees, following a recent by-election. Councillor G Cutting had given notice that he had joined the Conservative Group, thus necessitating the review.

RESOLVED – that (A) the allocation of seats be as set out in the report now submitted, and

(B) the membership of Scrutiny and Regulatory Committees be agreed, with Members being appointed in accordance with the wishes of the political groups to whom the seats on these bodies have been allocated.

The meeting closed at 7.51 pm

Chairman
Date

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 1 OCTOBER 2014

PETITION – USE OF COMPULSORY PURCHASE POWERS

Mione Goldspink, a resident of Bishop's Stortford, has submitted a petition comprising 677 signatures as follows:

We, the undersigned, call on East Herts District Council not to use its Powers of Compulsory Purchase in order to assist Hendersons with its development scheme on the Old River Lane/Causeway site in Bishops Stortford.

Note:

Members are reminded that the lead petitioner is permitted to address Council for up to three minutes. The relevant Executive Member will respond to the petition. There is no provision for any general debate by Members, however, local ward Members may comment if they wish.

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 5 AUGUST 2014, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A Jackson (Chairman/Leader)
Councillors M Alexander, M Carver,
L Haysey, S Rutland-Barsby and M Tindale.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors P Ballam, J Jones, M McMullen,
P Moore, J Ranger, P Ruffles, J Thornton,
G Williamson and J Wing.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
Kevin Steptoe	- Head of Planning and Building Control Services
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

159 **LITTLE HADHAM CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport submitted a report on the Little Hadham, Bury Green and Hadham Ford Conservation Area Appraisal following public consultation. He detailed the outcome of the public consultation in the report now submitted and

advised that some comments had been taken on board.

The Appraisal identified the special character of the Conservation Area together with the elements that should be retained or enhanced and those which detracted from the identified character. Once adopted by the Council, the Appraisal would become a 'material consideration' in the process of determining planning applications. It would also link into the development of neighbourhood planning.

The Executive Member for Finance, as the local ward Member, supported the proposals and thanked the Officers involved for engaging with local residents.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Little Hadham, Bury Green and Hadham Ford Conservation Area Appraisal be agreed;

(B) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, to make any further minor and consequential changes to the Appraisal which may be necessary; and

(C) the Little Hadham, Bury Green and Hadham Ford Conservation Area Appraisal be adopted.

160 **HIGH WYCH CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport submitted a report on the High Wych Conservation Area Appraisal following public consultation. He detailed the outcome of the public

consultation in the report now submitted and advised that some comments had been taken on board.

The Appraisal identified the special character of the Conservation Area together with the elements that should be retained or enhanced and those which detracted from the identified character. Once adopted by the Council, the Appraisal would become a 'material consideration' in the process of determining planning applications. It would also link into the development of neighbourhood planning.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the High Wych Conservation Area Appraisal be agreed;

(B) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, to make any further minor and consequential changes to the Appraisal which may be necessary; and

(C) the High Wych Conservation Area Appraisal be adopted.

161

EAST HERTS GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE ACCOMMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT APRIL 2014

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 17 July 2014, on the East Herts Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment, April 2014.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the East Herts Gypsies

and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment, April 2014, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan; and

(B) the East Herts Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment, April 2014, be agreed to inform Development Management decisions.

(see also Minute 176)

162 **DISTRICT PLAN UPDATE REPORT**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 17 July 2014, on the District Plan Update Report.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the record of consultation activity, together with the analysis of comments logged, as contained at Essential Reference Papers ‘B’ and ‘C’ respectively, be noted; and

(B) explanation of the Duty to Co-Operate, together with the letter from the Planning Minister in relation to Green Belt policy contained at Essential Reference Paper ‘D’, be noted.

(see also Minute 176)

163 **DELIVERY STUDY UPDATE REPORT**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 17 July 2014, on the Delivery Study Update Report.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the specification for the District Plan Delivery Study contained at Essential

Reference Paper 'B', be noted; and

(B) the presentations to site promoters and subsequent meeting notes contained at Essential Reference Papers 'C' and 'D', be noted.

(see also Minute 176)

164 **GREATER ESSEX DEMOGRAPHIC FORECASTS 2012 – 2037 PHASE 5 MAIN REPORT – APRIL 2014**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 17 July 2014, on the Greater Essex Demographic Forecasts 2012 - 2037 Phase 5 Main Report – April 2014.

RECOMMENDED – that the Greater Essex Demographic Forecasts 2012 - 2037 Phase 5 technical study, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan.

(see also Minute 176)

165 **EAST HERTS EMPLOYMENT LAND REVIEW UPDATE 2013**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 17 July 2014, on the Employment Land Review Update 2013.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the Employment Land Review Update 2013, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan; and

(B) the Employment Land Review Update 2013, be agreed to inform Development Management decisions.

(see also Minute 176)

166 **BUNTINGFORD EMPLOYMENT STUDY 2014**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 17 July 2014, on the Buntingford Employment Study 2014.

RECOMMENDED – that the Buntingford Employment Study, June 2014, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan and for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications.

(see also Minute 176)

167 **STRATEGIC LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SLAA)
ROUND 3 UPDATE REPORT**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 17 July 2014, on the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) Round 3 Update Report.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the full list of identified sites being assessed through Round 3 of the SLAA, attached at Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ of the report submitted, be noted; and

(B) any future Call for Sites suggestions be included and assessed as part of the annual monitoring and review of the SLAA.

(see also Minute 176)

168 **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING UPDATE REPORT**

The Executive considered and supported the recommendations of the District Planning Executive Panel, at its meeting held on 17 July 2014, on the Neighbourhood Planning Update Report.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the roles and responsibilities of the Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and outlined in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.13 of this report submitted be noted; and

(B) the growing level of interest in Neighbourhood Planning in the District, together with the requirement to ensure that this area of work is adequately and appropriately resourced, be noted.

(see also Minute 176)

169 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor P Phillips.

170 **LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader referred to the Agenda Item on the Hertfordshire Building Control Project and stated that this would be considered as the last item of business, in case it would be necessary to exclude the press and public from the meeting.

The Leader gave advance notice that the Executive Member for Community and Partnership Liaison was working with Officers on organising an Urban Forum to look at specific town based issues that would operate in a similar way to the Rural Conference. Further details would emerge in due course.

171 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 1 July 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

172 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY

The Executive received a report detailing those issues referred to it by the Scrutiny Committees, which were noted. The issue relating to the increased workload caused by the need for frequent recalculations of benefit entitlement would be picked up. Issues relating to specific reports for the Executive were considered and detailed at the relevant report of the Executive Member.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

173 HOUSING REGISTER POLICY - REVIEW

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report reviewing the Housing Register and Allocations policy.

The Executive recalled that the policy had been agreed in March 2013, on the basis that two specific issues be reviewed after a year. These issues related to village priority/community cohesion in respect of the proposed threshold on settlements with over 1000 residents and the salary threshold of £48,000 for accessing the register.

The Community Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 24 June 2014, reviewed these issues and concluded that no policy changes were needed at this time.

The Executive Member for Finance expressed his disappointment with the conclusion reached by the Community Scrutiny Committee. He reiterated his previous view that the salary threshold was too high and that it should be reduced, in order to give greater priority for applicants on a lower income. He suggested that a scaled threshold of £35k

for a one-bed property, £40k for a two-bed property and £48k for a three-bed property would be more appropriate.

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support questioned whether such a scaled threshold would be too complicated to administer. However, she undertook to ask Officers to consider this further. The Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport reminded Members that the policy included a Limited Means Points award for applicants on benefits or low incomes.

In response to a question from Councillor J Wing relating to the impact of the spare room subsidy, The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support commented that additional properties would be coming on stream this year which should ease the problem of “bedroom blockage”

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support undertook to respond to Councillor J Ranger’s question on whether working in a village qualified as a village connection.

After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the recommendation now detailed, were approved.

RESOLVED - that the views of Community Scrutiny Committee be supported in that no policy changes in respect of ‘village priority procedure’ or ‘salary threshold’ be made at this time.

174 CAR PARKING PAY AND DISPLAY CHARGES - OBJECTIONS TO TRO

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report on the outcome of public consultation on four Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) that had been advertised. This detailed the objections made, including the petition submitted and debated at the Council meeting on 30 July 2014. A note summarising this debate had been tabled at the meeting.

In the absence of the Executive Member for Economic

Development, the Leader outlined the basis for the proposals in the TROs and reminded Members of the principles underpinning the car parking service. As indicated at the Council meeting on 30 July 2014, he proposed deferring the evening charge proposal, but that the £1 flat rate charge be retained for the hours of 4.00 pm – 6.30 pm. Also, the proposal for a 30 minute free period should also be retained. The Leader corrected the figures in Essential Reference Paper 'E' relating to the one-off costs of the alternative proposal for the flat rate evening charge between 4.00 pm – 6.30 pm.

The Leader commented on the potential impact of the changes for improving footfall in the town centres and on the Council's car parking income. He suggested that Officers would need to gauge the impact, seek feedback from retailers, the business community and the public and report back to the Executive in June 2015.

Notwithstanding these proposals, the Leader reiterated the moral justification for evening charges and the principle of the user pays. He referred to further considerations in the pipeline and advised that Officers were looking at a number of issues that utilised new technology in areas, such as pay on exit and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR). This review would also pick up the points made in the petition relating to town centre resident parking and in the context of the emerging District Plan.

The Executive Member for Finance referred to the financial implications of amending the TROs as suggested by the Leader and advised that they would cost the Council. Despite this, he supported the revised proposal.

Councillor J Wing repeated the concern he expressed at the Council meeting in respect of evening charges impacting on volunteers in community groups. He also expressed his concern on the displacement effect of evening charges and resident parking zones.

The Executive approved the revised proposals as now

detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the objections received in respect of the Traffic Regulation Orders be received;

(B) the summary of the petitioner's address to the Council meeting on 30 July 2014, as now tabled, be received;

(C) the making of the East Herts Rural Order be authorised;

(D) in respect of each of the Bishop's Stortford, Hertford and Ware Traffic Regulation Orders, these be implemented subject to the following modifications:

- (i) no evening charges beyond 6.30 pm;
- (ii) a £1 flat rate charge be retained for the 4.00 pm - 6.30 pm time band; and

(E) a further report reviewing the impact of these changes for the Council's finances and, in particular, for town centre retailers, be submitted to the Executive in June 2015.

175 REQUEST FOR AREA DESIGNATION FOR
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING: BISHOP'S STORTFORD
CENTRAL, SOUTH AND ALL SAINTS AND PART OF
THORLEY

The Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport submitted a report seeking approval for the designation of a neighbourhood area for Bishop's Stortford Central, South and All Saints and part of Thorley, as detailed on the plan attached to the report submitted.

The Executive considered the application and the consultation undertaken. The report submitted detailed the main areas of consideration in determining the application in accordance with Schedule 9 of the Localism Act 2011.

The Executive supported the application.

RESOLVED - that the application for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area, submitted by Bishop's Stortford Town Council, and to cover the Bishop's Stortford wards of Central, South, All Saints and part of Thorley Parish, be supported.

176 DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL: MINUTES - 17 JULY 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the District Planning Executive Panel meeting, held on 17 July 2014, be received.

(see also Minutes 161 - 168)

177 HERTFORDSHIRE BUILDING CONTROL PROJECT PROGRESS

The Leader reminded Members that Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report submitted contained exempt information, as defined by paragraph 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. He stated that the press and public could be excluded from the meeting if Members wished to discuss any of its detail.

The Executive Member for Community Safety and Environment submitted a report updating Members on the progress of the Hertfordshire Building Control project. He detailed the background to the work that had been undertaken to date by those Authorities that had expressed an interest.

In response to Members' comments and questions, the Executive Member stated that doing nothing was not an option as the future of the Building Control service needed to be secured. The proposed partnership would provide resilience and enable the service to remain competitive.

The Head of Planning and Building Control referred to the scoping work of the Solutions Centre and advised that the

business case to be developed would provide the necessary detail to justify the proposal. He advised Members that professional standards would be ensured by the usual competent bodies. Also, the management structure of the proposed arm's length company would include senior Officer and Member representation from all of the participating Authorities.

The Executive approved the proposal now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the report be noted; and

(B) in principle, the project move forward and a full business case be submitted for approval in the autumn of 2014.

178 NEW PROPOSALS FOR SUPPORTING MEMBERS' ICT

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report proposing a new policy for supporting Members' use of ICT and new support arrangements.

The Executive noted that the proposed new policy would take effect in May 2015, and would provide more flexibility, as detailed in the report submitted. The new support arrangements would be put in place as soon as possible following the forthcoming restructuring of the ICT service.

Councillor J Ranger expressed concern over the recycling of old laptops for new Members in 2015. The Executive Member for Community and Partnership Liaison referred to such arrangements working well with Members in Stevenage.

The Executive approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the policy detailed in the report now submitted requiring Members to access ICT systems using their own equipment with effect from May 2015, be approved;

(B) the ownership of existing laptops be transferred

to re-elected Members that wish to continue using them from May 2015 onwards;

(C) Members who are not elected in May 2015 return their laptops to provide a stock of equipment to be transferred to new Members should they wish to use them;

(D) the new arrangements for supporting Members set out in section 4 of this report be approved;

(E) the new Members' ICT support arrangements referred to in (D) above be put in place prior to May 2015 for those Members who wish to pilot such arrangements; and

(F) the new ICT Support Arrangements be formally reviewed post May 2015 to a timeframe to be agreed with the Executive Member for Economic Development.

179 GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN
2013-14

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report advising the on the General Fund Revenue Outturn for 2013/14. He also detailed the capital outturn for 2013/14 and the planned financing of the capital programme for 2014/15.

The Executive approved the proposals now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the General Fund Revenue Outturn for 2013/14 be approved;

(B) the level of Reserve Balances at 31 March 2014 as set out within the report, be noted;

(C) the Capital Outturn for 2013/14 be noted; and

(D) the Capital Programme for 2014/15 be noted.

180 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - JUNE 2014

The Leader submitted an exception report on performance, finance and risk monitoring for East Herts Council for June 2014.

The Executive approved the recommendations now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the budgetary variances set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report be noted;

(B) the virement of £15,000 from the merging of IT systems Capital budget within the Licensing and Environmental Health divisions to the Funding for Applications budget as detailed in paragraph 2.19 of this report, be approved; and

(C) the controls and scores listed in the strategic risk register for the period April to June 2014, as detailed at paragraph 2.22, be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm

Chairman
Date

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2014, AT 7.00
PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Alexander (in the Chair)
Councillors M Carver, L Haysey, P Phillips,
S Rutland-Barsby and M Tindale.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors P Ballam, R Beeching,
E Buckmaster, S Bull, M McMullen, P Moore,
N Symonds, J Thornton and J Wing.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

211 **CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN 2015/16 - 2018/19**

The Executive considered a draft of the Council’s Strategic Plan 2015/16 – 2018/19, which outlined priorities for the next four years and identified key outcomes it would be seeking to achieve.

The Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 26 August 2014, had recommended the Plan for adoption.

Councillor J Wing referred to comments he had made at the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee meeting, in respect of the recycling service and asked whether the financial implications of seeking to achieve a 60% recycling target had been built into the Plan. The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services referred to the reducing costs of recycling in recent years and stated that any specific projects identified during the Plan period would need to feed into the Medium Term Financial Plan.

In response to Councillor J Wing's comment on the use of capital receipts to achieve additional affordable housing, the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport referred to the affordable housing policies within the emerging District Plan and the importance of achieving the right mix of property types within housing developments. The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support also reminded Members of the Council's work with Registered Social Landlords in transferring land ownership that enabled affordable housing units to be provided.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that the 2015/16 – 2018/19 Corporate Strategic Plan be approved.

212 **FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2015/16 - 2018/19 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE**

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report which considered revisions to the Financial Strategy including the policy on Reserves and the proposed planning assumptions to be used in updating the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

The Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 26 August 2014, had considered the report and, whilst supporting the Financial Strategy and the MTFP, had expressed concern that the level of Reserves currently being held was not within the agreed limits set out in the Reserves Policy.

The Executive Member for Finance accepted these comments and stated that the Authority could either raise the ceiling within the Reserves policy or lower the level of Reserves. He advised that a report on this matter would be submitted to a future meeting of the Executive.

The Executive Member also drew attention to the planning assumptions within the MTFP as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'C' of the report submitted. He suggested that, as part of the continuing budget preparations, the assumptions on the Pay Settlement and Members Allowances be merged into a single line. He also suggested that Fees and Charges increases should be closer to the inflation figure. Further work on these matters would be undertaken and specific proposals reported back to Members as part of the MTFP and budget consideration at future meetings.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the proposed Financial Strategy as now submitted, be adopted, subject to further consideration of the Reserves Policy; and

(B) the planning assumptions set out in the report submitted, be adopted as the basis for framing the 2015/16 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan to 2018/19, subject to further consideration of the Pay Settlement, Members Allowances and Fees and Charges, as now detailed.

213 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor A Jackson.

214 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 5 August 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Leader.

215 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY

The Executive received a report detailing those issues referred to it by the Scrutiny Committees, which were noted. Issues relating to specific reports for the Executive were considered and detailed at the relevant report of the Executive Member.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

216 ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

The Executive considered the 2013/14 Corporate Annual Report, documenting the Council's key achievements for each of the corporate priorities over the last financial year. The report also provided an overview of the Council's financial position and performance and a statement on contracts.

The Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 26 August 2014, had supported the Annual Report subject to clarification of a couple of references relating to census data on 'country of birth' and 'method of travel to work' which appeared to be inconsistent. The Committee had also suggested clearer information regarding the balance of income to expenditure of Housing Benefit Grants be included. The Executive accepted these as fair comments.

The Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport gave an update on the progress of the District Plan and

expressed his appreciation of the hard work undertaken by the Planning Policy team.

The Executive approved the 2013/14 Corporate Annual Report as now submitted.

RESOLVED - that the 2013/14 Annual Report be approved.

217 2013/14 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Executive considered the 2013/14 Annual Governance Statement and the 2014/15 Action Plan. The Audit Committee, at its meeting to be held on 24 September 2014, would be asked to approve these documents and the Executive was invited to comment.

The Executive noted the comments of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 26 August 2014, in relation to the 'Here to Help' statement being expanded to include the role of Members. The Executive supported these comments and the documents going forward to the Audit Committee.

RESOLVED – that (A) the comments of Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee be received; and

(B) the Audit Committee be advised that the Executive supports the 2013/14 Annual Governance Statement and the 2014/15 Action Plan, as now detailed.

218 PUBLIC HEALTH OFFER TO DISTRICTS AND BOROUGHES IN HERTFORDSHIRE 2014-16

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report detailing a funding offer received from Hertfordshire County Council to provide public health outcomes and projects. A total of £100,000 had been offered for the next two years for the delivery of mutually agreed public health priorities. The Executive Member detailed the

criteria for evaluating and selecting suitable projects and the proposed governance and monitoring arrangements.

The Executive Member referred to recent informal discussions with some Members and suggested that a representative of the Health and Wellbeing Panel on the proposed project board could represent a conflict of interest, given the Panel's role in the scrutiny function. She undertook to hold further discussions with the Panel Chairman.

Notwithstanding this, the Executive Member suggested a slight amendment to the membership of the project board, which would ensure that appropriate officer expertise would be available in the evaluation process. This was supported by the Executive.

In response to a comment by Councillor P Ballam on a current HCC consultation on bus services, the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport advised that a report on this matter would be submitted to the Executive in due course.

The Executive approved the recommendations as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the proposed structure for the selection of projects for the delivery of public health outcomes funded by the offer from Hertfordshire County Council, be approved;

(B) the Director of Neighbourhood Services be authorised to sign the memorandum of understanding between the County Council and East Herts Council; and

(C) the project board consisting of the Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support, the Director of Neighbourhood Services and senior Officers appropriate to the proposals under evaluation for determination, be approved.

219 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - JULY 2014

The Executive considered an exception report on performance and finance monitoring for the Council for July 2014.

The Executive approved the recommendations now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the budgetary variances set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report be noted;

(B) the extension of the Conservation Officer’s contract as stated in paragraph 2.4 of the report submitted, be approved;

(C) a drawdown £135,000 from the Local Plan reserve as set out in paragraph 2.20 of the report, be approved;

(D) the use of £35,200 from the Cost Of Change Reserve to support the Graduate Trainee Scheme in 2015/16 as detailed in paragraph 2.21 of the report, be approved;

(E) the use of the Interest Equalisation Reserve as detailed in paragraph 2.22 of the report, be approved; and

(F) changes to the capital programme as detailed in paragraphs 2.33 to 2.41 of the report and a supplementary estimate of £50,000 for additional work to be undertaken at Hartham swimming pool as set out in paragraph 2.37 of the report, be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.48 pm

Chairman
Date

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON MONDAY
18 AUGUST 2014, AT 10.45 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Graham McAndrew (Chairman)
Councillors Mrs D Hone, J Ranger, P Ruffles,
J Thornton and N Wilson.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor C Woodward.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Emma Freeman	- Head of People and Property Services
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

181 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor P Ballam.

182 MINUTES - 9 JULY 2014

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

183 TURNOVER REPORT 2013/14

The Head of People and Property Services submitted a report setting out the turnover rates for 2012/13 and 2013/14.

The Head of People and Property Services explained that the turnover rate for 2013/14 was 13.24% against a target of 10% but that this figure also included transfers under the ICT shared service programme with Stevenage Borough Council. If this aspect was excluded, then the turnover rate was 9.3% against a target of 10%. The Head of People and Property Services provided breakdowns in relation to the Stability Index (currently 64% against a target of 90%), voluntary leavers by length of service, service and reason. The Exit Interview Form and process was explained.

The Head of People and Property Services stated that, in the main, the Council was viewed in a positive light by voluntary leavers (54.8%) against the 2012/13 figure of 38.4%. The Head of People and Property Services explained that a lack of promotion prospects tended to remain an issue for leavers and that the Council was doing all it could to address this issue including joint working and helping staff within their careers.

The Head of People and Property Services stated that the Recruitment Policy had been updated and that the Council would continue to run apprenticeship and other schemes. The Head of People and Property Services recommended that turnover targets remain the same for 2014/15.

In response to a query from Councillor P Ruffles concerning leavers, the Head of People and Property Services explained that the majority of leavers were from Revenues and Benefits on short term contract. In response to a further question regarding reasons for leaving, the Head of People and Property Services explained that the reasons listed were historical to the Council.

Councillor J Ranger suggested that the turnover figure which would be published should exclude those staff transferred under shared services, i.e. 9.3%. This was supported. The issue of recruitment, sharing of posts and making posts widely available was discussed. Councillor Ranger commented on the process of exit interviews suggesting that interviews

should be held with the relevant Line Manager. The Head of People and Property Services explained why the current process in terms of form completion had been adopted as this encouraged more honest responses. Councillor C Woodward commented that a lot of staff left their employment because of their relationship with their managers. Three HR Officers currently had responsibility for reviewing exit forms.

In response to a query from Councillor J Thornton regarding those staff on one year contracts, the Head of People and Property Services explained that there were approximately 30 staff and that approximately 15 zero-hours staff were employed at Hertford Theatre. The Director of Finance and Support Services explained that the short term contracts were usually to handle peaks and troughs generated in Revenues and Benefits work or specific project work, often where additional new burdens on funding had been received. The Director explained that there had also been a number of retirements from that service.

The Committee agreed to note the report and that the lower turnover figure of 9.3% be used for publication. Additionally, that the turnover targets for 2014/15 be 10%; the Voluntary Turnover target rate be 7% and the Stability Index target be 90%.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be noted and that the lower turnover figure of 9.3% be used for publication; and

(B) the turnover targets for 2014/15 as now submitted, be approved.

184 PDRS UPDATE - AUGUST 2014

The Head of People and Property Services submitted a report on the Performance Development Review (PDR) Scheme. The PDR statistics for December / January 2013/14 showed 89.52% (299 out of 334 staff) had had their reviews completed and that 85.98% (227 of 264 staff) had had their objectives set for 2014/15. Services which had achieved 100% in terms of reviews completed and objectives set and services with

outstanding reviews and objectives were set out in the report now submitted. The Head of People and Property Services provided updates on those services which had not achieved 100%. In terms of Planning and Building Control's statistics, the matter had been brought to the attention of the Head of Service and Director.

The Head of People and Property Services stated that in terms of Members' earlier request to sanction Managers who did not submit PDRs within the required timeframes, this aspect would be reflected within a Managers' own PDR rating and could result in discussions about their own performance and capability.

In response to a suggestion by the Chairman to postpone the January 2015 meeting in relation to the PDR process, the Director of Finance and Support Services explained that Human Resources Committee on 22 October 2014 would receive the mid-year statistics and this would reflect more positive results.

The Committee noted the update on the Performance Development Review Scheme.

RESOLVED – that the Performance Development Review Scheme update be noted.

185 EXPENSES POLICY

The Head of People and Property Services explained that there had been no agreement at the Local Joint Panel (18 August 2014) by UNISON to support the revised Expenses Policy and that the matter would be referred to the Joint Secretaries for the East of England Regional Council for mediation/advice.

The meeting closed at 11.35 am

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 20 AUGUST 2014, AT 7.00
PM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs R Cheswright (Chairman).
Councillors M Alexander, E Bedford, S Bull,
K Crofton, J Jones, P Moore, P Ruffles,
N Symonds, K Warnell, G Williamson and
M Wood.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors W Ashley, P Ballam, G Cutting
and J Mayes.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Glyn Day	- Principal Planning Enforcement Officer
Paul Dean	- Planning Enforcement Officer
Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
Kevin Steptoe	- Head of Planning and Building Control Services
Alison Young	- Development Manager

186 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of
Councillors D Andrews, G Jones and M Newman. It was

noted that Councillors S Bull, K Warnell and M Wood were substituting for Councillors D Andrews, G Jones and M Newman respectively.

187 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Head of Planning and Building Control advised that Officers had arranged an organised visit to the site for a proposed Solar Energy Farm at Great Munden on Monday 1 September 2014, at 6.00 pm.

Members were asked to inform the Head of Planning and Building Control if they were able to attend this site visit. Transport had been arranged and this would collect Members from the Standon Community Centre and would drop Members back at this location after the site visit.

188 MINUTES – 23 JULY 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

189 3/13/2223/FP – DEMOLITION OF THE BUNGALOW, THE STABLES AND HAZELWOOD FARM AND THE ERECTION OF 57 RESIDENTIAL UNITS TOGETHER WITH ACCESS AND ASSOCIATED ANCILLARY WORKS AT HIGH ROAD, REAR OF NORTH DRIVE, HIGH CROSS, SG11 1AD FOR DAVID WILSON HOMES, NORTH LONDON

Mr Parkin addressed the Committee in objection to the application. Mr Hayman spoke for the application.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, subject to the applicant or successor in title entering into a legal agreement pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, in respect of application 3/13/2223/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

Councillor P Ruffles read out a number of comments on behalf of the local ward Member, Councillor D Andrews. Councillor Andrews had referred to the significant outcomes of the informed negotiations and also praised the efforts of the Parish Council, the Case Officer as well as an East Herts Engineering Officer for their contributions to this application.

Councillor Andrews had regretted that the applicant had not placed less emphasis on piped drainage solutions in favour of an open channel flood relief scheme, which would result in an enhanced street scene with additional biodiversity and green space.

Councillor Andrews had also referred to the commitment from the developer to work with the Parish Council in transferring the ownership of a strip of land to ensure there could never be vehicular access to and from North Drive and to assist in the provision of play facilities for children.

Councillor G Williamson stated that he could not think of any other examples in East Herts where a settlement would increase in size by 50% as a consequence of a planning application. He referred to policy OSV1 and expressed his concern that this would be significant over expansion of the village.

Councillor P Moore referred to the 22 affordable units and she sought and was given clarification regarding the percentage split between social rent and shared ownership units. The Director referred to the significant additional information in the additional representations schedule, in particular the drainage issues and historical drainage problems that would be resolved by this application. The Director concluded that although this was a substantial increase in the size of the village, the location remained an identified site within the boundary of the village.

The Chairman referred to the access being opposite a chicane in the road which, in her opinion, would be dangerous. The Director referred to differing views relating to chicanes and highway safety. Members were reminded that Hertfordshire Highways had not raised this as an objection to this application.

Councillor P Ruffles referred to the importance of ensuring that condition 6 was sufficiently robust to prevent access to the development site via North Drive. He also referred to the significant population increase for the community affected by this application.

Councillor Ruffles commented that the application would not be an ugly bolt on form of development and would, in his view, integrate well with the existing community. He referred to the difficulties of removing water from the site and stated that he was inclined to support the application.

Councillor N Symonds commented on whether the application should be deferred to allow submission of further information regarding what the development would look like and, in particular, information regarding construction materials. The Director updated the Committee in respect of the materials that would very likely be used in construction of the development.

The Director confirmed that condition 6 was sufficiently robust to protect North Drive from the proposed development. Members were reminded that all of the conditions and the provisions of the Section 106 agreement had to meet certain standard tests in terms of their reasonableness and enforceability.

In response to queries from Councillor K Crofton and G Williamson, the Director confirmed that the Council's policies sought to ensure the provision of a range of community facilities for new developments. Members were reminded that as the proposals addressed the fundamental issue of drainage in the area, which resulted in a significant cost, a reasonable view had to be taken as

to what else could be achieved in terms of amenity provision.

Councillor P Ruffles proposed and Councillor M Alexander seconded, a motion that application 3/13/2223/FP be deferred to enable Officers to seek the provision of children's play facilities as part of the development.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED. The Committee rejected the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that, in respect of application 3/13/2223/FP, planning permission be deferred to enable Officers to seek the provision of children's play facilities as part of the development.

- 190 3/14/1048/FO – VARIATION OF CONDITION 2 (APPROVED PLANS OF PLANNING PERMISSION 3/13/1000/FP) WITH AMENDED LAYOUT TO ALLOW FOR A SEWER EASEMENT TO BE PROVIDED. HOUSE TYPES AB, AC, AE AND J TO HAVE RIDGE HEIGHTS REDUCED AT LAND NORTH OF, HARE STREET ROAD, BUNTINGFORD, HERTS FOR TAYLOR WIMPEY (UK) LTD

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, subject to the applicant or successor in title entering into a Deed of Variation pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to make reference to amended application 3/14/1048/FO, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

Councillor J Jones stated that he was glad that the ridge heights had been reduced. He also referred to whether the provision of allotments could be brought forward rather than awaiting the sale of the 38th property on the open market.

Councillor S Bull emphasised that the residents of Buntingford did not want the access for this development coming out onto The Causeway.

The Director confirmed that the issues of the allotments, the cemetery and the associated access had all been considered as part of the appeal process in December 2013. Members were also advised that the principle matters that were considered as part of the appeal process remained in place and could be implemented.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the Committee supported the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that subject to the applicant or successor in title entering into a Deed of Variation pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to make reference to amended application 3/14/1048/FO, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

- 191 3/14/0970/RP – APPROVAL OF RESERVED MATTERS FOR LAYOUT, SCALE, APPEARANCE AND LANDSCAPING FOLLOWING APPROVAL OF 3/13/0118/OP FOR THE ERECTION OF 105 DWELLINGS, ROADS, SEWERS, GARAGES, LANDSCAPING AND ANCILLARY WORKS AT LAND SOUTH OF HARE STREET ROAD, BUNTINGFORD FOR WHEATLEY HOMES LTD
-

Mr Waite addressed the Committee in objection to the application.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, subject to no new substantive objections being raised in respect of the amended plans by 28 August 2014, in respect of application 3/14/0970/RP, planning permission be granted, subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

The Director confirmed that the Environment Agency and the Council's engineers remained satisfied that the drainage elements of the application were acceptable.

Councillor J Jones commented on why the application was being determined when the consultation period was ongoing and he queried why this application could not have determined at the September 2014 meeting. The Director confirmed that the timescale for a major application was 3 months and the application had been received in May.

Councillor Jones questioned whether the 5% increase to 105 dwellings was reasonable and acceptable when the application was originally approved on appeal for 100 dwellings.

Councillor Jones emphasised that the application included 37 x4 bedroom homes whereas the appeals inspector had given weight to the need for additional housing for younger families in Buntingford. He stated that Officers had noted that such families would be unlikely to afford such large detached homes and there was a proven demand for bungalows.

Councillor Jones commented that the proposed 259 parking spaces was inadequate for the 304 bedrooms provided by this application, especially as most of the 66 garages would be used as garden sheds.

He concluded that there were access issues onto the site and he also referred to the attenuation pond and footpath 21, which those with local knowledge knew could only be used by able bodied people.

The Director advised that some of the issues referred to by Councillor Jones were matters of principle that Members would not be able to revisit in determining this application. Members were advised that the parking provision was in excess of policy requirements so this reduced any ability for the Authority to seek amendments

to this.

The Director reminded Members that the Authority remained in a position where delivery of new housing was modest and in the previous year only around a third of the amount of provision had been delivered. The Director stated that the application was an acceptable design in an acceptable location and, if Members deferred the matter, it would appear very likely that the same scheme would come back before the Committee with very little changed.

Members were advised that if modest issues were put in front of housing delivery, the Authority would be challenged on an increasingly regular basis for not delivering housing in line with the principal thrust of the NPPF.

Councillors P Moore, K Warnell and K Crofton supported the points made by Councillor Jones.

Councillor J Jones proposed and Councillor S Bull seconded, a motion that application 3/14/0910/RP be deferred to enable further negotiations with the applicant with regard to the house types proposed as part of the development.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED. The Committee rejected the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that, in respect of application 3/14/0970/RP, planning permission be deferred to enable further negotiations with the applicant with regard to the house types proposed as part of the development.

192 3/14/0914/FP – DEMOLITION OF THE EXISTING BUILDINGS AND REDEVELOPMENT TO PROVIDE A CARE HOME (USE CLASS C2), CAR PARKING, LANDSCAPING AND OTHER ASSOCIATED WORKS AT LEASIDE DEPOT, WARE, SG12 7QE FOR GORING ESTATES LTD

Mr Arnold addressed the Committee in objection to the application. Mr Marks and Mr Shellard spoke for the application.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that subject to the applicant or successor in title entering into a legal agreement pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, in respect of application 3/14/0914/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

The Chairman summarised the views of Councillor P Ballam, as the local ward Member. Councillor Ballam had stated the importance of ensuring that all vehicular access was via the petrol filling station access on Widbury Hill and Star Street and not via the Plaxton Estate. Councillor Ballam had also commented that residents were largely supportive of the application so long as the access was not via the Plaxton Estate.

The Director referred to the additional representations schedule and advised that Hertfordshire Highways would prefer an access via Plaxton Way but Highways Officers accepted that the existing site had an access that was via the petrol station.

The applicant proposed an access via the petrol station but had not precluded an access via Plaxton Way so either could be used for vehicular access.

The Director referred to a restriction on a previous appeal decision regarding vehicular access via Plaxton Way. Officers had not felt it reasonable to add a condition restricting access via the residential area.

Councillor E Bedford expressed concern that this was the only petrol station in Ware and, during peak times, traffic queued back onto Widbury Hill. He commented that ambulances and doctors would find access impossible during the peak periods. He stressed that the access needed to be widened and reconfigured.

Councillor N Symonds stated a GP surgery's view that Ware had sufficient care homes and there were insufficient doctors to support another care home. The Director stated that there was a provision within the Section 106 legal agreement for a contribution towards a further doctor's surgery in Ware and this had been requested by the NHS following consultation procedures.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the Committee supported the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that subject to the applicant or successor in title entering into a legal obligation pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, in respect of application 3/14/0914/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

- 193 3/14/0739/FP – CHANGE OF USE FROM CAR SHOWROOM (SUI GENERIS) TO A5 (HOT FOOD TAKEAWAY), NEW SHOPFRONT AND EXTRACT AND VENTILATION SYSTEM AT FORMER HUNTS MOTOR GARAGE, 30 NORTHGATE END, BISHOP'S STORTFORD, CM23 2EU FOR YUM III LTD

Mrs Jones and Mr Risby addressed the Committee in objection to the application. Mr Unwin spoke for the application.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of application 3/14/0739/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed

in the report now submitted.

The Director referred Members to the additional representations summary. He stated that it was for Members to consider the various issues raised by the application. Officers were of the view that policy supported the commercial reuse of buildings of this nature. Officers felt that, on balance, this application could be supported.

Councillor K Warnell, as the local ward Member, stated that the change of use from a car show room open from 9 am to 5 pm to a take away operation from 11 am to 11 pm seemed perverse in what was now an increasingly residential area.

Councillor Warnell commented that the proposed change of use opposite a pedestrian crossing and on a busy feeder road in the form of Rye Street would be detrimental to the amenity of local residents. He queried the exact meaning of the applicant's intention to store the delivery mopeds on site and he felt that he would be failing the residents of his ward if he supported this application.

Councillor N Symonds agreed with the points made by Councillor Warnell and she had noted the comments made by Bishop's Stortford Town Council. She objected to the comment made by the supporting public speaker regarding objectors commenting from outside Hertfordshire. She confirmed that all of the e-mails she had received had been from local residents.

Councillor Symonds expressed concern that a take away in this location would be dangerous for pedestrians who used Bryan Road as a cut through to Grange Paddocks and she was also concerned as Rye Street was a dangerous and busy road. She concluded that the application was not within the town centre and would have a detrimental effect on the conservation area of Bishop's Stortford.

Councillor M Wood supported all of the points made by Councillors K Warnell and N Symonds and he was concerned in particular in respect of the effect of the application on the amenity of the residents of Bryan Road and Northgate End.

The Director reminded Members that the issue of the number of representations and where these came from was less relevant than the issues that had been raised. Members were reminded that planning policies supported the reuse of commercial buildings and Members must consider whether the change of use was so unacceptable as to be harmful.

The Director advised that Hertfordshire Highways had not objected to the application and Officers felt that the additional pedestrian and vehicle traffic would not be unacceptable in this location.

Members should consider whether the proposed activity was sufficiently harmful to justify a refusal of planning permission. Members were reminded that the whole town centre was within the Bishop's Stortford Conservation Area and, as this was not a historic building, the impact on the conservation area would be benign.

Councillor N Symonds proposed and Councillor K Warnell seconded, a motion that application 3/14/0739/FP be refused on the grounds that the proposed development would result in a harmful impact on residential occupiers in the vicinity of the site by virtue of additional activity, noise and general disturbance and the application was therefore contrary to policy ENV1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED. The Committee rejected the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that, in respect of application 3/14/0739/FP, planning permission be refused for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development would result in a harmful impact on residential occupiers in the vicinity of the site by virtue of additional activity, noise and general disturbance. It would thereby be contrary to policy ENV1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Summary of Reasons for Decision

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2012 (as amended). East Herts Council has considered, in a positive and proactive manner, whether the planning objections to this proposal could be satisfactorily resolved within the statutory period for determining the application. However, for the reasons set out in this decision notice, the proposal is not considered to achieve an acceptable and sustainable development in accordance with the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

194 3/14/0926/FP – NEW SINGLE STOREY DWELLING AT 19A GYPSY LANE, GREAT AMWELL, WARE SG12 9RL FOR MR K KESSLER

Mr Tansley addressed the Committee in objection to the application.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of application 3/14/0926/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

The Director referred Members to the extra information contained in the additional representations summary. Officers had recommended a number of additional conditions following contaminated land surveys and piling works. Members were also reminded that the existing summer house and the other outbuildings on the site would be demolished as part of this application.

In response to a comment from Councillor P Moore regarding special circumstances for building in the Green Belt, the Director advised that, as Great Amwell was a category 2 village, no special circumstances were required as planning policies permitted limited infilling in such situations.

In response to a query from Councillor G Williamson regarding another application that Members had rejected in line with a recommendation from Officers, the Director stated that the refused application would have impacted on the openness of an area whereas this application was on a site that was tucked away so the impact on the openness of the Green Belt would be fairly limited.

Councillor P Ruffles stated that this application would not look right in this location. He referred to the definition of infilling in a category 2 village and stated that he would not be supporting this application. Councillor E Bedford expressed concern that this application would have too much of an adverse impact on the amenity of local residents.

In response to queries from Councillors N Symonds and K Warnell in respect of the definition of infill development, the Director read out a definition of infill development contained in the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 and Officers felt that this application would not adversely impact on the character and appearance of the area. The NPPF stated that development in rear gardens was inappropriate where an application adversely impacted on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

In response to a query from Councillor M Alexander regarding the planning history of the current annexe, the Director confirmed that Officers were unaware of the planning history of the current annexe. Members were advised that there would be no tie between the new single storey dwelling and the existing development on the site.

Councillor N Symonds stated she was concerned that approving this application would set a dangerous precedent for this area. The Director reminded Members that there was no policy objection regarding back land development and the Council's policies were more in relation to the impact of a development. Members should confine their considerations to this application and should not make comparisons with other applications in the District.

Councillor K Warnell proposed and Councillor E Bedford seconded, a motion that application 3/14/0926/FP be refused on the grounds that the proposed development would be out of keeping with the grain of development and would result in a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the locality and would therefore be contrary to policies ENV1, HSG7 and OSV2 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED. The Committee rejected the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that, in respect of application 3/14/0926/FP, planning permission be refused for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development, by virtue of its location and relationship to existing dwellings in the area, would be out of keeping with the grain of development and would result in a

harmful impact on the character and appearance of the locality. It would thereby be contrary to policies ENV1, HSG7 and OSV2 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Summary of Reasons for Decision

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2012 (as amended). East Herts Council has considered, in a positive and proactive manner, whether the planning objections to this proposal could be satisfactorily resolved within the statutory period for determining the application. However, for the reasons set out in this decision notice, the proposal is not considered to achieve an acceptable and sustainable development in accordance with the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

195 3/14/0847/FP – CHANGE OF USE FROM AGRICULTURAL USE TO 1 STATIC HOLIDAY CARAVAN IN THE FORM OF A LOG CABIN AT ELBOW LANE FARM, ELBOW LANE, HERTFORD HEATH, SG13 7QA FOR MR SEAMUS BOURKE

Mrs Walker addressed the Committee in support of the application.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of application 3/14/0847/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

Councillor M Alexander sought and was given clarification as to why the permission would only be permitted until 30 October 2016 and what would happen after that date. Members were advised that additional landscaping would assimilate the building into the local area and this could

be applied as a condition by Members if a more permanent permission was approved.

The Director confirmed to Councillor Alexander that Hertford Heath Parish had not commented on the application. The Chairman sought and was given clarification that this was a temporary construction that arrived in two sections and was bolted together on site.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the Committee accepted the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that, in respect of application 3/14/0847/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

196 3/14/1130/FP – SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION TO REPLACE CONSERVATORY, FIRST FLOOR SIDE EXTENSION AND REPLACEMENT DORMER WINDOW AT LAVENDER COTTAGE, HARE STREET, SG9 0DY FOR MR S OSBORNE

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of application 3/14/1130/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the Committee accepted the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that, in respect of application 3/14/1130/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

197 E/14/0019/B – UNAUTHORISED FENCING, GATES AND COVERED AREA AT 35A TOWNSHEND STREET, HERTFORD, SG13 7BP

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of the site relating to E/14/0019/B, enforcement action be authorised on the basis now detailed.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the Committee accepted the Director's recommendation for enforcement action to be authorised in respect of the site relating to E/14/0019/B on the basis now detailed.

RESOLVED – that, in respect of E/14/0019/B, the Director of Neighbourhood Services, in conjunction with the Director of Finance and Support Services, be authorised to take enforcement action on the basis now detailed.

198 E/13/0312/B – MATERIAL CHANGE OF USE OF BARN TO VEHICLE REPAIR/STORAGE USE AT NEW HALL FARM, FANHAMS HALL ROAD, WARESIDE, SG12 7SD

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of the site relating to E/13/0312/B, enforcement action be authorised on the basis now detailed.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the Committee accepted the Director's recommendation for enforcement action to be authorised in respect of the site relating to E/13/0312/B on the basis now detailed.

RESOLVED – that, in respect of E/13/0312/B, the Director of Neighbourhood Services, in conjunction with the Director of Finance and Support Services, be authorised to take enforcement action on the basis now detailed.

199 E/14/0064/A – UNAUTHORISED FASCIA SIGNAGE FOR RUMBLES FISH BAR AT 78 LONDON ROAD, SAWBRIDGEWORTH, CM21 9JN

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of the site relating to E/14/0064/A, enforcement action be authorised on the basis now detailed.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the Committee accepted the Director's recommendation for enforcement action to be authorised in respect of the site relating to E/14/0064/A on the basis now detailed.

RESOLVED – that, in respect of E/14/0064/A, the Director of Neighbourhood Services, in conjunction with the Director of Finance and Support Services, be authorised to take enforcement action on the basis now detailed.

200 E/11/0283/B – UNAUTHORISED LAYING OF HARD STANDING MATERIAL AT LAND TO THE WEST OF 12 BIRCH GREEN, HERTFORD, SG14 2LP

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of the site relating to E/14/0283/B, no further action be taken in respect of the enforcement notice issued on 21 October 2011 requiring the removal of hard standing from the site.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the Committee accepted the Director's recommendation for no further action to be taken in respect of the enforcement notice issued on 21 October 2011 requiring the removal of hard standing from the site.

RESOLVED – that, in respect of E/14/0283/B, no further action be taken in respect of the enforcement notice issued on 21 October 2011 requiring the removal of hard standing from the site.

201 ITEMS FOR REPORTING AND NOTING

RESOLVED – that the following reports be noted:

- (A) Appeals against refusal of planning permission / non determination;
- (B) Planning Appeals lodged;
- (C) Planning Appeals: Inquiry and Informal Hearing dates; and
- (D) Planning Statistics.

The meeting closed at 9.44 pm

Chairman
Date

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 26 AUGUST 2014, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor G Jones (Chairman)
Councillors S Bull, J Mayes, T Page,
M Pope, J Ranger, J Wing and J Wyllie.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors S Rutland-Barsby and M Tindale.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Karl Chui	- Performance Monitoring Officer
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Shahida Nasim	- Finance Review Project Manager
Alison Street	- Accountant
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

202 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor G Williamson.

203 MINUTES - 8 JULY 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

204 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman asked that all Members be vigilant in using the microphones to speak.

205 2013/14 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Leader of the Council submitted a report presenting the 2013/14 Annual Governance Statement and the 2014/15 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan. Essential Reference Paper 'C' detailed the Action Plan and Essential Reference Paper 'B' showed the version of the Annual Governance Statement with tracked changes detailing the amendments made to the wording of the current document.

The Director of Finance and Support Services explained that the Annual Governance Statement had been circulated to a number of committees and that Audit Committee was responsible for monitoring its progress. She explained that a number of small changes had been made, mainly around the management of risk, the District Plan, Data Protection and "Here to Help" arrangements.

Councillor J Ranger suggested that the Council's HR People Strategy in relation to pay and terms and conditions, which were referred to as "adequate" be amended to read "appropriate". This was supported. He also suggested that in relation to the Council's website the reference to "closed" consultations be amended and referred to as "past" consultations. This was also supported.

Councillor T Page raised a question regarding the Council's "Here to Help" approach. He also raised a query regarding Section 106 monies. The Director of Finance and Support Services explained the processes in place to ensure that monies were spent appropriately and in a timely manner, and what internal monitoring processes were now in place. She confirmed that local Councillors were consulted regarding Section 106 monies

when there was an opportunity to provide input, but more usually, the monies were provided for a specific purpose and transferred to partner agencies. The Director of Finance referred to the “Here to Help” approach adding that it was about how the Council worked, its values and staff behaviours and around organisational development. Members supported a suggestion that Councillors also be included in the “Here to Help” statement.

In response to a query from Councillor M Pope regarding ICT targets, the Director of Finance and Support Services confirmed that not all the dates had changed and the targets were realistic. She confirmed what changes had been made in terms of improving data security.

The Committee received the report and supported the minor changes requested.

RESOLVED – that (A) the 2013/14 Annual Governance Statement 2013/14 and 2014/15 Action Plan, be supported;

(B) the Council’s HR People Strategy in relation to pay and terms and condition be amended to “appropriate”;

(C) on the Council’s website, “Closed” Consultations be referred to as “Past Consultations”; and

(D) the “Here to Help” Statement be amended to include Councillors.

206 ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

The Leader of the Council submitted a report providing Members with an initial draft of the Council’s Annual Report for 2013/14.

The Performance Monitoring Officer explained the key achievements over the last financial year and provided an

overview of the Council's financial position.

Councillor T Page raised a number of queries regarding population statistics, suggesting that 4% of the population were "missing" from the statistics as presented.

Additionally, he commented that there were statistical discrepancies in two different paragraphs in the report in relation to modes of travel. Councillor Page also referred to the differences in relation to housing benefit paid in and paid out and asked what the "difference" was used for.

The Director of Finance and Support Service explained that the population statistics were provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and that it could be that some people might not have wanted to provide nationality information. She undertook to provide a more detailed written explanation. She also undertook to provide a written response in relation to the modes of travel query. The Director explained that in relation to Housing Benefit and monies paid in and out, the use of housing benefit monies was prescribed but that there were associated costs in managing the service in terms of administration. She agreed to write to Members with a breakdown of this cost. The Director assured Members that the Council was not profiting from Housing Benefit claims.

Councillor M Pope referred to the number of land charges searches. The Director of Finance and Support Services stated that this reflected an upturn in the housing market during the last year.

Councillor S Bull asked what community schemes had taken place in this year in Buntingford. Officers undertook to write to the Member.

The Committee received the report and asked that Members' comments as now detailed, be referred to the Executive along with its recommendation to the Executive for approval.

RESOLVED – that (A) Members' comments as

now detailed, be referred to the Executive; and

(B) the 2013/14 Annual Report be recommended to the Executive for approval.

207 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - APRIL TO JUNE 2014

The Director of Finance and Support Services submitted an exception report on finance and performance monitoring for the period April to June 2014.

In response to a query from Councillor S Bull regarding an anticipated increase in the budget for Bed and Breakfast charges, the Director of Finance and Support Services explained that more people had been placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation and that the Council, at the beginning of each year, had to make a number of assumptions in relation to planning its budget. The Executive Member for Finance reminded Members that they did have an opportunity to review charges at scrutiny.

The Director of Finance and Support Services explained that the contingency balance was £225,000 and not as reported.

Councillor T Page requested further information on the projected spend on the Bishop's Stortford Market Improvement Scheme. The Director of Finance and Support Services explained that the running of the market was out to tender at the moment and that it would be inappropriate to comment during the tendering process other than to say that this was money which had been set aside for its improvement from the capital budget. The Executive Member for Finance suggested that the Member speak to the Executive Member for Economic Development in terms of how the figures had been arrived at.

Councillor J Mayes sought clarification on the weir

project. The Director of Finance and Support Services explained that Environment Scrutiny Committee would be receiving an update about the micro hydro unit at its meeting on 12 September 2014.

Councillor M Pope referred to parking income generated from car washing at Jackson Square, Bishop's Stortford and queried whether there was an opportunity of introducing this in other areas. The Director of Finance and Support Services explained that the Parking Team had looked at this. The Scrutiny Officer explained the problems associated with this arrangement including drainage and water supply. The Director explained that once a decision had been made about the provision of car washing facilities in car parks, the service went out to tender which included issues such as insurance and behaviours.

In response to a query from Councillor M Pope regarding Hertford Theatre, the Director of Finance and Support Services explained that the future governance of the theatre would be part of a business plan and that the Shared Internal Audit Service would be providing the Council with its expertise on this. The Director provided background information in relation to the theatre's categorisation as "Amber".

Members received the report.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

208 CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN 2015/16 - 2018/19

The Leader of the Council submitted a report presenting a draft of the Council's Corporate Strategic Plan which outlined the Council's priorities for the next four years and the key outcomes it hoped to achieve. The report also highlighted the high level priorities and identified the key activities that will be undertaken.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the Corporate Strategic Plan for 2015/16 to 2018/19, as now submitted, be recommended to the Executive for approval.

209 FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2015/16 - 2018/19 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report inviting the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee to consider revisions to the Financial Strategy, including its policy on using reserves and the proposed planning assumptions to be used to update the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2015/16 to 2018/19.

The Director of Finance and Support Services introduced two officers, Alison Street (from the Accountancy team) and Shahida Nasim (currently co-ordinating a finance review at the Council). These officers were in attendance to evaluate how Members used the “modelled” information as presented. The Director of Finance and Support Service explained the importance of having a Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan covering a four year period. Key paragraphs within the report were explained.

In response to a query from Councillor M Pope regarding business rates and how significant the risk was, the Director of Finance and Support Services explained risk in terms of the extension of business rate relief, of the increase in the number of requests for relief and the fact that appeals for business relief could be backdated five and six years.

The Director of Finance and Support Services stated that the Council’s Policy on its level of reserves had been agreed by Members and that this was based on good practice. She added that external audit would not comment on how much the Council had in reserve, but it would comment if it felt that the level held was insufficient.

Councillor J Ranger commented on the level of reserves and that the Council should do something with some of its reserves but would be unhappy to see, three years ahead, that it had insufficient reserves.

The Committee Chairman stated that the Council had £8Million earmarked in general reserves and that it had exceeded this figure by a further £1.374 Million and that it was breaching its own policy in terms of its level of reserves. The Chairman stated that he “had a problem” with a MTFP which did not conform to its own policy.

Councillor J Wing suggested that some reserves be the subject of discussions with social housing providers and local housing associations.

Councillor T Page suggested that the reserves be protected in terms of its residents and in relation to Council Tax.

The Executive Member for Finance explained that the reserves policy was reviewed by Audit Committee and conformed with CIPFA guidelines. He explained the importance of having sufficient reserves. The Director of Finance and Support Services explained what the earmarked reserves would be used for including running local elections and funds for interest equalisation (i.e. interest rates dropping). She added that without these reserves, Council Taxpayers could be hit sharply if there were significant fluctuations in activity from year to year.

Following a question regarding interest on cash balances, the Director of Finance and Support Services referred to cash flows and the importance of understanding the day to day needs of the Council, keeping enough cash in hand to run its activities. She also explained the difficulties experienced with identifying opportunities to invest money appropriately.

In response to a query from Councillor J Wyllie regarding interest rates shown as low in the report for next year, the

Director of Finance and Support Services explained the approach adopted.

Councillor J Ranger referred to staff salaries and the fact that these had been “down” for a long time adding that this was not sustainable.

Councillor M Pope expressed concern at using reserves to freeze Council Tax. Councillor J Wyllie was also concerned about freezing Council Tax and suggested a modest increase of 1% every year. Members supported this approach.

The issue of recycling, waste disposal and income generation was discussed. The Director of Finance and Support Services stated that consideration needed to not only be given to recycling costs, but also reducing the levels of residual waste given the increasing costs of disposal.

The Executive Member for Finance stated that recycling had now reached 50%. With regard to increases in Council Tax he felt that a 1% increase was very low and added that the Council should not increase Council Tax until such time as reserves had achieved a ceiling. Members agreed that there was a need to be prudent in relation to spending in order to protect the affordability of Council Tax in future years when shortfalls were already showing up in the MTFP. Members suggested that there be small increases in Council Tax rather than a single, large increase after a long period of freeze.

Councillor T Page referred to the income generated from fees and charges and especially in relation to planning. Councillor J Wing suggested that the Council should consider introducing some form of scaled approach in relation to pre-application discussion fees for community based organisations or charity organisations except in cases where full cost recovery was necessary or required. Members also felt that the current level of fees within planning was set too low for big commercial firms who,

they felt, were making significant financial gains on larger development sites in the District.

The Committee received the report and asked that Members' comments as now detailed, be referred to the Executive along with its recommendation to approve the proposed financial strategy.

RESOLVED – that (A) Members' comments as now detailed, be referred to the Executive; and

(B) the proposed financial strategy be recommended for approval.

210 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman submitted a report setting out the Committee's future work programme for 2014/15. The Scrutiny Officer explained that the Work Programme had been added as the last agenda item in order to afford Members an opportunity of adding items discussed earlier on the agenda. The Scrutiny Officer explained that no items had been identified for the October 2014 meeting of Corporate Business Scrutiny.

In the absence of agenda items, it was suggested that the meeting be used for cross-council training in preparation for the budget setting at Joint Scrutiny in January and February 2015 and that all Members of the Council be invited to attend. This was supported.

The Committee approved the 2014/15 work programme, as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the October 2014 meeting of Corporate Business Scrutiny be used for wider training and that all Members be invited to attend; and

(B) the work programme, as now detailed, be approved.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm

Chairman

Date

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY 9
SEPTEMBER 2014, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Pope (Chairman).
Councillors D Abbott, W Ashley, R Beeching,
E Buckmaster, A Dearman, C Rowley,
G Williamson and B Wrangles.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors M Alexander, D Andrews and
P Ruffles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Cliff Cardoza	- Head of Environmental Services
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
David Thorogood	- Environmental Co- Ordinator
Trevor Watkins	- Waste Services Manager

220 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor C Woodward. It was noted that Councillor R Beeching was substituting for Councillor Woodward.

221 MINUTES – 10 JUNE 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

222 CHANGES TO RECYCLING SERVICES: REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION AND ANALYSIS RESULTS

The Executive Member for Community Safety and the Environment submitted a report providing Members with an update following the implementation of the changes to the recycling service in November 2013. The report also provided an update on the outcomes of those changes, the detail of which was set out in the Essential Reference Paper.

Members were reminded of what had been implemented by the Authority under the SPARC project, which had been delivered on time and slightly under budget. The Head of Environmental Services advised that the residents survey had indicated a high level of awareness of the changes and the survey showed that satisfaction levels had risen from 77% in 2011 to 80% in 2013. Waste services satisfaction levels had also increased from 77% to 83%.

Members were reminded that the Authority had addressed the issue of removing card from the organic waste stream, which had resulted in a positive effect on the composting operation and there was now a very low level of card contamination of organic waste.

The Head of Environmental Services stated that the changes in the service had engendered a marked increase in recycling performance allied to a reduction in waste levels. Members were advised that the amount of paper collected was slightly below the 2012/13 levels (4.3%) but this was much better than expected.

Members were reminded that, nationally and in East

Herts, the quantity of paper being captured for recycling had been falling for several years due to people moving to electronic media. In East Herts, the 2012/13 level for November to March was 11% below the 2011/12 figure for the same period.

The Head of Environmental Services reported that the smaller recycling vehicle fleet and associated collection round efficiencies would deliver a saving of around £94,300 for 2014/15 compared with the previous year.

Members were advised that there had been an expected spike in missed collections when the new SPARC collection rounds were introduced. Members were further advised that the numbers of missed collections had returned to normal levels and the service was now performing well.

Councillor R Beeching queried what the 4% reduction in waste sent to landfill would actually save in disposal costs. He also commented on what this equated to in terms of tonnage. The Waste Services Manager undertook to provide a written response after the meeting.

In response to a query from Councillor G Williamson regarding whether soft plastics could be recycled in future, the Head of Environment Services advised that this would depend on whether there was a market for such material. He advised that the recycling industry responded well to technological advances and was very innovative. Members were advised that new processes might mean that there was a market for such material in future.

In reply to a comment from the Chairman, Members were advised that there might be capacity in future for commercial recycling collections once the residential collection rounds had been completed. The Chairman thanked the Waste Services Manager for his hard work for East Herts Council over many years.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the implementation and the outcomes of the recycling service changes be noted.

223 ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY HEALTHCHECK: APRIL 2014 TO JULY 2014

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report setting out the performance of key indicators relating to Environment Scrutiny for the period April to July 2014, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted and supporting Essential Reference Papers.

In respect of EHPI 157a, Processing of planning applications: 'Major', Members were advised that the workload of Officers was very high and additional staff had been recruited and they were working through a backlog of applications.

In respect of EHPI 2.4, removal of fly tips, Members were advised that the data on page 35 was incorrect and an updated health check spreadsheet had been tabled for the Committee. Adjusted performance data was detailed in the report on page 27.

In relation to EHPI 191, the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services advised that the residual household waste per household was 441 kilos against a target of 448 kilos. Members were also advised that, in respect of EHPI 192, the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting was 54.4%.

In response to a query from Councillor D Abbott in respect of EHPI 2.4, the removal of fly tips, Members were advised that there was no correlation between the closure of household waste and recycling sites and fly tipping in East Herts.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the performance for the period April to July 2014 be noted.

224 UPDATE REPORT ON FUEL POVERTY IN EAST HERTS

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report setting out the key points of the Government's draft consultation document for addressing Fuel Poverty in England and suggestions on what could be done locally to assist with fuel poverty.

The Environmental Strategy and Development Manager advised that Officers had now received a long awaited draft report from the Government in respect of Fuel Poverty in England. Members were advised that, once the final report was published, Officers hoped to produce a specific Fuel Poverty Strategy and Action Plan for East Herts.

Members were also reminded that the generally accepted definition of Fuel Poverty was when more than 10% of the household income was required to be spent on heating a dwelling to a comfortable level.

The Environmental Strategy and Development Manager stated that, under the new definition, a household was in Fuel Poverty when fuel costs were above average in reference to the national median level and if a household spent that amount, the occupants would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

Members were advised that the main effect of the new definition was to reduce the number of households in apparent fuel poverty, since the old definition was heavily influenced by fluctuating fuel prices. The new definition aimed to better understand the number of ongoing fuel poor.

The Environmental Strategy and Development Manager reported that 7.5% of East Herts local households were fuel poor and this was in line with the Hertfordshire average. Watford Borough had the largest proportion of fuel poor at 10.3% whilst Stevenage and Broxbourne were the least at 6.3%. Members were reminded that East Herts had a very similar level of fuel poor as a typical inner London Borough, backing up the evidence that fuel poverty was not solely an inner city problem.

Members were advised that communities that were off gas towards the rural north of the District and owners of hard to treat properties with solid walls were the most likely to be in fuel poverty. Officers hoped that further data on specific communities maybe available for a future report and this reflected a similar picture across the UK where there was usually a significantly greater proportion of fuel poor in more rural communities, off mains gas and living in “hard to treat” properties.

The Environmental Strategy and Development Manager detailed the role of local authorities and the Health and Wellbeing Boards in helping residents in a Fuel Poverty situation. Members were advised of a number of measures that were already in place across the District and the progress that had been made against these measures.

In response to a query from Councillor R Beeching, Members were advised that landlords would soon be obliged to ensure that a property was energy and heat efficient and it would soon be impossible to rent a property that was not at an acceptable standard. Grants were available for landlords in East Herts to assist with maintaining these standards.

In reply to a query from the Chairman, the Environmental Strategy and Development Manager stated that assistance for those in Fuel Poverty had to be assessed on a geographic basis so that only those who genuinely needed help would receive assistance.

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services advised that, if support was going to be offered for measures such as loft and wall insulation, this would need to be included within the Medium Term Financial Plan. The Environmental Strategy and Development Manager commented that the Green Deal on energy had been seen by some as an expensive way to borrow.

The Committee received the report and Members agreed that Officers be asked to bring forward costed proposals that take forward the Fuel Poverty Strategy for East Herts.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received;

(B) Officers bring forward costed proposals that would take forward the Fuel Poverty Strategy for East Herts;

(C) the Fuel Poverty Strategy must be supported by costed proposals being brought forward by Officers; and

(D) a further report and Action Plan be presented for Members' consideration when the Government's Fuel Poverty Framework was published.

225 WORK PROGRAMME 2014/2015

The Chairman submitted a report setting out the future work programme for Environment Scrutiny Committee for 2014/15. The Scrutiny Officer advised that, subject to national government guidance, a further report on fuel poverty would be submitted to the February 2015 meeting.

Members were advised that a report on pavement and grass verge parking would be submitted to the November 2015 meeting. A graduate trainee would be carrying out

a 6 month study on the subject of pavement and grass verge parking from April 2015.

The Head of Environmental Services advised that the report to the 10 November 2015 meeting would set out the hot spots of pavement and grass verge parking and would also summarise what needed to be done locally to address this issue.

RESOLVED – that the work programme, as amended, be approved.

226 EAST HERTS CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN REVIEW OF PROGRESS

The Executive Member for Community Safety and the Environment submitted a report setting out the progress achieved during the first four years of implementing the East Herts Climate Change Action Plan.

Members were reminded that the Authority had adopted a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan in December 2009. The Environmental Strategy and Development Manager advised that the waste contract had delivered considerable ongoing CO₂ savings and the total reduction in carbon emissions achieved since 2008/09 to date was 27%, which was in excess of the Council's agreed carbon reduction target of 25% by 2020.

Members were also advised that, since 2009, there had been a reduction of 15% in total CO₂ emissions, from major sources achieved so far (a further 2% improvement from 2012/13). If all sources were included CO₂ emissions from East Herts Council's service delivery had fallen by almost 17% since the baseline year.

The Environmental Strategy and Development Manager stated that, whilst overall CO₂ emissions for the Council's leisure facilities have risen by 4% last year, there had been a corresponding increase in usage of an additional 11,668 customer visits. Since the baseline year of 2009,

average CO₂ emissions per visit to the Council's leisure facilities have fallen by almost 50% per visit in 2013 and this represented a major efficiency in terms of energy savings per user.

Members were advised that the past refurbishment of Castle Hall into Hertford Theatre, which included the installation of a range of energy efficiency measures, had resulted in considerable ongoing carbon reductions year-on-year with an overall 29% reduction in CO₂ emissions.

The Environmental Strategy and Development Manager concluded by setting out the support offered by East Herts Council in support of the Government's Community Energy Strategy. The support on offer centred on grants from East Herts Council or facilitation work for the provision of community energy schemes.

In response to a query from Councillor R Beeching, the Environmental Strategy and Development Manager advised that reductions in fuel costs or reductions in CO₂ as less energy was used in the form of Kilowatt Hours, had come about due to a number of energy efficiency measures. A voltage regulator was in use at Wallfields and pool covers at the leisure facilities resulted in a significant direct saving due to the heat that was no longer being lost from the Council's pools.

Councillor P Ruffles encouraged Officers to develop contacts with the Environment Agency to get things moving in respect of progress regarding the Micro Hydro scheme at Hertford Theatre. The Environmental Strategy and Development Manager advised that it generally took about 3 to 4 years to get a micro hydro scheme through the Environment Agency.

Members were advised that the Council's negotiations with the Environment Agency were nearing conclusion and the latest piece of work being undertaken was acting on an Environment Agency requirement for an Eel Pass. The Environmental Strategy and Development Manager

undertook to update the Committee at the next meeting.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the progress achieved in implementing the East Herts Climate Change Action plan since its adoption in 2009, be noted;

(B) an update report be submitted to the next meeting in respect of the Micro Hydro Scheme at Hertford Theatre; and

(C) Officers bring forward some budgeted proposals to progress the Council’s policy for the assistance being offered to Community Energy Groups.

The meeting closed at 8.07 pm

Chairman
Date