

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 2 MARCH 2011, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor A D Dodd (Chairman)
Councillors M R Alexander, D Andrews,
W Ashley, P R Ballam, K A Barnes,
R Beeching, A L Burlton, M G Carver,
R N Copping, A F Dearman, J Demonti,
R Gilbert, Mrs M H Goldspink, P Grethe,
L O Haysey, Mrs D Hone, A P Jackson,
G E Lawrence, J Mayes, G McAndrew,
M P A McMullen, T Milner, M Newman,
R L Parker, M Pope, R A K Radford,
J O Ranger, P A Ruffles, S Rutland-Barsby,
G D Scrivener, V Shaw, R I Taylor,
J J Taylor, M J Tindale, A L Warman,
J P Warren, N Wilson, M Wood,
C Woodward and B M Wrangles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Anne Freimanis	- Chief Executive
Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Philip Hamberger	- Programme Director of Change
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Lorraine Kirk	- Senior Communications Officer
Alan Madin	- Director of Internal Services
George A Robertson	- Director of

Customer and
Community
Services

573 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed the press and public to the meeting and reminded Members that the meeting was being webcast and that they should remain seated when speaking.

The Chairman advised that Councillor J Hedley had been admitted to hospital through illness and expressed best wishes on behalf of the Council.

He detailed a number of his recent engagements. This being the last Council meeting of this Administration, the Chairman thanked all staff for their support throughout the previous four years. He expressed best wishes to all Members seeking re-election and thanked those retiring Members for their valued work.

The Leader of the Council also thanked the staff and paid tribute to those Members known to be retiring. In particular, he thanked Councillors R N Copping, R Gilbert, A M Graham, P Grethe and R L Parker and referred to their specific achievements.

Councillor M Wood echoed these comments and expressed his view that East Herts was a better place as a result of their efforts.

Councillor K A Barnes concurred with the Leader and commented that although he had not always agreed with them, he was sorry to see them go.

574 MINUTES

Councillor V Shaw referred to Minute 567 – Members' Questions and the supplementary question she had asked relating to the issue of a leaflet by the Conservatives in Ware.

She commented that the response attributed to the Executive Member for Planning Policy and Transport was inaccurate and should be amended to read that the Executive Member had stated that he was not responsible for such matters. The Executive Member commented that, whilst he would need to refer to his notes, he believed that the Minute, as presented, was accurate.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 February 2011, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

575 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Councillor V Shaw asked the Executive Member for Community Safety and Protection, why she had been told last week, that if a town council defaulted on its payment for CCTV cameras, East Herts Council would not be liable, when in the Executive papers of 11 January 2011, Agenda item 7, regarding the future plans for CCTV, the risk management implications had stated that there was no service level agreement with town councils and East Herts Council was vulnerable to councils withdrawing and not paying their contribution.

In reply, the Executive Member asked whether Councillor V Shaw was suggesting that town councils were going to default. He questioned whether this would happen, given the benefits resulting from the investment in CCTV cameras. He stated that the Executive report of 11 January 2011, had detailed all the costs that East Herts Council would be liable for. In the unlikely event that a town council did default, then East Herts Council would have to manage the risk, but not necessarily the costs. Ultimately, the costs would be borne by the council taxpayer.

The Executive Member reminded Council of the ongoing work being carried out in exploring partnership opportunities and alternative funding sources with relevant stakeholders. He hoped that all Members would support the forthcoming review of the Community Safety Strategy.

In response to a supplementary question, the Executive Member stated that, if there was a defaulting town council, there were a range of options that could be considered, such as withdrawing cameras, which would have an impact on security. He referred to a number of recent decisions that had been taken to demonstrate the Council's commitment to Ware.

Councillor A Burlton asked the Executive Member for Housing and Health if he was aware that East Herts PCT had told the dentists surgery at Thorley Community Centre that it was withdrawing its NHS funding with effect from last Friday, 25 February 2011 and that they would no longer be able to treat NHS patients. He also asked if he was aware of any consultation that had been carried out with a huge number of patients spread over 3 wards in Bishop's Stortford who had relied upon this practice for 25 years.

In reply, the Executive Member outlined the communications he had received on this matter before and since the 25 February 2011. He expressed concern at the timing and believed that the short notice given was unacceptable. He understood that a short term extension until the end of August 2011 had been granted, but that the PCT would have to determine arrangements beyond this date. The Executive Member hoped that an amicable settlement could be reached and that patients would receive timely advice on the availability of an NHS dentist.

In response to a supplementary question, the Executive Member did not accept that residents in Bishop's Stortford appeared to be treated worse than residents in the western part of the District. He believed that service provision was there, but that perhaps, they were sufficiently publicised. He was working with NHS providers and hoped that this issue would be addressed by the provision of a suitable document that informed local people.

576 COUNCIL TAX 2011/12 - COUNTY COUNCIL AND POLICE AUTHORITY ELEMENTS

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report advising that Hertfordshire County Council's and Hertfordshire Police Authority's precepts for 2011/12, as they affected East Hertfordshire District Council taxpayers, would total £73,621,497.95. This comprised £65,029,756.09 for the County Council and £8,591,741.86 for the Police Authority, giving Band D equivalents of £1,118.83 and £147.82 respectively.

RESOLVED - that the Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Police Authority's precepts be noted.

577 COUNCIL TAX 2011/12 - PARISHES

Council considered a report of the Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support setting out Parish Council precepts for 2011/12 in the District. Council noted that the total Parish spending in 2011/12 would be £3,525,900.93 compared to £3,514,180.50 in 2010/11.

RESOLVED – that the Parish Council precepts for 2011/12, as set out in the schedule now submitted, be noted.

578 COUNCIL TAX 2011/12 - FORMAL RESOLUTION

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support submitted a report setting out the formal Resolution necessary to set the Council Tax for 2011/12 (Essential Reference Paper 'A' to these Minutes). This was based on the precepts from Parish Councils, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Police Authority, as well as the District Council budgets set at the Council meeting held on 23 February 2011 (Minute 568 refers).

Council approved the Council Tax Resolution as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that the Council Tax Resolution, as set

out at Essential Reference Paper 'A' to these Minutes, be approved.

579 AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

Further to Council's consideration of proposed amendments to the Constitution at its meeting held on 23 February 2011 (Minute 570 refers), the Monitoring Officer submitted a further report as requested. Council considered the proposed amendment relating to the role of Scrutiny Committees as detailed at paragraph 2.5 of the report now submitted.

Councillor Mrs M H Goldspink moved, and Councillor R Taylor seconded, a motion that paragraph 2.5 be amended with the inclusion of the words "before it comes to the Executive" after "...urgent business".

Councillor J O Ranger commented that as the forward plan was usually blank, it was unnecessary to restrict this matter to forward plan items only. Therefore, he suggested an amendment by deleting the words "in the Forward Plan". Councillor Mrs M H Goldspink agreed to accept this amendment.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared LOST.

Councillor A P Jackson moved, and Councillor M G Carver seconded, a motion that paragraph 2.5 be amended with the deletion of the words "in the Forward Plan". After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the amendment was declared CARRIED.

Council approved the recommendations as now amended.

RESOLVED – that the amendment to the Constitution, as now amended, be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.48 pm