

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING
OF EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
ON WEDNESDAY, 12 MAY 2004 AT
7.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor D E Mayes (Chairman).
Councillors M R Alexander, W Ashley, D R Atkins,
Mrs P R Ballam, H G S Banks, K A Barnes,
S A Bull, N Burdett, A L Burlton, E J Cain,
M G Carver, D Clark, R Conway, R N Copping,
A F Dearman, J Demonti, A D Dodd, G L Francis,
R Gilbert, Mrs M H Goldspink,
Mrs D L E Hollebon, D M Hone, A P Jackson,
M P A McMullen, T Milner, S Newton, R L Parker,
D A A Peek, H Penson, L R Pinnell, N C Poulton,
J O Ranger, D Richards, T K H Robertson,
P A Ruffles, S Rutland-Barsby, B W J Sapsford,
A Schweizer, J J Taylor, J D Thornton,
M J Tindale, A L Warman, J P Warren, N Wilson,
M Wood.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

John Nowell	- Executive Director (Resources)
Miranda Steward	- Executive Director (Operations)
Rachel Stopard	- Executive Director (Marketing)
Simon Drinkwater	- Assistant Director (Law and Control)
Naomi Fulwood	- Senior Communications Officer
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Lois Prior	- Head of Communications

Georgina Stanton	- Assistant Director (Communications)
David Tweedie	- Assistant Director (Financial Services)

1 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman (Councillor R N Copping) stated that he had wondered for a long time, what he could possibly say to Members at the meeting that night, following unfulfilled intentions due to an enforced six month lay off.

He referred to various events he had organised during the previous year, including the very successful garden party at Fanhams Hall for the staff of the Council, and another civic reception and garden party at Wallfields. At Christmas, he had got off his sick bed to join the staff for Christmas drinks.

The Chairman also referred to the previous month's birthday drink to celebrate the joining together of the local rural and urban areas to form East Herts 30 years ago. This had been well received, although in Broxbourne, the Council there had franked its envelopes with a motif of '30 years of service' above its emblem of a badger. The Chairman referred to a suggestion he had received that East Herts should have a flower as an emblem. If so, the Chairman stated his preference for a dahlia, because he used to grow and cut 100 boxes a day with a reputation for the best dahlias in Covent Garden. He stated that fashions changed, however he thought there were still more dahlias in East Herts than badgers in Broxbourne.

The Chairman then referred to his Civic Service at Haileybury Chapel on 25 April 2004. This had been a memorable day, at which even Keith Emsall, Chairman of the County Council, who was very good at criticising details of such events, had acknowledged its success. Lady Nichols, High Sheriff of Hertfordshire, had written a letter of thanks to the Chairman, in which she had expressed her

pleasure at the event.

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank his Vice-Chairman, Councillor D E Mayes, for his support, particularly during his illness. The Chairman was sure that the experience would help him for what lay ahead.

The Chairman thanked the Council for allowing him the privilege of acting as Chairman over the previous two years. He had been asked if he would seek another term of office, to which the Chairman replied that as there were fifty Councillors, and if they all took a turn, it would be 100 years before his turn came round again. This he felt, was some measure of the honour bestowed on being Chairman of the Council.

The Chairman stated that perhaps he would now be able to find time to tend to his garden, although he would not be looking to win any prizes, as experience told him that that would take all the fun out of it.

The Chairman concluded by presenting the Council with a new gavel, specially made in rosewood and suitably engraved.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

It was moved by Councillor M G Carver and seconded by Councillor H G S Banks that Councillor D E Mayes be elected Chairman of the Council to hold office for the Civic Year 2004/2005.

RESOLVED - that Councillor D E Mayes be elected Chairman of the Council and hold office for the Civic Year 2004/05.

The newly-elected Chairman made the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office, and took the Chair.

The Chairman thanked Members for their support and doing him the honour of electing him to be the new Chairman of

East Herts.

The new Chairman thanked Councillor R N Copping for the help he had given him during his time as Vice-Chairman. He referred to Councillor Copping's dedication and wished him well for the future.

The Chairman stated that he would carry out his duties in a fair and impartial manner.

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

It was moved by Councillor H G S Banks and seconded by Councillor M G Carver that Councillor R N Copping be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the Civic Year 2004/05.

RESOLVED - that Councillor R N Copping be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council to hold office for the Civic Year 2004/05.

The Vice-Chairman made the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

4 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 7 April 2004 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded Members that tonight's meeting was the last one to be attended by John Nowell before his departure from the Authority the following week. He thanked John for his efforts and service to the Authority over the previous fourteen years. He believed he spoke for all Members in wishing John well for the future. The Chairman then invited the two political group leaders to speak.

Councillor M G Carver, on behalf of the Conservative Group, referred to his former position as Chairman of the Resources

Sub-Committee and the patience, steady influence and dry wit shown by John in advising Members. He felt that John had always put the interests of East Herts residents first and had shown strong support for the staff as well. As a result, the Council now enjoyed a healthy financial position. He expressed his best wishes to John for the future.

Councillor M Wood, on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group, expressed regret at John's departure. He had always found him helpful in making local government finances accessible. He too, expressed his best wishes to John for the future.

In reply, John Nowell expressed his gratitude to Members for their kind words, and said that it had been an honour to serve the Council. He thanked Councillors H G S Banks and J O Ranger for serving on the Appointments Committee that had appointed him fourteen years ago. He thanked all Members and Officers who had supported him over many years.

The Chairman stated that a number of Members had yet to complete and return their Related Party Transactions form. He asked Members to ensure that this form was returned to the Assistant Director (Financial Services) as soon as possible, even if there was a nil return. Spare forms had been placed around the table for Members to complete.

The Chairman reminded Members that claim forms for travelling and subsistence expenses should be submitted on a monthly basis. Members were further reminded that claims should only be made for approved duties, on which further advice would be issued via the Members' Bulletin shortly.

As far as tonight's agenda was concerned, a list detailing group nominations to seats on committees, etc, had been placed around the table. The Chairman stated that this would be referred to at item 14 on the agenda.

The Chairman stated that in the past, Chairmen had announced the charities they wished to sponsor during their

term of office. However, he did not intend to impose on Members his own choice of a charity or good cause, but instead acknowledged that individuals had their own worthy causes that were special to them. He felt that it was important to respect such individual choices. Therefore, he suggested that he would support local charities and good causes chosen by local Members and communities. The Chairman felt it would be inappropriate for him to suggest that the causes he supported were more deserving than others. Local people should decide the good cause they wished to sponsor, and he would do his best to support them.

However, the Chairman did believe that the Hertfordshire Community Foundation was a vehicle through which the people of East Herts could support local groups in their areas. With the help of Members and other community leaders, the Chairman proposed the establishment of the 'East Herts Fund for the Future', in association with the Foundation.

The Foundation, over fourteen years, had been able to fund a variety of good causes throughout the County. It was able to make arrangements to earmark monies that had been donated for a particular cause to be disbursed for that purpose only. Thus, any money earmarked for East Herts, through the 'Fund for the Future', would be spent on good causes in this District only. The aim was to build up a capital fund, the interest from which would be used to provide grants. As a grant awarding body, the Hertfordshire Community Foundation would act as an independent disburser of funds, ensuring that deserving, often small, local good causes get a share of available resources.

The Chairman thought it might even be possible that he could persuade those who initiated local fundraising activities to dedicate a proportion of the money they raised as a donation to the 'East Herts Fund for the Future'. The Chairman also hoped that individuals and local businesses would join in the effort to raise £100,000 in the first year of the fund. The interest from that capital sum would enable the distribution of grants to needy and deserving causes in East Herts on a sustainable basis. The Chairman stated

that he would be bringing forward proposals for developing this idea in the very near future.

Another task of the Chairman of the Council was to promote the District's image and interests in a non-political way. The Chairman undertook to attempt this. The task was also to support and encourage the many and varied communities in the District. He hoped towns, parishes and community groups would help him to achieve that during his chairmanship, by inviting him to visit them and to support their good causes, no matter how small and seemingly insignificant, so that he could demonstrate the Council's commitment to them.

In the past, Chairmen had held centrally organised civic functions which had been held in a few, larger venues. This had been made necessary by the large number of invitees. The Chairman suggested that District civic functions could be held in many parish and village halls, as long as the number of invitees to a particular function was limited and selected by the local community. It was not necessary that these civic occasions should be fundraising affairs – that would be the choice of the organisers. These occasions might also be used for local 'Award' events to recognise the community efforts of local unsung heroes.

The Chairman stated that he would be consulting community groups before deciding what form these events might take. He believed his proposals accorded with the Council's modernising agenda and the exercise of the office of the Chairman. He commended them to the Council and hoped for their support.

Finally, the Chairman invited all Members and Officers to join him at a buffet reception at the end of the meeting.

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members made the following declarations of interest:

- Councillor R N Copping declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the matter referred to at Minute 779 -

- East Hertfordshire Local Plan – Second Review – Chapter 15 – (Stanstead Abbots And St Margarets) – Responses To The Deposit Consultation 2001 And Revised Deposit Chapter 15 (Stanstead Abbots And St Margarets), although the nature of the interest was not stated.
- Councillor A L Warman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the matter referred to at Minute 763 – Complaint in respect of Councillor Warman, and left the Chamber whilst this matter was considered.
 - Councillors R Gilbert, Mrs M H Goldspink and M Wood asked Council to note their declarations made at the Development Control Committee meeting held on 31 March 2004, in respect of Minute 744 – Application 3/04/0179/OP.
 - Councillor R Gilbert declared a personal interest in the matter referred to at Minute 779 - East Hertfordshire Local Plan – Second Review – Chapter 15 – (Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets) – Responses to the Deposit Consultation 2001 and Revised Deposit Chapter 15 (Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets), in respect of the element of this item relating to Lea Valley Regional Park, as he was a Member of the Park Authority.
 - Councillor D L E Hollebon declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the matter referred to at Minute 784 - East Hertfordshire Local Plan – Second Review – Chapter 11 – (Bishop’s Stortford) – Secondary Education Provision, Leisure/Recreation Facilities and Special Countryside Area, although the nature of the interest was not stated. She left the Chamber during consideration of this matter.
 - Councillor S Rutland-Barsby asked Council to note her declarations made at the Development Control Committee meetings held on 31 March and 28 April 2004, in respect of Minutes 748 – Applications 3/99/0693/FP and 3/99/0694/LB and Application 3/04/0297/FP respectively.

- Councillors A D Dodd and D Richards asked Council to note their declaration made at the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20 April 2004, in respect of Minute 769 – Future Development of the Cultural Strategy.
- Councillor D E Mayes asked Council to note his declaration made at the Executive meeting held on 27 April 2004, in respect of Minute 787 – Mead Lane, Hertford Draft Development Brief.
- Councillor S A Bull asked Council to note his declaration made at the Development Control Committee meeting held on 28 April 2004, in respect of Minute 803 – Application 3/04/0324/FO.
- Councillor W Ashley asked Council to note his declaration made at the Development Control Committee meeting held on 28 April 2004, in respect of Minute 806 – Application 3/04/0249/FP.
- Councillor M P A McMullen asked Council to note his declaration made at the Development Control Committee meeting held on 31 March 2004, in respect of Minute 748 – Applications 3/99/0693/FP and 3/99/0694/LB.
- Councillors A F Dearman and J J Taylor asked Council to note their declarations made at the Development Control Committee meeting held on 31 March 2004, in respect of Minute 743 – Application 3/03/2542/FP.

7 PETITION: CAR PARKING IN BISHOP'S STORTFORD

The Chairman reported that a petition containing 410 signatures had been received as follows:

Withdrawal of long-stay parking facilities at Apton Road and Basbow Lane car parks, Bishop's Stortford

'East Herts District Council have changed the use of the above car parks, limiting the maximum stay to 4

hours. For those working in this part of Bishop's Stortford town centre, the alternative facilities are a considerable distance away and totally unacceptable. We are petitioning to return the above car parks to their previous long-stay status.'

The Chairman stated that the lead petitioner, Mr W South, had submitted his apologies for being unable to attend the meeting. He had submitted a written statement, which had been tabled.

The petitioners had referred to the decision of the Council to change the use of Apton Road and Basbow Lane car parks, in Bishop's Stortford town centre, limiting the maximum stay to 4 hours. For those people working in this part of Bishop's Stortford, long stay facilities were a necessity. The alternative long stay facilities were a considerable distance away and totally unacceptable. The petitioners requested a return of the aforementioned car parks to their previous long-stay status.

The petitioners felt that the Council had a very biased view towards facilities for shoppers and visitors, over those who worked and serviced the town. Whilst appreciating the need for adequate short-stay provision, they were adamant that this should not be at the expense of all day parking.

In response, the Executive Member for Community referred to the long and detailed investigation into how the car parks should operate in 2002. Two external consultants with a wealth of national experience in traffic management, were appointed. Consultation formed a significant part of this study and took the form of public meetings, meetings with local businesses and organisations and questionnaires, including its use by a local newspaper for readers to complete.

The main outcome of this work was setting priority usages for car parks – shoppers, town centre businesses and then all day parking. A further part of that work was the redesignation of car parks to meet those priorities and an investigation into whether to seek to control of on-street

parking. This final point underlay much of the work and decisions that had subsequently been taken and had been forced upon the Council by the action of the Police in discontinuing the Traffic Warden service. Support for the Council to take over this role, known as decriminalisation, was virtually unanimous.

The Executive Member stated that for many years, the business community in Bishop's Stortford had been pressing for a park and ride scheme because of a shortage of short stay spaces. He believed that the Council was now very close to bringing together a very complex set of financial and logistical equations that would turn the park and ride scheme into a reality.

The Executive Member referred to the major redevelopments, at least four, that would take place in the town centre within the next five years. At various times, around 35% of parking provision would be lost, and there was no way around this problem. By designating the Northgate End car park as long stay and removing the dedicated user status, the Council had guaranteed the retention of some long stay car parking during this process. Whilst the work was ongoing, the provision of long stay parking in the town centre would have a major detrimental impact on the town's viability and could prove terminally disastrous to many of the small businesses. He added that the Council had never received any complaints about the distance people had to walk to their business from Northgate End when it provided dedicated parking spaces.

The Executive Member referred to the introduction of residents parking schemes within East Herts in the coming months following consultation with affected residents. The first two schemes for Bishop's Stortford were already being drawn up with strong support from the residents affected. Residents in other areas had also expressed interest in such schemes.

In referring to the massive changes in East Herts generally, and in Bishop's Stortford particularly, the Executive Member stated that Councillors did not make decisions, such as those relating to parking, without consultation and expert

advice. Whilst Councillors liked to make popular decisions, they could not bury their heads in the sand and pretend that a problem did not exist. To avoid the demise of Bishop's Stortford and the failure of many businesses, the Council had an obligation to assist in making business viable. Car parking played a major part in that viability, and customers had an expectation that adequate parking spaces in the town centre, were there.

The Executive Member stated that the redevelopments would provide substantial additional parking. The recent decisions had been taken to satisfy current needs and the needs of the community leading into the major redevelopments. Additional measures would be needed in the light of experience and the car parks would be kept under constant review. He did not rule out the return of some long stay parking in the town centre at some time in the future, although this was against current theory and advice of all specialists in the traffic management field.

The Executive Member concluded by stating that there was a price to pay for community improvements, whether it was a small increase in charges or a short additional walk to work. It could also be measured in the time and effort taken to consult and get the best advice possible. Even those who had to make decisions had a price to pay, and the previous year had not been the happiest he had spent on the Council. At the end of the day, the Council may have got it wrong, but nobody would be able to say that it had not tried its best to maintain the current viability of Bishop's Stortford whilst preparing for the future. Some decisions may not have been popular with everyone but the Council had tried its best. Monitoring would continue and changes would be made if and when appropriate.

7 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Councillor A D Dodd asked the Leader of the Council if the District Council in future, would consider part funding the appointment of Police and Community Safety Officers (PCSOs) for employment in East Herts in conjunction with the County Council? A number of other District Councils in the County – Stevenage, Hertsmere, Welwyn/Hatfield had

already taken this action, and could provide a further increased Police strength in the District to help combat crime and disorder.

In reply, the Deputy Leader stated that the Executive was well aware of the initiative to increase visible, uniformed presence in local communities. Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) were being provided through a combination of Home Office, Hertfordshire Constabulary, County Council and District Council funding. In East Herts, whilst some funding had been put towards PCSOs from partnership funds, as part of the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership, the Council had not put any contribution in thus far. However, as one of the Council's priorities was about improving residents' feelings of safety, the Executive would be looking at potential support during budget discussions for next year.

Councillor G L Francis asked the Leader of the Council if he could give this Council full and up to date information regarding the A10 bypass?

In reply the Deputy Leader referred to the Highways Agency's latest press release. He stated that repair work to the damaged carriageways of the £25m Wadesmill Bypass had commenced. After four months of extensive investigations into the cause of the defects, work to replace the damaged areas of the unopened new dual carriageway bypass commenced this week. Fitzpatrick Lafarge, contractors for the works, were determined that all necessary work would be completed by August subject to reasonable weather conditions through the rest of Spring and Summer.

The defects first appeared in December 2003 just before the road was due to be opened and comprised of relatively small ridges and cracking in the finished road surface in two localised areas. Over the following weeks and months the area of carriageway affected by the movements increased significantly. By March, around 25% of the carriageway area was affected but no significant defects had been recorded since then.

Repair work could not commence until testing and analysis was completed. The bypass was being continually monitored to determine if there was any change to the extent of the defect areas. The extensive investigation work undertaken between January and April had confirmed that a chemical reaction within the pavement foundation layers had caused the expansive reaction that had taken place and become apparent at road surface level. The reaction occurred when sulphates present in soils reacted with lime used in the ground stabilisation process. The work to positively confirm this cause was continuing.

However, the process of lime stabilisation was tried and tested and had been used on many road schemes. This was a Design and Build contract and the contractors, Fitzpatrick Lafarge were responsible for all remedial works. Recycling would be used where possible to minimise the effect on the environment and reduce lorry movements.

In response to a supplementary question, the Deputy Leader stated that to his knowledge, as this was a Design and Build contract, there would be no additional costs to the taxpayer.

Councillor G L Francis asked the Leader of the Council who, given Hertfordshire County Council's claim that this Council was properly consulted over the amalgamation of The Havers and The Firs Schools in Bishop's Stortford, and the Council's denial of this, was telling the truth?

In reply, the Leader stated that the consultation began in September 2003 with a letter to parents. According to the County Council, a consultation letter was sent to the District Council at this time advising of the proposal. This letter was apparently addressed to the 'Planning Department'. No record could be found of this letter having been received. Andrea Gilmour (Development Control Manager) met with Bob Chapman (Herts County Council Property) in November 2003 regarding the principle of redevelopment of the Havers School site for residential purposes. Following the parent consultation, the proposed amalgamation of the two schools was reported to the County Council's Cabinet on 26 January 2004, where it was agreed that a Statutory Notice would be

published in accordance with the relevant regulations. A copy of this notice, dated 12 February 2004, was sent to the District Council and had been displayed in the Bishop's Stortford offices.

Councillor G L Francis asked the Leader of the Council if he would join him in congratulating the Leader of Hertfordshire County Council in moving a resolution to seek approval for Hertfordshire to be designated a GM Free Zone, and also that the whole of the Eastern Region followed that example?

In reply, the Leader stated that in light of the County Council's Cabinet decision made on Monday of that week, he would be writing to Councillor Robert Ellis, the Leader, to offer this Authority's support to the County Council's position, bearing in mind that unlike the County, the District Council was not a farmland owner.

Councillor D A A Peek asked the Leader of the Council if there was any substance in the rumour that this Authority had changed its name?

In reply, the Leader stated that unless somebody had omitted to tell the Leader of this decision, the Council was not changing its name! Since 1999, the Council had, in theory, worked to guidance that required it to avoid abbreviations in public communication, such as EHDC, and encouraged the use of the shortened title of East Herts Council for all but statutory information.

However, although the guidance had existed for some years, in reality the Council had not always stuck to it. In fact, far too often, the Council had fallen into the trap of using meaningless and confusing titles, of which eight had been counted recently! This did not help the public to understand what their Council was, and what services were offered to them.

To address this, and to reflect a more cohesive organisation, the Council had undertaken a review of its branding, and this week would be introducing some subtle changes. These would include more consistent rules on the design, the

inclusion of its title in the logo and revised guidance on accessibility. This work had followed extensive consultation with sample groups of staff and members of the Council, including those with professional marketing expertise. All Members might also have read about this project in the Members' Information Bulletin (MIB). More detail would follow in the MIB this week, or was available directly from the Communications Team who had done this work.

8 REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Leader of the Council reported on the work of the Executive and presented the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 27 April 2004.

The Leader referred to the outcome of the CPA inspection and the elevation of the Council to the 'Good' category. He felt sure Members from all parties would join him in giving a huge thanks to all staff, who had continued to work hard in the best interests of local residents, and helped the Council to achieve this good rating. He also stated that a big thank you was due to all Members in the Chamber that evening. The role of elected Members had been equally important. The Leader also thanked the Council's partners in the community, who had worked with the Council to ensure that East Herts really was the place where people wanted to live and enjoy the quality of life.

The quality of life in East Herts had been further emphasised by a recent Government survey, which looked at areas in which people enjoyed the highest quality of life. East Herts was ranked ninth in a table of 354 authorities. This told the world what the Council already knew – East Herts was a great place to live. The whole philosophy and vision of the Council was to continue to improve the quality of life of all its residents, and preserve all that was best in East Herts.

The external challenges to the Authority still remained, and the Council was awaiting the outcomes of two particular studies related to the housing requirements for Hertfordshire, which could threaten the quality of life within the District significantly. The speed at which these studies

were being undertaken could almost be described as obscene, given the size and scale of the impacts which might be anticipated. On behalf of the Authority, the Leader undertook to continue to challenge both the process and the legality of any findings, as well as challenging any results that had a detrimental effect on the District.

The Leader, once again, thanked all staff and Members for their hard work during the previous year. The Authority had come a long way in just twelve months, and he looked forward to the challenges the next year might bring. He hoped that at this time next year, he would have the opportunity to celebrate even greater success in achieving an even better quality of life for all East Herts residents.

In relation to Minute 783 - East Hertfordshire Local Plan – Second Review – Chapter 5 – (Transport) – Responses To The Deposit Consultation 2001 and Revised Deposit Chapter 5 (Transport), Councillor Mrs M H Goldspink moved, and Councillor M Wood seconded, an amendment to recommendation (C) to include a specific reference to paragraph 5.9.8 of the Transport Chapter which related to car parking standards.

Council agreed to amend recommendation (C) as follows:

Insert, '(including paragraph 5.9.8)' after the word 'discussed'

In relation to Minute 784 - East Hertfordshire Local Plan – Second Review – Chapter 11 – (Bishop's Stortford) – Secondary Education Provision, Leisure/Recreation Facilities and Special Countryside Area, some Members expressed their opposition to recommendation (A) relating to secondary education and leisure/recreation facilities provision on the site to the south of Bishop's Stortford between the built-up area and the south-western distributor bypass. They acknowledged the need for additional secondary provision, but did not accept that this should be on green belt land.

Councillor D A A Peek moved, and Councillor J Demonti seconded, an amendment to recommendation (A) as

seconded, an amendment to recommendation (A) as follows:

Insert:

after the word 'Version', 'of an appropriate area of land required'

before the word 'leisure', 'associated'

after the word 'facilities', 'only'

After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, this amendment was CARRIED.

Following a request that a recorded vote be taken on the substantive recommendation, and after it was put to the meeting, the substantive recommendation was CARRIED, the voting being as follows:

FOR

Councillors M R Alexander, W Ashley, D R Atkins, Mrs P R Ballam, H G S Banks, S A Bull, N Burdett, A L Burlton, E J Cain, M G Carver, D Clark, R Conway, R N Copping, A F Dearman, J Demonti, A D Dodd, R Gilbert, D M Hone, A P Jackson, M P A McMullen, D E Mayes, T Milner, S Newton, R L Parker, D A A Peek, H Penson, N C Poulton, J O Ranger, D Richards, T K H Robertson, P A Ruffles, S Rutland-Barsby, B W J Sapsford, A Schweizer, J J Taylor, J D Thornton, M J Tindale, A L Warman, J P Warren, N Wilson.

AGAINST

Councillors K A Barnes, G L Francis, Mrs M H Goldspink, L R Pinnell.

For: 40

Against: 4

In respect of Minute 785 - East Hertfordshire Local Plan – Second Review – Chapter 17 – (Other Settlements – The Villages) – Responses to Representations made to the Deposit Consultation 2001 in Respect of Category 1 Villages and the Remaining Responses and Revised Deposit Chapter 17 (Other Settlements – The Villages), Councillor Mrs M H Goldspink expressed her concern with recommendation (B) as it related to two particular sites in Braughing, and suggested that officers should look at these sites again.

In reply, the Leader reiterated the Local Plans process, and stated that the Officers' recommendations on site reappraisals had been based on policies. The recommendations on the reversal of the two sites in question would be subject to further consultation with the publication of the Second Deposit Version and then the Public Inquiry that would be held.

After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the recommendations as proposed, were CARRIED.

In respect of Minute 788 – Forward Plan, Councillor Mrs M H Goldspink requested that item 9 of the Forward Plan relating to Access to Democratic Decision-making be referred to Council as well as the Executive.

RESOLVED – that (A) in respect of Minute 783 - East Hertfordshire Local Plan – Second Review – Chapter 5 – (Transport) – Responses To The Deposit Consultation 2001 and Revised Deposit Chapter 5 (Transport), recommendation (C) be amended to include the words, '(including paragraph 5.9.8)' after the word 'discussed';

APP

(B) in respect of Minute 784 - East Hertfordshire Local Plan – Second Review – Chapter 11 – (Bishop's Stortford) – Secondary Education Provision, Leisure/Recreation Facilities and Special Countryside Area, recommendation (A) be amended to read:

APP

'provision be made in the Revised Deposit Version of an appropriate area of land required in respect of secondary education provision and associated leisure/recreation facilities only on the site to the south of Bishop's Stortford between the built-up area and the south-western distributor bypass, as identified at Appendix 'C' of the report now submitted; and'

(C) the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 27 April 2004 be received, and the recommendations contained therein, be adopted.

9 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(A) DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE - 31 MARCH 2004

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 31 March 2004 be received.

(B) STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 14 APRIL 2004

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 14 April 2004 be received.

(C) POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 20 APRIL 2004

Council noted a typographical error in Minute 769 – Future Development of the Cultural Strategy, in the final paragraph of the narrative, in that the word, 'parts' should be replaced with the word 'parks'.

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20 April 2004 be received.

(D) DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE –
28 APRIL 2004

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 28 April 2004 be received.

(E) PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 4 MAY
2004

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 4 May 2004 be received.

10 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S DECISION MAKING
STRUCTURE

The Executive Director (Resources) submitted a report reviewing the Council's Decision Making Structure. The Council recalled that it had adopted a new model for political management in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000, based on the Leader and Cabinet model. The Director's report had been prepared on the basis that the Council would continue with its existing political management model and constitution, subject to a number of amendments as now detailed.

In respect of Scrutiny, Regulatory and Joint Committees, it was proposed to retain the arrangements introduced for 2003/04. However, Council noted that in view of the imminent transfer of the responsibility of liquor licensing from Magistrates Courts to local authorities, the role of the Licensing Committee would likely need reviewing.

Council noted that where Members of the Council were divided into political groups, the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 placed a duty on the Council to review the allocation between those groups of seats on its Scrutiny, Regulatory and Joint Committees according to certain principles. The aim was to ensure that the political composition of the Committees, etc reflected the composition of the Council. The rules of proportionality did

not apply to the Executive. There were two duly constituted political groups within the Council. In addition, account had to be taken of those Members who were not Members of political groups on the Council, as they were entitled to a proportion of seats in relation to their relative percentage size. It was for Council to appoint such Members to the seats allocated. Details of political group, etc sizes were set out in the report now submitted.

A list detailing group nominations to seats on committees, etc, had been circulated at the meeting.

In respect of the Council's Standards Committee, it was proposed that this be appointed for the ensuing Civic Year comprising the two independent Members previously appointed to serve a four-year term of office, three District Councillors, one Town Council Member and one Parish Council Member.

Council recalled that in October 2003, the Council established five Community Voices to provide local residents an opportunity to comment upon issues concerning their community. These were based around the five main towns in the District: Bishop's Stortford, Buntingford, Hertford, Sawbridgeworth and Ware. Council also agreed that rural communities' engagement needs should be dealt with via the convening of the Rural Parish Conference twice a year. It was proposed that the five existing Community Voice bodies be retained with the same Chairman for each.

In respect of the Executive, the Leader proposed that the size of the Executive be five Members plus the Leader and Deputy Leader. He also reported that subject to Council approving the size of the Executive, Councillor D Clark would be appointed to the Executive with a portfolio comprising Economic and Regional Development. He stated that a revised Executive responsibility matrix would be issued shortly.

The Leader also gave notice of his intention to bring forward proposals in November 2004, to appoint two additional interim Executive Members, who would eventually replace

Councillors H G S Banks and N C Poulton, who had indicated their intention to resign from the Executive in May 2005.

In respect of the appointment of Chairman of Scrutiny Committees, etc., Council noted a list of proposed appointments that had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Council approved its calendar of meetings for 2004/05 at its meeting held on 25 February 2004. Under the Constitution, Council was required to confirm its programme of meetings for 2004/05, as now detailed.

In respect of outside bodies, Council noted that the appointment of such representatives was delegated to the Assistant Director (Law and Control), in consultation with the Leader of the Council. These were currently being reviewed for the ensuing civic year. The Assistant Director, acting under delegated authority, would make appointments to outside bodies for 2004/05 in the near future.

Council agreed the proposed recommendations, as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the following Scrutiny Committees, Regulatory Committees, Joint Member/Employee Panel, and Joint Committees be appointed, with the number of voting Members stated:

Policy Development Scrutiny	16
Performance Scrutiny	16
Call-In Scrutiny	12
Development Control	25
Licensing	17
Highways Joint Member Panel (6 from Hertfordshire County Council 6 from East	12

Herts Council)

Local Joint Panel (4 Members of the Council and 4 representatives of employees drawn from UNISON with substitutes) 8

Royston, Buntingford and Bishop's Stortford Joint PCT Scrutiny Committee (4 non-executive Councillors from this Council)

South East Herts Joint PCT Scrutiny Committee (2 non-executive Councillors from this Council)

(B) the Council's constitution be amended to take account of the decisions at (A) above and (C) to (L) below; ALC

(C) the allocation of seats on Scrutiny Committees and the Development Control and Licensing Committees be as follows:

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Seats</u>	<u>Cons</u>	<u>Lib Dem</u>	<u>KAB</u>	<u>JW</u>	<u>BWJS</u>	<u>DRA</u>	<u>Total</u>
Policy Scrutiny	16	13	2	1	0	0	0	16
Performance Scrutiny	16	13	2	0	1	0	0	16
Call-In Scrutiny	12	10	1	0	1	0	0	12
Development Control	25	20	2	1	0	1	1	25
Licensing	17	14	1	0	0	1	1	17
Total	86	70	8	2	2	2	2	86

(D) the allocation of seats on Sub-Committees to political groups be as detailed in the appendix to the report now submitted,

(E) the allocation of seats on the Highways Joint Member Panel (6) and Local Joint Panel (4) to political groups be as follows:

	<u>Cons</u>	<u>Lib Dem</u>	<u>KAB</u>	<u>JW</u>	<u>BWJS</u>	<u>DRA</u>
HJMP	5	1	0	0	0	0
LJP	3	1	0	0	0	0

(F) as a consequence of the decisions at (A) and (C) to (E) above, the membership of Scrutiny Committees, Regulatory Committees, Joint Member/Employee Panel and the Highways Joint Member Panel be as set out in the papers tabled, with Members being appointed in accordance with the wishes of the political groups to whom the seats on these bodies have been allocated,

(G) the following Members be appointed as Chairmen (and where specified, Vice-Chairmen) of the bodies detailed:

	<u>Chairman</u>	<u>Vice-Chairman</u>
Policy Scrutiny	J O Ranger	-
Performance Scrutiny	Mrs D L E Hollebon	-
Call-In Scrutiny	M Wood	-
Development Control	R Gilbert	S A Bull
Licensing	M P A McMullen	W Ashley
Community Voice:		
Bishop's Stortford	A L Burlton	-
Buntingford	S A Bull	-

Hertford	J D Thornton	-
Sawbridgeworth	D Richards	-
Ware	J J Taylor	-

(H) the number of Executive Members to be appointed to the Executive be 5, plus the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council,

(I) the Council's Standards Committee be appointed for the ensuing civic year consisting of two independent Members (previously appointed to serve a four year term of office), three District Councillors (one from each political party with five or more Members), one Town Council Member, one Parish Council Member and the following individuals be appointed thereto:

District Council

Councillors A L Burlton, J P Warren, M Wood

Town/Parish Councils' Representative

Mrs E Woods (Town) and Mr B Taylor (Parish)

(J) the programme of Council meetings, as previously agreed, be confirmed.

(K) the action to be taken by the Assistant Director (Law and Control), in consultation with the Leader, under delegated authority, concerning the appointment of representatives to outside bodies, be noted, and

ALC

(L) the Community Voice bodies be retained.

11 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report proposing amendments to the constitution as a result of the Council's recent management restructuring, and the new roles of the Executive Directors.

It was proposed that the Rules of Procedure be amended to the effect that Members would not be required to stand when addressing the Chairman. Also, for consistency, questions submitted by the public would now be subject to the same time limits as Members' questions.

A number of Members spoke against the proposal that Members should not stand when addressing the Chairman. Council agreed that this proposal be withdrawn and the status quo be retained.

Council noted that the revised constitution as now detailed, contained a number of inconsistencies and typographical errors.

Council approved the proposed amendments to the constitution, subject to final proof reading to ensure consistency with the current political and officer structure.

RESOLVED - that the constitution, as now detailed, be amended, subject to final proof reading to ensure consistency with the current political and officer structure.

ALC

The meeting closed at 9.42 pm