

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF EAST  
HERTS COUNCIL HELD IN THE  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,  
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 25  
JANUARY 2006 AT 7.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A L Burlton (Vice-Chairman in the Chair).  
Councillors M R Alexander, W Ashley, D R Atkins, P R Ballam, H G S Banks, K A Barnes, M G Carver, D Clark, R Conway, R N Copping, J Demonti, A D Dodd, R Gilbert, Mrs M H Goldspink, A M Graham, L O Haysey, J Hedley, Mrs D L E Hollebon, A P Jackson, M P A McMullen, T Milner, R L Parker, D A A Peek, L R Pinnell, N C Poulton, J O Ranger, D Richards, P A Ruffles, S Rutland-Barsby, B W J Sapsford, G D Scrivener, J J Taylor, J D Thornton, J P Warren, N Wilson, M Wood.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Philip Thomas	- Interim Executive Director
Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Corporate Governance
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Dave McRobbie	- Head of Customer Relations
Lois Prior	- Head of Communications
David Tweedie	- Director of Resources

ACTION570 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 December 2005, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Vice-Chairman.

571 VICE-CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Vice-Chairman referred to the good progress the Chairman was making and stated that he was hoping to attend the next meeting.

572 MEMBERS' QUESTION

Council noted that, in the absence of Councillor M J Tindale, his question had been deferred until the next meeting.

573 PORTFOLIO REPORT – PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Councillor T Milner, Executive Member for Public Engagement, gave a presentation on developments made in enhancing customer services through e-government. He detailed the progress being made and highlighted improvements in areas such as online payments, Castle Hall bookings, recruitment and planning. He congratulated those staff involved for the progress made.

In response to a question from Councillor J O Ranger relating to a question on the telephone system in the MORI survey, the Executive Member undertook to provide a written answer.

In response to a question from Councillor R Conway relating to the ease with which the Council's website could be found from various search engines, the Executive Member undertook to provide a written answer.

In response to other questions, the Executive Member confirmed that drawings relating to planning applications and permissions would need to be readable electronically. Also,

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details relating to licensing enforcement would be accessible via the website.

Councillor K A Barnes suggested that the wording and titles used within the Council should be looked at, as some were confusing.

**574 REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE**

The Acting Leader of the Council reported on the work of the Executive and presented the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 10 January 2006.

He reassured Members that he would bring enthusiasm and purpose in undertaking his responsibilities. He expressed his sadness at the resignation of Councillor M G Carver as Leader and referred to his successes in improving service delivery and people's quality of life. He referred to Councillor Carver's efforts at county and regional level in defending East Herts' position and stated his relief that with the forthcoming East of England Inquiry in mind, he was continuing as an Executive Member.

The Acting Leader referred to the budget process and encouraged Members to attend the Budget Scrutiny Panel meeting on 2 February 2006.

Finally, he updated Members on the progress made in appointing a Chief Executive. He stated that the selection process would take place on 26 – 28 February 2006 and that the panel would comprise the Chairman of the Council, Councillors N Burdett, A P Jackson, J O Ranger and M Wood. Council, at its meeting on 1 March 2006, would be asked to endorse the appointment.

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In response, Councillor M Wood, as Leader of the Opposition, also paid tribute to the work of Councillor M G Carver. He referred to the various changes during his four and a half years as Leader and highlighted the positive outcome of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Review and his efforts at regional level.

In respect of Minute 536 – Forward Plan, the Executive Member for Public Engagement informed Council that items 12 and 15 were now the responsibility of Councillor M G Carver and not Councillor D Clark as stated.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 10 January 2006, be received, and the recommendations contained therein, be adopted.

575 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(A) PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
– 15 DECEMBER 2005

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 December 2005, be received.

(B) DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE  
– 11 JANUARY 2006

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 11 January 2006, be received.

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(C) POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
– 17 JANUARY 2006

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 January 2006, be received.

Arising from this item, Philip Thomas, Interim Executive Director, addressed Council.

He stated that he had been asked by the Scrutiny Chairmen to discuss the role of scrutiny and the role of backbench Members. He referred to the role as developing policy proposals, reviewing and scrutinising policies, considering the draft budget and monitoring performance. These were not new tasks and were all set out in the Council's Constitution. Therefore, the powers were there and scrutiny meetings could be made more interesting.

He believed Scrutiny was required to keep the Executive in check, but that this was not happening. He gave examples of how scrutiny could operate. He concluded by referring to his Challenge Group meetings and invited Members to participate in them.

576 ACTING LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Director of Corporate Governance submitted a report seeking the appointment of an Acting Leader following the resignation of Councillor M G Carver as Leader of the Council.

It was anticipated that the election of a Leader would take place at the Council meeting on 1 March 2006. In the interim, Council was invited to appoint Councillor A P Jackson as Acting Leader. Further, it was suggested that the Acting Leader should receive, during his term of office, the Special Responsibility Allowance that the Leader would receive (this would be instead of the allowance received as Deputy Leader). It was recommended that, for the sake of

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clarity, the position of Acting Leader be vested with the duties and responsibilities identified for the Leader of the Council within the Constitution. Accordingly, the Acting Leader would be able to appoint Members to serve on the Executive.

It was noted that it was for Council to determine the size of the Executive. For the interim period, Council was requested to set the overall size of the Executive at 7. Following the appointment of a Leader, the size of the Executive would revert back to comprising the Leader, Deputy Leader and five Members.

Councillor A M Graham asked Councillor A P Jackson about his time commitment and what his management style would be.

Councillor A P Jackson responded by stating that his style would be friendly and receptive to ideas. As Deputy Leader, he had devoted an average of 2.5 to 3 days a week and that this was unlikely to change. He referred to his time management skills and believed that this would hold him in good stead.

Council supported the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED - that (A) the resignation of Councillor M G Carver from the office of Leader of the Council be noted;

(B) Councillor A P Jackson be appointed Acting Leader of the Council and the overall number of Members of the Executive be set at 7 until such time as a Leader of the Council is elected;

(C) the position of Acting Leader be vested with the duties and responsibilities identified for the Leader of the Council within the constitution; and

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(D) the Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the Leader of the Council be paid to Councillor Jackson for the duration of his term as Acting Leader.

DCG

577 LONDON LUTON AIRPORT CONSULTATION (OCTOBER 2005): LUTON AIRPORT DRAFT MASTER PLAN

Council considered a report setting out a suggested response to a suite of consultation documents regarding future growth at Luton Airport. The Executive Member for Regions and Partnerships drew attention to the fact that the Council had not been consulted originally and that its disappointment should be expressed.

The Executive Member for Regions and Partnerships stated that Government policy for airport growth was set out in the Air Transport White Paper. The policy for Luton Airport was for a full length runway broadly on the alignment of the existing runway on condition that the overall impacts of such development were carefully controlled and mitigated and subject to stringent limits on noise. This policy had been drafted despite the objections to the South East and East of England Regional Air Services Study (SERAS) consultation made by both East Herts Council and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) objecting to any form of new full length runway or extension to the existing runway.

The preferred option put forward by the airport operators at Luton as part of Phase 2 was for a new full length runway some distance (around 1km) to the south of the existing runway. A large amount of land (330ha) would be required from the Green Belt. The existing runway would be retained for emergencies and when the new runway was being maintained. There was also a possibility of continued use of the existing runway for business aviation.

This proposal was not considered to reflect the provisions of the Air Transport White Paper, which envisaged a “replacement” runway broadly on the existing alignment. Whilst the proposals in the Master Plan would involve growth

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to 30mppa, the retention of the existing runway would clearly allow considerable growth above and beyond this level.

The Executive Member referred to HCC's Cabinet report dealing with the Master Plan for Luton Airport, which highlighted the key issues affecting the county and East Herts. This report was attached at Appendix 'A' to the report now submitted. In summary, the County Council remained totally opposed to the development proposed in the draft Master Plan.

Although Luton Airport was not within East Herts, growth at the airport would have potentially significant environmental consequences in terms of increased aircraft movements and noise, particularly for the central and western parts of the District. In addition, growth could have considerable implications in terms of surface access, via the A414 and the A120 involving journeys through the District when these two roads were already subject to capacity issues.

In response to a question from Councillor M Wood, the Executive Member confirmed that local Members of Parliament had been lobbied on the issue of night flights.

Council endorsed the response by Hertfordshire County Council as set out at Appendix 'B' of the report now submitted and objected to the proposals set out in the draft Master Plan.

RESOLVED - that in respect of the consultation document entitled "Master Plan – A Consultation: Project 2030", London Luton Airport Operations Limited be advised that East Herts Council:

DPP

(A) objects to the proposals set out in the draft Master Plan on the basis of the significant consequences for the District in terms of increased aircraft movements and noise, together with the impacts of increased surface access requirements;



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(B) considers that the proposals do not reflect the provisions of the Air Transport White Paper; and

(C) endorses the response of Hertfordshire County Council attached at Appendix A to the report submitted.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

Chairman	.....
Date	.....

Nps\Council\Minutes 25 Jan 2005