

# Public Document Pack



Chairman and Members of the Council

Your contact: Katie Mogan  
Ext: 1441  
Date: 18 Nov 22

cc. All other recipients of the Council agenda

Dear Councillor

## **COUNCIL - 16 NOVEMBER 2022**

Please find attached the responses to Public and Members' Questions:

7. Public Questions (Pages 3 - 5)

To receive any public questions.

8. Members' Questions (Pages 6 - 12)

To receive any Members' questions.

**MEETING** : COUNCIL  
**VENUE** : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD  
**DATE** : WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2022  
**TIME** : 7.00 PM

# Agenda Item 7

Council – 16 November 2022

## PUBLIC QUESTIONS

<b>Question 1</b>	<b>David Royle, on behalf of the Sustainable Sawbridgeworth community group to ask Cllr Graham McAndrew, the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability</b>
<p>Sawbridgeworth Town Council produced its own Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (LCWIP) in August 2018, over four years ago. It has not yet been implemented.</p> <p>We note that in North Hertfordshire there has just been a consultation on the proposed walking and cycling improvements in Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock, Royston and Knebworth, as part of their Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.</p> <p>Can we please ask how the East Herts LCWIP work is progressing, has it actually started, what stage is it at, when and how can local groups feed into it and when is it due for completion?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>An LCWIP to cover the district is being jointly prepared in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), the lead authority on this project. While East Herts Council is ready to commence work on the LCWIP at the earliest opportunity, a change in HCC staff has meant that this Council has been awaiting confirmation on the timeline for the next steps to progress this work.</p> <p>HCC has recently advised that a new member of staff is due to start shortly and also that a Project Manager has been identified at the consultancy who will be supporting the project, so it is therefore expected that initial work will commence in coming weeks.</p>	

Public consultation is a key element of LCWIPs and this will certainly occur as part of the East Herts project, the expected timeline for which will be finalised when the full programme is confirmed in due course.

There was no supplementary question.

**Question 2**

**James Dean to ask Cllr Graham McAndrew, the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability**

What are the council intending to do to mitigate the impact of the new parking proposal on residents who have no option but to park in public car parks?

The only parking we have near our house is a public car park, Crown Terrace in Bishop's Stortford. My partner works Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday, leaving before 8.30am and returning around 6.30pm, parking overnight, and then paying for Fridays. The introduction of the new proposals will mean we have to pay for half a day (£3.60 - the car park opposite our house only does half and full day during the week) just to cover the additional 6.30pm to 8.30pm charging period, for an additional 5 days a week. Plus also £1.50 for Sundays. That means an additional £78 a month on top of what we already pay for parking to cover various eventualities here and there. We understand the need for the council to raise more money, and your proposals as stated are targeting commuters and shoppers who have at least one alternative option (bus, cycling, walking etc). But we have no other options. We have a 2 year old son as well, so can't just park miles away.

**Response**

I understand and appreciate that a small number of residents make use the council's car parks overnight due to limited parking options on street. The council has decided to make better use of its car parks by ensuring that the user pay for the service. It is

therefore important that we seek to balance the needs of car park customers, and also local residents, against the council's responsibility to ensure a fair return on its investment that delivers value for money for the taxpayer. When evening car park charges are introduced, there are options that we can consider including implementing a permit type arrangement with eligible residents who have no on street parking options available to them.

I note that Crown Terrace itself is controlled by a single yellow line waiting restriction that stops at 6.30pm. Residents may therefore legitimately park on-street from 6.30pm until 8.30am in the morning, should they wish to.

**Supplementary question from James Deane**

We would like to put forward the idea of residents having a permit that allows them to not to have to pay for the additional charge time of 6.30pm to 8.30pm on weekdays. It's not us asking to not pay at all. Just to not have to pay for that additional charge time which would cause increased financial and logistical pressure.

**Response from Councillor Graham McAndrew**

Officers will investigate this option and will be in contact.

COUNCIL – 16 NOVEMBER 2022

## MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

<p><b>Question 1</b></p>	<p><b>Cllr David Snowdon to ask Cllr Jan Goodeve, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth</b></p>
<p>Could the Executive Member please make a statement about the future of Launchpad once the Old River Lane works commence?</p> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>We are aware that Launchpad is a popular and well used facility in the town and many businesses there are getting nervous about its future within the ORL development. We are actively seeking a new venue and have identified two possible options, one of which is quite advanced in terms of negotiations. We hope to have resolved the issue before Christmas and be in a new venue from 1 April 2023. Chris Smith, our award winning Economic Development Manager, is liaising closely with the businesses in the Launchpad about the options and I know several of them have committed to stay with us if and when we do move.</p> <p>There was no supplementary question.</p>	
<p><b>Question 2</b></p>	<p><b>Cllr Ben Crystall to ask Cllr Jan Goodeve, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth</b></p>
<p>In May this year the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea ruled that all Grade II listed and most Grade II* listed properties can install solar panels without seeking listed building consent. In an order applying the change, the council said solar panels "would appear as an honest and clearly modern intervention, and</p>	

normally read as part of the equipment necessary to service the uses conducted within the building", similar to water tanks, television aerials and other equipment.

Will East Herts Council introduce a similar change?

### **Response**

The permission for solar panels on Listed Buildings referred to is as a result of a Local Listed Building Consent Order. These were introduced by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 but have not been widely used as of yet. If introduced, they can grant blanket consent for "works of any description for the alteration or extension of listed buildings" and means that the owners of those listed buildings specified in the Order will not have to make individual applications, but will be able to proceed with the works, provided they comply with any conditions that may be attached to the Order.

East Herts has around 4000 listed buildings (comprised of around 3100 listings), a similar total number to Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, but the context is very different. We could not serve any sort of blanket order in the same way due to the variety of our building stock and the many vernacular buildings with feature such as thatched roofs that would not be suitable for the introduction of solar panels. In many instances in predominantly rural areas like East Herts, solar panels are best placed within the grounds of a building or on outbuildings, rather than on the main roof of a Listed Building, where they could result in avoidable harm to the character and special interest of the Listed Building. There are many instances whereby solar panels can be installed on Listed Buildings without harming their character and special interest, such as where there are parapets that hide view of the roof from street level. The example in given in

the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is of predominantly urban terraces of listed buildings, with roofs that are not prominent within the street scene.

In order to put in place a similar Local Listed Building Consent Order in East Herts we would need to survey all 4000 listed buildings within our district to ascertain which would be suitable for inclusion within the order. This would be a sizeable task and resources would need to be put in place in order to undertake both the survey work and the serving of the order.

It should be noted that if East Herts were to grant such an order, if in the future it was to be revoked, compensation would be payable for the withdrawal of consent. There are therefore financial implications for the Council which would have to be carefully considered, and specialist legal advice would need to be obtained on this point.

**Question 3**

**Cllr Chris Wilson to ask Cllr Jan Goodeve, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth**

I recently asked a question at a previous full council meeting about the lack of progress of the cycle route through the Meads and Grange Paddocks in Bishop's Stortford and was told this was a County Council project and that therefore there was no information that could be given to me by East Herts. However, it is the case that this route is not an official cycleway, and so not necessarily wholly within the remit of the County Council. It is also a route that goes partly through East Herts Council-owned land, and is, at least theoretically, partly funded through S106 money from an East Herts development, In light of this, I again ask, what role has East Herts had in the delay to this cycle route and what are our plans with respect to the part of it that goes through East

Herts-owned land? What negotiations have been done with the department of the County Council that are dealing with this proposed route?

**Response**

The Rye Street – Grange Paddocks cycle route is a concept which is supported in principle by all interested Local Authority parties. Our Parks and Open Spaces team have recently been working with HCC’s Countryside and Rights of Way service to confirm a preferred route and establish delivery costs. Currently Section 106 contributions from the BS North development held by EHC make up approximately 40% of projected delivery costs. Work to establish a mechanism to secure further funding, as well as delivery, adoption and ongoing maintenance responsibility is ongoing.

**Question 4**

**Cllr Chris Wilson to ask Cllr Eric Buckmaster, the Executive Member for Wellbeing**

The recent Castle Park redevelopment in Bishop’s Stortford, while mainly successful, has included a failure with respect to the contractors who were employed to construct the new Skate Park. My understanding is that these contractors failed to complete their assignment and honour their contract and are due to be replaced. They have however, pocketed public money in the process, to the tune of more than £100,000. While I am aware that it was Bishop’s Stortford Town Council (BSTC) that ran this project, East Herts are partners in this exercise and our money and our resources have been used to help fund the redevelopment. Can I therefore ask if the council has asked BSTC if they performed due diligence and for an explanation as to why such funds have been misspent?

**Response**



The Castle Park project is a joint project with Bishop's Stortford Town Council (BSTC) led by East Herts District Council (EHDC) and therefore it was EHDC that let the contract to construct the skate park development. A tender process was carried out to commission the company which included financial checks and the normal due diligence you would expect i.e. insurance, references etc. Following an assessment of works completed we can confirm the company only received funds for works carried out and therefore funds were not misspent.

There was no supplementary question.

**Question 5**

**Cllr Tim Page to ask Cllr Jan Goodeve, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth**

Can the Executive Member for Planning and Growth please explain to the Council, and specifically Stortford Fields residents, the reasons for the delay in establishing a working Community Management Trust that meets the Council's planning conditions and can demonstrate that it is both accountable to the Council, and fit for purpose?

**Response**

The Legal Agreement that was secured as part of the original planning permission for Stortford Fields requires the developer consortium to establish a Community Trust in accordance with the provisions within the agreement. To clarify, whilst the Trust needs to be set up in accordance with the provisions in S106 agreement, it won't be accountable to the Council. It will however, manage and maintain the community buildings and community infrastructure within Stortford Fields such parks and landscaping and will include representatives from the council and the residents of Stortford Fields as well as the consortium of housebuilders, who collectively will be party to decision making and finance governance associated

with the activities of the Trust.

Overtime the housebuilders involvement in the Trust will diminish in favour of greater resident control.

We are aware that the developer consortium has set up the Stortford Fields Estate Management Company (SFEMC) which has taken on responsibility of the community assets delivered to date.

The Council acknowledges that progress on the establishment of the Community Trust has been slow and it has been a bigger task than anticipated. It is recognised that this needs to be addressed as a priority and officers are starting to make good progress.

We are currently working closely with the consortium to understand the workings of the Stortford Fields Estate Management Company in more detail and to ensure that a Community Trust is established over time that fully meets the provisions of the legal agreement. This will take some time but remains a key priority for us going forward and we will ensure that residents are kept informed when there are updates to share.

Meetings between Council officers and representatives for the consortium have recently taken place in order to ensure that the shadow board is up and running over the next couple of months. The Council is also bringing in specialist support to advise of detailed matters.

### **Supplementary question from Councillor Tim Page**

The Executive Member suggests that a Community Trust will be set up in the next few months. Councillor Page asked if Councillor Goodeve could give a more precise target.

### **Response**

Councillor Goodeve said some arrangements would be in place before Christmas.