

Public Document Pack



Chairman and Members of the
Council

Your contact: Katie Mogan
Tel: 01279 502174
Date: 14 October 2024

cc. All other recipients of the Council
agenda

Dear Councillor,

COUNCIL - 16 OCTOBER 2024

Please find attached the following reports which were marked "to follow" on the agenda for the above meeting:

7. Public Questions (Pages 2 - 3)

To receive any public questions.

8. Members' Questions (Pages 4 - 6)

To receive any Members' questions.

Please bring these papers with you to the meeting next Wednesday

Agenda Item 7

COUNCIL – 16 OCTOBER 2024

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question 1	Patrick Kane to ask Cllr Ben Crystall, the Leader of the Council
<p>Following EHDC’s purchase of Water Lane Hall in 2019 and its subsequent designation as an Asset of Community Value, the building is falling into a state of serious disrepair. It is our understanding that EHDC is responsible either directly for maintenance (as the building owner) or indirectly (enforcing maintenance actions as the landlord of URC). In particular the toilets are backing up and overflowing because of drainage issues and water is leaking through the roof. Hirers have reported these and other issues to the URC and EHDC, but they have not been addressed and are getting worse. Without this work being done-before the winter the hall will almost certainly become unusable and unsafe, thus failing to remain an Asset of Community Value.</p> <p>Does EHDC intend to conduct essential maintenance on the building before the start of the winter, using the £170k budgeted for this work, or to compel the tenants to do so?</p>	
Question 2	Graeme Smith to ask Cllr Ben Crystall, the Leader of the Council
<p>Since the designation of Water Lane Hall as an ACV in 2023, Friends of Water Lane Hall (FoWLH) have shared a proposal to renovate WLH to face onto the new Old River Lane, relating positively to the new ORL development. We understand that EHDC is currently re-negotiating with the United Reform Church about the re-location of URC parking spaces which were allocated in 2019 to URC on a 100 year lease behind the Lemon Tree. The renovation opportunity - and the future viability of WLH - would be invalidated in the event that the 11 leased car parking spaces are moved back into the area of the current WLH car park (part of the EHDC purchased property), and would lose our community the opportunity to harmonise this area of the town centre with the new Old River Lane development. Essentially, moving the car parking to the back into the WLH boundary would block public</p>	

access forever.

What assurances can EHDC council give that this community space to the Old River Lane side of Water Lane Hall (but within the WLH boundary) will not be given away to car parking?

Agenda Item 8

COUNCIL – 16 OCTOBER 2024

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Question 1	Cllr Ian Devonshire to ask Cllr Vicky Glover-Ward, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth
<p>In April 2024, the Five Year land supply Position Statement stated that we had a five year land supply of 5.95 years. However, recently the Planning Inspector has granted permission for 350 houses in Buntingford on appeal. The Inspector disagreed with this Statement and believed that we have much less than 5 years Land supply.</p> <p>This decision now leaves this Authority very vulnerable to further unwanted development, which is a very serious position. How did this Council arrive at this position?</p>	
Question 2	Cllr Graham McAndrew to ask Cllr Ben Crystall, the Leader of the Council
<p>At the Executive meeting on 1st October, I suggested exploring the option of a shared CEO, potentially shared with another authority, given the completion of key projects and streamlined operations. This would provide cost efficiencies and still meet our strategic needs. With the current vacancy, does the Leader agree that we should also review the composition of the Senior Management Team to ensure optimal use of resources?</p>	
Question 3	Cllr David Andrews to ask Cllr Ben Crystall, the Leader of the Council
<p>What can you tell council this evening about how the consultation on Parking is shaping up? Both On-line and at the in-person sessions in each of the towns?</p>	
Question 4	Cllr Tom Deffley to ask Cllr Chris Wilson, Executive Member for Community Engagement
<p>The Council has held various consultations recently on a variety of subjects, which have been held on-line and in person. Does the Executive Member for Community Engagement believe that these consultations have represented good use of resource and value for money?</p>	

Question 5	Cllr Yvonne Estop to ask Cllr Chris Wilson, Executive Member for Resident Engagement
<p>Bishop’s Stortford residents heard about a proposal to make Cemetery Road one-way through a Traffic Regulation Order consultation, generating a large number of objections. Herts County Council executive member for transport, Cllr Bibby, and highways officers pointed out this had been approved through a planning condition for St James Park in 2021.</p> <p>One HCC officer said ‘I do find it a real shame that our residents did not engage in the planning process before the ‘one way’ proposal was approved as a planning obligation for Countryside Properties’. This application was for the discharge of a condition and was one of 51 discharge of condition applications and 22 reserved matters applications for St James Park (not to mention 9 variation applications). None of the applications with substantive design proposals are noticed by residents because of the arcane language of the proposal.</p> <p>What can the council do to enable residents to identify and engage with substantive proposals following the grant of outline permissions?</p>	
Question 6	Cllr Yvonne Estop to ask Cllr Carl Brittain, Executive Member for Financial Sustainability
<p>Members are aware of the £300,000 annual business rates accruing to Charringtons House. Could you please set out the overall figures for insurance cost, security and maintenance cost of the deteriorating building, and lost annual rental income since premature eviction of office tenants by the previous administration in 2022?</p>	
Question 7	Cllr David Willcocks to ask Cllr Vicky Glover-Ward, Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Can the Executive Member provide a progress report on the Council's support of work by Bishop's Stortford Town Council and Hertfordshire County Council on the creation of the new cycle route in Bishop's Stortford North, in particular whether an agreement has been reached between the councils on use of EHC parkland for the overall project?

Question 8

Cllr David Willcocks to ask Cllr Carl Brittain, Executive Member for Financial Sustainability

Please provide detailed information on the estimated annual savings for the council that can be attributed to the services of East Herts Citizens' Advice?

Question 9

Cllr David Jacobs to ask Cllr Carl Brittain, Executive Member for Financial Sustainability

Earlier this year EHDC agreed to sell some of its property assets as part of its budget for 2024/25. A subset of these properties was discussed at Executive on 1/10/24 and agreed for sale by auction.

Can the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability provide an update on the original list of sites, setting out which if any of the properties have already been sold and whether the list of prospective sites has changed since it was initially shared with councillors?

Question 10

Cllr David Jacobs to ask Cllr Ben Crystall, Leader of the Council

Can the Leader provide Council with a statement on the circumstances in which the Chief Executive left the council last month without serving any notice or handover period, including details of any severance package?