

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2011, AT
7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor S Rutland-Barsby (Chairman)
Councillors D Abbott, M Alexander,
D Andrews, W Ashley, P Ballam, S Basra,
E Bedford, E Buckmaster, S Bull, M Carver,
Mrs R Cheswright, K Crofton, A Dearman,
J Demonti, P Gray, L Haysey, T Herbert,
Mrs D Hollebon, Mrs D Hone, A Jackson,
G Jones, G Lawrence, J Mayes,
G McAndrew, M McMullen, P Moore,
W Mortimer, M Newman, T Page, P Phillips,
M Pope, N Poulton, R Radford, J Ranger,
C Rowley, P Ruffles, N Symonds, M Tindale,
G Williamson, N Wilson, J Wing, M Wood,
C Woodward, B Wrangles and J Wyllie.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Alan Madin	- Director of Internal Services
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services

497 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised that the meeting would not be webcast.

Members recalled that the Council had received an award from the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH), the 2011 Health Promotion and Community Well-being Organisation and Partnership Award. The Chairman welcomed Dr Selwyn Hodge, Chairman of the Royal Society, who was in attendance to present the award.

Dr Hodge gave details of the work of the RSPH and outlined the criteria for the award. He outlined the judges' citation for the award and congratulated the Council for its achievement. He presented a framed certificate to the Chairman.

The Leader, on behalf of the Council, thanked those Officers and Members who had shown great commitment in achieving this award for the Council.

The Chairman referred Members to the shared Revenues and Benefits partnership that had commenced on 1 December 2011. On behalf of the Council, she welcomed staff from Stevenage who had joined East Herts' staff to take this important service forward.

Members recalled the sad passing of Honorary Alderman Hedley Banks on 30 October 2011. He had served on the District Council from May 1976 until May 2007, representing Thundridge ward. The Chairman asked Members to stand and observe a minute's silence.

The Chairman highlighted some of the many events she had attended and expressed her gratitude to the Vice-Chairman and Honorary Aldermen for their assistance. She referred to the community awards and expressed her admiration to the numerous people she had met of all ages for their continued charitable efforts in helping others less fortunate in the community.

Finally, the Chairman invited all Members and Officers to join her for some seasonal refreshments after the meeting.

498 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting and the ordinary meeting of the Council, both held on 28 September 2011, be approved and signed by the Chairman as correct records.

499 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A number of Members declared interests in the matter referred to at Minutes 463 and 506 – Review of Discretionary Rate Relief as follows:

Personal and Prejudicial

Councillor W Ashley – Director of Wodson Park.

Councillor P Ballam – Director of Wodson Park, Trustee of Ware Museum.

Councillor P Gray – Trustee of Rhodes Birthplace Trust and member of Age Concern.

Councillor N Poulton - Director of Wodson Park, Trustee of Hertford Museum and two Parish Council halls.

Councillor P Ruffles – Trustee of Hertford Museum and Chairman of Scout movement.

Councillor N Wilson – Chairman of Hertford and Ware Sea Cadets.

These Members all left the chamber whilst this matter was considered.

Personal

Councillors P Ballam and M Pope – Directors of Ware Drill Hall Association.

Councillor J Demonti – Trustee of Havers Community Trust, Bishop's Stortford Sports Hall Trust and Rhodes Birthplace Trust.

Councillors Mrs D Hollebon, G Jones, M Wood and C Woodward – Trustees of Rhodes Birthplace Trust.

Councillor G McAndrew – Trustee of St Michael's Mead Community Hall, Havers Community Trust and Bishop's Stortford Sports Hall Trust.

Councillor T Page – Trustee of St Michael's Mead Community Hall.

Councillor R Radford – Trustee of Hertford Museum.

Councillor J Wing – Director of Wodson Park and trustee of Ware Museum and Ware Priory. Also his son was a member of a scout troop.

Councillor J Wyllie – Trustee of Rhodes Birthplace Trust, St Michael's Mead Community Hall and Havers Community Trust.

Councillor E Buckmaster declared a personal interest in the matter referred to at Minutes 462, 473 and 505 – Replacement Gym Equipment at Fanshawe and Leventhorpe Pools, in that he used the gym at Leventhorpe.

Councillor M Carver asked Council to note the declaration of his personal interest in the matter referred to at Minute 354 – My Incubator - East Herts, in that he was Chairman of the Board of Governors at Hertford Regional College.

Councillor M Carver declared a personal interest in the item referred to at Minutes 464 and 507 – Strategic Land

Availability Assessment (SLAA) Next Steps, in that he was Chairman of the Board of Governors at Hertford Regional College.

Councillor T Page asked Council to note his personal and prejudicial interest in the matter referred to at Minute 414 – Application 3/11/1421/FP (Bishop’s Stortford Rugby Club), in that he lived within the vicinity of the application site.

Councillor J Wing declared a personal interest in the item referred to at Minutes 464 and 507 – Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) Next Steps, in that his wife was Vice-Chairman of the Board of Governors at Hertford Regional College.

500 PRESENTATION - EAST AND NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE
NHS TRUST UPDATE - CHANGING A&E SERVICES AT
THE QEII HOSPITAL

Richard Beazley, Sarah Brierley, Nick Carver and Debbie Whittaker, East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust, gave a presentation on the changing hospitals programme at Lister and QEII hospitals. They outlined the developments to date and the improvements to come which were at the heart of delivering quality healthcare in Hertfordshire.

A number of questions from Members were fielded on a range of issues, including:

- car parking
- transport links
- mental health care
- recruitment and retention
- service provision at Lister and QEII hospital sites.

The Chairman thanked NHS colleagues for their update.

501 MEMBERS' QUESTION

Question 1

Councillor M Wood referred to questions he had asked during the past 18 months about the suitability of the new premises in Bishop's Stortford being able to host committee meetings, when he had received the assurance that the new meeting rooms, when linked together, would in fact be large enough. He asked the Leader to explain why, therefore, no meetings had taken place in Stortford and seemingly none were scheduled to take place there.

In reply, the Leader acknowledged the sentiment in the question, but commented that the Authority had made a decision to move back office functions to a single site in Hertford, where a majority of meetings would be held. The meeting rooms in Charringtons House were adequate for a range of meetings, especially those concerned with Bishop's Stortford issues. He cited the Bishop's Stortford 2020 Group as an example and hoped that these meetings would continue to be held there.

He referred to particular Development Control and Scrutiny Committee meetings, which had been held in Bishop's Stortford when specific issues of local major interest were considered. He reiterated that the Council was obliged to manage its ways of working in the most cost effective manner possible.

In response to a supplementary question on whether he could understand that Councillor M Wood had felt misled as the situation now described was different, the Leader hoped that the Member understood that the world had moved on.

502 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 11 OCTOBER 2011

The Leader looked forward to 2012 in what would prove to be a challenging period for the Council. He sought to provide reassurance to residents that the Council would continue to be sensitive to community needs and would maintain financial stability, in order to continue providing high quality services. He believed there was much to be proud of in the list of achievements and thanked all Members for playing their part

in a spirit of cooperation.

Councillor M Wood referred to the completion of the transfer of staff and services to Wallfields and, despite being against it, wished to place on record his thanks to staff.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 11 October 2011, be received.

503 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 8 NOVEMBER 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 8 November 2011, be received.

504 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 6 DECEMBER 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 6 December 2011, be received.

505 REPLACEMENT GYM EQUIPMENT AT FANSHAWE AND LEVENTHORPE POOLS (1)

RESOLVED - that a £113,000 Capital Expenditure bid to fund the replacement of gym equipment at the Fanshawe Pool & Gym and Leventhorpe Pool & Gym on an 'invest to save' basis, be approved, £84,000 to be spent at Fanshawe Pool & Gym in the current year 2011/12 and £29,000 at Leventhorpe Pool & Gym in 2012/13.

506 REVIEW OF DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF

The Executive Member for Finance referred to the consideration of this matter at the Executive meeting held on 6 December 2011, and his undertaking to review further the position in respect of village halls. He also referred to the many comments he had received from Members and the general public in respect of the potential impact of the proposals on scout groups. As a result, he proposed deleting recommendation (A)(1) and (B), so that there would be no

change to Discretionary Charitable (Top Up) Relief.

In response to a question from Councillor M Newman on the impact on a petrol station in his ward, the Executive Member suggested that utilising councillor grants might be appropriate and that this specific case could be looked at.

Council approved the revised proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that Discretionary Rate Relief be amended as follows:

- (1) Discretionary Rural Relief be withdrawn for pubs and petrol filling stations; and
- (2) Discretionary Charitable Relief be withdrawn for sports clubs with or without a bar.

507 STRATEGIC LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SLAA)
NEXT STEPS

RESOLVED - that (A) the information received in respect of the SLAA sites, attached at Essential Reference Papers 'B' and 'C' of the report submitted and revised at the Executive meeting, be noted; and

(B) the SLAA Next Steps, Assessment Criteria and Fact Sheet, attached at Essential Reference Papers 'D', 'E' and 'F' of the report now submitted, be agreed.

508 HERTFORDSHIRE STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT SITES
STUDY (APRIL 2011)

RESOLVED – that the Hertfordshire Strategic Employment Sites Study (April 2011) be agreed and published as a technical study, forming part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts Local Development Framework.

509 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - EVIDENCE BASE
- TECHNICAL STUDIES 2010/11 AND 2011/12

RESOLVED - that (A) it be noted, or as appropriate agreed, that the technical studies listed in Essential Reference Paper 'B' to the report now submitted, which are due for completion, already underway or proposed to be undertaken during 2011/12, contribute to the Local Development Framework Evidence Base and be completed or undertaken by means of:

- (1) seeking competitive quotes or tenders, as appropriate, to engage consultants, with the costs being met from the 2011/12 Planning Policy / Local Development Framework budgets for such purposes; and/or
- (2) partnership working where appropriate, with neighbouring authorities and other relevant partners; and

(B) the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Policy and Transport, be given authority to approve funding, within the limits of the 2011/12 Planning Policy/Local Development Framework budgets, for such other relevant planning policy studies, as may be deemed appropriate.

510 ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2010/11

RESOLVED – that (A) the Annual Monitoring Report 2010/2011 contained as Essential Reference Papers 'B' and 'C' to the report now submitted be approved for publication and submission to the Secretary of State by 31 December 2011; and

(B) the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Policy and Economic Development, be authorised to make any necessary amendments or corrections to the

above document, which may be required or identified prior to publication and submission to the Secretary of State.

511 INTERIM PLANNING GUIDANCE NOTE (NOVEMBER 2011)

RESOLVED – that (A) the Interim Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note (November 2011) contained at Essential Reference 'B' to the report now submitted be agreed and published;

(B) further consideration is given to the potential resource implications of Neighbourhood Planning; and

(C) communities be advised to wait before they do any substantive work on Neighbourhood Plans until the Localism Bill has been enacted, associated regulations published and the Council has progressed with its Core Strategy.

512 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - OCTOBER 2011

RESOLVED – that (A) a supplementary capital estimate of £38,900 for the Voice Recognition telephony system be approved, in accordance with Financial Regulations 4.62(c), as detailed at paragraph 2.26 of the report submitted;

(B) a supplementary capital estimate of £44,100 for professional fees associated with the Wallfields refurbishment be approved, in accordance with Financial Regulations 4.62(c) as detailed at paragraph 2.27 of the report submitted; and

(C) a supplementary capital estimate of £15,000 to replace the dosing equipment at Fanshawe Pool be approved, in accordance with Financial Regulations 4.62(c) as detailed at paragraph 2.29 of the report submitted.

513 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(A) CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 4 OCTOBER 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 4 October 2011, be received.

(B) HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 12 OCTOBER 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 12 October 2011, be received.

(C) DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE - 12 OCTOBER 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 12 October 2011, be received.

(D) DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE - 26 OCTOBER 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 26 October 2011, be received.

(E) LICENSING COMMITTEE - 3 NOVEMBER 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 3 November 2011, be received.

(F) DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE - 9 NOVEMBER 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 9 November 2011, be received.

(G) ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 15
NOVEMBER 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 November 2011, be received.

(H) COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 22
NOVEMBER 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Community Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 22 November 2011, be received.

(I) AUDIT COMMITTEE - 23 NOVEMBER 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 23 November 2011, be received.

(J) CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -
29 NOVEMBER 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 29 November 2011, be received.

(K) DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE - 7
DECEMBER 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 7 December 2011, be received.

514 COUNCIL TAX - CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE
2012/13

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report recommending the calculation of the council tax base for the whole District and for each parish and town council for 2012/13.

Council approved the recommendations as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) from 1 April 2012, 90% of the full council tax continue to be charged in respect of second homes, the charge in respect of long term empty properties be increased from 90% to 100% and the council tax base for East Herts and each of its parish and town councils be calculated as set out in the report submitted; and

(B) in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the amount calculated by East Hertfordshire Council as its council tax base for the whole area for 2012/13 shall be 58576.71 and for the parish areas for 2012/13 the amount shown in column A (Table 1 of the report submitted), to be increased by 50.97 for the whole area and for each parish or town by the amounts in column B (Table 1 of the report submitted) by the removal of the long term empty discount.

515 JOINT REVENUES AND BENEFITS COMMITTEE -
APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE

RESOLVED – that Councillor P Moore be appointed as the East Herts Council substitute Member on the East Herts Council and Stevenage Council Joint Revenues and Benefits Committee.

516 TREASURY MANAGEMENT - SHORT TERM INVESTMENT
STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report advising of the actions taken in respect of the Council's investments since the previous meeting and seeking endorsement of the proposed strategy for the next three months.

Council approved the proposals as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the investment strategy of maintaining significant investments in UK government securities accepting that there will be lesser return on such compared with bank deposits and Money Market Funds, be endorsed; and

(B) the maximum sum with Nat West at any time not to exceed £15m.

The meeting closed at 9.06 pm

Chairman
Date