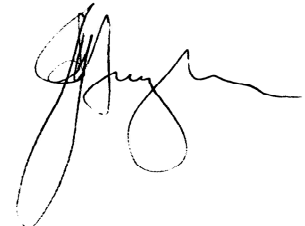


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EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of East Hertfordshire District Council will be held in the Council Chamber, Wallfields, Hertford on Wednesday 4th July, 2012 at 7.00 pm, for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the Agenda below, and you are hereby summoned to attend.

Dated this 20th day of June 2012



Jeff Hughes
Head of Democratic and
Legal Support Services

Note: Prayers will be said before the meeting commences. Those Members who do not wish to participate will be invited to enter the Chamber at their conclusion.

AGENDA

1. Chairman's Announcements

To receive any announcements.

2. Minutes (Pages 7 - 22)

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 16 May 2012.

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Members' declarations of interest.

4. Petitions

To receive any petitions.

5. Public Questions

To receive any public questions.

6. Members' questions

To receive any Members' questions.

7. Executive Report - 22 May 2012 (Pages 23 - 26)

To receive a report from the Leader of the Council and to consider Executive recommendations on the matter below.

(A) Monthly Corporate Healthcheck - February and March 2012

Minute 30 refers

8. Executive Report - 19 June 2012

To receive a report (to follow) from the Leader of the Council and to consider Executive recommendations on the matters below.

(A) Parking and Transport Strategy

(B) Economic Development Strategy Revisions

Note – Members are asked to bring their copy of these Executive agendas to the meeting.

9. Joint Meeting of Executive, Committees, etc: Minutes - 16 May 2012
(Pages 27 - 30)

Chairman: Councillor J Taylor

10. Development Control Committee: Minutes - 23 May 2012 (Pages 31 - 52)

Chairman: Councillor S Rutland-Barsby

11. Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee: Minutes - 29 May 2012 (Pages 53 - 64)

Chairman: Councillor D Andrews

12. Community Scrutiny Committee: Minutes - 12 June 2012 (Pages 65 - 72)

Chairman: Councillor G McAndrew

13. Development Control Committee: Minutes - 20 June 2012

*Chairman: Councillor S Rutland-Barsby
(To follow)*

14. Environment Scrutiny Committee: Minutes - 26 June 2012

*Chairman: Councillor D Abbott
(to follow)*

15. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011-12 (Pages 73 - 114)

To receive a report of the Scrutiny Chairmen.

16. Investment Strategy (Pages 115 - 122)

To receive a report of the Executive Member for Finance.

17. Motions on Notice

To receive Motions on Notice.

PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

1. A Member with a personal interest in any business of the Council who attends a meeting of the Authority at which the business is considered must, with certain specified exemptions (see section 5 below), disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest prior to the commencement of it being considered or when the interest becomes apparent.
2. Members should decide whether or not they have a personal interest in any matter under discussion at a meeting. If a Member decides they have a personal interest then they must also consider whether that personal interest is also prejudicial.
3. A personal interest is either an interest, as prescribed, that you must register under relevant regulations or it is an interest that is not registrable but where the well-being or financial position of you, members of your family, or people with whom you have a close association, is likely to be affected by the business of the Council more than it would affect the majority of inhabitants of the ward(s) affected by the decision.
4. Members with personal interests, having declared the nature of that personal interest, can remain in the meeting, speak and vote on the matter unless the personal interest is also a prejudicial interest.
5. An exemption to declaring a personal interest applies when the interest arises solely from a Member's membership of or position of general control or management on:
 - any other body to which they have been appointed or nominated by the authority
 - any other body exercising functions of a public nature (e.g. another local authority)

In these exceptional cases, provided a Member does not have a prejudicial interest, they only need to declare their interest if they speak. If a Member does not want to speak to the meeting, they may still vote on the matter without making a declaration.

6. A personal interest will also be a prejudicial interest in a matter if all of the following conditions are met:
 - the matter does not fall within one of the exempt categories of decisions
 - the matter affects your financial interests or relates to a licensing or regulatory matter
 - a member of the public, who knows the relevant facts, would reasonably think your personal interest is so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

7. Exempt categories of decisions are:
- setting council tax
 - any ceremonial honour given to Members
 - an allowance, payment or indemnity for Members
 - statutory sick pay
 - school meals or school transport and travelling expenses: if you are a parent or guardian of a child in full-time education or you are a parent governor, unless it relates particularly to the school your child attends
 - housing; if you hold a tenancy or lease with the Council, as long as the matter does not relate to your particular tenancy or lease.
8. If you have a prejudicial interest in a matter being discussed at a meeting, you must declare that interest and its nature as soon as the interest becomes apparent to you.
9. If you have declared a personal and prejudicial interest, you must leave the room, unless members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter, by statutory right or otherwise. If that is the case, you can also attend the meeting for that purpose. However, you must immediately leave the room once you have finished or when the meeting decides that you have finished (if that is earlier). You cannot remain in the public gallery to observe proceedings.
10. Members intending to make a declaration of interest, are invited to complete the form below and to hand this to Jeff Hughes or Martin Ibrahim, prior to the meeting. This will assist in recording all declarations. Members are still required to make a verbal declaration at agenda item 3.

Member:			
Minute or item number	Subject	Personal or Personal and Prejudicial	Nature

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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 16 MAY 2012, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor S Rutland-Barsby (Chairman).
Councillors D Abbott, M Alexander,
D Andrews, W Ashley, S Basra, E Bedford,
R Beeching, E Buckmaster, S Bull, M Carver,
Mrs R Cheswright, 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, P Ruffles,
N Symonds, J Taylor, 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
Lorna Georgiou	- Communications Team Leader
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services

1 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman (Councillor S Rutland-Barsby) welcomed the press and public to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was being webcast.

She looked back over the past year and thanked Members for their trust and support. She had enjoyed meeting many people as Chairman, culminating in her recent visit to the Hertfordshire Schools Gala at the Royal Albert Hall. She also thanked Officers, her husband, the Vice-Chairman (Councillor J Taylor) and the Honorary Aldermen for their support throughout the year.

The Chairman reported that over £8,200 had been raised for her chosen charities, Isabel Hospice and St Elizabeth's Centre. Finally, the Chairman gave her best wishes to her successor.

Councillors A Jackson and M Wood each paid tribute to the Chairman. The Leader spoke of her dedication, zeal and enthusiasm in carrying out her duties. Councillor M Wood referred to her commitment in following the great traditions of representing the District, to which the whole Council was grateful.

The Vice-Chairman, Councillor J Taylor, presented the Chairman her Past Chairman's badge and a bouquet of flowers.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2012/13

It was moved by Councillor A Jackson and seconded by Councillor M Alexander that Councillor J Taylor be elected Chairman of the Council to hold office for the civic year 2012/13.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, Councillor J Taylor was elected Chairman of the Council for the civic year 2012/13.

RESOLVED - that Councillor J Taylor be elected Chairman of the Council and hold office for the civic year 2012/13.

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

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2012/13

It was moved by Councillor P Phillips and seconded by Councillor D Andrews that Councillor G McAndrew be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council to hold office for the civic year 2012/13.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, Councillor G McAndrew was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the civic year 2012/13.

RESOLVED - that Councillor G McAndrew be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council and hold office for the civic year 2012/13.

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

4 FURTHER CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman (Councillor J Taylor) thanked Members for her election. She was humbled to be elected and expressed her commitment to serve the District. She paid tribute to her predecessor and commented that she would be a hard act to follow. She welcomed the appointment of Councillor G McAndrew as Vice-Chairman and looked forward to them working together in the coming year.

The Chairman stated that her chosen charity was the neo-natal intensive care unit at Great Ormond Street hospital. She referred to her personal experience of the service provided by the unit and expressed a desire to support life giving

opportunities.

The Chairman advised that her Civic Service would be held at St Mary's Church, Ware and that details of the Civic Dinner would follow in due course.

She reminded Members that there would be a joint meeting of committees at the conclusion of Annual Council and so all Members were requested to remain seated until all the business was concluded.

Members were also reminded that they had received a copy of an information sheet in the courier on the subjects of "Councillor Community Engagement Grants" and the Authority's "Community Grants Programme for 2012". Members who had any queries on these matters were advised to contact either Mekhola Ray or Claire Pullen of the Community Engagement Team.

Finally, the Chairman invited all Members and Officers to receive light refreshments at the conclusion of the meetings.

5 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 4 April 2012, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Question 1

Councillor N Poulton asked the Leader of the Council to write to the Executive Member of the County Council responsible for Highway issues, County Councillor Stuart Pile, asking him what the future of the Hertfordshire Joint Members Panel was, following the decision to alter the current excellent working arrangements between County and District Members.

In reply, the Leader shared Councillor N Poulton's frustration and provided the latest information he had. Members were

aware that responsibilities and some budgets had been devolved to the local level and that the County was looking at replacing the Panel with two liaison meetings each year, that would include parish and town council representatives as well. Whilst acknowledging the wider engagement of this approach, the Leader expressed concern on whether District Members would be able to input to the decision-making process on significant issues.

The Leader referred to an officer level meeting that was being held on 14 June 2012 to discuss the way forward. He understood that the County Council's Cabinet would be considering the matter in July 2012. The Leader commented that, in principle, he would be happy to write the letter suggested, but not until after the outcome of the officer meeting in June 2012 was known.

Councillor N Poulton agreed that the letter should wait until after the officer meeting in June 2012, but asked the Leader to confirm that the scheduled Panel meeting on 20 August 2012 would still take place and that a mechanism for petitions to be heard would be retained.

In reply, the Leader undertook to ask Officers to seek clarity on the August meeting and to raise the issue of petitions.

Question 2

Councillor J Ranger expressed concern that the Local District Plan might be delayed and asked the Executive Member for Planning Policy and Economic Development to let Council know the progress of the Secretary of State's decision concerning the appeal relating to the schools site in Bishop's Stortford.

In reply, the Executive Member for Planning Policy and Economic Development expressed his gratitude for this opportunity to update Members on the Government's decisions or lack of. He reminded Members that the appeal decision on the schools site had been expected on 24 April 2012, but had now been delayed until 26 July 2012. This

three month delay had had a significant impact on the District Plan timetable, as the intention of starting public consultation on the preferred option in September 2012 would now have to be changed.

The Executive Member commented that the Government had yet to remove Regional Plans from statute, which was particularly frustrating, as the Government had spoken of speeding up the planning process and yet were causing more delays. He undertook to lobby the Government and to seek the local MP's support for an end to such delays.

The Executive Member advised on the new District Planning timetable. The District Plan Panel meeting scheduled for 13 June 2012 had now been cancelled. The Panel meeting on 26 July 2012 would be retained and an additional meeting would be held on 28 November 2012, from which recommendations would be submitted, via the Executive on 4 December 2012, to the Council meeting on 12 December 2012. Therefore, the public consultation would not begin until 17 January 2013.

7 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 6 MARCH 2012

The Leader reflected on the progress made by the Council over the previous 12 months. He spoke of a year of consolidation with the conclusion of the C3W programme and the budget challenges faced by the Council. He referred to the Council's achievements in freezing council tax levels and car parking charges again, retaining support for PCSOs and commencing shared Revenues and Benefits services.

The Leader also commented on new initiatives, such as the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme, the utilisation of the New Homes Bonus and the establishment of Hertford Futures. He referred to the continued work on the health agenda, working with PCTs, NHS Trusts and the County Council's Scrutiny Committee. He also reminded Members of the success in receiving a public health award and thanked Officers in the Environmental Health team for their hard work.

The Leader commented on the role of scrutiny and thanked Members for their continued good work and expressed his gratitude to Liberal Democrat and Independent Members for their efforts. He spoke of the financial challenges ahead and believed that the Council had strengthened its position over the previous year. He looked forward to building on this in helping people over the coming year.

Councillor E Buckmaster thanked the Leader and spoke of the past year as a rewarding experience.

Councillor J Wing also thanked the Leader for his comments. He acknowledged the financial pressures the Council faced, but undertook to continue to champion support for community groups. As a Ware Councillor, he looked forward to the town receiving the same focus as Bishop's Stortford and Hertford.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 6 March 2012, be received.

8 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 4 APRIL 2012

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the inquorate Executive meeting held on 4 April 2012, be received.

9 COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 28 FEBRUARY 2012

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Community Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 28 February 2012, be received.

10 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 29 FEBRUARY 2012

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 29 February 2012, be received.

11 LICENSING COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 8 MARCH 2012

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 8 March 2012, be received.

12 ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 13 MARCH 2012

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13 March 2012, be received.

13 AUDIT COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 14 MARCH 2012

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 14 March 2012, be received.

14 STANDARDS COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 14 MARCH 2012

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 14 March 2012, be received.

15 IT PROTOCOL FOR MEMBERS

Council considered and approved the recommendation of the Standards Committee, at its meeting held on 14 March 2012, on a proposed IT protocol for Members.

RESOLVED – that the proposed IT Protocol for Members, as now submitted, be adopted.

16 CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 20 MARCH 2012

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20 March 2012, be received.

17 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 21 MARCH 2012

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 21 March 2012, be received.

18 CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF XX RECRUITMENT PANEL: MINUTES - 18 APRIL 2012

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Chief Executive and Director of XX Recruitment Panel meeting held on 18 April 2012, be received.

19 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 18 APRIL 2012

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 18 April 2012, be received.

20 STANDARDS COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 19 APRIL 2012

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 19 April 2012, be received.

21 LOCALISM ACT 2011

Council considered the recommendations of the Standards Committee at its meeting held on 19 April 2012, on the new standards regime arising from provisions within the Localism Act 2011. The Monitoring Officer also submitted a report outlining alternative recommendations for the Council to consider.

In response to various Members' questions, the Monitoring Officer clarified the role of the Independent Person, the position on disclosable interests and the need for town and parish councils to adopt a code of conduct. He advised that regulations on Disclosable Pecuniary Interests had yet to be published.

The Leader proposed, and Councillor M Tindale seconded, that the alternative recommendations, as now detailed, be adopted. After being put to the meeting, this was declared CARRIED. Council approved the alternative recommendations as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) a Standards Committee comprising 5 elected Members of the District Council, appointed proportionally, be established;

(B) the Leader of the Council be requested to nominate to the Standards Committee only one Member who is a Member of the Executive;

(C) the Local Government Association’s “Template code and guidance note on conduct”, as detailed at Essential Reference Paper ‘C’ of the report now submitted, be adopted;

(D) when the Disclosable Pecuniary Interests Regulations are published, the Monitoring Officer, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, add to that draft Code, provisions which he considers to be appropriate for the registration and disclosure of interests other than Disclosable Pecuniary Interests;

(E) in respect of arrangements for dealing with complaints, the proposals set out in Essential Reference Paper ‘E’ of the report now submitted, be adopted;

(F) the Council join with other Authorities with a pool of Independent Persons;

(G) the Independent Persons be reimbursed for travel and subsistence expenses;

(H) the Monitoring Officer be requested to prepare and maintain a new register of Members’ interests to comply with the requirements of the Act and of the

Council's Code of Conduct, once adopted, and ensure that it is available for inspection as required by the Act;

(I) the Monitoring Officer be requested to ensure that all Members are informed of their duty to register interests;

(J) the Monitoring Officer be requested to prepare and maintain new registers of Member' interests for each Parish Council and any Code of Conduct adopted by each Parish Council and ensure that it is available for inspection as required by the Act;

(K) the Monitoring Officer be requested to arrange to inform and train Parish Clerks plus one or two Members from each Parish/Town Council on the new registration arrangements;

(L) the Monitoring Officer be instructed to recommend to Council a Standing Order which equated to the current Code of Conduct requirement that a Member must withdraw from the meeting room, including from the public gallery, during the while of consideration of any item of business in which he/she has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, except where he is permitted to remain as a result of the grant of a dispensation;

(M) the Monitoring Officer be instructed to recommend to Council a Standing Order which equates to the current Code of Conduct requirement that where a decision is to be made by a single Member, the decision will be referred to the Executive if he/she has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, except where he is permitted to remain as a result of the grant of a dispensation;

(N) the power to grant dispensations be delegated:

(i) on Grounds set out in paragraphs 11.2 (a) and 11.2 (d) of the report now submitted, to the

Monitoring Officer with an appeal to Standards Committee; and

- (ii) on Grounds set out in paragraphs 11.2 (b), 11.2 (c), 11.2 (e) of the report now submitted, to the Standards Committee after consultation with the Independent Person.

22 APPOINTMENT OF STATUTORY OFFICERS

Following the recent appointment to the post of Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services, there was a need to confirm the appointment of statutory officers.

Council approved the appointment of statutory officers as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services be appointed as Head of Paid Service; and the Director of Internal Services to act as deputy; and

(B) the Director of Neighbourhood Services be appointed as Returning Officer in accordance with Section 35(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 and as Electoral Registration Officer in accordance with Section 8(2)(a) of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

23 REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report reviewing the Council's Constitution and proposing various amendments. He also proposed an additional amendment reducing the notification period for substitute Members of the Development Control Committee from 24 hours to 7 hours before the meeting.

In response to questions from Members, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that "written" included e-mails and that

Members would still be able to request applications being reported to Committee.

Council approved the amendments as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that the amendments to the Constitution, as now submitted, be approved.

24 DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE

The Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services submitted a report reviewing the Council's decision-making structure. He advised that Council was required to approve the size of the proposed committees and the allocation of seats to political groups. Council noted that three political groups had been formed and their nominations to the seats on committees were detailed in the report now submitted.

In addition, Council noted the establishment of a new Council Tax Setting Committee and a new Standards Committee (from 1 July 2012) as a result of the decisions at Minute XX above.

Leaders of political groups advised on their nominations to these Committees.

Council approved the proposals as now detailed.

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

<u>Committee</u>	<u>No. of Members</u>
Community Scrutiny	10
Corporate Business Scrutiny	10
Environment Scrutiny	10
Audit	7

Council Tax Setting	5
Standards Committee (w.e.f. 1 July 2012)	5
Development Control	12
Human Resources	7
Licensing	15
Highways Joint Member Panel (8 from Hertfordshire County Council and 8 from East Herts Council)	16
East Herts Council and Stevenage Borough Council Joint Revenues and Benefits Committee (3 from each Council)	6
Hertfordshire Police and Crime Panel	1

(B) the allocation of seats to political groups be as set out in Essential Reference Paper 'C' of the report now submitted;

(C) the allocation of seats on the Highways Joint Member Panel (8) and the Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee (3) to political groups be as follows:

Highways Panel

Conservative	7
Liberal Democrats	1

Revenues and Benefits

Conservative	7
Liberal Democrats	1

(D) the membership of Scrutiny Committees,

Regulatory Committees, the East Herts Council and Stevenage Borough Council Joint Revenues and Benefits Committee and the Highways Joint Member Panel be as set out in Essential Reference Paper 'D' of the report submitted, with Members being appointed in accordance with the wishes of the political groups to whom the seats on these bodies have been allocated;

(E) the intention of the Leader of the Council to appoint 5 Members to the Executive (in addition to the Leader) with the portfolio responsibilities as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report submitted, be noted;

(F) the Council's Standards Committee be established for the period ending on 30 June 2012 and consist of four independent Members, four District Councillors (of whom at least one should be from each political party with four or more Members), one Town Council Member, two Parish Council Members and the following District Councillors be appointed:

District Council

Councillors A Burlton, M Carver, N Poulton and M Wood.

Town/Parish

Mr J Jones

Mr C Marks

Mrs E Woods

Independents

Mr S Bouette

Mr D Farrell

Mr J Morphew

Mr T Vickers

(G) the programme of Council meetings, as detailed at paragraph 6.1 of the report submitted, be approved;

(H) the Director of Internal Services be authorised to

sign, on behalf of the Authority, the finalised agreement to establish Hertfordshire’s Police and Crime Panel’s (governance) arrangements;

(I) Councillor M Alexander be appointed as East Herts Council’s member of the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Panel;

(J) the Director of Internal Services be authorised to make changes in the standing membership of committees, joint committee and panel in (A) above, in accordance with the wishes of the political groups to whom seats on these bodies have been allocated, and

(K) the action to be taken by the Director of Internal Services, in consultation with the Leader, under delegated authority, concerning the appointment of representatives to outside bodies, be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Chairman
Date

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 22 MAY 2012, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A Jackson (Chairman/Leader).
Councillors M Alexander, M Carver,
L Haysey, P Phillips and M Tindale.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors W Ashley, E Buckmaster,
Mrs R Cheswright, G McAndrew, N Poulton,
C Rowley, P Ruffles and J Wing.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services

28 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader welcomed the press to the meeting and Councillor P Phillips to his first meeting as an Executive Member.

29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor N Poulton declared a personal interest in the matter referred to at Minute 32 – Parking and Transport Strategy, in that his wife was a blue badge holder.

30 **MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - FEBRUARY
AND MARCH 2012 (1)**

The Leader submitted an exception report on finance and performance monitoring for February and March 2012.

The Executive recommended the carry forward of various budgets, as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the underspending of £44k on property budgets be set aside and carried forward to 2012/13 to be applied to a programme of refurbishment of toilets at Wallfields, as detailed at paragraph 2.9 of the report submitted;

(B) £9k of the £50k funding for business improvement be set aside and carried forward to 2012/13 to be applied to the following projects:

- (1) Self service
- (2) Voice recognition phone service
- (3) Freedom of information request

as detailed at paragraph 2.10 of the report submitted;

(C) £50k of the £107k underspend on ICT licences be set aside and carried forward to 2012/13 to be applied to improvements to ICT resilience and business continuity and roll out of the new telephone system, as detailed at paragraph 2.11 of the report submitted; and

(D) in accordance with Financial Regulation 4.7.3, the carry forward of the capital budgets not spent in 2011/12, as set out in Essential Reference Paper 'D' and summarised at paragraph 2.27 of the report submitted, be approved, and that these sums be added to the 2012/13 capital estimates.

(see also Minute 33 below)

31 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meetings held on 6 March and 4 April 2012 be approved as correct records and signed by the Leader.

32 PARKING AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport submitted a report proposing the adoption of a Parking and Transport Strategy. He commented that the proposed Strategy was intended to provide a position statement and a strategic framework for more specific proposals to come forward later.

The Executive Member thanked the Environment Scrutiny Committee, Task and Finish group Members and Officers for their work in developing the Strategy. He also thanked residents and community and business representatives for their contribution and input.

Various Members commented on the need to strengthen the economic vitality of towns and for this not to be compromised by certain parking options, such as on-street parking charges. The need for consultation with disabled people on blue badge policies were also acknowledged. Reference was also made to the need for realistic aspirations particularly for rural communities.

The Leader acknowledged the comments made and stated that the proposed Strategy did not commit to any specific measures. The Executive Member for Economic Development also commented on the need for parking policies to support the economic vitality of town centres. With this in mind, he proposed an alternative recommendation that would seek to achieve specific policy recommendations being submitted for consideration at the next Council meeting.

The Executive approved the revised recommendations as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the work undertaken on the development of East Herts Council’s first Parking and Transport Strategy, be noted;

(B) Officers be requested, in consultation with the Executive Member for Economic Development, to bring forward specific policy recommendations for consideration and adoption by Council at its next meeting; and

(C) in the event that the recommendations in (B) above are approved, Officers be requested to identify key potential projects and an outline action plan in line with these policies, to be submitted to the next Executive meeting.

33 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2012 (2)

The Leader submitted an exception report on finance and performance monitoring for February and March 2012.

RESOLVED – that the budgetary variances set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report submitted, be noted.

(see also Minute 30 above)

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm

Chairman
Date

MINUTES OF A JOINT MEETING OF
EXECUTIVE, COMMITTEES, SUB-
COMMITTEES AND PANELS HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 16 MAY
2012, AT 8.46 PM

PRESENT: Councillor J Taylor (Chairman)
Councillors D Abbott, M Alexander,
D Andrews, W Ashley, S Basra, E Bedford,
R Beeching, E Buckmaster, S Bull, M Carver,
Mrs R Cheswright, 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, P Ruffles,
S Rutland-Barsby, 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
Lorna Georgiou	- Communications Team Leader
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services

25 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

It was moved by Councillor A Jackson and seconded by Councillor M Carver that Councillor J Taylor be appointed Chairman for this meeting.

RESOLVED - that Councillor J Taylor be appointed Chairman for this meeting.

26 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the joint meeting of the Executive, committees, sub-committees, panels and Community Voice held on 18 May 2011, be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

27 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMEN, SUB-COMMITTEES, PANELS, ETC

The Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services submitted a report seeking approval for the appointment of Chairmen to Committees set up by Council at its Annual meeting on 16 May 2012 and the establishment of sub-committees and panels.

It was noted that the appointment of Vice-Chairmen would be dealt with at the next meetings of the relevant committees.

The joint meeting noted the nominations of each political group to the seats on sub-committees and panels as detailed in the report now submitted and approved the recommendations as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the following Sub-Committees and Panels be appointed, with the number of voting Members stated:

<u>Sub-Committee/Panel</u>	<u>No. of Members</u>
Licensing Sub-Committee	3

Director Recruitment Panel	5
Local Joint Panel (4 Members of the Council and 4 representatives of employees drawn from UNISON with substitutes)	8
District Planning Executive Panel	2
Health Engagement Panel	6

(B) the allocation of seats on Sub-Committees to political groups be as detailed in Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report now submitted;

(C) as a consequence of the decisions at (A) - (B) above, the membership of Sub-Committees and Panels be as set out in Essential Reference Paper 'D' of the report submitted, with, where appropriate, Members being appointed in accordance with the wishes of the political groups to whom the seats on these bodies have been allocated;

(D) the Members detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'C' of the report submitted, be appointed as Chairmen of the bodies detailed; and

(E) the Director of Internal Services be authorised to make changes in the standing membership of committees and joint committees in (A) above, in accordance with the wishes of the political groups to whom seats on these bodies have been allocated.

The meeting closed at 8.47 pm

Chairman
Date

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 23 MAY 2012, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor S Rutland-Barsby (Chairman).
Councillors M Alexander, E Bedford,
A Burlton, Mrs R Cheswright, G Lawrence,
P Moore, M Newman, N Symonds and
G Williamson.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, W Ashley and
P Ruffles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Malcolm Amey	- Arboricultural Officer
Liz Aston	- Development Control Team Leader
Glyn Day	- Principal Planning Enforcement Officer
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
Kevin Steptoe	- Head of Planning and Building Control Services
Alison Young	- Development Control Manager

34 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

It was moved by Councillor M Alexander and seconded by Councillor S Rutland-Barsby that Councillor M Newman be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Development Control Committee for the 2012/13 civic

year.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, Councillor M Newman was appointed Vice–Chairman of the Development Control Committee for the 2012/13 civic year.

RESOLVED – that Councillor M Newman be appointed Vice–Chairman of the Development Control Committee for the 2012/13 civic year.

35 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Andrews, S Bull, G Jones and T Page. It was noted that Councillors N Symonds and G Williamson were in attendance as substitutes for Councillors Jones and Andrews respectively.

36 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed the press and public to the meeting and those who were watching the live webcast.

The Chairman advised that the following applications had been withdrawn from the agenda:

- a) 3/12/0427/FP – Conversion and extension of former coachworks to form 2 no. 3 – bedroom houses and ground floor retail unit with 10 no. apartments above and provision of 2 no. 3 bedroom houses on former car park site opposite former Waters Garage Site, 3-9, North Road, Hertford for Mr Tom Beynon; and b) 3/12/0428/LC – Demolition of existing structures at former Waters Garage Site, 3-9, North Road, Hertford for Mr Tom Beynon.

The Chairman welcomed the Committee to the first meeting of the new civic year and stated that she looked forward to working with Members.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Planning and Building Control for the training session arranged by Officers prior to this meeting. Members were advised that further training would be arranged throughout the year in line with the training schedule that Members had been provided with in advance of this meeting.

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S Rutland–Barsby declared a personal interest in applications 3/12/0252/FP and 3/12/0253/FP, in that she was acquainted with the applicant.

Councillor Mrs R Cheswright declared a personal interest in applications 3/11/2209/FP and 3/12/2210/LB, in that she lived near to the site.

38 MINUTES - 18 APRIL 2012

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

39 A) 3/11/2209/FP – DEMOLITION OF EXISTING FARM BUILDINGS, CONVERSION AND EXTENSION OF LISTED BARN TO FORM 1 NO. DWELLING, ERECTION 27NO. DWELLINGS AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT AT PENTLOWS FARM, BRAUGHING FOR LINDEN HOMES; AND B) 3/11/2210/LB – DEMOLITION OF EXISTING FARM BUILDINGS, CONVERSION OF LISTED BARN TO PART DWELLING AT PENTLOWS FARM, BRAUGHING FOR LINDEN HOMES

Mr David Roberts addressed the Committee in opposition to the applications.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, subject to the applicant entering into a legal agreement pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, in respect of applications

3/11/2209/FP and 3/11/2210/LB, planning permission and listed building consent be granted subject to the conditions now detailed.

The Director advised that the Council's Solicitor had commented that reference to intermediate affordable housing on page 13 of the report now submitted should have instead made reference to shared ownership.

The Director commented that the Solicitor had stated that there was insufficient information relating to the transfer of land between the developer and the Parish Council and further information in respect of this matter, including how the land will be used and maintenance contributions, should be submitted in order for the Section 106 agreement to be properly drafted.

The Director confirmed that a fallback position would need to be identified in any legal agreement should the Parish Council decide not to take ownership of the land.

The Council's Solicitor had also commented that further information relating to the maintenance costs associated with the balancing pond, future landscaped areas and private access road should be submitted in order for the Section 106 to be properly drafted. The Director confirmed that the Parish Council had indicated a willingness to fund the maintenance of the balancing pond.

Councillor Mrs R Cheswright expressed her concerns that another modern development of large houses with small rooms and gardens was being imposed on the old English village of Braughing.

Councillor Cheswright referred to a locally acknowledged need for smaller 2 to 3 bedroom properties and commented that the majority of houses in this proposed development were of 4 or more bedrooms. Councillor Cheswright spoke against the numerous minor amendments that had been made to a number of

applications, gradually increasing the size of the houses. She stated that the applicant should apply for the full proposed size of dwelling from the outset.

Councillor Cheswright stressed that any planning conditions must be realistic and enforceable. She also stated that off street parking by contractors' vehicles often meant that it was very difficult for pedestrians and vehicles to negotiate the B1368.

Councillor Cheswright was particularly concerned in respect of heavy goods vehicles using the narrow roads in the village, which were in close proximity to a number of listed buildings and where weight restrictions of 4.5 tons were in force.

Councillor Cheswright was also concerned in respect of the proposed siting and maintenance of the balancing pond, particularly as the Parish Council had requested that the pond's location be reviewed to allow for more burial plots in the churchyard.

Councillor Cheswright was further concerned regarding the potential loss of hedgerows and sycamore trees on the site. She stated that the homes must be built to lifetime home standards and must have wheelchair access.

Councillor Cheswright concluded that the Parish Council were concerned regarding the choice of planting being of a suburban nature rather than rural. She emphasised that the Section 106 legal agreement must be completely watertight in terms of the details referred to by the Director.

The Director advised Members that this site was an allocated site within the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007. The Director confirmed it was the understanding of Officers that the balancing pond and the associated land would be transferred into the ownership of Braughing Parish Council.

In relation to wheelchair access, the Director advised that due to the topography of the site, whilst the frontage of a limited number of properties had stepped access, they complied with the appropriate building regulation requirements in that the rear of the properties benefited from level access.

The Director also advised that, whilst there would be no vehicular access between the north and south parts of the site, foot and cycle access was possible. The Landscape Officer had not felt strongly enough about the loss of the sycamore trees to resist the application on that basis.

The Director commented that, provided that traffic access was maintained on all roads close to the site, then the Council had very limited powers to act in respect of construction traffic and congestion.

In respect of construction traffic, there would be an element of disruption and Officers had attached a condition requiring that details of all construction vehicles be submitted to and agreed by Officers prior to the commencement of the development.

Councillor M Newman referred to policy OSV1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007. He stated that for category 1 villages such as Braughing, the policy stated that only limited small scale development was acceptable. The Policy also referred to the size of the village and given that Braughing was a small village, the numbers in a development should be towards the lower end of the scale, i.e. 15 dwellings or less.

Councillor Newman cast doubt on whether it was appropriate for this development to be approved, particularly when considering previous developments in Braughing. He queried whether the community infrastructure was in place to support a total of 60 houses from this development and previous developments in the village.

The Director advised that, in addition to allocated sites, there would inevitably be other developments coming forward that were not located on those sites. In formulating the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007, the Council had assumed a development rate of 100 dwellings per annum in this way.

Members were advised that the Authority should continue to have identified a 5 year supply of housing, as per the now superseded PPS3. The new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) had applied further pressure by stating that a further 5% of land should be available in addition to the 5 year supply. The Director stated that that Authority had identified a 4.5 year supply in its most recent Annual Monitoring Report.

The Director reported that Braughing was a category 1 village so was a village on the larger end of the scale with a certain level of supporting infrastructure. Members were reminded that the legal agreement sought to secure the infrastructure required to support this development.

Councillor M Alexander raised a number of concerns relating to information that was outstanding, such as details regarding design and environmental quality, landscaping, planning out crime, wildlife habitats, particularly grass snakes, as well as the issue of the balancing pond.

Councillor P Moore commented that there were a number of unknown aspects in respect of this application and she was particularly concerned in respect of the limited facilities for the disabled. Councillor Moore was also concerned regarding the impact of the application if the Construction Method Statement was not adhered to.

Councillor A Burlton stated that the proposed above ground SUDs solution, as well as rainwater re-use systems, should be made mandatory for inclusion into the designs for this site, as this would greatly reduce the flood

risk potential.

Councillor M Alexander proposed and Councillor Mrs R Cheswright seconded, a motion that applications 3/11/2209/FP and 3/11/2210/LB be deferred to enable Officers to seek further information in relation to a range of issues raised by the development proposals.

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

The Committee rejected the recommendations of the Director of Neighbourhood Services that, subject to the applicant entering into a legal agreement pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, applications 3/11/2209/FP and 3/11/2210/LB be granted subject to the conditions now detailed, and agreed to defer the applications.

RESOLVED – that, in respect of applications 3/12/2209/FP and 3/11/2210/LB, these matters be deferred to enable Officers to seek further information in relation to a range of issues raised by the development proposals.

- 40 3/12/0314/FP – INSTALLATION OF A 2ND SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH ADJACENT TO EXISTING ARTIFICIAL SPORTS PITCHES/COURTS; INSTALLATION OF ADDITIONAL 6.5M HIGH BALL STOP NETTING TO PROTECT A NEW GRASS FOOTBALL PITCH TO BE MARKED ON LOWER QUITCHELLS PLAYING FIELD; CREATION OF TWO GRASSED RUGBY PITCHES AND CRICKET SQUARE WITH OUTFIELD ON HAILEY FIELD AT HAILEYBURY COLLEGE, HERTFORD, SG13 7NU FOR PAUL WATKINSON
-

Mr Tom Betts addressed the Committee in support of the application.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of application 3/12/0314/FP, planning

permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

The Director advised that the applicant's agent had confirmed that the school wished to use the synthetic turf pitch and floodlights for the same times as had been permitted for the existing pitch, i.e. 9.00 am to 10.00 pm daily.

Councillor Mrs R Cheswright stated that the proposed facilities would be of great benefit to students at Haileybury College.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the Committee supported the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that in respect of application 3/12/0314/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

- 41 3/12/0355/FP – USE OF LAND FOR THE SITING OF A RESIDENTIAL MOBILE HOME IN THE FORM OF A LOG CABIN FOR A TEMPORARY 3 YEAR PERIOD FOR OCCUPATION BY A STOCKMAN AT DALMONDS WOOD FARM, MANGROVE LANE, BRICKENDON, HERTFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG13 8QJ FOR EAMON BOURKE

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of application 3/12/0355/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

In response to a query from Councillor M Alexander, the Director stated that after the 3 years had expired for any planning approval on this application, the applicant would have to apply for a renewal of planning permission or apply for a new house on the site. Officers would then have the opportunity to judge whether this was justified on the site in relation to the viability of the business.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the Committee supported the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that in respect of application 3/12/0355/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

- 42 3/12/0392/FP – TWO STOREY EXTENSION TO ROCHESTER HOUSE, PLUS CONSTRUCTION OF NEW DISABLED RAMP AND ENTRANCE STEPS AT HOCKERILL ANGLO-EUROPEAN COLLEGE, DUNMOW ROAD, BISHOP'S STORTFORD, CM23 5HX FOR HOCKERILL ANGLO-EUROPEAN COLLEGE
-

Mr S Dennis addressed the Committee in support of the application.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of application 3/12/0392/FP, planning permission be refused for the reason detailed in the report now submitted.

In response to a query from Councillor A Burlton, the Director stated that, if there was the suggestion of Officers meeting with the applicant in respect of the aspirations of the application and further solutions for the site, then Members could support the Officers' recommendation for refusal and invite the applicant to meet with Officers.

Members could instead defer a decision to enable such discussions to take place, in order to achieve a greater respect of the character of Rochester House whilst adhering to the aspirations of the applicant.

Councillor M Newman commented that he was concerned that this application would adversely affect the symmetry of the frontage of the existing building. He concurred with

the Officers' view that whilst the need for the extension to the building was acknowledged, these matters did not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the historical and architectural significance of the building.

Councillor A Burlton proposed and Councillor M Newman seconded, a motion that application 3/12/0392/FP be deferred to enable Officers to seek amendments to the scheme.

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

The Committee rejected the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted and agreed to defer the application.

RESOLVED – that in respect of application 3/12/0392/FP, the matter be deferred to enable Officers to seek amendments to the scheme.

- 43 3/12/0256/FP – CHANGE OF USE FROM INDUSTRIAL (B1/B8) TO LEISURE (D2) FOR FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE TO ACCOMMODATE A CHILDRENS SOFT PLAY VENUE AT 10 HASLEMERE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, PIG LANE, BISHOP'S STORTFORD, CM23 3HG FOR MR J FOTHERGILL
-

Mr Gary Kemp addressed the Committee in opposition to the application.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of application 3/12/0256/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

Councillor A Burlton commented that if the building was fully insulated and all the conditions were adhered to, then there should be no noise. He stated however, that in a metal storage style building such as this, it may not be possible to adequately insulate against noise.

Councillor Burlton raised concerns relating to car parking, although he acknowledged the presence of a car park at the end of the road where this site was located. He expressed concerns relating to the proposed hours of use being longer than any previous use of the site.

Councillor M Newman stressed that for any insulation to be effective, there must be a clearly defined decibel (dba) rating at a certain distance from the structure that was the subject of this application.

The Director advised that condition 4 in the report now submitted had been put forward by the applicant and Officers would consult with environmental health to ensure that there was limited transmission of noise from the site.

Councillor Burlton commented on the likely transmission of noise once the doors to the outside were opened during periods of warm weather. Councillor G Williamson stated that users of the site would make a certain degree of noise when arriving outside the building and also when being picked up.

Councillor N Symonds was concerned relating to the level of traffic, both commercial and domestic, on what was a very narrow road. Councillor Symonds was also concerned in respect of the lack of parking provision and the likely parking habits of the people using the site.

The Director advised that condition 3 restricted the hours of use to less than what had been applied to a similar use on a site adjacent to the one that was the subject of this application. Councillor M Alexander stated that whilst he had no wish to restrict this type of use, he could not support this application.

The Director advised caution regarding resisting this application with regard to the hours of use given that similar applications with longer hours had been approved

in units in close proximity to this site.

Councillor A Burlton proposed and Councillor M Alexander seconded, a motion that application 3/12/0256/FP be refused on the grounds that; the proposal failed to make adequate provision for pedestrian access to the building and therefore would result in direct conflict between pedestrians and general commercial traffic within the Industrial Estate, contrary to paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework; insufficient information had been submitted in relation to noise operated by the proposed use and any steps to be taken to mitigate its impact, to enable the local planning authority to properly consider the impact of the development on neighbouring residential properties; and the proposal was contrary to policies ENV1 and ENV24 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

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

The Committee rejected the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that in respect of application 3/12/0256/FP, planning permission be refused for the following reasons:

1. The proposal fails to make adequate provision for pedestrian access to the building and therefore would result in direct conflict between pedestrians and general commercial traffic within the Industrial Estate, contrary to paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. Insufficient information has been submitted in relation to noise operated by the proposed use and any steps to be taken to mitigate its impact, to enable the local planning authority to properly consider the impact of the

development on neighbouring residential properties. The proposal would thereby be contrary to policies ENV1 and ENV24 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

- 44 A) 3/12/0252/FP – DEMOLITION OF AN EXISTING PAIR OF SEMI DETACHED DWELLINGS AND ERECTION OF A SINGLE REPLACEMENT DWELLING FOR OCCUPATION BY AN AGRICULTURAL WORKER AT PLOT 1, PENNY ROYAL, BUCKS ALLEY, BAYFORD FOR MR ALAN FITZJOHN; AND (B 3/12/0253/FP-ERECTION OF DETACHED AGRICULTURAL WORKER'S DWELLING AT PLOT 2, PENNY ROYAL, BUCKS ALLEY, BAYFORD FOR MR ALAN FITZJOHN
-

Jane Orsborn addressed the Committee in support of the applications.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of applications 3/12/0252/FP and 3/12/0253/FP, planning permission be refused for the reasons detailed in the report now submitted.

The Director read out a statement on behalf of the local ward Member, Councillor L Haysey. Councillor Haysey referred to the letter from the applicant in that this set out the reasons why these applications should be approved.

The Director stated that Councillor Haysey had highlighted that Officers had acknowledged the need for the replacement dwellings. She emphasised that Officers felt that the replacement dwellings should occupy the existing footprint of the dwellings that would be demolished.

Councillor Haysey had stated that there were sound reasons as to why the second dwelling should be located in a new position on the site. Councillor Haysey also commented that the applicant and his structural engineer had felt that the Landscape Officer had not taken into

account the reasons for the proposed siting of the two properties.

Councillor Haysey was of the view that these dwellings were necessary accommodation for workers in the agricultural sector and were not an unnecessary expansion of housing into the green belt. Councillor Haysey had urged the Committee to grant both applications.

In response to comments from Councillor Mrs R Cheswright relating to concerns from neighbours regarding loss of privacy, the Director stated that this should not be an issue as there were no windows facing numbers 3 and 4 Penny Royal.

Councillor M Newman referred to there being no objection in principle to the applications. He stated that building the plot 1 house towards the western extremity of the site would overcome any issues regarding the radius of influence of the trees.

Councillor Newman referred to the points mentioned in the report regarding alternative solutions to the problem of subsidence, other than the re-siting option put forward by the applicant. He commented that there were always structural solutions for overcoming such issues and he felt that the reasons for building away from the existing footprints were not overwhelming.

Councillor N Symonds concurred with the points raised by the local Member and stated that building additional properties on the sodden clay soil would result in lots of problems. She emphasised that the existing dwellings had a lot of cracks in the walls and were not fit for habitation.

The Director advised Members that there was an in principle objection to the building on plot 2 in the green belt. Members were advised however that there was no in principle objection to replacement dwellings. Officers

had not been satisfied that sufficient information had been provided to justify the need for new dwellings on the site. The Director referred to a range of engineering solutions that could be put in place on the site.

Councillor M Alexander proposed and Councillor A Burlton seconded, a motion that the Committee support the Director's recommendations in respect of applications 3/12/0252/FP and 3/12/0253/FP.

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

The Committee supported the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that in respect of applications 3/12/0252/FP and 3/12/0253/FP, planning permission be refused for the reasons detailed in the report now submitted.

- 45 3/12/0200/FP – REPLACEMENT DWELLING AMENDED SCHEME WITH NEW LOCATION FOR REPLACEMENT DWELLING, INCORPORATING A REAR ORANGERY EXTENSION AND BASEMENT AT EPPING GREEN FARMHOUSE EPPING GREEN, HERTS SG13 8NE FOR MR L EAGLESTONE
-

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of application 3/12/0200/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the Committee supported the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that in respect of application 3/12/0200/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

46 3/12/0375/FN – SUBDIVISION OF EXISTING DWELLING INTO 5 DWELLINGS AND NEW GARAGES AT THORLEY PLACE, THORLEY LANE EAST, BISHOP'S STORTFORD CM23 4BH FOR MR N THURLEY

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of application 3/12/0375/FN, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the Committee supported the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that in respect of application 3/12/0375/FN, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

47 3/12/0467/FO – VARIATION OF CONDITION 2 OF LPA REFERENCE 3/11/2050/FP (POSITIONING OF MARKET STALLS IN NORTH STREET) TO ALTER HOURS FROM 05:00-16:00 TO 05:00-17:30 ON THURSDAYS AND SATURDAYS AT NORTH STREET, BISHOP'S STORTFORD FOR EAST HERTS DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of application 3/12/0467/FO, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the Committee supported the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that in respect of application 3/12/0467/FO, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

48 3/12/0328/FP – SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION,
BOILER HOUSE WITH CHIMNEY AND CONVERSION OF
GROUND FLOOR GARAGE SPACE AT WATTS FARM,
ALBURY END, ALBURY FOR MR K DEWSON

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of application 3/12/0328/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the Committee supported the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that in respect of application 3/12/0328/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

49 3/12/0154/FP – TWO STOREY AND SINGLE STOREY SIDE
EXTENSION AND SINGLE STOREY FRONT EXTENSION
AT 1 FROGS HALL LANE, BROKEN GREEN, STANDON,
WARE, SG11 1NG FOR MR C ROBERTS

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of application 3/12/0154/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the Committee supported the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that in respect of application 3/12/0154/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

- 50 3/12/0244/FP – FRONT, REAR AND SIDE SINGLE STOREY EXTENSIONS AND ROOF ALTERATION TO CREATE FIRST FLOOR ACCOMMODATION AT WHITE WILLOWS, THE STREET, HAULTWICK, WARE SG11 1JQ FOR MR R ADAMS
-

Mr Ross Adams addressed the Committee in support of the application.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of application 3/12/0244/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the Committee supported the recommendation of the Director of Neighbourhood Services as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that in respect of application 3/12/0244/FP, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted.

- 51 E/11/0403/A – UNAUTHORISED USE OF UNITS FOR CLASS B2 (GENERAL INDUSTRIAL) USE AT UNITS 5A AND 5B, HADHAM INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, LITTLE HADHAM, HERTS, SG11 2DY
-

The Director of Neighbourhood Services recommended that, in respect of the site relating to E/11/0403/A, enforcement action be authorised on the basis now detailed.

The Committee accepted the Director's recommendation for enforcement action to be authorised in respect of the site relating to E/11/0403/A on the basis now detailed.

RESOLVED – that in respect of E/11/0403/A, the Director of Neighbourhood Services, in conjunction with the Director of Internal Services, be authorised to take enforcement action on the basis

now detailed.

52 TREE PRESERVATION ORDER (TPO) – RESURVEY OF
TPO NOS 49, 167, 171 AND 345

Lucy Evans addressed the Committee in opposition to the inclusion of tree 'T4' in TPO 569 at Saffron Meadow, Standon.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted a report regarding the resurvey and revocation of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) numbered 49, 167, 171 and 345 as detailed in the report now submitted. The Director's report also requested the confirmation of replacement TPOs numbered 566, 567, 568 and 569.

The Director stated that the public speaker had objected to the inclusion of tree 'T4' in TPO 569 and Members could either resolve to remove this tree from the TPO or the Committee could confirm the TPO, on the condition that a replacement tree be planted elsewhere at the property should the applicant be successful in applying to remove tree 'T4'.

Councillor D Andrews proposed and Councillor M Alexander seconded, a motion that tree 'T4' be excluded from TPO 569 at Saffron Meadow, Standon.

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

The Committee supported the Director's recommendation regarding the resurvey and revocation of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) numbered 49, 167, 171 and 345 on the basis now detailed. The Committee also approved the Director's recommendation in respect of replacement TPOs numbered 566, 567, 568 and 569 on the basis now detailed, subject to the removal of tree 'T4' from TPO 569.

RESOLVED – that (A) TPOs numbered 566, 567,

568 and 569 be confirmed, subject to the removal of tree 'T4' from TPO 569; and

(B) TPOs numbered 49, 167, 171 and 345 be revoked.

53 ITEMS FOR REPORTING AND NOTING

RESOLVED – that the following reports be noted:

(A) Appeals against refusal of planning permission / non determination;

(B) Planning Appeals lodged;

(C) Planning Appeals: Inquiry and Informal Hearing dates; and

(D) Planning Statistics.

The meeting closed at 9.12 pm

Chairman
Date

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 29 MAY 2012, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor D Andrews (Chairman).
Councillors E Bedford, S Bull, J Mayes,
W Mortimer, T Page, M Pope, J Ranger,
G Williamson and J Wing.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors L Haysey.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Karl Chui | - Performance Monitoring Officer |
| Lorna Georgiou | - Communications Team Leader |
| Marian Langley | - Scrutiny Officer |
| Alan Madin | - Director of Internal Services |
| Peter Mannings | - Democratic Services Officer |
| Will O'Neill | - Communications and Engagement Manager |
| Ceri Pettit | - Corporate Planning and Performance Manager |
| Neil Sloper | - Head of Customer Services and Parking |

54 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

It was moved by Councillor J Ranger and seconded by Councillor J Mayes that Councillor G Williamson be

appointed Vice–Chairman of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee for the 2012/13 civic year.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, Councillor G Williamson was appointed Vice–Chairman of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee for the 2012/13 civic year.

RESOLVED – that Councillor G Williamson be appointed Vice–Chairman of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee for the 2012/13 civic year.

55 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor G Jones. It was noted that Councillor S Bull was in attendance as substitute for Councillor G Jones.

56 MINUTES – 20 MARCH 2012

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

57 REVIEW OF COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS APRIL 2011 TO MARCH 2012

The Head of Customer Services submitted a report detailing a summary of the formal comments, compliments and complaints (3Cs) that had been logged by the Council between April 2011 and March 2012. The report highlighted the key issues arising from these 3Cs and also presented the 3Cs action plan for 2012/13.

Members were advised that the 2011/12 target for percentage of complaints resolved within 14 days was 70%, not 90% as detailed on page 6 of the report now submitted.

The Committee was also advised that in preparing the

report, an error had been discovered in the previous calculation of performance indicators caused by adding stage 2 (review) complaints to the totals. The data in this report was confirmed as accurate and the indicators had been updated accordingly.

The Head of Customer Services provided a breakdown of the complaints performance of the Authority. He emphasised that, considering the Council received over 1.5 million phone calls in a year, the 62 formal complaints received was a relatively low figure.

The Authority was within its targets in respect of stage 2 complaints and there had been a one third reduction in complaints overall. Of the 19 cases registered with the Local Government Ombudsman, there had been no instances of maladministration by the Authority.

Members were referred to Essential Reference Paper 'E' for all the corrective action that had been taken following the receipt of complaints, which included staff training and actions taken to ensure appropriate service delivery.

Members were reminded that some complaints related to cases where Officers had acted in accordance with Council policy but the complainant remained unsatisfied with the Authority. In some cases, there was a need to distinguish between a formal complaint and a request for service from the Authority.

Councillor D Andrews stated that 62 complaints was a low figure and constituted excellent performance. Councillor J Mayes stated that more meaningful results would be available if performance in the report was detailed as actual figures as opposed to percentages.

Councillor J Ranger congratulated Officers on what seemed to be a very satisfactory situation regarding complaints. He stated that there were important distinctions to be drawn when classifying contact with a resident as a complaint, particularly in relation to statutory

planning matters and cases brought before the Standards Committee.

Councillor J Wing referred to planning and stated that the system was imbalanced as there was no third party right of appeal.

Councillor J Wing stated that the seemingly good performance should not lead to complacency and the Authority should be careful in analysing such data. He commented that there were groups that, whilst reluctant to raise formal complaints if they were dependent on continuing grant or aid from the Council, were none the less dissatisfied with aspects of the Authority.

Councillor Wing raised a particular concern in respect of the lack of grant support from East Herts for bringing the Great Bed of Ware to Ware.

The Head of Customer Services stated that the actions taken to resolve complaints ranged from a basic delivery of service to one to one training or a team meeting. The number of complaints was small and many were down to minor errors by Officers rather than an indication of a serious problem.

Councillor T Page requested that this report be further developed to outline what, if any, improvement actions needed to be taken across the Authority. Councillor J Ranger stated that a press release should be issued explaining what areas were inside and outside the control of the Authority, for example the regulations regarding Development Control were not set by East Herts Council.

Councillor J Wing commented that complaint resolution was not helped when the adjudicator was the Head of Service for the service involved. The Head of Customer Services explained that Directors would often adjudicate, such as when a complaint was made about a Head of Service. Members were also advised that planning professionals were often required to adjudicate when a

complaint related to complex planning issues.

Members requested that future reports draw a closer link between complaints, remedial actions and outcomes. This was supported.

The Director of Internal Services stated that many complaints were down to basic human error and training could easily correct such situations. He emphasised however, that some complaints were very difficult to resolve if Officers had followed appropriate procedures in line with Council or Government policy and it was the underlying policy which the complainant objected to.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be noted; and

(B) future reports draw a closer link between complaints, remedial actions and outcomes; and

(C) the actions detailed in the report be supported.

58 EAST HERTS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2012

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report introducing a new Communication Strategy and Action Plan together with a set of social media principles.

Members were advised that this report was the first stage in securing a proactive communications strategy for the Authority, in order to ensure there was a targeted approach to communications. Officers would then be able to ensure that appropriate messages were delivered to audiences across the District.

The Committee was advised that social media would assist Councillors in engaging with communities at a local level. Members would be given training on the

appropriate usage of social media and there would also be a workshop on community engagement at ward level.

In response to a number of comments from Councillor J Ranger, Members were advised that all Parish and Town Council Clerks had been contacted. Members were also advised that the new strategy would assist with ensuring that the public were more able to distinguish between the functions performed by East Herts Council and Hertfordshire County Council.

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support stated that the strategy would ensure the exciting and innovative use of communication to publicise the good work being carried out across East Herts. Councillor D Andrews commented that the Members Information Bulletin would be reviewed as part of the strategy.

In response to a query from Councillor M Pope, Members were advised that the strategy would also provide residents with an important linkage between value for money and the services of East Herts Council. The Director of Internal Services reminded Members that the freeze in Council Tax was particularly relevant.

The Committee received the report and recommended that the 2012 East Herts Communications Strategy should be adopted.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be noted; and

(B) the 2012 East Herts Communication Strategy be recommended to the Executive for adoption.

59 2011/12 END OF YEAR SERVICE PLANNING REPORT

The Leader of the Council submitted a report detailing a summary of 2011/12 Service Plan actions that had been achieved and also those that required a revised completion date or had been deferred/suspended.

Members were advised that the Authority would no longer be submitting a bid to secure the new watercourse and maintenance contract as, due to a change of plan by the Environment Agency, small contracts had now been included in a South of England contract, which was too large for the Authority to manage.

In response to a query from Councillor J Mayes, the Committee was advised that the implementation of an enhanced self-service telephony system should be completed by the end of May 2012. Councillor D Andrews commented that the automated telephone system appeared to be working well.

Councillor J Ranger congratulated Heads of Service and Officers for delivering service plan actions, particularly in the context of difficult times in 2011/12.

In response to concerns from Councillor J Ranger, the Director of Internal Services advised that 2011/12 had been a difficult year but there had been a steady improvement in access to Council information. Members were advised that an externally hosted web development tool would improve the visibility of the website from a customer perspective.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the revised completion dates against the 2011/12 Service Plan actions be noted.

60 2011/12 PERFORMANCE OUTTURNS

The Leader of the Council submitted a report detailing the performance indicators that the Council was required to monitor and publish annually in the Annual Report. The purpose of the report was to advise Members of the performance outturns for 2011/12 and any changes to targets.

Members were advised that the report covered 57

performance indicators, of which 55 were the subject of targets detailed in Essential Reference Paper 'B'. The report also covered the Monthly Corporate Healthcheck exception report for February and March 2012, which was detailed in Essential Reference Paper 'C1'.

In response to a query from Councillor J Mayes, the Corporate Planning and Performance Manager stated that the Authority should retain performance indicators relating to percentages of Officers employed with disabilities or from Black, Minority and Ethnic (BME) groups. Members were advised that the Authority did everything possible to encourage applications from these groups.

The Director of Internal Services confirmed it was important for the Human Resources Committee and Officers to be mindful of these indicators to ensure that the Authority was not discriminating against any potential applicants when undertaking recruitment. Councillor J Ranger confirmed that the Human Resources Committee had discussed this issue in relation to ensuring targets were realistic and sensible.

Councillor J Mayes commented on EHPI 8 – percentage of invoices paid on time being just off target. Officers confirmed that most invoices were paid on time. Councillor D Andrews stated that EHPI 181 – time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events was also off target but only by a very narrow margin.

Councillor J Ranger stated that the recommendation relating to EHPI 156 – buildings accessible to people with a disability should be changed to 90 or 91%, as opposed to 90.91%. Councillor J Wing requested that all Essential Reference Papers should contain text that adhered to the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) guidelines of not less than 14 point font, as he was unable to scrutinise these documents in their current form.

Councillor M Pope observed that the total salary budget was detailed as an overspend at year end. The Director predicted that this budget would show a slight underspend 2012/13.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received;

(B) the Outturns for 2011/12, as detailed in Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ of the report submitted, be noted;

(C) the 2013/14 target of 65% for EHPI 3 – overall satisfaction with the Authority, be noted;

(D) the revised target from 2013/14 onwards of 90 or 91% for EHPI 156 – buildings accessible to people with a disability, be noted;

(E) the revised target from 2013/14 onwards of 80% for EHPI 2.15 – Health and Safety Inspections, be noted;

(F) the proposed deletion of EHPI 14 – retirements, be noted;

(G) the actions detailed in the report in respect of improving data quality be recommended to the Executive for approval;

(H) the budget variances and performance detailed in Essential Reference Paper ‘C1’ of the report submitted, be noted; and

(I) the Executive be recommended to authorise Officers to re-evaluate EHPI 16a and EHPI 16b – the percentage of staff with disabilities and the percentage of top 10% of earners with a disability.

The Chairman submitted a report setting out the Committee's future work programme for 2012/13, the detail of which had been set out in Essential Reference Paper 'B' to the report now submitted.

Councillor J Ranger stated that a Task and Finish Group should be set up to conduct a fundamental review of how IT benefited the operations of the Authority and its customers, both internal and external. He commented that this work should not be undertaken by a Member working party but by a Task and Finish Group.

In response to comments from the Scrutiny Officer regarding budget restraints and the fact that topics had already been identified for Task and Finish Groups, Councillor Ranger stated that each Scrutiny Committee should have at least one Task and Finish Group in a civic year.

Councillor Ranger commented that there was a light list of topics for the July meeting. He stated that a report relating to the roles of Members in respect of outside bodies could be submitted to that meeting. This was supported.

Members also agreed that a scoping report would be submitted to the July meeting in respect of a Task and Finish Group relating to a fundamental review of how IT benefited the operations of the Council and its customers, both internal and external.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that reports in the work programme relating to Community and Public Engagement would be refocused as part of the wider Communications Strategy work. A full report would be submitted to the meeting in March 2013 and an interim report would be submitted to the meeting in October 2012. This was supported.

The Committee approved the report, as amended.

RESOLVED – that the work programme be approved, as amended.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm

Chairman
Date

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY
12 JUNE 2012, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor G McAndrew (Chairman)
Councillors R Beeching, S Bull,
Mrs D Hollebon, Mrs D Hone, J Mayes,
N Symonds, M Wood and C Woodward.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors P Ruffles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Mekhola Ray	- Community Projects Team Manager
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services

62 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

It was moved by Councillor R Beeching and seconded by Councillor C Woodward that Councillor S Bull be appointed as Vice Chairman for the Civic Year 2012/13.

RESOLVED – that Councillor S Bull be appointed Vice Chairman for the Civic Year 2012/13.

63 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor T

Herbert.

64 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

65 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked Councillors E Buckmaster, P Moore and P Ruffles for their contribution to Community Scrutiny Committee during the last civic year. He welcomed new Members of the Committee and substitutes.

The Chairman referred Members to the Members' Information Bulletin for week ending 25 May 2012 which contained a progress update from the Citizens' Advice Bureau. Copies were available on request.

The Chairman informed the Committee that the report on Hertford Theatre would be presented to Members on 28 August 2012 to allow time for figures to be based on audited accounts.

66 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D Hone declared a personal interest in Minute Number 67 - Report of the Health Engagement Panel, by virtue of the fact that she was a Member of the East and North Herts NHS Trust.

67 REPORT FROM HEALTH ENGAGEMENT PANEL

Councillor D Hone, former Chairman of the Health Engagement Panel, provided a summary of the recent work of the Panel. The Minutes of the Health Engagement Panel held on 6 February 2012 were also submitted for information. These were noted by the Committee.

The Chairman thanked Councillor D Hone for Chairing the

Health Engagement Panel and urged Members to attend future meetings. He acknowledged Councillor N Symonds as the new Chairman of the Panel.

The Committee received the report and noted the Minutes.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received; and

(B) the Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 6 February 2012, be noted.

68 END OF YEAR SERVICE PLAN REPORT 2011-12

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report which provided a summary of the 2011/12 Service Plan actions for four services which had been achieved and those which required revised completion dates, the detail of which was set out in the Essential Reference Papers now submitted. He stated that Corporate Management Team (CMT) had commended the work of Heads of Service and staff for their work during a year which had presented a particularly challenging environment.

Members praised the work which had been achieved.

In response to a query from Councillor R Beeching, the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services explained how the target for affordable homes was calculated.

Councillor M Wood praised the efforts of Revenues and Benefits staff for their efforts in the light of an increasing workload. It was noted that new claims were currently being processed within a 4-5 day turnaround.

The Chairman referred to the numerous challenges and difficulties faced by staff over the last two years and praised all staff for their efforts.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the revised completion dates

against the 2011/12 Service Plan actions be noted; and

(B) the comments made by Corporate Management Team in congratulating staff, be endorsed.

69 COMMUNITY SCRUTINY CORPORATE HEALTH CHECK -
JANUARY - MARCH 2012 AND 2011/12 PERFORMANCE
OUTTURNS

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report on the performance of key indications relating to Community Scrutiny Committee for the period January to March 2012 and the performance outturns. He asked Members to note minor amendments to the recommendations.

In response to a query from Councillor N Symonds regarding response times to Anti Social Behaviour complaints, the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services stated that he would ask the Head of Licensing, Community Safety and Environmental Health to provide a written response.

In response to a query from Councillor R Beeching regarding a revised target of £0.47p (net cost subsidy per visit swim and gym) the Chief Executive and Director of Community Services explained that the figure should be viewed in the context of having reduced from over £7 since the start of the contract. The contractual arrangement between the Council and SLM was explained. In response to a question whether further major investment was appropriate, he suggested that any further major investment would be best considered after the contract's natural end.

The Chairman urged Members who were not familiar with Covalent to contact Officers so that training could be organised.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) performance for the period

January to March 2012 be received;

(B) outturns for 2011/12 as detailed in Essential Reference Paper “C” of the report submitted, be received;

(C) the revised targets of £0.2p for 2012/13, £0.16p for 2013/14 and £0.47p for 2014/15 for EHPI2 – Net cost subsidy per visit (swims and Gym) be supported; and

(D) the revised targets to maintain performance achieved in 2011/12 for the next three years for EHPI 3a to 3c – Usage; number of Swims and EHPI 4a to 4b (Usage: Gyms; be supported.

70 EAST HERTS SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY: 2009 - 2024 REVIEW OF PROGRESS

The Communications and Engagement Manager submitted a report on the East Herts Sustainable Community Strategy (2009 to 2024) and of the progress made. The Engagement and Partnerships Team Leader provided the background to the report, including the work of the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and the subsequent launch of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) in 2009.

The LSP has focused its priorities as:-

- Promoting economic wellbeing;
- Supporting vulnerable people; and
- Community safety.

In response to a question about performance reward grant, the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services explained the background in terms of the Government’s initial funding of LSPs, Local Area Agreements and how the grant funding had been allocated between the District and Hertfordshire County Council. Bids which had been supported by the LSP and which met specific criteria, were detailed in the Essential Reference Papers, attached to

the report now submitted.

Councillor N Symonds expressed concern regarding the absence of “Dial a Ride” in villages. The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services stated that the facility was provided by the County Council and suggested the Member might wish to discuss this further with their County Council representatives in attendance.

The Committee received the report and endorsed the Strategy’s priorities.

RESOLVED - that (A) the progress made by the Local Strategy Partnerships (LSPs) on the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) be supported; and

(B) the LSP’s three priorities as detailed in the report now submitted, be endorsed.

71 COMMUNITY SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer submitted a report outlining the future work of Community Scrutiny Committee. The Scrutiny Officer referred to the possible review of taxi licensing processes and procedures, and the rationale for this. She explained that Licensing Committee had devolved powers in terms of any recommendations which might be made by a Task and Finish Group. Members supported the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to review the processes and procedures.

Members considered the possibility of Housing Associations reporting back to Community Scrutiny. Following a lengthy debate on the advantages and disadvantages of having each of the key associations attend a future meeting of Community Scrutiny Committee, Members were reminded of what other avenues existed for Members to scrutinise the actions of Housing Associations, rather than have key officers attend meetings.

Members considered the suggestion that a report on the

Housing Stock (Transfer of Residual Undertaking) Annual Statement and the Action Plan to support the new East Herts Housing Strategy (including how the “Ageing Well” theme might be integrated into housing matters, be reported to Members. This was supported.

Members were reminded that the report on Hertford Theatre would also be reported to the next meeting of Community Scrutiny Committee.

Members received the report and supported the amendments, as proposed.

RESOLVED – that the work programme as amended, be agreed.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

Chairman
Date

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 4 JULY 2012

REPORT BY CHAIRMEN OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This cover report is to introduce the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12 on behalf of the Chairmen of Scrutiny Committees for that year.

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL:</u>	
(A)	that the Annual Report on the work of the East Herts Scrutiny Committees (and Health Engagement Panel) during 2011/12 be received.

1.0 Background

1.1 An Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report is prepared each year and presented to Council by the scrutiny chairmen. Reports from previous years can be accessed through the council's website <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/scrutinyannualreport>

2.0 Report

2.1 The Annual Report for 2011/12 (attached as **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**) summarises the activities of all scrutiny committees during the past year, details the outcome of the evaluation workshops and sets out some of the plans for the coming year.

2.2 The report is written for many audiences: those Members involved in scrutiny, those who might wish to be, and Members of the Executive (to whom the scrutiny committees act as a critical friend).

- 2.3 It is also hoped that partners, community groups and residents who have contributed to our scrutiny process during the year will appreciate that their contributions are valued by Members.
- 2.4 Once agreed by Council, the report will be published on the Council's website and notification of its 'e-location' will be passed to partner organisations in the Local Strategic Partnership.
- 2.5 As last year, the Annual Report will also be uploaded into the library section of the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) website.
<http://www.cfps.org.uk/library>
- 3.0 Implications/Consultations
- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

Minutes of all scrutiny committee meetings held during the 2011/12 civic year. These minutes are available on the council's website at
<http://online.eastherts.gov.uk/moderngov/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>

- Contact Members: Councillor Graham McAndrew: Chairman 2011/12,
Community Scrutiny
graham.mcandrew@eastherts.gov.uk
Councillor David Andrews: Chairman 2011/12,
Corporate Business Scrutiny
david.andrews@eastherts.gov.uk
Councillor Diane Hollebon: Chairman 2011/12,
Environment Scrutiny
diane.hollebon@eastherts.gov.uk
- Contact Officer: Jeff Hughes, Head of Democratic and Legal Support
Services – Extn 2170
jeff.hughes@eastherts.gov.uk
- Report Author: Marian Langley, Scrutiny Officer – Extn 1612
marian.langley@eastherts.gov.uk

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

<p>Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives</p>	<p>Effective use of the scrutiny process contributed to the Council's ability to meet two core objectives during 2011/12:</p> <p>Fit for purpose, services fit for you <i>Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.</i></p> <p>Leading the way, working together <i>Deliver responsible community leadership that engages with our partners and the public.</i></p> <p>Any issues identified for scrutiny will relate to at least one of the Council's new corporate objectives for 2012/13 onwards:</p> <p>People <i>This priority focuses on enhancing the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.</i></p> <p>Place <i>This priority focuses on the standard of the built environment and our neighbourhoods and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean.</i></p> <p>Prosperity <i>This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic and social opportunities.</i></p>
<p>Consultation:</p>	<p>The Annual Report has been drafted following consultation with all scrutiny Chairmen and the Chairman of the Health Engagement Panel.</p> <p>All members of scrutiny committees and HEP have had the opportunity to contribute to the evaluation of the year's work.</p> <p>The Executive and Directors have also been given the opportunity to comment on 2011/12 scrutiny activity.</p>
<p>Legal:</p>	<p>The Council's constitution states in Part 2 at paragraph 6.3 (d) that - "Scrutiny committees must report annually to full Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate."</p>

Financial:	<p>The cost of circulating the report to Members can be met within existing budgets.</p> <p>Greater use will be made of signposting interested parties and partners to the Council's website to access the Annual Report which will minimise use of material resources, distribution costs and gain potential CO₂ efficiencies from on-line provision.</p>
Human Resource:	none
Risk Management:	<p>Matters which may benefit from scrutiny may be overlooked. The selection of inappropriate topics for review would risk inefficient use of resources. Where this involved partners, it could risk damaging the reputation of the council and relations with partners.</p>



OVERVIEW and SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

June 2012

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

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Councillor David Andrews

Chairman Corporate Business Scrutiny



Councillor Graham McAndrew

Chairman Community Scrutiny



Councillor Diane Hollebon

Chairman Environment Scrutiny

A total of 36 councillors have served on the scrutiny committees, Health Engagement Panel or task and finish groups this year.

This report records their key achievements (it does not attempt to list every discussion or decision) and sets out our hopes and plans for the coming year.

“I would just like to recognise the vital role played by scrutiny and the scrutiny committees through the year.

They have, I believe, developed a maturity during the past year that has led them to be more incisive in their role as scrutineers and critical friend in helping to inform policy.

I offer my thanks to the committee chairmen and members of those committees. With their help we will explore the opportunities within the Localism Act in the coming year and work with those in our communities to help them play a part in shaping their own towns and villages.”



Councillor Tony Jackson – Leader, East Herts Council

From Annual Council Meeting 16 May 2012

Webcast: time index starting 0:39:08

http://www.eastherts.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/75644

1. WHAT IS SCRUTINY?

The aim of scrutiny is to provide an open and transparent forum in which elected councillors, sitting in public, can review the work of the council to check that policies and services are meeting the priorities and the needs of local people. Scrutiny committees cannot make decisions themselves, but they have the power of influence. They make recommendations informed by partner and public opinions, performance information, examples of best practice, expert advice and evidence.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) has set out the 'four principles of good scrutiny' which should apply in the scrutiny cycle – and which have been adopted by East Herts:



In addition, local government scrutiny has statutory powers to scrutinise the work and performance of partnerships and partners, in relation to Crime and Disorder and the work of the Local Strategic Partnership.

There is also a separate power to scrutinise Health, and East Herts contributes to this function which is led by Hertfordshire County Council. There are a lot of changes on the way arising out of the new Health and Social Care Act – but these are for the future and did not impact on the 2011/12 scrutiny agenda.

2. SCRUTINY AT EAST HERTS.

East Herts has three ‘topic specific’ scrutiny committees given below.

Corporate Business Scrutiny (CBS): Scheduled to meet 6 times per year and Joint Scrutiny: which meets 2 times a year	Regular performance monitoring
	Pre-decision scrutiny (selecting from the Forward Plan)
	Budget setting proposals and strategies
	Scrutiny and policy development of the ‘business’ side of the council including: finance, ICT, facilities, legal & procurement
Community Scrutiny: Scheduled to meet 4 times per year	Community Safety and Protection
	Community Development, Leisure & Culture
	Health and Housing
Environment Scrutiny: Scheduled to meet 4 times per year	Planning Policy and Transport
	Environment and Environmental Quality
	Conservation and Climate Change

During the year, two **Joint Scrutiny** sessions have been held to allow members from all the committees to come together to discuss significant budgetary and cross-cutting issues. It is cost effective and more time efficient to hold a single meeting rather than three separate ones.

The initial service plan and budget consultation with councillors (prior to the Joint meeting) was offered as an on-line forum available throughout December 2011 and up to the first Joint meeting in January 2012. This gave councillors an extended period of time to read and consider each option and to raise questions on the proposals – these could then be taken into account before the final draft budget and service plans were brought forward to committee.

East Herts Council has a seat on the county-wide Hertfordshire Health Scrutiny Panel. Our representative is the councillor who is Chairman of our own **Health Engagement Panel (HEP)** which operates as a ‘standing panel’ under the Community Scrutiny Committee.

During 2011/12, the Committees were supported by one full-time officer. The Scrutiny Officer role is to provide project management support to the Scrutiny Committees and undertake research and information analysis in relation to reviews set up by the main Committees. Another important strand of the officer’s role is to ensure external witnesses, experts, partners and local residents are invited to be involved in the scrutiny activity within East Herts.

3. How do the Committees decide what to scrutinise?

Councillors select issues which are:

- Of local public concern
- Linked to the council's vision and priorities
- Capable of being influenced
- Not being scrutinised by another body

In the light of the economic climate, 2011/12 saw councillors add three new considerations to topic planning. They decided to also consider:

- areas where significant costs might be incurred or could be saved
- minimising the level of risk associated with the topic/issue
- the length of time since the topic was last reviewed.

4. How to get involved

Scrutiny is strengthened by involving partners and residents. They bring expertise, local knowledge, fresh ideas and external challenge.

If you would like to know more, ring the Scrutiny Officer on 01992 531612 or e-mail scrutiny@eastherts.gov.uk

You can access full details on any item or outcome mentioned in the following pages of this report via our website. Agendas, reports and minutes of every council committee are posted and regularly updated – and meetings are open to the public:

<http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/committees>

If you ever take part in one of our scrutiny reviews and every time you attend as an observer, we would value your feedback to help us improve the process. An on-line feedback form is available at

<http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/scrutinyfeedback>

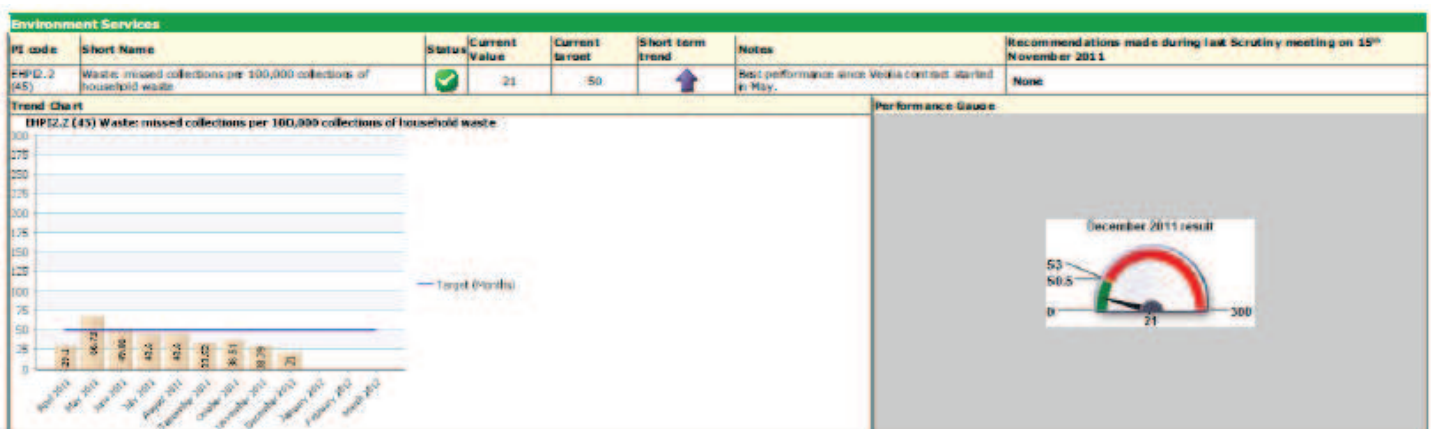
or you can ask for a paper-based version from the Scrutiny Officer.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACHIEVEMENTS May 2011 – April 2012

5. General business of all Committees

Performance monitoring:

- At any time this is an important role for scrutiny – but when funding is tight, it is important we make every penny count and make a measurable difference to residents. At every scrutiny meeting (alternate meetings for CBS), councillors receive a report showing how well the services are performing against target levels. Since 2010 far fewer of these targets are now set centrally – the majority are set by local agreement so we can focus on the issues which really matter to local people in East Hertfordshire. The report is known as a ‘Healthcheck’ for good reasons – it is one way of taking the temperature of the council and checking it is operating well. For CBS this report also includes financial information so that scrutiny gets an holistic view across the council’s business functions.
- One example from Environment Scrutiny is reproduced below. It relates to the collection of household waste and shows the number of ‘missed bins’ for every 100,000 houses visited.



Councillors are able to follow the monthly performance trend in the columns on the left hand side and use the dial on the right hand side as a quick reference ‘traffic light’ system to pick up on good/amber warning/red results.

As our new contractor took over in May 2011 the figure jumped up over target. Although concerned, councillors were aware that there had been changes to the collection routes and collection days. The contractor had to get used to the new routes and, despite extensive publicity it was inevitable that some residents would forget to put bins out on the new day. As the trend chart shows – both parties have settled down into the new routine and we now have a ‘missed bin’ rate well below our target figure.

Service Plan Monitoring:

- At the start of every year each council service sets out its main projects for the forthcoming 12 months. As part of the budget setting process councillors agree (or not) to fund these and every project has a completion date set against it. Halfway through the year the scrutiny committees get a report on the progress of each of the projects that fall under their remit – with another report coming to them at year end.

One mid year report which came to CBS in November 2011 began by stating

*In total, there are 53 actions in the 2011/12 Service Plans relevant to Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee, of which:
28% (15) have already been achieved
55% (29) are on target
17% (9) have had their completion dates revised.*

A good start – but scrutiny is interested in the 9 projects which are not on target as these might lead to problems further down the line. Each hold up is explained and councillors check to see whether they are satisfied enough is being done to remedy the situation. Sometimes it is another agency outside the council who might be taking longer than expected to act or make a decision – but if it is internal, then we have to find a solution and learn from the situation.

Call-In:

- Whenever a key decision is made by the Executive it is publicised and open to scrutiny for five working days before the decision takes effect. During that time, if four or more councillors object to the decision, it can be ‘called-in’ and heard by the most appropriate scrutiny committee.

During 2011/12 there were no ‘call-ins’ at East Herts.

Councillor Call for Action (CCfA):

- Under section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, councillors may call for debate and discussion at committee, on a topic of neighbourhood concern. These powers are limited to an issue which affects a single council ward and can only be brought when all other attempts at resolution have been exhausted.

Since the introduction of CCfA, councillors at East Herts have never had cause to bring forward such a case.

6. Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee (CBS)

Councillors

D Andrews (Chairman)	P Phillips (Vice Chairman)
E Bedford	M Pope
G Jones	J Ranger
W Mortimer	G Williamson
T Page	J Wing

Substitutes:

Cllrs S Bull, K Crofton, J Mayes and M Wood

Scrutiny:

- Along with the council's Audit Committee, CBS holds the reins on the 'business functions' of the council. During this year, councillors have subjected the following reports to scrutiny:
 - Annual Governance Statement
 - Partnership Register – Governance and risk management when working with other agencies

Scrutiny and Audit serve to check that statutory requirements, regulations and legal aspects of governance are complied with – offering East Herts residents a measure of security and confidence in the process.

- At the first meeting of the year, councillors got a sense of the scale of Freedom of Information requests coming into the council. The number grew by 42% in 2010 compared with 2009 and there was a further 52% increase in the first quarter of 2011 compared to the same period in 2010. The topics covered ranged from Allotments to Zoo Licensing and, as an illustration, officers reported that of the 220 requests in 2011 to date – 134 were from individuals, 39 from businesses, 27 from the media, 19 from various organisations and one from an MP.

Some requests are clear and easy to deal with as the data is readily available (eg: how many staff work for the council?) – but others are resource intensive as they require research by council staff to collect, collate and verify information as it might not be held in a format which matches the question raised (eg: How many social housing tenant enquiries in 2009 and 2010 and 2011, separately, mentioned any of the following words: ghost, ghosts, haunted, spirit, haunting or poltergeist?). For the interested reader – the answer to this question is "None"!

Every Freedom of Information question asked of East Herts, along with the reply, is posted on line on the council's website and can be found at <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=12831>

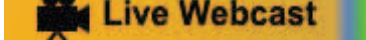
The council might never know why the question is being asked, but in most cases it has to invest resources into providing a reply. There are some safeguards to protect us from unreasonable or vexatious requests – but the Information Commissioner's Office can still over-rule the council should they interpret the evidence differently. This unquantifiable cost to the council was of real concern to scrutiny at this time of economic restraint and councillors asked for data on the 'time and cost per request' be kept over the coming year so it can be reviewed in 2012/13.

- Scrutiny, and the whole of council, is interested in the views and opinions of the public. Two reports were received by CBS which gave councillors an opportunity to check that the council was responding promptly and appropriately to local opinion:
 - Progress against the 'all survey' action plan (based on the public's responses to both the 2009 Residents' Survey and the 2008 Place Survey)
 - Review of comments, compliments and complaints 2010/11

Some situations are out of our control (heavy snow fall making it unsafe for the refuse collection vehicles to go out) and some are the responsibility of other agencies (potholes in the road) – but if there is a problem we can deal with then we want to find a solution and put procedures in place to prevent repeats.

In 2011/12 a small number of formal complaints (10) did get referred to the Local Government Ombudsman by the complainant and no cases of maladministration were identified during that time. However scrutiny was concerned over the length of time taken to deal with some complaints at the earlier Stage 2 level and, although there is always room for improvement, many of these delays could be explained by the council having to wait for data/information from an external agency (such as the Department of Works and Pensions).

- CBS always gets the opportunity to comb through the Corporate Annual Report (for the previous year), the Corporate Strategic Plan (projected forward for 4 years) and the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Plan (how are we going to pay for everything). These important documents then go on to the Executive and then full Council which allows them to be well aired and debated. Residents and the press can attend all these meetings and our Executive and Council are also webcast live on the evening. Access to the live service is through

the button on the front page of our website  and from there you can get to the archive of previous recordings.

The reports and plans themselves are also readily available on the website at <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=11547> .

- In a similar vein, the detailed debates, recommendations and decision making around the formal budget setting process are also held in an open and transparent forum with all the paperwork for the councillors' meeting also being available to residents and interested parties. Scrutiny of the service plans, the draft budget and the targets we are setting ourselves for the coming year are all presented to two **Joint Scrutiny** meetings in January and February each year when the members of all three committees come together. We used to meet separately but it was costly and time consuming so we streamlined the process and tried to make it more cost effective. It is a heavy workload for councillors but one which they take very seriously.
- One long and detailed scrutiny debate arose out of a review of the Discretionary Rate Relief which we offer. This 'relief' applies to charities and rural businesses where the council has some limited discretion to reduce the business rates paid by these categories of tax payers. The cost of offering this relief to this group (just over 200 organisations) is £97K with the funding coming partly from the council and partly from government. In the current economic climate, every area of expenditure has to be reviewed – and this budget was no exception.

In order to identify £30K of savings, scrutiny sent a recommendation on changes to Rate Relief for rural pubs, rural petrol stations, sports clubs, village halls and national charities to the Executive for their consideration. The Executive accepted most points but decided to look again at village halls and also exempted the local Citizens' Advice Service (CAB) from any reduction in relief.

Comment from Cllr David Andrews (Chairman):

I would like to thank members of CBS for the time and effort they have given to scrutiny during 2011/12. Many reports they have to deal with are technical and full of detailed financial data – after all, the business of a district council which oversees the wellbeing of some 128,000 people is always going to be a complex matter.

We keep looking for ways to make the information more 'digestible' and I think we have succeeded with the visual format of the Performance Healthcheck – but we still have a way to go with summarising and presenting financial material. With the help of feedback from councillors – and ideas from the public – I would like to see the work of CBS become even more transparent and accessible to a wider audience.

7. Community Scrutiny

Councillors

G McAndrew (Chairman)	J Mayes
E Buckmaster	P Moore
S Bull (Vice Chairman)	P Ruffles
T Herbert	N Symonds
D Hone	C Woodward

Substitutes:

Cllr N Poulton

Scrutiny:

- At the start of the civic year councillors got to see the details relating to the December 2010 -April 2011 period for the newly reopened Hertford Theatre on the old Castle Hall site. The project was designed as an 'invest-to-save' scheme with the expectation that over time the council would increase income, maximise use of this asset and make a significant and positive contribution to the cultural offer in the district.

In addition to improved overall financial performance – the visual appearance of the building has been greatly enhanced, the venue is much more accessible for customers with a disability and councillors heard that the income for room hire was running well ahead of target. The introduction of a digital cinema has also been appreciated by the public and it opened to sell-out showings.

Projects on this scale do have teething problems and the report set out the key challenges which still needed to be addressed. Although acknowledging that it was 'early days' and quick judgements should not be made – councillors did pick up on the lower than projected customer figures for the main auditorium and the delay in installing the micro-hydro unit (planned for the weir site beside the building) which will be an attraction in its own right but also reduce utility costs for the theatre. Both of these points and a full year of financial and audience data will be the focus of a detailed report coming back to the scrutiny committee in June 2012.

- Community Scrutiny was part of the process which reviewed a report on the Assessment of East Herts sports facilities which had been undertaken as part of Sport England 'Facilities Improvement Scheme'. Scrutiny was pleased to learn that our robust approach to analysis and consultation was seen as an exemplar by Sport England who would be using the resulting strategy as a model of good practice.

- East Herts is one member of the local Community Safety Partnership and detailed information on that area of work can be found on our website at <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=10435>

The report which came to scrutiny during the year was reviewing progress against the 3 year action plan and the key issue which stood out for councillors was the very low response rate from the public when the Partnership put out a consultation to gather residents' views on crime and community safety issues. This might suggest our residents feel very safe and secure in the district and have no concerns to put forward – but councillors made a number of low and nil cost suggestions related to raising the profile of the next consultation and getting better publicity with the objective of increasing the response rate.

- As part of their monitoring of the Homeless and Homeless Prevention strategy action plan, councillors got to hear how recent changes in legislation could impact on local people. On the horizon are social landlords offering fixed term tenancies (rather than lifetime ones), tenancies being offered at 80% market rate and the incoming reduction in housing allowances.

At particular risk are tenants under the age of 35 who are currently in one-bedroom accommodation and who would have their allowance reduced to a single room rate. Scrutiny is keen for the situation to be closely monitored, particularly in relation to younger people.

- The main East Herts Housing Strategy has run its full five year course (2008 -2011) and needs renewing. Scrutiny was able to consider and agree on a set of key future objectives which can now go out for wider consultation with our partners and residents.

Councillors had already supported the main themes for the future (the strategic housing objectives) and all the consultation will be around ways to deliver these

- Maximise the delivery of a range of new homes, including affordable homes whilst ensuring the best use of existing housing
 - Meet the needs of a growing elderly population
 - Meet the needs of vulnerable people and stronger communities.
- It's always good to end the year on a high note – and that's just what our leisure contractor SLM - Everyone Active was able to do. After the 2009 investment of £3.58 million made by East Herts into the local leisure facilities it is excellent news to hear that our residents are

'voting with their feet' as membership numbers and usage figures continue to stay strong. Scrutiny congratulated SLM on their 2011 performance and for helping to make this 'invest-to-save' project such a success.

SLM continues to invest in our venues across the district with £119,000 being spent at Hartham (Hertford) and a further £40,000 due at Grange Paddocks (Bishop's Stortford).



During the year, the council installed £84,000 of Technogym gym equipment at Fanshawe Pool and Gym in Ware. In return, SLM - Everyone Active has agreed to reduce the management fee, saving the council £154,700 over the contract's seven remaining years. Some of the new equipment at Fanshawe is specifically designed for wheelchair users and people with disabilities, putting the leisure centre among the best in the region for people on exercise referral schemes from their GP.

Not to be left out, Leventhorpe Pool and Gym in Sawbridgeworth will receive £29,000 of new equipment in autumn 2012.

Reviews:

- Scrutiny commissioned a short-term member/officer working group to look at community grants and make recommendations to get them 'fit for purpose' for 2012/13. The group reviewed the way grants had been split up into a range of different 'pots' and judged the current system to be over complicated and confusing. They suggested rebranding the funding streams, simplifying the application process and clarifying the allocation procedure.

The group also looked at prioritising a Jubilee theme and an Olympic theme for 2012. All their recommendations were accepted by the committee and by the Executive - and 67 grants have already been allocated. Further details can be obtained from the website at <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=25480>

- 2011/12 saw a task and finish group (which is what we call our review groups) of six councillors, chaired by Cllr Andrews, look at two key aspects of Community Safety in more detail. The first part of the review examined the challenges facing community safety funding and the second part addressed the issue of the public perception of crime as it relates to the actual level of crime reported in the area.

Members on the group represented a good cross-party section of the council, including our youngest member (Cllr Charlie Rowley) who brought a fresh perspective to the discussions.

Community Safety has had to contribute to the government's deficit reduction and funding has fallen from £120,000 in 2010 to just £55,218 in the current year, so it is easy to see why some difficult decisions have to be made. With all projects having merit and contributing to community safety, this was a challenging task. As the extent of even more future cuts was not known, the group come up with a report which in their view offered the 'least worse' option for withdrawing funding from specific projects. They set out the recommendation in a ranking order for making cuts, listing which should 'go' first - through to the one which should have its funding 'protected' as far as possible.

For details of the recommended rank order and arguments which supported the difficult decision, see the full committee report and subsequent notes (minute 440) from the November 2011 meeting <http://online.eastherts.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=116&MIId=1742&Ver=4>

The group moved straight on to look at the question: "Despite East Herts having low crime levels and ranking so highly in independent 'quality of life' surveys, why do residents appear more fearful of crime than the actual incidents of crime suggest?" Supported by academic research, the group quickly appreciated that this was an intractable question in itself and focused on looking for ways of working with our partners to counter the perception.

The resulting report was based on a wealth of consultation including attendees at the Rural Parish Conference, a questionnaire carried out by councillors in their own wards, a Conversation Café held in Hertford Theatre, presentations to town councils and consideration of responses to relevant questions in the 2011 East Herts Residents'

Survey. The group also had a face to face meeting with the new police Chief Inspector for the district.

The resulting three recommendations and suggested action plan can be found in detail under the February 2012 meeting (minute 641) on <http://online.eastherts.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=116&MIId=1722&Ver=4>

Both reports were offered to, and taken up by the full Community Safety Partnership.

Trying something new:

- At one meeting of this committee the issue of an ageing population generally and the demographic data for East Herts particularly were raised as a concern. Estimates suggest that in 2015, 17.5% of the East Herts population will be 65+ years old – that will be 24,600 residents. Councillors agreed to initiate a discussion on the topic with the Executive member for health, housing and community support – with a view to exploring the council’s readiness, resilience and sustainability in respect of the “ageing well” and “later life” agenda.

This approach to scrutiny – one of questioning the Executive’s forward thinking on a themed topic – was new for East Herts. Councillors raised issues relating to strategy, budgets, involvement of older people, the concept of ‘lifetime neighbourhoods’ and problems of social isolation and poor rural transport links.

There were three key outcomes from the discussion:


- The formation of a member group to look at the role of the ward councillor in relation to “ageing well”
- For all senior officers to look at “age proofing” their services and estimate any cost involved/resources needed
- An undertaking to strengthen the focus with our partners on addressing the growing number and needs of this sizable section of our community

Comment from Cllr Graham McAndrew (Chairman):

It’s been a very productive year for Community Scrutiny - trialling new questioning techniques throughout the year and putting our extensive training to the test. All members of the committee played an important role in ensuring that our very full programme was scrutinised carefully during the course of the past year.

I feel the committee has made a real contribution to ‘launching’ the Ageing Well initiative which will bring wide-ranging, long-term benefits to East Herts residents. On a more immediate timescale, we hope our communities enjoy their local Jubilee and Olympic themed events which we have been able to support through our community grant programme – the only thing scrutiny can’t do is guarantee the sunshine!!

8. Health Engagement Panel

Chairman: Councillor Dorothy Hone	
Councillors	
R Beeching (Vice Chairman)	K Crofton
E Buckmaster	N Symonds
S Bull	

Substitutes:
Cllrs P Ballam and P Moore

Partners and outward focus:

- This Panel has an excellent record for dialogue with local health and well-being providers and 2011/12 was no exception. Councillors welcomed visitors to every one of their meetings during the past year and the opportunity for scrutiny of the service, generating ideas for co-operative working and problem-solving grew out of the discussions.

month	speaker and agency	Key issues for East Herts
June 2011	Darren Leach: Executive Director Delivery at Princess Alexander Hospital, Harlow	31% of PAH patients come from East Herts – poor rural transport links. Also limited signage to the hospital from routes on Hertfordshire side of the county boundary. Councillors raised the issue of the use within PAH of the ‘purple folder’ communication tool for patients who have learning difficulties.
Oct 2011	Sarah Brierley: Director of Business Development and Partnerships, East and North Herts NHS Trust	How to work together to best communicate the forthcoming changes to adult and children’s emergency department care at the QEII and Lister hospitals. Four councillors went on to take part in the Trust’s focus groups on the matter and information on the changes was included in the council’s Spring 2012 edition of LINK magazine

Oct 2011	Managers from two of the Children's Centres within the East Herts District	An opportunity to hear about the full range of work undertaken by the Centres, but a focus on the 'Funky Food' healthy eating project run jointly by the centre in Hertford and East Herts Council. Explore ideas and opportunities for further joint work.
Dec 2011	Siobham Nundram: Community Services Manager, Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	An opportunity to hear about the transformation of mental health services and support – particularly looking at what is now different and new for patients in East Herts and their families.
Feb 2012	Anne Griffiths: Programme Lead for Choose and Book NHS Hertfordshire PCT	An opportunity for councillors to better understand the 'Choose and Book' system of GP referrals to specialists and for the council to ask for data on level of GP/patient take-up at surgeries in this district.

Internal scrutiny:

- As a district council, we have a significant part to play in the general well-being of local residents. The Health Engagement Panel contributed extensively to the development of the East Herts Public Health strategy 2008-2013. <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=9326> will take you to this document and the Panel continues to check on whether the planned projects are delivering positive results. Their work this year has included
 - Performance monitoring of progress against 2011/12 action plan
 - Review of strategy and proposals for 2012/13
 - Agreement on 2012/13 action plan.

With limited resources, it is important to identify the most productive and effective ways to work. The approach taken by the Health Engagement Panel has been to be very clear about what each project was setting out to achieve, evaluating whether it has been successful and then how it might be improved or developed further if we are going to repeat it in the following year.

Working together (with feedback from our local partners) HEP members and officers have developed an interactive, workshop approach to joint planning for the year ahead.

- We have been subject to ‘scrutiny’ ourselves during the year as part of the judging process for a national award – where we were successful in being given the **Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) 2011 Health Promotion and Community Well-being Organisation and Partnership Award.**

East Herts Council achieved the highest level of award classification, related in particular to the range of Public Health activities completed since the launch of the East Herts Public Health Strategy 2008-2013. The award is for three years and means that the council will be able to work with the RSPH to further develop and improve its Public Health effectiveness and targeted work in reducing health inequalities for local East Herts residents.

The feedback from the assessment panel at the Panel Challenge event on the 28 September 2011 highlighted a number of key strengths of the work of East Herts Council:

- Strong and effective partnership working
- Good involvement and engagement with elected councillors
- Clear strategic support and individual leadership of the Public Health role

External Scrutiny:

- Formal scrutiny of the Health Service lies with Hertfordshire County Council and all 10 district/borough councils make contribution to that body. The timing of our Health Engagement Panel meetings are set to fall just before these HCC meetings. This allows East Herts councillors to consider agenda items in advance and discuss what local perspective needs to be voiced at the main Hertfordshire Scrutiny Committee.

These HCC meetings are also open to the public and details can be found through their main website.

http://www.hertsdirect.org/your-council/civic_calendar/healthscrut/ will take you through to their Health Scrutiny Committee meetings page.

Comment from Cllr Dorothy Hone (Chairman):

This has been a busy year for the Health Engagement Panel and I thank colleagues for their support. Work continues on the Public Health Strategy and the 3 year award from the Royal Society of Public Health will enable the Council to further develop public health effectiveness and encourage our residents in making healthy lifestyle choices to ensure wellbeing.

Changes in wider health services are now being finalised and there will be much to do to ensure continuity of good health provision and reassurance to all our residents in the coming year.

9. Environment Scrutiny

Councillors

D Hollebon (Chairman)	P Gray
D Abbott	N Poulton
W Ashley	C Rowley (Vice Chairman)
S Basra	M Wood
R Beeching	J Wyllie

Substitutes:

Cllrs E Bedford, A Dearman and J Wing

Scrutiny:

- Collectively, our Refuse and Recycling contract along with the Street Cleansing and the Grounds Maintenance ones are the largest area of service expenditure for the council. An evaluation of the 'value for money' and residents' satisfaction of the services is always high on the scrutiny agenda. The first meeting of the year gives councillors the chance to look back at the previous year's performance and feedback.

Councillors regularly get key data via the 'Healthcheck' reports (as described on page 4) and this annual report is able to draw together the results and give a wider perspective on the services as a whole. Alongside the encouraging increase in percentage of household waste recycled and composted (up from 41.24% to 48.29%), officers were also able to report an increase in income from commercial refuse collection (up £77K), a slight reduction in the number of cases of larger fly tips (down 2%) and a continuing very low level of abandoned vehicles to be removed (only 14 in East Herts for the whole year). The continuing and improving high standard of grounds maintenance has helped East Herts in gaining/keeping Green Flag status for three of its main open spaces across the district.

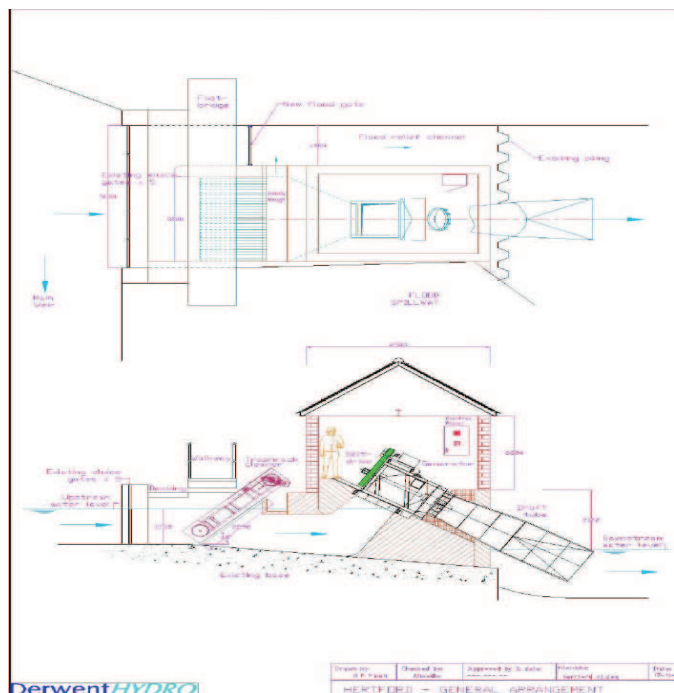
During the year, 900 inspections were carried out to check the standard of cleanliness in our district. Of these, only 1% was found to fall short regarding litter whilst 10% did not reach standard for 'detritus'. It is these anomalies that scrutiny wants to know more about. In this case the figure can be explained by the rural nature of so much of our district. Landslip from banks and verges following heavy rain tends to result in more detritus on rural roads than in districts with urban highways that have neat kerbs and pavements.

The committee, through the Chairman was able to congratulate officers and our contractors on an excellent year of results.

- In 2009 scrutiny members undertook a major piece of work on climate change which resulted in a new strategy for the council and a detailed action plan. This plan covered the council's own use of resources and resulting 'carbon footprint', the carbon footprint of our contractors and our role as a community leader in supporting the district as a whole to address the issue.

Despite best intentions, some of the projects have had to be put 'on hold' as funding from central government or agency partners was withdrawn as part of the budget constraints and financial cut backs.

This action plan was never going to be a 'quick-win' - many of the projects are long-term ones which take time to set up and evidence results. The delay which has disappointed scrutiny most is the hold up to the installation of a micro-hydro scheme at Castle Weir alongside Hertford Theatre. Long running discussions and negotiations with the Environment Agency has meant work could not start in summer 2011 as planned. The committee heard that the next window of opportunity to start would be when water levels are at their lowest in summer 2012 – but even this is not certain as the Environment Agency is still to give final permission. Multi agency working has its strengths – and its challenges.



Reviews:

- Scrutiny is always keen to check its recommendations have resulted in the outcomes they were looking for – and committees are open enough to acknowledge when things are not working as well as hoped

and prepared to modify their position. A 2009/10 task and finish group on Planning Enforcement had made some recommendations which had been running for a year to collect and collate data for analysis. The group reconvened after the year to look at the outcomes.

As a result of their review, the group modified their recommendations and acknowledged that some data they had requested did not add to either the efficiency or the effectiveness of the service – but did in fact add a burden of unnecessary administration on the staff. Their follow-up report evidenced the findings and redesigned the performance indicators required to focus only on those that have proved helpful and support the delivery of a high quality, responsive service to the public.

- The most demanding piece of work this year has been carried out by the task and finish group which has been developing a Parking and Transport strategy for East Herts. Scrutiny is not always about examining what we already do – but also about undertaking extensive research and recommending to the Executive and Council what we could aspire to in the future. The report from this cross-party group (chaired by Cllr McAndrew) looked at a strategy for the 10 year period from 2012 to 2022 and based its findings on feedback from 700 written responses from the public, meetings with town and parish councillors, discussions with focus groups in all 5 of our larger towns, data from the 2011 Residents' Survey, best practice examples from elsewhere, specialist/industry research and local, related documents.

The group recognised that there are real tensions between the economic, social and environmental aspects of parking and transport management – and their report and recommendations sought to find a pragmatic balance between them. The final report was well received by the full scrutiny committee and will be going forward to Executive and then to full Council at the start of the 2012/13 civic year – and news of the outcome will be available on the council website after 4 July 2012.

Comment from Cllr Diane Hollebon (Chairman):

Environmental Scrutiny has had a busy year with Task & Finish Groups still playing an important role within the Scrutiny function. To date we have reviewed Climate Change Action Plan; Parks & Open Spaces, with a new Group set up – the Parking and Transport Strategy. This Group has been particularly busy, looking at the overall picture affecting the whole District, liaising with the Towns and Rural areas to gauge the views of residents before final presentation of the Strategy to the Executive on 22 May 2012.

I wish to thank all Environmental Scrutiny Members for their support and I must also officially record my personal thanks to all the Officers for their hard work

10. External JOINT SCRUTINY and WORKING WITH COUNTY

During 2011/12, Hertfordshire County Council published the reports from several earlier topic groups and held several new topic groups, five of which have some interest for district and borough councils.

Details of these and all other HCC reviews can be found on Hertfordshire County Council's own website via the following link:

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/your-community/havesay/scrutiny/scrutinycomm/topics/>

In Summary:

- **Youth Connexions – an investigation into the new integrated youth support service (part 2)** (held 13 May 2011: report published 10 June 2011). East Herts Executive Member and an officer attended Part 1 of the topic group and the session held this May was a follow up review. The 2011 HCC topic group included Cllrs Ruffles, Andrews and Cheswright sitting as county councillors. The group wanted to look at the progress made since the new, integrated Youth Connexions Hertfordshire service was set up in April 2008.

Amongst their comments and recommendations:

- Councillors were pleased to hear of the joint working with district councils on the development of diversionary and positive action projects. They endorsed the need, in the current economic climate, for creative solutions to be found in order to maintain this provision.
- Councillors were also in support of the Channelmogo website and MogoZout youth portal which gave young people access to information – however, they remained concerned about the perceived lack of facilities in some rural areas and where access to town provision is difficult for those living in rural areas.

- **Highways Maintenance** - (held on 17 & 24 June 2011: report published 11 July 2011). The focus of the scrutiny was to assess the impact of maintenance strategies on road conditions. During the review, county councillors (including our CBS Chairman, Cllr Andrews) had the opportunity to take part in an 'option appraisal workshop'. This was based on a software programme which let councillors work through the impact that different scenarios would have on the highways network over future years. This allowed councillors to see the balance between cost and risk in taking decisions on the various engineering options open to them for any particular project.

Amongst their comments and recommendations:

- Councillors noted the key role played by districts/borough partners and found that the 'deep cleans' carried out jointly with some authorities works well and could be expanded to all areas.
- They recommended that Communications should be improved further (with the public and councillors) and that additional costs (particularly on restricted working hours) should be kept to the minimum necessary and savings used to fund the maintenance programme.
- Councillors did recommend sticking with the current holistic maintenance strategy. This is a Hybrid Balanced Approach which seeks to find the optimum

balance between undertaking preventative work and doing the 'worst-first' jobs to best manage the assets of the whole network.

- **Adoption of New Roads** – (held on 26 Sept 2011: report published 14 Oct 2011). The purpose of the scrutiny was to consider the effectiveness of the revised approach for adoption of new roads as public highway introduced in November 2009. The county council is the Highway Authority and has a responsibility to keep all adopted public roads and pavements safe for everyone to use – however, not all roads are adopted. Currently there is no need for the developer to submit adoption details to gain planning permission and they are unlikely to commit to the expense of preparing such detail until planning permission is gained.

Scrutiny members on the group (including Cllr Cheswright sitting as a county councillor) expressed their disappointment that no progress has been made nationally to change the law to give local authorities the power to oblige developers to enter into S38 Agreements in order that highways which meet HCC's revised approach for adoption of new roads can be adopted.

- **Crime & Disorder 2012 Scrutiny - Alcohol Misuse** (held on 4 & 5 Oct 2011: report published 19 Oct 2011). The purpose of this scrutiny was to consider the effectiveness of current interventions to reduce alcohol misuse and alcohol related crime and disorder. The scrutiny concentrated on the night time economy.

Amongst their wider recommendations, scrutiny members commended the work of the Street Pastors and Street Angels and asked for their appreciation to be passed onto the various voluntary groups operating across the county.









- **Bankside and River Pollution** – (held on 3 Nov 2011: report published 25 Jan 2012). The purpose of this scrutiny was to examine three main questions:
 1. Are water pollution and bankside issues on Hertfordshire's rivers a concern?
 2. Are there particular 'hotspots' for pollution in Hertfordshire?
 3. Whose responsibility is it to deal with the different types of pollution?








The Topic Group (which included Cllr Woodward sitting as a county councillor) made a number of recommendations to the Environment Agency, the Countryside Management Service and the County Council itself, but none specifically to district councils – except to note (*incorrectly*) that the district councils are the main litter agencies for all public rights of way. We are actually the litter authority for the public highway (not rights of way) and an example of an area of the highway adjacent to a river is on Folly Island, Hertford (below) and on last inspection the footpath here was given a very creditable grade B for litter.



11. EVALUATING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

During a previous scrutiny evaluation process a year ago, Councillors identified some areas where they wanted to make some improvements to scrutiny. This year they looked at what progress we had made in these areas during 2011/12:

What we wanted to achieve during 2011/12	Some examples of what we did towards this objective	How did we do?
Continue to look for ways to improve the level of community and public involvement in scrutiny	<p><i>The Parking and Transport strategy task and finish group drew directly on 700 public responses to a survey published in our LINK magazine and also held focus group meetings of residents, businesses and partners in each of the 5 main towns.</i></p> <p><i>The Community Safety review task and finish group held a Conversation Café on the issue at Hertford Theatre and drew evidence from the public's responses to the Community Safety Partnership questionnaire as well as carrying out their own survey (by councillors in their own wards).</i></p> <p><i>During 2011/12, no scrutiny topic suggestion came directly from a resident and we had no public attend a main formal committee meeting.</i></p>	  
Continue to bring evidence from independent or outside sources and make evidence easier to review	<p><i>The Parking and Transport strategy task and finish group used local and national material and published documents for benchmarking and drew on industry lead bodies for background research and examples of good practice.</i></p> <p><i>The Community Safety review task and finish group had the opportunity to meet and interview the newly appointed Chief Inspector for the district (on his second day in the post).</i></p> <p><i>Although improved, the presentation of complex financial data can still be daunting for new councillors – and by extension to the general public.</i></p>	  
Plan agendas well in advance, identify the 'value added' which scrutiny can bring to a topic and ensure this is monitored and recognised	<p><i>Advance items for each scrutiny committee agenda are notified at least six months in advance (and some up to 12 months) and agreed by councillors at each meeting. This information is available to the public on request or via the council's website.</i></p> <p><i>All task and finish groups have a scoping document prepared and agreed to clarify what will and will not be covered by the review and to list the outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>Although improved, some issues still come to scrutiny too far down the line/too late to effect any</i></p>	 











	<i>significant changes. Also, not enough publicity is given to the linkage between improved/high quality services and the role scrutiny has played in achieving these.</i>	
Continue to keep scrutiny councillors informed and offer opportunities to develop skills needed	<p><i>An e-Newsletter (Scrutiny Matters) is written and circulated to all councillors every six months. The weekly Members' Information Bulletin is used to update councillors of any significant scrutiny news and as a reminder for any internal scrutiny activity.</i></p> <p><i>All newly elected councillors were sent a scrutiny induction pack at the start of the civic year.</i></p> <p><i>Regular scrutiny related training was available to councillors throughout the year as part of their wider development programme. (Details of 2011/12 activity listed in Section 14 of this report).</i></p> <p><i>District councillors tend to be very active within their own communities (town/parish councils, housing association bodies, voluntary/community group etc) and it is difficult to arrange training at a time which they can all attend.</i></p>	   
Scrutiny of external public bodies and partners	<p><i>The Health Engagement Panel had external visitors/partners attending every one of its meetings during 2011/12. These are listed on page 14/15 of this report.</i></p> <p><i>The leisure provider SLM attended Community Scrutiny and responded in detail to a set of themed questions prepared in advance – with different members of the committee leading on each theme.</i></p> <p><i>No external Joint Scrutiny was undertaken during 2011/12 and East Herts did not submit any formal evidence directly to a County review as no topic on the agenda lent itself to this approach.</i></p>	 

The Directors and the Executive members were canvassed for written feedback and asked for examples of how the scrutiny process in 2011/12 had supported the work of the council and asking for specific areas to strengthen during 2012/13.

The responses show an Executive open to scrutiny and a willingness to develop the 'critical friend' relationship with stronger challenge coming from scrutiny members. There is also the 'reality check' - with scrutiny having to be undertaken in the light of the existing economic climate and a shared understanding of why some difficult choices and changes need to be made.

Scrutiny committee members were all invited to workshops in April 2012 to evaluate their performance in 2011/12. A written response form was also made available to those councillors who could not attend the interactive sessions.

Councillors were asked to look at how well the scrutiny activity in East Herts matches up to the four principles of good practice set out by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (refer back to CfPS diagram on page 1 of this report). Their responses mirrored the feeling expressed last year: it is a 'work in progress' and there are always improvements and new approaches to be tried out.

CfPS principle	Some examples of what we did towards this .. and what we need to build on ..	How did we do?
<p>provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers</p>	<p><i>Challenged the plans for Discretionary Rate Relief and got the Executive to look again at some categories.</i></p> <p><i>With so many newly elected councillors in 2011/12 – need time to build knowledge, experience and confidence to challenge.</i></p>	 
<p>enables the voice and concerns of the public and its communities</p>	<p><i>Scrutiny made extensive use of written survey and questionnaire responses from residents and held focus groups specifically to allow the voice and concerns of the communities to be heard.</i></p> <p><i>Low public response rate to on-line consultations – need councillors to become familiar with and actively promote newer channels of communication.</i></p>	 
<p>is carried out by 'independent-minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny role</p>	<p><i>Task and finish groups set the agenda and 'own' their recommendations and reports submitted in their name.</i></p> <p><i>With so many newly elected councillors in 2011/12 – need time to build knowledge, experience and confidence to lead.</i></p>	 
<p>drives improvement in public services</p>	<p><i>Recommended a simplification to the Community Grants 'pots' and asked for the funding to be themed for the Jubilee and Olympic year.</i></p> <p><i>Promoted wider use of 'purple folder' in local hospital to support communication for people with a learning disability.</i></p> <p><i>'Ageing Well' issues embedded across services and future developments following the scrutiny debate with Executive Member.</i></p> <p><i>Role of scrutiny in driving improvement can get 'lost' – especially if councillors themselves don't recognise the links and celebrate success.</i></p>	   

12. WHAT ARE OUR PLANS FOR 2012/13?

Councillors have identified some areas in which they would like to further strengthen scrutiny in 2012/13:

What we want to do?	How are we going to do it? – an action plan for 2012/13
Actively look for ways to improve the level of community and public involvement in scrutiny	<p><i>Continue to develop the 'Community Leadership' role of councillors in their wards and take scrutiny 'out' to residents wherever possible.</i></p> <p><i>Encourage topic suggestions from residents and explore idea of getting issues raised through town/parish councils and youth councils.</i></p> <p><i>Councillors to raise awareness of the on-line budget consultation process open to residents and the business community and support officers in widening the consultation to other 'seldom heard' groups in order to provide scrutiny with more external views and opinions (eg when asked to undertake surveys within their own ward).</i></p>
Strengthen use of evidence from independent or outside sources and plan approach to questioning	<p><i>Find cost effective and timely ways of bringing external evidence into any review – through expert witnesses (including more external experts in person or by written submission of evidence), visits where appropriate, surveys/questionnaires, published documents and good practice examples from similar authorities.</i></p> <p><i>Make more use of themed topics and pre-planned questions to gather evidence.</i></p>
Clearly identify the 'value added' which scrutiny can bring to a topic and ensure this is monitored and recognised	<p><i>Focus scrutiny reviews on topics where there is real scope for influencing change and where measurable benefits for residents can be seen.</i></p> <p><i>Be clear about scrutiny role and impact in respect of agenda item choices and reports brought to committee.</i></p> <p><i>Identify outcomes which can be used in council publications to illustrate the positive impact of scrutiny to raise awareness.</i></p>
Continue to keep scrutiny members informed and offer opportunities to develop skills needed	<p><i>Continue publishing an e-Newsletter every 6 months and make use of weekly bulletin (MIB) to update councillors on significant issues/developments and confirm scrutiny related events.</i></p> <p><i>Offer councillors 'pre briefing' material where relevant to widen knowledge and understand context/background to topics.</i></p> <p><i>Ensure training opportunities are well publicised and suitable options are available for both new and experienced councillors. Test out a range of different learning approaches to meet the needs of councillors and fit into other time constraints they might have.</i></p>
Strengthen scrutiny of external public bodies and partners	<p><i>Move from 'scrutiny of' to 'scrutiny with' partners when reviewing local services offered to residents.</i></p> <p><i>Identify opportunities (jointly with other councils where possible for efficiency) to scrutinise aspects of the LSP or a common issue.</i></p>

Work programmes

At the end of the year, councillors were asked to agree outline agendas for their 2012/13 meetings - but there is flexibility to review and amend them throughout the year to keep the work of scrutiny relevant and topical.

Topics already confirmed:

CBS has already agreed to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comments, Compliments and Complaints• Review of Community and Public Engagement action plan (particularly the A5 size LINK magazine and the use of social media)
Community Scrutiny has already agreed to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Report for Hertford Theatre• East Herts Sustainable Communities Strategy – a focus on the 3 new Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) priorities• Community Grants: review of applications and allocation for Q1/2 & Q3/4
Health Eng Panel has already agreed to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HCC Health and Wellbeing strategy – respond to consultation• Speaker – new Director of Public Health (after he takes up post July 2012)• Speaker – HealthWatch (once new arrangements are in place)
Environment Scrutiny has already agreed to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report on the new recycling ‘drive’ (Project Surge)• Parks and Open Spaces: end of current 2007/12 strategy and draft for a new one• Climate Change action plan – progress against action plan with data/results of carbon and cost savings generated

The most up to date versions of all the topics scheduled for each committee can be found under the papers published on the East Herts website (<http://online.eastherts.gov.uk/moderngov/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1> will take you to the most recent ‘Work Programme’ report under each scrutiny meeting agenda).

The committees may wish to add to their work programmes by selecting from a list of ‘reserve’ topics drawn from a number of sources. To date, there are a number of issues expected to come under closer scrutiny during 2012/13, including:

- Review of our Taxi Licensing policy and procedures
- Review of our Environmental Crime policies (when new legislation is finalised and guidance published)
- Review of our Grounds’ Maintenance Contract (due for renewal)

As every year, a short article about scrutiny was printed in the council's regular LINK magazine which goes to every household in the district. The spring edition, delivered during March 2012, invited residents to suggest any issues for consideration by the scrutiny committees during the coming year.



The new 2012/13 scrutiny committee members will make the final decision as to which topics are added to their committee agenda or set up for more detailed review by a task and finish group.

All the work of the 2012/13 scrutiny committees will focus on helping to deliver the three new corporate priorities of East Herts Council:

PEOPLE:
This priority focuses on enhancing the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.
PLACE:
This priority focuses on the standard of the built environment and our neighbourhoods and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean.
PROSPERITY:
This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic and social opportunities.

Our task and finish groups tend to meet several times, spread out over a number of months and this is appropriate when evidence needs to be gathered over time. However, there may be some topics which could benefit from 1 or 2 day scrutiny, where councillors can be immersed in an issue over a shorter period of time – making recommendations based on fresh and immediate evidence.

Although this approach was not used during last year, the pressure of reduced resources may make it a more appropriate method during 2012/13.

13. THE EVOLVING ROLE OF SCRUTINY

There are general implications for scrutiny arising from the government's new legislation:

- the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011
- the Localism Act 2011 and
- the Health and Social Care Act 2012

Powers in all three pieces of legislation – and in other legislation enacted by the current government – emphasise the importance of partnership working in the future delivery of public services. Large-scale commissioning, more joint working and different attitudes to procurement will mean that the way that services are delivered will be subject to profound change in the coming months and years.

While this may initially suggest that scrutiny will need to look at more “external services”, the challenge is in fact more fundamental than this. Increasingly, council business is delivered in partnership with others and the contents of the Acts will only serve to accelerate this trend. It will become more difficult to distinguish between “internal” council-only services and “external” ones delivered by partners. The merging of the two will mean that the way in which scrutiny deals with all issues across a local area will need to be harmonised.

This may involve a number of changes:

- More proactive consultation and discussion with partners about the scrutiny work programme (we consult members and officers within the council but it is less usual to speak to partners more widely);
- A better understanding of scrutiny by partners more generally and if necessary develop a protocol to define relationships in the future, focusing on improvement and the avoidance of duplication;
- More scrutiny on specific issues, that may **involve** partners, rather than “scrutiny **of** partners”. Traditionally, partners may have been invited to give evidence to scrutiny committees to give an account of their general work. It may make more sense to integrate evidence from partners into scrutiny reviews of “issues” affecting local people;
- More joint scrutiny. The administrative boundaries of some partners or partnerships may not be coterminous with those of the local authority. More informal or formal joint working may be necessary – particularly in two tier areas.

Into this complex landscape, scrutiny, with its broader powers over partners, will have to find a niche. In practice, this may mean that scrutiny will be carrying out more joint work with other bodies and agencies to pursue areas of mutual interest.

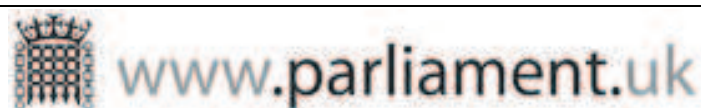
For example, with others, our local authority scrutiny function might

- collaborate with tenant scrutiny panels to jointly challenge housing providers in the local area,
- draw evidence from Local HealthWatch to challenge health and social care providers,
- share information with Police and Crime Panels.

Apart from enhancing the scope and profile of scrutiny work, this could provide a focus to target resources more effectively.

Central inspection is largely being withdrawn in the new landscape, replaced by the use of 'market forces', direct elections and transparency as means to ensure local accountability. Local people, and their representatives, are being expected to take a stronger role in securing accountable and effective services.

Going forward, there is a key role for scrutiny to play in allowing our directly elected district councillors to drive the local improvement process, to maintain momentum and to provide constructive scrutiny based on challenging traditional approaches to service delivery.



General information on the new Acts can be found on the parliament website and details of the legislation are on the specialist pages below:

Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/13/contents/enacted>

Localism Act 2011

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents>

Health and Social Care Act 2012

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/7/contents/enacted>

14. TRAINING

As part of a much wider training programme, councillors from East Herts attended the following scrutiny related events during 2011/12:

Date	Event/session	Delivered by ...
24 May 2011	Group and tutorial-style training on 'Covalent' (the Corporate Performance Management software designed specifically for the public sector and used by East Herts) – to give councillors the skills to look up any information they are interested in, at any time. "Data Quality" – to explain all the checks that are carried out on statistics and information before they are reported to ensure decisions made by councillors are based on sound evidence	In-house by the Performance team – delivered as part of the Induction training for newly elected councillors and a refresher for returning councillors
31 May 2011	Effective Scrutiny (Part 1) – The Process	In-house by an experienced councillor
14 June 2011	Effective Scrutiny (Part 2) – Questioning Techniques	In-house by an experienced councillor
16 June 2011	Chairing Skills	by a visiting external trainer
13 July 2011	'Mock' scrutiny committee meeting – a practical exercise designed for newly elected councillors	In-house by scrutiny officer and CBS Chairman
Autumn 2011- Spring 2012	East Herts councillors attended (with officers) all 4 Local Health Network meetings: including the March meeting of LHN which focused on how we can strengthen accountability at all levels for local healthcare and public health policy, planning and delivery. A key focus was the role of councillors and scrutiny and how councils can work with community and service users and local HealthWatch.	Local Government Information Unit (LGiU) in London
17 Jan 2012	Local Government Finance	In-house by Director of Internal Services
24 Jan 2012	Parliamentary Seminar Series – focusing on scrutiny chairing skills	CfPS held at the Houses of Parliament
31 Jan 2012	Scrutiny Skills development workshop	In-house by scrutiny officer
13 Mar 2012	Chairing for scrutiny (organised by Watford BC)	South East Employers
17 April 2012	Scrutiny Evaluation workshop – reflecting on the past year 2011/12	In-house by scrutiny officer and scrutiny Chairmen
24 April 2012	Scrutiny Topic Planning – looking forward to 2012/13	In-house by scrutiny officer and scrutiny Chairmen

A continuing training programme will be needed to keep all councillors briefed on their developing role as described above in Section 13 and offer them the chance to strengthen their scrutiny skills.

Councillors have indicated an interest in some specific areas of scrutiny related training for the coming year:

- Chairing Scrutiny
- Scrutiny 'with' partners and 'of' partners
- Planning questioning and gathering evidence

15. AND FINALLY

The scrutiny function is greatly enhanced by co-operative working between all parties – and that includes East Herts residents. All our committee meetings are open to the public and anyone can suggest a topic for scrutiny. Contact us directly or talk to your local district councillor and let us know what is concerning you.



Contact details for all our councillors are on the East Herts Council website <http://online.eastherts.gov.uk/moderngov/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1>

Introduce yourself and get to know more about how we can work together to keep East Herts a great place to live, work and study in.

If you want more information on scrutiny in general, this can be found on the Centre for Public Scrutiny main website on <http://www.cfps.org.uk/>

There will be a limited print run of this document.

Greater use will be made of signposting interested parties, partners and residents to the Council's website to access the Scrutiny Annual Report. This will minimise use of material resources, distribution costs and gain potential CO₂ efficiencies from on-line provision.

<http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/scrutinyannualreports>

If you do require a paper copy, there will be a limited number available at the reception desk at Wallfields in Hertford and at our Customer Service Centre in Charringtons House, Bishop's Stortford – or contact the Scrutiny Officer on 01992 531612 : e-mail scrutiny@eastherts.gov.uk

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 4 JULY 2012

REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCE

INVESTMENT STRATEGY

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To recommend to Council changes to the Council's Investment Strategy for 2012/13.

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:</u> That:	
(A)	counterparty investment limits for Lloyds and Nat West be increased to £20m with immediate effect;
(B)	a minimum credit rating of "A" be applied for investments of up to 2 years with UK banks; and
(C)	the Executive Member for Finance be given delegated authority to vary the Council's investment strategy (as a matter of urgency) in agreement with the Leader, the Chairman of the Audit Committee and the Director of Internal Services and to report the changes to the Council.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 28 September 2011 Council resolved to authorise the Executive Member for Finance to vary the Council's Investment Strategy (if determined as a matter of urgency) before the December Council meeting in order to either protect the Council's funds or to take advantage of investment opportunities afforded by market volatility. The delegation was authorised at a time of market volatility prior to the Euro summit meeting in October 2011.

- 1.2 The Executive Member was authorised to vary the strategy in agreement with the Leader (or Deputy) of the Council and the Chairman of the Audit Committee (the body charged with oversight of Treasury management).
- 1.3 This report proposes that arrangements be incorporated into the Treasury Management Strategy until Council determines otherwise.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 An “informal” investment board currently meets approximately quarterly, or more frequently as necessary, in order to facilitate the Council’s management of its Treasury Management activities. The board currently comprises;

The Executive member for Finance
Leader
Chairman of Audit Committee
Director of Internal Services
Head of Finance & Performance
Principal Accountant
Sector (Council’s Treasury Management Advisors)
External Member

- 2.2 The board is an informal source of information and sounding board for the Executive Member for Finance. It provides a forum for discussion about developments in the financial markets, interest rates and investment options.
- 2.3 At a meeting of the board on 1 June 2012 further opportunities were discussed for entering into fixed term investments of up to 2 years with UK banks. The board agreed that it would be appropriate to place a further £10m deposit with Lloyds given the returns currently being offered (circa 3%) having regard to the Government’s significant shareholding in this bank. This would increase the Council’s overall investments with Lloyds to £20m as the Council already has a £10m “structured deposit” in place. Council approval to increase the individual counterparty limit with Lloyds is sought.

An increase in the limit for holdings with the Councils banker, Nat West, is also recommended in order to both increase investment

options in the future and to facilitate the withdrawal and reinvestment of funds from Scottish Widows.

- 2.4 The Council's current Treasury Management Strategy (approved in February 2012) restricts investments in banks for more than 1 year duration to those with a minimum credit rating of "AA". Given current economic conditions and concerns in the Eurozone rating agencies have reduced ratings for many banks (see **Essential Reference paper 'B'**). The Council, is therefore invited to approve investments up to 2 years with banks rated "A".
- 2.5 Sector, the Council's Treasury Management advisors, whilst confirming that shorter duration limits counterparty risk, see the proposals outlined within the report as ones which the Council might reasonably consider in balancing security of investment and returns on these investments.
- 2.6 Given the continuing uncertainty in the financial markets it is recommended that Council gives further delegation to the Executive Member for Finance to vary the Treasury Management Strategy and in particular Investment criteria (counterparty limit and credit rating) in order that the Council can take "urgent" action to mitigate any escalation of risks and to take advantage of investment opportunities. Any decisions will continue to be agreed with the Leader, Chairman of Audit Committee and Director of Internal Services and have regard to the Council's priority objective of ensuring security of capital.
- 2.7 Any actions will be reported for endorsement at the next meeting of the Council.
- 3.0 Implications/Consultations
- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

Treasury Management Report to Executive / Council February 2012.

Contact Member: Councillor Michael Tindale – Executive Member for Finance
michael.tindale@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Alan Madin – Director of internal Services
Contact Tel No Ext 1401
alan.madin@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author: Simon Chancellor – Head of Finance & Performance
simon.chancellor@eastherts.gov.uk

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (delete as appropriate):	<p>People This priority focuses on enhancing the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.</p> <p>Place This priority focuses on the standard of the built environment and our neighbourhoods and ensuring our towns and villages are safe and clean.</p> <p>Prosperity This priority focuses on safeguarding and enhancing our unique mix of rural and urban communities, promoting sustainable, economic and social opportunities.</p>
Consultation:	Proposals have been discussed at a meeting of the Investment Board on 1 June 2012
Legal:	The Council's Treasury Management Strategy is approved annually by Council.
Financial:	Proposals contained within the report aim to both enhance investment returns in the medium term and provide an increased likelihood that returns assumed within the latest MTFP will be achieved.
Human Resource:	None
Risk Management:	Risks in relation to the achievement of budgeted investment returns will be mitigated by an increased level of fixed rate deposits. Delegations to the Executive Member for Finance will allow the ability to take advantage of market volatility in the current economic position.

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'B'

Counterparty	CREDIT RATINGS								
	Fitch Rating			Moody's Ratings			S & P Ratings		
	Long Term status	Long Term	Support	Long Term status	Long Term	FSR	Long Term status	Long Term	
UK		AAA			Aaa			AAA	
Bank of New York Mellon	sb	AA	1	-	-	-	-	-	
Barclays Bank plc	sb	A	1	rd	Aa	c	sb	A	
Citibank International plc	sb	A	1	rd	A	c	-	A	
Clydesdale Bank	sb	A	1	rd	A	c	po	BBB	
Co-operative bank plc	nw	A	3	sb	A	c	-	-	
Credit Suisse international	sb	A	1	rd	Aa	-	no	A	
Crown Agents bank Ltd	sb	BBB	3	-	-	-	-	-	
DB UK Bank Limited	-	-	-	rd	A	-	-	-	
HSBC Bank Ltd	no	AA	1	rd	Aa	c	sb	AA	
MBNA Europe Bank	sb	A	1	-	-	-	-	-	
Northern Rock plc	sb	BBB	5	-	-	-	sb	BBB	
Santander UK plc	dg/sb	A	1	no	A	c	sb	A	
Standard Chartered Bank	no	AA	1	sb	A	b	sb	AA	
Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Cor	nw	A	1	sb	Aa	c	no	A	
UBS Ltd	sb	A	1	rd	Aa	-	no	A	
Nationalised and Part Nationalised Banks									
Lloyds Banking Group plc	sb	A	1	rd	A	-	sb	A	
Bank of Scotland plc	sb	A	1	rd	A	d	sb	A	
Lloyds TSB Bank plc	sb	A	1	rd	A	c	sb	A	
Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc	sb	A	1	rd	A	-	sb	A	
National Westminster Bank plc	sb	A	1	rd	A	c	sb	A	
The Royal Bank of Scotland plc	sb	A	1	rd	A	c	sb	A	
Ulster Bank Ltd	sb	A	1	rd	Baa	d	no	BBB	
Begium		AA			Aa			AA	
Fortis Bank	sb	A	1	rd	A	c	no	AA	
KBC Bank NV	sb	A	1	dg/sb	A	d	sb	A	
Denmark		AAA			Aaa			AAA	
Danske Bank	no	A	1	sb	Baa		sb	A	
Finland		AAA			Aaa			AAA	
Nordea Bank Finland plc	sb	AA	1	sb	Aa	c	sb	AA	
France		AAA			Aaa			AA	
BNP Paribas	sb	A	1	rd	Aa	c	no	AA	
Credit Agricole Corporate and Investment Ba	no	A	1	rd	Aa	d	sb	A	
Credit Industrial et commercial	sb	A	1	sb	Aa	c	sb	A	
Credit Agricole SA	no	A	1	rd	Aa	c	sb	A	
Societe Generale	no	A	1	rd	A	c	sb	A	
Germany		AAA			Aaa			AAA	
Comerzbank ag	sb	A	1	no	A	d	no	A	
Deutsche Bank ag	sb	A	1	rd	Aa	c	no	A	
DZ Bank AG	sb	A	1	sb	A	c	sb	AA	

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'B'

LandesbankBaden Wuerttemberg	sb	A	1		sb	A	d		-	-	
Landesbank Berlin AG	sb	A	1		sb	A	d		-	-	
Landesbank Hessen-Thuringen	sb	A	1		sb	A	d		sb	A	
Landwirtschaftliche Rentenbank	sb	AAA	1		sb	Aaa	-		sb	AAA	
Norddeutsche Landesbank Girozentrale	sb	A	1		sb	A	d		sb	BBB	
Luxembourg		AAA				Aaa				AAA	
Banque et Caisse d'Epargne de l'Etat	-	-	-		dg/sd	Aa	c		no	AA	
Clearstream Banking	sb	AA	1		-	-	-		sb	AA	
Netherlands		AAA				Aaa				AAA	
Bank Nederlandse Gemeenten	sb	AAA	1		sb	Aaa	a		no	AAA	
Cooperative Centrale Raiffeisen BrnlInbank	sb	AA	1		dg/sb	Aa	b		no	AA	
Ing Bank NV	sb	A	1		dg/no	A	c		sb	A	
Sweden		AAA				Aaa				AAA	
Nordea Bank AB	sb	AA	1		sb	AA	c		sb	AA	
Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken AB	sb	A	1		sb	A	c		sb	A	
Swedbank AB	sb	A	1		sb	A	c		sb	A	
Svenska Handelsbanken AB	sb	AA	1		sb	AA	c		sb	AA	
Switzerland		AAA				Aaa				AAA	
Credit Suisse	sb	A	1		rd	Aa	b		no	A	
UBS AG	sb	A	1		rd	Aa	c		no	A	
U.S.A.		AAA				Aaa				AA	
Bank of America N.A.	sb	A	1		rd	A	c		no	A	
Bank of New York Mellon	sb	AA	1		no	Aa	b		no	AA	
Citibank N.A.	sb	A	1		rd	A	c		no	A	
HSBC Bank USA, N.A.	no	AA	1		rd	Aa	c		sb	AA	
JP Morgan Chase Bank NA	no	A	1		rd	Aa	b		no	A	
Northern Trust Company	sb	AA	5		sb	Aa	b		sb	AA	
State Street Bank and Trust Company	sb	A	1		no	Aa	b		no	AA	
Wells Fargo Bank NA	sb	AA	1		no	Aa	c		no	AA	
Australia		AAA				Aaa				AAA	
Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	sb	AA	1		sb	Aa	b		sb	AA	
Commonwealth Bank of Australia	sb	AA	1		sb	Aa	b		sb	AA	
Macquarie Bank Limited	sb	A	3		sb	A	c		sb	A	
National Australia Bank Ltd	sb	AA	1		sb	Aa	b		sb	AA	
Westpac Banking Corporation	sb	AA	1		sb	Aa	b		sb	AA	
Canada		AAA				Aaa				AAA	
Bank of Montreal	sb	AA	1		sb	Aa	b		sb	A	
Bank of Nova Scotia	sb	AA	1		sb	Aa	b		sb	AA	
Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce	sb	AA	1		sb	Aa	b		sb	A	
National Bank of Canada	sb	A	1		sb	Aa	b		sb	A	
Royal Bank of Canada	sb	AA	1		rb	Aa	b		sb	AA	
Toronto Dominion Bank	sb	AA	1		no	Aaa	b		sb	AA	
sb	stable outlook				dg/no	downgrade & negative outcome					
nw	negative watch				dg/sb	Down grade negative outlook					
no	negative outcome										
rd	under review for possible downgrade										
po	positive outcome										