

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 24 JULY 2013, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor G McAndrew (Chairman).
Councillors M Alexander, D Andrews,
R Beeching, E Buckmaster, M Carver,
Mrs R Cheswright, K Crofton, A Dearman,
L Haysey, Mrs D Hollebon, A Jackson,
G Lawrence, J Mayes, M McMullen, T Page,
P Phillips, M Pope, J Ranger, C Rowley,
P Ruffles, R Sharma, J Taylor, M Tindale,
J Thornton, A Warman, K Warnell,
G Williamson, N Wilson, M Wood,
C Woodward, B Wrangles and J Wyllie.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

158 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded Members that the meeting was being webcasted. On behalf of East Herts Council, he

congratulated Kate Middleton and Prince William on their new born son.

The Chairman advised that he had attended 41 events since being elected Chairman. He stated that he had gained an educational insight into how many local organisations operated and the functions that they carried out.

The Chairman reported that the Herts Youth Games had been held at Wodson Park and he had witnessed the youth of East Herts competing against the very best from across Hertfordshire. He congratulated Team East Herts for a splendid effort.

The Chairman stated that he had spoken to a number of Officers when he recently toured the Revenues and Benefits Department. He advised that Officers had all been very positive in approaching their work, particular in respect of increased productivity since home working was introduced. The Chairman commented that he held the Revenues and Benefits Officers in very high esteem and this was a testament to the Head of Service and Officers in that department.

The Chairman reported that he had attended the staff briefings at Hertford and Bishop's Stortford and he was pleased to see that morale was high across the board. He praised the Senior Management Team for this. He advised that his civic service would take place at 11 am on Sunday 5 October 2013 at St Michael's Church, Bishop's Stortford.

The Chairman advised that his Civic Dinner would take place at the Rhodes Arts Complex on Friday 21 March 2014. He also advised that he hoped to arrange a possible Burns night.

Finally, the Chairman advised that a Councillors local produce tour would take place on Monday 2 September 2013. He provided Members with a detailed breakdown

of the itinerary for this event.

159 MINUTES – 15 MAY 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 15 May 2013, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

160 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Question 1

Councillor P Ruffles asked the Executive Member for Community Safety and Environment to provide an update on the progress towards the generation of hydro-power from the flow of the Lea at Hertford, to provide so many benefits, not least of which would be power charge costs for Hertford Theatre.

In reply, the Executive Member for Community Safety and Environment advised that this project continued to progress well. He stated that there were very few micro hydro schemes in the UK and all such schemes were bespoke.

Members were reminded of the ongoing requirement to satisfy the requirements of statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency. There was an ongoing exercise in flood mapping to ensure that actual flooding would not occur in extreme flood conditions.

The Executive Member concluded that, once the flood risk assessment work had been completed and Officers were sure that hydrology and biodiversity would not be adversely affected, there would be a planning application and formal consultation.

Question 2

Councillor E Buckmaster commented that Public health

delivery was currently going through many changes, and was under great pressure to make improvements. He asked whether the Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support could comment on the role of East Herts Council in the Public Health arena, and in particular, the part that we as individual Members can play in the process.

In reply, the Executive Member for Health Housing and Community Support stated that the role of East Herts Council was increasing and expanding in the arena of public health. Members were reminded that Hertfordshire County Council was now responsible for public health in Hertfordshire.

The Executive Member advised that the Authority was working closely with them and other partners in respect of public health. Officers were also working on a high level health strategy for the District, with a focus on smoking cessation and tackling obesity.

Members should focus their efforts on embedding public health in the minds of Officers at all levels, particular in reference to healthy eating and encouraging exercise. Members should also focus on exemplars of healthy living as an important area where the Authority could influence the lifestyles of East Herts residents.

161 EXECUTIVE REPORT – 4 JUNE 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 4 June 2013, be received.

162 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK – FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2013 (1)

RESOLVED – that (A) the budgetary variances detailed in paragraph 2.1 of the report be noted; and

(B) in accordance with Financial Regulation 4.7.3,

the carry forward of capital budgets not spent in 2012/13, as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'D' of the report submitted, be approved and these sums be added to the 2013/14 estimates.

163 EXECUTIVE REPORT – 23 JULY 2013

The Leader referred to the journey of East Herts Council in the context of the challenging times currently being experienced by Local Government. He referred in particular to the recent LGA Conference where there had been a major announcement in respect of the rewired public services documents. This document contained many challenging propositions that were very much aligned with the direction of travel for East Herts.

The Leader referred to independence and responsibility in terms of decision making at East Herts Council. He stated that East Herts continued to work towards a sound financial base whilst continuing to improve services during this at this difficult time.

The Leader stated that innovative and creative ways of managing costs and improving services were very important and the micro hydro scheme at Hertford Theatre and the Authority's well respected work in partnership with the Care Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Hertfordshire County Council were good examples.

The Leader referred to the increased resilience and reduced cost that would result from the business case for shared services with Stevenage Borough Council for ICT, Business Improvement, Print and Design, this being in addition to the arrangements already in place in respect of Revenues and Benefits.

The Leader concluded that Hertford Theatre was a well regarded venue and the capital investment that Members were being asked to approve would further enhance that reputation. He also referred to the financial benefits for East Herts Council of the forthcoming CCTV partnership.

He also stated that the Authority was doing all it could to assist with affordable housing provision.

Council approved the recommendations as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 23 July 2013, be received.

164 BUSINESS CASE FOR SHARED SERVICES – (FOR ICT, BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT, PRINT AND DESIGN)

RESOLVED – that (A) The delivery of ICT, Business Improvement, Print and Design service functions be delegated to Stevenage Borough Council; and

(B) £82,500 additional capital funding be added to the capital programme to support the delivery of shared services.

165 HERTFORD THEATRE CAPITAL

Councillor M Wood commented on whether the Authority and Hertford Theatre intended to consult with the Rhodes Arts Complex in respect of the improvements that were funded by East Herts Council, particular in respect of the retractable seating. He also stated that he was pleased the Authority was investing in the lighting, audio and technical equipment at Hertford Theatre.

The Leader stated that he hoped that Officers would be consulting with the Rhodes Arts Complex so that they were mindful of the experience gained of investing in the facilities there.

Council approved the recommendation now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) £64,500 be added to the Capital Programme for essential upgrades to audio, lighting and technical equipment at Hertford Theatre as specified in Essential Reference Paper

'C' of the report submitted; and

(B) in respect of upgrading the seating in the auditorium at Hertford Theatre, a further report be submitted following the tendering process.

166 JOINT MEETING OF EXECUTIVES, COMMITTEES, ETC – 15 MAY 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the joint meeting of the Executive, Committees, etc, held on 15 May 2013, be received.

167 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES – 22 MAY 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 22 May 2013, be received.

168 CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: MINUTES – 28 MAY 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 28 May 2013, be received.

169 ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: MINUTES – 11 JUNE 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 11 June 2013, be received.

170 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES – 19 JUNE 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Management Committee meeting held on 19 June 2013, be received.

171 COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: MINUTES – 25 JUNE 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Community Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 25 June 2013, be received.

172 CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: MINUTES – 2 JULY 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 2 July 2013, be received.

173 HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: MINUTES – 3 JULY 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 3 July 2013, be received.

174 AUDIT COMMITTEE: MINUTES – 10 JULY 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 10 July 2013, be received.

175 LICENSING COMMITTEE: MINUTES – 11 JULY 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 11 July 2013, be received.

176 TAXI LICENSING POLICY: FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATION WITH THE LICENSED TAXI TRADE

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

(B) the revised Taxi Licensing Policy, subject to the inclusion of wording that ensured that private hire vehicles displayed a warning notice stating

that occupants were not insured if the private hire Taxi had not been pre-booked, be approved.

177 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES – 17 JULY 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Management Committee meeting held on 17 July 2013, be received.

178 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

Council considered a joint report of the Scrutiny Committee Chairmen detailing the Scrutiny Annual report 2012/13.

Councillor D Andrews commended the report as excellent and he encouraged all Members to read it. He also thanked the Scrutiny Officer for her hard work during a challenging and interesting year. He thanked Members for their input and stated that the forthcoming year would be equally challenging.

Councillor Andrews referred to pages 138 to 139 of the report now submitted for the areas identified by Councillors to strengthen the Scrutiny process in 2013/14. He stated that a key theme was how to encourage residents to join in the scrutiny process.

Councillor J Ranger congratulated the Scrutiny Officer on the report and he referred to the positive outcomes of the work of the Scrutiny Committees. Councillor E Buckmaster complimented the Scrutiny Officer and stated that the report was very readable and should be shared with residents.

The Leader stated that the scrutiny process ensured that the Council continued to improve it's performance for residents. He emphasised that the scrutiny process added value to the decision making process at East Herts.

The Leader invited Scrutiny Members to continue to constructively challenge the decisions made by the Executive as well as informing the Executive where future decisions may need to be made. Council agreed to receive the report.

RESOLVED – that the Annual Report on the work of the East Herts Scrutiny Committees and Health Engagement Panel during 2012/13, be received.

179 AMENDMENT TO CONSTITUTION – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PRIOR APPROVAL PROCESSES

Council considered a report from the Monitoring Officer in respect of amending the Council's Constitution to reflect national changes in permitted development rights.

In response to a query from the Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support, the Monitoring Officer stated that there was no time limit that could be imposed in respect of the Development Management Prior Approval Process. He advised that he would liaise with Officers in terms of how this process would operate.

Members were advised that Officers would keep a close eye on this process and would report back to the Development Management Committee. In response to a query from the Leader, the Monitoring Officer stated that Officers would take account of Members' views and Officers could then make a delegated decision or refer the matter to the Development Management Committee.

Councillor D Andrews expressed a concern that should a premises change use from agricultural use to business use (B1), then the premises could become another use entirely should legislation be changed again in future.

The Monitoring Officer advised that Officers would be carefully monitoring this situation. Council approved the amendment to the constitution as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that in respect of delegation to Officers relating to planning matters, the Council’s Constitution be amended as detailed at paragraph 2.3 of the report now submitted.

The meeting closed at 7.42 pm

Chairman
Date