

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 29 JANUARY 2014, AT 7.00
PM

PRESENT: Councillor G McAndrew (Chairman).
Councillors D Abbott, M Alexander,
D Andrews, P Ballam, E Bedford,
R Beeching, E Buckmaster, S Bull, M Carver,
Mrs R Cheswright, A Dearman, L Haysey,
T Herbert, Mrs D Hone, A Jackson, G Jones,
J Jones, G Lawrence, M McMullen, P Moore,
M Newman, T Page, M Pope, J Ranger,
C Rowley, P Ruffles, S Rutland-Barsby,
R Sharma, N Symonds, J Taylor, A Warman,
K Warnell, G Williamson, N Wilson, J Wing,
M Wood, C Woodward and J Wyllie.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
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
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

490 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed the press and public to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was being webcast.

The Chairman referred to the recent sad news that former Councillor Les Pinnell had passed away. He had represented Bishop's Stortford All Saints ward on the District Council from May 2003 – May 2007. Members stood and observed a minute's silence.

The Chairman advised Members that Councillors Haysey and Tindale had been nominated to represent the District Council at this year's Royal Garden Party.

Referring to the recent Burns Night event, the Chairman thanked Members for their support and reported that approximately £5,000 had been raised in support of Cazfest.

Finally, the Chairman reminded Members of the "Battle of the Bands" event on 1 February 2014, at Hertford Theatre, which would be supported by various town Mayors. He also stated that invitations for his Civic Dinner would be sent out shortly.

491 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2013, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

492 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Question 1

Councillor M Wood asked the Leader of the Council if he would reconsider his rejection of his idea of having an Urban conference on an annual basis for the benefit of the five towns in our District.

In reply, the Leader stated that he remained open-minded to

the idea and was willing to explore the matter further with Councillor M Wood and the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services.

Question 2

Councillor C Rowley stated that over Christmas, the majority of ordinary families across East Herts would have spent the festive period celebrating with their closest relatives, neighbours and loved ones. Residents in his ward who found themselves on their own, and many of whom were elderly, had the opportunity to come together with other residents who found themselves in the same position and spend Christmas Day being entertained by volunteers at Sele school. This had only been made possible by local organiser, Janet Bird, and her team of volunteers who had helped with cooking the Christmas lunches and transporting residents to ensure as many people as possible were able to attend. Similar events, organised by local volunteers, had taken place in Bishop's Stortford and across East Herts.

Councillor C Rowley asked the Leader if he agreed that these volunteers and events were an invaluable service to many elderly residents and the wider community, and with that in mind, what resources were available to help individuals and volunteers, like Janet in his ward, who wanted to set up and run these events for residents who found themselves alone, not just at Christmas, but throughout the year.

The Leader invited the Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support to respond. The Executive Member agreed that the invaluable work of volunteers made a recognisable contribution to the community, She referred to the Council's grants activity which had increased in the last year and was considered regularly by Community Scrutiny Committee. A total of 49 grants worth just under £20,000 had been distributed to a variety of groups.

The Executive Member referred to the Christmas grants where priority had been given to the elderly and most vulnerable groups, as part of the Ageing Well programme.

Finally, she commented that some funds in this year were still available and the deadline for applications was 17 February 2014.

493 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 21 JANUARY 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 21 January 2014 be received.

(see also Minutes 494 – 498)

494 DUTY TO CO-OPERATE – UPDATE REPORT

In response to a question by Councillor M Newman, the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport agreed that the principle of the Duty to Co-operate should be on assessed housing need and not aspirational economic growth. He referred to the vagaries of some Planning Inspectorate decisions and commented that East Herts Council would continue to challenge neighbouring plans where appropriate.

RESOLVED – that the notes of recent Member-level meetings with Broxbourne, Epping Forest and Welwyn Hatfield Councils, be agreed.

(see also Minute 493)

495 INTERIM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REPORT (JANUARY 2014)

RESOLVED – that (A) the Interim Development Strategy Report, January 2014, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan; and

(B) the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, be authorised to make non-material, and typographical corrections to the Interim Development Strategy Report and Essential Reference

Papers, prior to publication for consultation purposes.

(see also Minute 493)

496 INFRASTRUCTURE TOPIC PAPER (JANUARY 2014)

RESOLVED – that the Infrastructure Topic Paper, January 2014, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan.

(see also Minute 493)

497 INTERIM SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT (DECEMBER 2013)

RESOLVED – that (A) the Interim Sustainability Appraisal of the East Herts District Plan, January 2014, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support the Draft East Herts District Plan (Preferred Options) (January 2014);

(B) the Council's response as detailed in Section 11.3 Tables 11.3 and 11.4 to the Interim SA, be incorporated into the Consultation version of the Interim Development Strategy Report (January 2014); and

(C) the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, be authorised to make non-material, and typographical corrections to the Interim Sustainability Appraisal.

(see also Minute 493)

498 DRAFT EAST HERTS DISTRICT PLAN (PREFERRED OPTIONS) (JANUARY 2014)

The Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport advised Members that the formal consultation period would run from 27 February – 22 May 2014. Every household would receive a pamphlet which would be delivered in the same way

as Link magazine. He encouraged the public to engage in the process.

RESOLVED – that the Draft East Herts District Plan (January 2014), as detailed at Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ of the report now submitted, be agreed and made available for public consultation for a period of twelve weeks, in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012;

(B) the Consultation Strategy, as detailed at Essential Reference Paper ‘F’ of the report now submitted, be agreed; and

(C) the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, be authorised to make non-material, and typographical corrections to the Draft District Plan, prior to publication for consultation purposes.

(see also Minute 493)

499 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 8 JANUARY 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Management Committee meeting held on 8 January 2014, be received.

500 JOINT MEETING OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES: MINUTES - 14 JANUARY 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees held on 14 January 2014, be received.

501 HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 15
JANUARY 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 15 January 2014, be received.

502 AUDIT COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 22 JANUARY 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 22 January 2014, be received.

503 NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC RATES CALCULATION
2014/15

Council considered a report recommending the calculation of the National Non Domestic Rates Budget 2014/15. The Leader advised Members that Officers were still receiving guidance from the Government and explained that this could impact on the calculations now detailed. He advised that the paragraph number quoted in recommendation (C) should be amended to read 2.21 and not 2.22.

The Leader further suggested that, given the late Government advice still being received, Officers be delegated authority to make any last minute amendments to form NNDR1 that might prove necessary. This was agreed by Council.

The Leader also referred to the highly technical nature of the report and suggested that this matter might best be delegated to Officers to deal with in future years.

Council approved the calculation as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) in accordance with the Non-Domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013, the amount calculated by East Herts Council for the year 2014/15 shall be £43,031,531 (Non domestic rating income from rates retention scheme) (*part 1b line 14 Column 5*);

(B) the Section 31 grant in relation to the Business Rates proposals within the 'Autumn Statement' shall be £1,690,873;

(C) the estimated Collection Fund Surplus for 2013/14 of £780,442 be allocated to the constituent bodies as detailed at paragraph 2.21 of the report submitted;

(D) the Council's share of the estimated 2013/14 NDR Collection Fund Surplus be transferred to a new reserve to be called 'Government Funding Risk Reserve'; and

(E) authority be delegated to the Director of Finance and Support Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, to make any necessary changes to form NNDR1 for submission to the DCLG by 31 January 2014, should further information or revised forms be sent to the Authority.

The meeting closed at 7.37 pm

Chairman
Date