

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 10 MAY 2017, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor J Jones (Chairman).
Councillors D Abbott, A Alder, M Allen,
D Andrews, P Ballam, P Boylan, R Brunton,
E Buckmaster, S Bull, M Casey,
Mrs R Cheswright, K Crofton, S Cousins,
G Cutting, B Deering, I Devonshire, H Drake,
M Freeman, J Goodeve, B Harris-Quinney,
L Haysey, R Henson, Mrs D Hollebbon,
G Jones, J Kaye, P Kenealy, G McAndrew,
M McMullen, P Moore, D Oldridge, T Page,
P Phillips, M Pope, L Radford, S Reed,
P Ruffles, S Rutland-Barsby, C Snowdon,
R Standley, M Stevenson, T Stowe,
N Symonds, K Warnell, G Williamson,
C Woodward and J Wyllie.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Martin Ibrahim	-	Democratic Services Team Leader
Lorraine Kirk	-	Senior Communications Officer
Helen Standen	-	Director
Alison Stuart	-	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Adele Taylor	-	Director
Liz Watts	-	Chief Executive

1 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman (Councillor K Crofton) welcomed Honorary Aldermen, Members and the public to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was being webcast.

He advised that former Councillor Eric Marshall had recently passed away. Eric had represented Parsonage ward in Bishop's Stortford from the District Council's inception in 1973 until 1987. He invited Honorary Alderman Bob Parker to address the meeting. Honorary Alderman Bob Parker spoke of his time serving with Eric Marshall as a member of the Ratepayers' Association. At all times, he had acted in the interests of representing Bishop's Stortford. Members stood and observed a minute's silence.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Tony Stowe to his first Council meeting, following his success at the Datchworth & Aston by-election. He also welcomed Alison Stuart, the new Head of Legal and Democratic Services, to her first Council meeting.

The Chairman also referred to a questionnaire about Paperless Committee meetings which had been distributed to Members and asked them to complete this before the end of the meeting.

Reviewing recent events and the highlights of the previous year, the Chairman paid tribute to the efforts of the voluntary sector and thanked his Vice-Chairman, Councillor Jeff Jones for his support. He also thanked Officers, in particular, Esther Piper, for her continued support in managing his diary of events. He spoke of the honour of representing the District throughout the year.

The Leader of the Council congratulated the Chairman on his dedication to representing the District on a vast array of activities and praised the professional manner in which he had carried out his duties. She moved a motion that the Council place on record its thanks for his year of service. This was supported unanimously.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL 2017/18

It was moved by Councillor P Ruffles and seconded by Councillor P Phillips that Councillor J Jones be elected Chairman of the Council to hold office for the civic year

2017/18.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, Councillor J Jones was elected Chairman of the Council for the civic year 2017/18.

RESOLVED - that Councillor J Jones be elected Chairman of the Council and hold office for the civic year 2017/18.

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

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR 2017-18

It was moved by Councillor J Wyllie and seconded by Councillor M Freeman that Councillor K Warnell be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council to hold office for the civic year 2017/18.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, Councillor K Warnell was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the civic year 2017/18.

RESOLVED - that Councillor K Warnell be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council and hold office for the civic year 2017/18.

The Vice-Chairman made the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office. He thanked Members and looked forward to supporting the Chairman.

4 FURTHER CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman (Councillor J Jones) thanked Members for giving him the honour of representing the District Council over the coming year. He thanked the Past Chairman, Councillor K Crofton, his consort and support staff for their outstanding service. He presented Councillor K Crofton with his Past Chairman's badge.

He looked forward to working together with Councillor K Warnell. The Chairman advised that his chosen charities for the forthcoming year would be Isabel Hospice and the Herts Air Ambulance. He also referred to supporting the East Herts Community Chest.

The Chairman stated that he would be looking for Members' support at a range of events and detailed some events that had already been scheduled. The Civic Service would be on 25 June 2017, at St Peter's Church, Buntingford. There would be a charity golf day at Hanbury Manor on 29 September 2017, followed by a dinner and auction in aid of the Herts Air Ambulance. The Civic Dinner, also at Hanbury Manor, would be held on 17 March 2018. The East Herts Got Talent competition would also be held again with the finals night on 21 April 2018.

The Chairman also referred to other days that would be commemorated and further details would be circulated.

The Chairman reminded all Members that a joint meeting of committees would be held at the conclusion of Annual Council and so all Members should remain seated until all the business had been concluded.

Finally, Honorary Aldermen, Members and Officers were invited to receive light refreshments at the conclusion of tonight's meetings.

5 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 29 March 2017, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 4 APRIL 2017

The Leader of the Council welcomed those Members who had been successful in the recent County Council elections and looked forward to a continued successful working relationship.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 4 April 2017 be received.

(see also Minute 7)

7 WASTE AND STREET CLEANSING VEHICLES

RESOLVED – that Capital funding in the range of £3.5 million to £4 million for the purchase of vehicles required to deliver the District's waste and street cleansing service from May 2018, be approved, subject to tender evaluation indicating that option provides a substantial saving to the Council.

(see also Minute 6)

8 HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 18 JANUARY 2017

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 18 January 2017, be received.

9 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 25 JANUARY 2017

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee meeting held on 25 January 2017, be received.

10 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 5 APRIL 2017

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Management Committee meeting held on 5 April 2017, be received.

11 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report reviewing the Council's decision-making structure. She advised that Council was required to approve the size of the proposed committees and the allocation of seats to political groups. Council noted that, following the outcome of the Datchworth & Aston by-election, one political group of 49 Members had been formed and its nominations to the seats on committees were detailed in the report now submitted.

The Head also referred to the proposed terms of reference for the two new scrutiny committees, which were detailed on Essential Reference Paper 'C' of the report now submitted, and referred to a typing error in paragraph 6.44, where the number of Standards Sub-Committee members should have read "four" and not "three".

Council approved the proposals as now detailed.

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

<u>Committee</u>	<u>No. of Members</u>
Overview and Scrutiny	14
Performance, Audit and Governance Scrutiny	14
Development Management	12
Human Resources	7
Licensing	12
Chief Officer Recruitment	5
East Herts Council and Stevenage Borough Council Joint Revenues and Benefits Committee (3 from	6

East Herts and 3 from Stevenage)

- (B) the membership of Scrutiny Committees, Regulatory Committees, the East Herts Council and Stevenage Borough Council Joint Revenues and Benefits Committee 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 group to whom the seats on these bodies have been allocated, and Independent Member being appointed to Committees as now detailed;
- (C) 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;
- (D) the programme of Council meetings, as detailed at paragraph 5.1 of the report submitted, be approved;
- (E) the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make changes in the standing membership of committees and joint committee in (A) above, in accordance with the wishes of the political group to whom seats on these bodies have been allocated;
- (F) the action to be taken by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader, under delegated authority, concerning the appointment of representatives to outside bodies, be noted; and
- (G) the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make such amendments to the Council's constitution as may be necessary to account for the decisions in (A) to (F) above.

12 OUTSIDE BODIES - ANNUAL REPORT

Council considered a report reviewing the activities of outside bodies to which the Council appointed representatives. The Chief Executive advised that this was the first report of its kind and would be submitted annually. She also asked Council to note that appointments for 2017/18 would be finalised shortly.

RESOLVED – that the reports of Members, as now submitted, be received.

13 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES - REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report detailing the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) for the Members' Allowances Scheme 2017/18. She referred to the recommendations at the head of the report and advised that two of the IRP's recommendations had been omitted. These related to the cessation of the £270 payment for Development Management Committee Members and the subsistence arrangements for overnight accommodation. She asked that these be included in Council's determination.

In response to a question from Councillor D Andrews, the Head advised that the IRP's use of the word "disapplied" meant "discontinued".

In respect of the IRP recommendation to cease the £270 payment, Councillor M Casey spoke against this on the basis that it would cost the Council more and increase the bureaucracy in managing the additional mileage claims. Other Members spoke in support of this recommendation on the basis that it was fairer, more transparent and would not penalise substitute Members.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the IRP's recommendations were approved by Council. Council approved the Members' Allowances Scheme as now submitted.

RESOLVED – that (A) an increase of 1% in the basic and special responsibility allowances be supported;

(B) the Chairmen of each revised Scrutiny Committee (from 5 to 2) each receive a payment of £6,400;

(C) there be no change in the Carers and Dependents allowance;

(D) there be an amendment to the provision in relation to mileage allowance from 0.45p for the first 50 miles to 0.45p for the first 10,000;

(E) the provision relating to ‘out of district’ payments for journeys at 0.25 after the first 50 miles be discontinued;

(F) there be an amendment to remove the requirement under approved duties at point 4 of Appendix 2 of the scheme to have prior approval for attendance at meetings;

(G) the Members’ Allowance Scheme be subject to an in-depth review for 2018/19;

(H) the payment of £270 to Members of Development Management Committee, cease; and

(I) the proposed subsistence levels detailed in the report be implemented and that the subsistence scheme be amended by the inclusion of the sentence “the most cost effective” overnight accommodation.

14 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2017-18

Council was invited to consider a recommendation from the Human Resources Committee meeting of 19 April 2017 on the Pay Policy Statement 2017/18 and pay scale points for Directors. The Chief Executive reminded Council that a Pay

Policy Statement was required to be produced annually under the Localism Act 2011.

Council approved the recommendations as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Pay Policy Statement 2017/18 be approved; and

(B) the pay scale points for Directors be approved.

15 BUNTINGFORD COMMUNITY AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2014-2031

The Leader of the Council submitted a report seeking approval to adopt the Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan following the Referendum of 23 March 2017. Council noted the outcome of the Referendum with an overall 'yes' vote of 1,268 against 82 who voted 'no'. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Council was now able to make the Neighbourhood Plan as more than half of those voting in the Referendum had voted in favour of the Plan being used to determine planning applications in the area.

In response to a question from Councillor I Devonshire, the Chairman advised that the whole process from the early stages of preparing a plan had taken four years.

Council approved the recommendation now detailed.

RESOLVED – that the Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan, as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report submitted, be formally 'made' and used as part of the statutory Development Plan for the District.

16 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS

Council considered a report seeking approval to a protocol whereby the payment of any New Homes Bonus (NHB) would be delayed for any ward(s) affected by a community

governance review, until the review was complete. The Chief Executive explained that, in order to ensure fairness in the allocation of NHB, where any area was undergoing a community governance review, the Council would hold in abeyance any NHB payments until the outcome of the community governance review was known and any payments would be backdated.

In response to questions, the Chief Executive advised that two community governance reviews were outstanding and that the outcome of these reviews would be implemented for the 2019 elections.

Councillor J Wyllie commented that, whatever the outcome of the community governance review in Bishop's Stortford, only one Town Council would be involved and so the NHB payment need not be delayed. The Chief Executive acknowledged this and suggested that in the absence of a form of words to agree now, the protocol could be amended to allow for the scenario detailed by Councillor J Wyllie.

Council approved the recommendation with this proviso.

RESOLVED – that any New Homes Bonus payments be held in abeyance for an area which is the subject of a Community Governance review until the outcome of the Community Governance review is complete, at which point, payments will be backdated and paid in line with the outcome of the review, subject to the proviso that the protocol could be amended to allow for the scenario detailed by Councillor J Wyllie.

17 EXTENSION OF LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report seeking approval for a leave of absence to be granted to Councillor J Taylor on the grounds of ill health. Council noted this was the last opportunity to consider such a request before the six month deadline from the last meeting attended would arise.

Council approved the recommendation now detailed.

RESOLVED – that a leave of absence for Councillor J Taylor on the grounds of ill health, be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.17 pm

Chairman
Date