

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, PEGS LANE,
HERTFORD, SG13 8DQ ON WEDNESDAY 28
JULY 2021, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor K Crofton (Chairman).
Councillors A Alder, T Beckett, S Bell,
R Buckmaster, R Bolton, P Boylan, M Brady,
E Buckmaster, S Bull, J Burmicz, A Curtis,
G Cutting, B Deering, H Drake, R Fernando,
M Goldspink, J Goodeve, L Haysey, J Jones,
I Kemp, G McAndrew, S Newton, T Page,
M Pope, C Redfern, S Reed, P Ruffles,
M Stevenson, T Stowe, N Symonds,
R Townsend, G Williamson, C Wilson and
J Wyllie.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Richard Cassidy	- Chief Executive
James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Steven Linnett	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager
Helen Standen	- Deputy Chief Executive

Ben Wood

- Head of
Communications,
Strategy and
Policy

109 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting and said that the meeting was being recorded.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor R Townsend to the Council following his successful election in May 2021. The Chairman also thanked Councillor Jones for assisting him at the meeting as the Vice-Chairman had given his apologies.

He outlined the civic events he had recently attended, including the Armed Forces flag raising ceremony in Hertford, the Herts Scouts Annual General Meeting, a fete in Ardeley and the presentation awards for recipients of British Empire Medals at Hatfield House.

The Chairman announced the sad passing of Councillor Rutland-Barsby's husband Paul. The Leader of the Council paid tribute to Paul who was an enormous support to Councillor Rutland-Barsby in her role as Chairman of the Council and in life as her husband. Councillor Haysey said she counted Paul as a friend and always had a story to tell and his friendship would be sorely missed.

The Chairman announced that five East Herts residents had been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours

2021 and he read out a list of their achievements for each recipient:

- Richard Beazley – awarded an MBE for services to the community in Hertfordshire
- Ben Davies-Levinson – awarded an OBE for services to education
- Elizabeth Franklin-Jones – awarded an MBE for services to Nursing and Mental Health Services in Hertfordshire
- Elizabeth Anne Finlay Gardiner – awarded a DCB for services to the Government and the Legislative Process
- Darryl Keen – awarded the Queen’s Fire Services Medal for Distinguished Service.

Ben Davies-Levinson, Elizabeth Franklin-Jones and Darryl Keen were in attendance and thanked the Council for recognising their achievements.

110 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrews, Crystall, Devonshire, Dumont, Frecknall, Hall, Hollebon, Huggins, Kaye, McMullen, Rutland-Barsby, Snowdon and Ward-Booth.

111 MINUTES - 29 APRIL 2021

Councillor Fernando proposed, and Councillor Wyllie seconded, a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The motion to approve the Minutes having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting, and upon a vote taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

112 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

113 PETITIONS

There were no petitions to consider.

114 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Jill Goldsmith was unable to attend the meeting so the Chairman read out her question on her behalf.

Jill Goldsmith asked the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability the following question:

“The Council has been holding Environmental and Climate Forum meetings in line with its commitment in its June 2019 Climate Motion. These are an important opportunity for the Council and interested members of the Community to hear from independent experts and to discuss progress and ideas for changes to planned actions or additional actions.

“How well does the Council consider these meetings are going? In particular:

- what attendance has there been at the meetings?
- are the meetings providing useful feedback to the Council?
- which of the ideas generated has the Council actioned?
- what plans are there for future meetings?"

Councillor McAndrew responded as follows:

"I would like to thank Jill Goldsmith for her question.

"After a short break last year due to Covid, since September 2020 the Forum has been meeting every two months. It is making such a significant contribution to climate change planning in the district that I can only touch on the highlights, so please visit the environmental sustainability pages on the council's website for the full details.

"At each meeting, there are typically around 40 attendees, with broadly 75% of these being representatives of local community groups, stakeholder organisations, town and parish councils and individual residents. The rest are East Herts Officers and Members of all political parties on East Herts Council.

"We have had a wide range of experts present to the Forum, going far beyond the 'usual suspects', including the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, the Heal Rewilding charity, a local resident talking through how to encourage walking instead of short car trips, Affinity Water covering how to reduce water demand and the

Garden Organic group discussing food waste. This is resulting in network between groups, for example, at our most recent meeting a community group asked one of speakers to present to their members; he willingly agreed.

“The council has a ‘live’ action plan, with over 100 individual actions, which is monitored and updated on a monthly basis. This is available on our website as are details of the actions already completed. The action plan includes a number of actions and projects suggested by the Forum, including:

- looking into the possibility of digital signage in towns or other technology-based alerts to promote behaviour change such as reducing engine idling and lower water use. Officers are currently exploring a range of options
- making more pro-active use of social media. We followed this up for Clean Air Day and I’m very pleased to say that our messaging reached 11,700 people with over six times more reactions than any other recent social media posts by the council
- working more closely with farmers and land owners. We have established a ‘rural roundtable’ group with local farmers and land owners, the Soil Association and the National Farmers Union.

“With regard to future plans, the dates and topics for Forum meetings until January 2022 are listed on our website with renewable energy and the wider greening of the economy among upcoming subjects for discussion.

"I hope I have been able to demonstrate that the East Herts Environmental and Climate Forum is now firmly embedded as a key way in which the council and partners are working together towards carbon neutrality by 2030."

115 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Councillor Alexander Curtis asked the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability the following question:

"Can the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability confirm what is being done to prevent fly-tipping in our District, and hold perpetrators of fly tipping responsible for their actions?"

Councillor Graham McAndrew responded as follows:

"Thank you Councillor Curtis for your question about this important issue. Please let me explain the council's preventative and enforcement approaches.

"Our preventative approach includes conducting anti-fly tipping campaigns and providing advice, all backed up with the use of mobile CCTV cameras and signage at fly-tipping hotspots. This approach can work. In 2018, a combined campaign across the county led to the second lowest annual total of fly tips in Hertfordshire since 2012. Unfortunately during 2020/21 and the pandemic levels have risen again and so our work continues.

"The council cannot, of course, deal with fly tipping

alone. We are a member of the Hertfordshire Fly Tipping Group, a multi-agency taskforce with other councils, the police, the Environment Agency and the National Farmers Union among others. This has had tangible results including securing funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner to work with the National Farmers Union to clear fly-tips on farmers' land and increase target hardening.

"At the same time, we will take enforcement action when needed. This includes issuing community protection warnings and notices and, for more serious or persistent offences, fixed penalty notices and prosecutions. Indeed, the council has a strong track record in prosecuting offenders. In the five years to 2020/21, the council secured 17 court prosecutions and issued 79 fixed penalty notices.

"So far in 2021/22, the council has successfully prosecuted four individuals. Three cases were heard at Stevenage Magistrates Court; the offenders were fined and ordered to pay costs. In the fourth case, a man from Hoddesdon was fined by the council after he deposited a sizable boat in a layby near to Pearce's Farm Shop causing obstruction in late 2020.

"The council gained good publicity in the local press about these actions. That said, we and other authorities see a case for strengthening sanctions nationally. We are joining others to ask the Sentencing Council to review the Environmental Offences Definitive Guideline 2014 so as to address inconsistencies in court judgements.

“The FTG is also leading national lobbying efforts to address what it sees as significant deficiencies in the current legislative framework relevant to fly tipping and is about launch a major new lobbying effort targeting the Sentencing Council with a view to securing a review of the Environmental Offences Definitive Guideline 2014 to address what the FTG believes are serious inconsistencies in typical court judgements rendered in response to successful prosecutions and the alternative fixed penalty regime implemented in 2016. This latest effort, which is about launch, is being supported by 124 local authorities across the UK and 10 professional bodies.

“Finally, all Members have a role to play. It is hoped that our enforcement actions, along with our continued campaigns and joint working, will discourage people from fly-tipping in our district. So, if colleagues are able to publicise the things I’ve mentioned through their own networks and social media, this will amplify the council’s strong anti-fly tipping message.”

Councillor Curtis thanked the Executive Member for his response and asked as a supplemental question, if East Herts could continue to look at what other local authorities are doing across the country to deal with fly tipping.

Councillor McAndrew said that East Herts continue to work with the Fly Tipping Group who network with councils across the country. East Herts will continue to look at best practice but often other councils look to us as a great example.

Councillor Mark Pope asked the Executive Member for Planning and Growth;

“Can the Executive Member for Planning and Growth provide an update regarding the *Shop Safe Shop Local* campaign and other measures that are being taken to support local start-up businesses?”

Councillor Goodeve responded as follows;

“The Shop Safe, Shop Local campaign is going well and of course has been ramped up in recent months as more operating restrictions on businesses have been lifted. The messages have actually shifted from shop safe to “welcome back” to emphasise the importance of supporting your local businesses as well as being safe. Members may have seen the various messages that have come out over social media, newspapers and indeed on ivans in recent months.

“On Facebook the campaign had 27,000 impressions over 2 weeks in May and then a little over that again in the middle of June. On Spotify it reached just over 27,000 people.

“Alongside this various editorials were taken out in the Mercury and Bishop’s Stortford Independent encouraging residents to make a pledge and support a local business. This work will continue over the coming weeks and more content will be released under the Welcome Back campaign publicising events that are happening this summer in our towns including the food and drink festival in Hertford and the outdoor

cinema in Bishop's Stortford for August. This will be followed by more communications about events in early September including the classic car display in Buntingford and Rock in the Priory in Ware. If any Members are aware of local events that you want publicising then please let myself and the Executive Member for Corporate Services know.

"I'm glad the second part of your question asks about start up support. You may have seen that just 2 weeks ago we launched a new grant scheme offering £5,000 for any new or existing businesses in the district that are interested in opening up new premises. This grant be used to cover some of the costs of doing so such as rent or fitting out making it much more affordable for businesses to expand or for entrepreneurs to test out a new product or service on the high street. This sits alongside the over £30m we have given out in grants to businesses over the past 12 months and is another good example of where we are supporting businesses."

There was no supplementary question from Councillor Pope.

Councillor Carolyn Redfern asked the Executive Member for Wellbeing the following question;

"Figures up to March 2020, raised in a motion by Labour Councillors to Hertfordshire County Council, show that East Herts has seen the second highest increase in rates of child poverty in the county.

"We know that the long-term costs of children living in

poverty place a huge amount of strain on public services. Early prevention and support can result in dramatic savings later on and ensure all of our children receive a good start in life.

“Can I ask what action the Executive on East Herts District Council plans to take to tackle rising child poverty in our district, and whether they will impress upon their colleagues on Hertfordshire County Council the importance of this?”

Councillor Buckmaster responded as follows;

“I’d like to thank Councillor Redfern for her question. Just a word of caution in that increases can be relative, because on looking at County Data and National Data East Herts is not an area with very high levels of child poverty but there are what we would call pockets of deprivation.

“East Herts Health and Wellbeing Strategy has two main priorities that can relate to the question.

1. Help all children to start off well
2. Empower children, young people and adults to achieve their life potential

“One of the ways we can achieve these is in our criteria for grant giving to meet Health and Wellbeing objectives particularly in certain areas, and of course through the affordable housing supply where since 2017 768 family sized homes have been let to those with limited means and where the household is in receipt of means tested benefits.

“Community grants have enabled the new Network

Homes Sele Farm development *support a scheme* that enables families accessing affordable housing to encourage good healthy food preparation and meet children's dietary health needs.

"Another community grant has been recently awarded to Buntingford Homestart who support families and young children with their health and wellbeing needs.

"Herts Sports Partnership and County are currently running the HAPPY programme of food and activities this summer which is targeted at those who normally access free school meals – this is in addition to the £50 per child offered during the school holidays

"A range of Healthy Hub East Herts partners also provide direct support around the areas of providing domestic abuse support for families and children, mental wellbeing, job employment and skills assistance, and money management.

"The much broader range of Childrens Services is of course provided by County. Families First is but one example of how families are supported. These are services that work together for early help to create a package of support. They can help with issues in common with those available from the Healthy Hubs. There is also the Herts Help, helpline which can enable people to find the support they need.

"Hertfordshire Council is absolutely committed to supporting families and children. In terms of influence that East Herts Members have at County, well it is considerable. Of the 8 Conservative dual Members we have 2 full cabinet Members, 2 deputies, plus the

chairman and other Members of Overview and scrutiny. Councillor Deering as Executive Member for Resources recently announced a Covid Recovery package of £9.6million including a £2m joint 'Building Life Chances' package from Adult Care, Children's, and Public Health services, to tackle some of the impacts on families. Including, crisis intervention funding, community projects and financial advice to support families in, or at risk, of poverty. There is also two-year funding package includes £3m for Children's Services to finance initiatives such as the 'Coming Back Stronger' programme of educational recovery, including mental health support for pupils, and mentoring delivered by Herts for Learning. As mentioned we are all absolutely committed to helping those in need."

There was no supplementary question from Councillor Redfern.

Councillor Mione Goldspink asked the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability the following question;

"Does the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability agree with me that it would be an excellent idea for East Herts Council to take part in the Queen's Green Canopy project? This project is designed to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022, and every person across the whole of the UK is invited to plant a tree. Planting needs to be done between October 2021 and March 2022. If the Executive Member does agree with me, would he be willing to set up a Working Party to look at the practicalities of taking

part in this project?"

Councillor McAndrew responded as follows;

"I would like to thank Councillor Goldspink for her question. I share her enthusiasm for the Queen's Green Canopy project and I'm pleased that encouraging participated has been listed in the council's Sustainability Action Plan for some time.

"A project like this is all about collectively doing something for which the outcome is greater than the sum of the parts. Therefore, as proactive members of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership, we are already liaising with Hertfordshire County Council's dedicated officer for this project.

"The primary emphasis of this important national project is, however, for communities and individual residents to take up the challenge to increase green cover and so I'd like to assure Members that publicity and opportunities to get involved will shortly be promoted by the council. Mostly notably, we aim to highlight initiatives such as that at The Woodlands Trust, which is providing tree packs free of charge for schools and community groups, and provide information on species and site choice to ensure truly sustainable benefits.

"Importantly, we in East Herts are particularly keen to use this opportunity to not simply promote an increase the number of trees but to encourage residents and local groups to strengthen or reintroduce indigenous species of trees and shrubs. We haven't waited until

October to start this and I'm very pleased to say that on 24th May this year the council showed what can be done when a number of residents, Members and Officers came together at Northgate End in Bishop's Stortford to plant 336 native trees and 288 native shrubs.

"At the same time, we'd like to see tree planting that preserves and indeed increases biodiversity through planting in appropriate locations. We have an enviable track record of demonstrating what can be done and have just declared Pishiobury Park as a local nature reserve given the quality of its biological, geological and historical interest.

"Given the vital importance of residents and community groups taking up the challenge to increase the Queen's Green Canopy, I would like to invite all Members to promote the project and share the council's publicity which will be issued in the next few weeks."

Councillor Goldspink sought clarification as a supplemental question about whether there would be a specific project that East Herts District Council would be running or just supporting local groups?

Councillor McAndrew said that there would be a social media campaign highlighting local community groups who are planting trees and to encourage others.

Councillor Alastair Ward-Booth asked the Executive Member for Wellbeing the following question;

“Our Parks and Open Spaces have proven to be invaluable to the health and wellbeing of our residents, especially during the past year. Could you please update Members as to any projects underway or completed in our parks and any ideas for the future?”

Councillor Buckmaster responded as follows;

“During the last year we have certainly seen more of our residents enjoy our parks and open spaces more frequently.

Two key projects we have delivered recently include the Trinity Close play area in Bishop’s Stortford and Hartham Play area in Hertford.

“Our new facility at Hartham was developed from a shared vision between ourselves and local residents, and funded through a combination of crowd funding and section 106 money, enabling us to create an inclusive and attractive play area for our residents to enjoy.

“Trinity Close is a much smaller park which was ready for a makeover. The site had some access issues that were not going to be easy to resolve owing to the lie of the land. When funds became available through planning contributions from an adjacent development, we were able to launch a quite visionary project which included re landscaping to assist those with mobility issues. The resultant play space, now with an area in which the local community will be able to hold events, has been warmly received.

“Members will also be aware that this week is Love

Parks week and we are celebrating by encouraging residents to enjoy our parks and open spaces through picnics, walks and exercise. But please, I urge residents to take their litter home. Details on a number of organised activities can be found on our website. In addition, we have now launched our parks and open spaces strategy consultation. We encourage Members and residents to provide us feedback to help shape the future priorities for our parks and open spaces in the district. The consultation closes on 24 September 2021.

“A snapshot of our beautiful parks and open spaces can be seen in our consultation video which is also available on the website with some beautiful drone footage, so please all take a look.”

Councillor Ward-Booth gave his apologies for this meeting so there was no supplementary question.

Councillor Chris Wilson asked the Executive Member for Planning and Growth the following question;

“Uttlesford District Council is in the process of producing a new local plan. Given their proximity to Bishop's Stortford, any developments on the edge of the town, but over the border in Uttlesford, have the potential to place an even greater burden on the already overstretched infrastructure. Can the Executive Member for Planning and Growth advise what meetings she is planning to have with Uttlesford and what she is doing to safeguard the interests of the residents of East Herts in this regard?”

Councillor Goodeve responded as follows;

“The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that public bodies, including local planning authorities, have a duty to co-operate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries.

“As part of the Council's ongoing commitment to meet the requirements of the NPPF and to engage constructively with a range of bodies, a Co-operation for Sustainable Development Board was established in 2014, comprising the West Essex/East Herts housing market area partners, which includes Uttlesford Council. The Board is now well-established and has previously undertaken comprehensive work on strategic cross-boundary issues, including housing, transport infrastructure, employment and environmental impact. It is through this forum that key issues such as infrastructure have been, and will be continue to be discussed.

“Furthermore Uttlesford Council has also established a Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Group to identify strategically significant development proposals, infrastructure requirements and other matters where cross boundary collaboration is required. Councillor Haysey recently attended a meeting of this group (28 June 2021), specifically to discuss transport infrastructure proposals to support sustainable growth.

“As you would expect officers will continue to engage constructively with colleagues at Uttlesford Council during the formative stages of their Plan-making process, with a view to arranging a Member level duty

to co-operate meeting once their spatial strategy is clear. At this meeting the Council will be seeking to ensure that any growth proposals put forward have been properly assessed by Uttlesford Council, particularly those in the vicinity of Bishop's Stortford, and that future infrastructure needs are identified."

There was no supplementary question from Councillor Wilson.

116 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 6 JULY 2021

The Leader of the Council thanked Hertfordshire County Council for allowing the Council to use their Council Chamber as a number of councillors felt uncomfortable meeting at Wallfields. She also thanked the Democratic Services team for organising the meeting at the new venue at short notice.

Councillor Haysey said there were a number of Members having to self-isolate after being 'pinged' by Track and Trace or had contracted Covid-19 so she wished those Members a speedy recovery.

Councillor Haysey congratulated the residents who had received honours from the Queen which demonstrated the extraordinary range of talented residents in the district.

The Leader then presented a report setting out recommendations to the Council made by the Executive at its meeting on 6 July 2021.

116 REFRESHED CORPORATE PLAN FOR 2021/22

The Leader presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 6 July 2021, regarding the Refreshed Corporate Plan for 2021/22. She asked Members to note that the text at 2.1 in the report was incorrect and said it should read “the Executive were asked to review and comment on the refreshed priorities for 2021/22 onwards”. She said that the Corporate Plan guided the Council in all its interactions and its ambitions for the future. The refreshed plan followed the SEED principles but had been refreshed due to the impact of Covid-19.

Councillor Haysey proposed that the recommendations in the Executive report be supported. Councillor Pope seconded the proposal.

Councillor Goldspink confirmed that the Liberal Democrat group were supportive of this recommendation.

Councillor Wilson noted that the funding for two of the initiatives, the Launch Pad and ‘Welcome Back’, were funded by the EU. He asked where the funding would come from in the next few years.

Councillor Goodeve said the Launch Pad funding had been guaranteed for two years.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the refreshed Corporate Plan

be adopted.

116 DRAFT EQUALITIES, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY FOR EAST HERTS

Councillor Drake proposed that the recommendations in the Executive report be supported. Councillor Curtis seconded the recommendations.

Councillor Curtis said that a lot of work had gone into the strategy and Members had had the opportunity to feed into it through a Members briefing session and a report was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Goldspink confirmed that the Liberal Democrat group were in support of the recommendation. She said that the group were delighted to see the strategy as it was important that all residents were treated equally and was pleased to see clear recommendations for action.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy be adopted.

116 APPROVAL OF THE STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY 2021 - 26 UNDER THE LICENSING ACT 2003

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the

Executive report of 6 July 2021, regarding the approval of the Statement of Licensing Policy 2021-26. He explained that, as a Licensing Authority, the Council must adopt and publish a Statement of Licensing Policy every five years which sets out the principles when carrying out its licensing functions. The consultation engaged with a wide range of stakeholders including the police and elected Members. Councillor Boylan said that the policy included a focus on health and wellbeing when applications were determined and the introduction of a sensitive licensing area. The policy had been endorsed by the Licensing Committee and the Executive with no further amendments.

Councillor Boylan proposed that the recommendation in the Executive report be supported. Councillor Bolton seconded the recommendation.

Councillor Goldspink confirmed that the Liberal Democrat group were happy to support the recommendation.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That the Statement of Licensing Policy 2021-26 be approved with affect from 29th July 2021.

116 ADOPTION OF BENGEO NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA PLAN FOLLOWING REFERENDUM

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 6 July 2021. Councillor Goodeve proposed that the recommendations in the Executive report be supported. Councillor Ruffles seconded the recommendation.

Councillor Goldspink confirmed that the Liberal Democrat group were happy to support the recommendation.

Councillor Newton spoke as the local ward member and said she was delighted with the plan and was a true representation of the community coming together.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Development Plan 2019-2033 be formally 'made'.

116 ADOPTION OF SELE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA PLAN
FOLLOWING REFERENDUM

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 6 July 2021. Councillor Goodeve proposed that the recommendations in the Executive report be supported. Councillor Deering seconded the recommendation.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That the Sele Neighbourhood Area Development Plan 2018-2033 be formally ‘made’.

116 ADOPTION OF THUNDRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOLLOWING REFERENDUM

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 6 July 2021. Councillor Goodeve proposed that the recommendations in the Executive report be supported. Councillor Boylan seconded the recommendation.

The Chairman read out a statement from Councillor Andrews, the local ward member, who had given his apologies for the meeting:

Councillor Andrews felt it was an excellent Neighbourhood Plan and demonstrated the hard work that had gone into it over many years. He acknowledged the support from officers at East Herts, especially George Pavey. The plan was a wonderful exercise in community engagement and it was a good foundation and marker for the future of the community in Thundridge Parish.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That the Thundridge Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2033 be formally 'made'.

116 ADOPTION OF GILSTON AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOLLOWING REFERENDUM

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 6 July 2021. Councillor Goodeve proposed that the recommendations in the Executive report be supported. Councillor E Buckmaster seconded the recommendation.

Councillor E Buckmaster wanted to show his appreciation for the local community group that assisted in the development of the plan. He said that this was the largest development area in the District, the plan went through a tough public examination and received 97% support in the referendum. He gave thanks to George Pavey who had worked on the plan.

Councillor Haysey said that East Herts had a good reputation for producing fantastic Neighbourhood Plans which had brought communities together. The Gilston area would be subject to major planning applications for development and this plan would help developers understand what was expected and what the local area was about.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Gilston Area Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2033, as detailed at Appendix A to this report, be formally 'made'.

117 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Leader of the Council presented the report which set out a number of changes to the Council's Committees since the Annual Council meeting in April 2021. Councillor Haysey said that some of the changes had been a result of a change in the Executive where Councillor Kaye had replaced Councillor Rutland-Barsby as Executive Member for Communities. She gave her thanks to Councillor Rutland-Barsby for her work in community engagement. Councillor Haysey announced that Councillor Goodeve would be responsible for Licensing, moving from the Neighbourhoods remit into Planning and Growth as licensing had a strong relationship with planning.

Councillor Haysey proposed that the recommendations in the report be noted. Councillor Alder seconded the proposal.

Councillor Goldspink noted the changes and asked the Leader to pass on her and her Group's sincere condolences to Councillor Rutland-Barsby.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That the membership of the Council's Executive and Committees as set out in Appendix A and B of the report, be noted.

118 LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION COUNCIL SIZE SUBMISSION

The Leader of the Council submitted a report relating to the Local Government Boundary Commission Council Size Submission. She said that East Herts last had a boundary review in 1998 and the report was the first step in the current boundary review process. The review was necessary as the population had increased and some wards were out of step with the Commission's requirements. Councillor Haysey said that Councillor Snowdon had worked with the opposition groups to get an agreement to keep the 50 seats on the Council.

Councillor Haysey proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. The recommendations were seconded by Councillor Bolton.

Councillor Goldspink proposed an amendment to the recommendations and was seconded by Councillor Redfern. The amendment was as follows:

"Delete Recommendation (B) completely, and then replace it with a new (B) which states "However, if the Head of Legal and Democratic Services considers that changes should be made to the Council's Submission, he must refer the matter back to the Full Council and ask for a further vote."

Councillor Haysey said that she could not accept the proposed amendment. She said that the timeline for the review was laid out in the report on page 554 and Council would not be meeting again until October 2021. The dates were set by the Local Government Boundary Commission and the approval of the report was an important part of the process.

Councillor Goldspink explained her reasons for the amendment and highlighted that Council could hold an extraordinary meeting if necessary to approve any amendments to the submission. She felt that recommendation (B) in the report was undemocratic and any alterations should be agreed by Council, not delegated to two people.

Councillor Redfern supported the points raised by Councillor Goldspink. She said there was consultation with all political groups when the submission was in development and had reached an agreement on 50 seats on the Council. She said that by delegating to the Leader and Head of Legal and Democratic Services, it would ignore the democracy of the Council.

The motion to amend recommendation (B) in the report, having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting, and upon a vote being taken, it was declared LOST.

Councillor Bell proposed and Councillor Redfern seconded another amendment to recommendation (B). The amendment was as follows:

“That Council agree cross party delegation to the Leader and Head of Legal and Democratic Services”

Councillor Haysey thanked Councillor Bell for her suggestion but said that decisions like in the report were often delegated if any minor amendments needed to be made. She said she was more than happy to stick with the recommendations as written in the report.

Councillor Townsend said it was a minor amendment and would only go to support, encourage and convince residents that most things are considered.

The motion to amend recommendation (B) in the report, having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting, and upon a vote being taken, it was declared LOST.

The motion to support the recommendations in the report, having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting, and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the submission on Council Size, as set out in Appendix A be approved;

(B) Council agree a delegation to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any final changes to the Council Size Submission as may be necessary; and

(C) authorisation be given to the Chief

Executive to submit the Council's Submission on Council Size to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

119 ACQUISITION OF WARE PROPERTY FOR CONVERSION TO TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION - 34 QUEENS ROAD, WARE

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods submitted a report in respect of the acquisition of a property for conversion to temporary accommodation. He informed Members that the accommodation would be suitable for families with children and would provide more settled and secure accommodation. Councillor Boylan explained that homelessness was on the increase and the council had 31 temporary housing units and in the first quarter in 2020, there were 178 homeless households and by the last quarter, this had risen to 235. The council used bed and breakfast accommodation when the temporary units are full which was far from ideal and represented a huge cost to the council. The unit that the council had acquired had planning permission in place and had been stripped back ready for work to begin. The Executive Member said the benefits were clear and the extra units proposed would save the council £26,000 a year.

Councillor Boylan proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Kemp seconded the proposal.

Councillor Wilson said he supported the recommendation and felt it was a sensible move. He regretted that homelessness was on the rise and felt this was due to the Council's previous decision to sell

off their housing to housing associations.

Councillor Bell said she was happy to see the proposal and welcomed the shift into other parts of the district.

Councillor Symonds said she was thrilled to see the proposal. She said that putting people into bed and breakfast was not good for their mental health and was pleased to see that the council would be changing lives.

Councillor Goldspink welcomed this report and wished more could be done. She was pleased that a way had been found to finance the project without adding any financial pressure.

Councillor Curtis thanked the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and the officers involved. He said it was important for homeless families to remain in the local community.

Councillor Beckett asked if Councillor Boylan could confirm whether these units would be provided at social rent.

Councillor Boylan said the temporary accommodation came from homelessness grants.

Councillor Kemp said some of the bed and breakfast units were situated in Harlow so was pleased to see further provision in the east of the district. He praised the choice of building as it would allow for a mix of units.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That the residential property known as 34 Queens Road, Ware be acquired by the council and converted to two self-contained units for use by East Herts Council as temporary accommodation for homeless households by means of an addition the council's capital programme and utilisation of commuted sums held by the council for affordable housing as detailed in the EXEMPT Appendix A.

120 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

Councillor Deering proposed a motion on the planning reforms set out by the Government in the 2020 White Paper "Planning for the Future". Councillor Goodeve seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Goldspink supported the motion. She said that the government consulted on their plans last year and the Council had worked hard on sending a response. She trusted the government to listen to the responses of the consultation but they had ignored them. She said that if further lobbying was needed to get the government to listen, she would be supportive.

Councillor Deering said he was satisfied that the government was in the right place but had just pitched their proposals wrong. He said that in 2010, the government inherited the lowest house building levels since the 1920s and the Labour led Croydon Council

established a group “Brick by Brick” to focus on house building but did not build a single house. The government was investing in housing market and built 243,000 homes last year and 1.8 million since 2010.

Councillor Haysey felt the wrong language was being used, she said that the government was listening and she had had many conversations with Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government but local authorities just needed to be heard. She said that there needed to be a ‘carrot and stick’ approach so developers produce what they promise.

Councillor Wilson said the government had promised 200,000 starter homes in 2010 and none had been built.

Councillor Goodeve highlighted that the district was currently overachieving in its housing targets. The district had a District Plan in place and felt the Planning Inspectorate should have more respect for it. She said the Council would be lobbying the MP to be listened too.

Councillor Bell said that there was more than one MP in East Herts and asked if all three MPs could be lobbied.

The substantive motion being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - The Council notes the announcement in the recent Queen’s Speech

that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is to proceed with the reforms to the planning system set out in the 2020 White Paper "*Planning for the Future*".

The Council responded to the Government's consultation in October 2020, and regrets that the Government is pushing ahead with some reforms with which the Council previously expressed concerns, including:

- the proposal to grant automatic outline permission in certain circumstances;
- more centralised decision making, which would reduce local democratic input to planning decisions; and
- failure to acknowledge important local contexts.

The Council is concerned that the White Paper as published last year would lead to less local control and less accountability about planning decisions which fundamentally affect the lives of local residents and hopes that the Government will listen to the responses of this Council and others to the White Paper when forming its new legislation.

The Council urges the Leader and the Executive Member for Planning and Growth to work with stakeholders including the Town and Country Planning Association to continue to lobby Government to listen to the responses to the White Paper consultation and alter the reforms

before they appear on the statute book.

The meeting closed at Time Not Specified

Chairman
Date