

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
- COUNTY HALL, HERTFORD, SG13 8DQ ON
WEDNESDAY 15 DECEMBER 2021, AT 7.00
PM

PRESENT: Councillor K Crofton (Chairman).
Councillors D Andrews, S Bell, R Bolton,
P Boylan, M Brady, E Buckmaster,
R Buckmaster, S Bull, J Burmicz, B Crystall,
A Curtis, B Deering, I Devonshire, H Drake,
J Dumont, J Frecknall, J Goodeve, A Hall,
L Haysey, J Jones, J Kaye, I Kemp,
G McAndrew, S Newton, M Pope,
C Redfern, S Reed, P Ruffles, D Snowdon,
M Stevenson, T Stowe, N Symonds,
R Townsend, A Ward-Booth, 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
Steven Linnett	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager

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

The Chairman explained that due to the current increase in cases due to the Omicron Covid variant, the questions that had been submitted by members of the public and Members would be provided with a written response outside the meeting with the exception of Councillor Symonds' question who had agreed to defer her question to the next meeting. The responses would be provided on the Council's website and circulated to Members.

The Chairman thanked Members for wearing their Christmas jumpers to raise money for his chosen charity, Macmillan Cancer Support.

The Chairman said that the Vice-Chairman and himself had been busy representing the Council at a number of events. He said that he had attended a fundraising event for Breathe Easy organised by Councillor Hollebon. He had attended the Remembrance Day parade in Hertford and Sawbridgeworth and thanked Councillors Devonshire, Jones and Kaye for attending the events in the other towns in the District. He said that he had attended the opening of a new facility for Hertfordshire Independent Living Service which would allow them to expand their services.

The Chairman gave his condolences to the family of Ian Spall, an Officer at the council, who had sadly passed away. He had attended his funeral and said that he

would be remembered by colleagues for his sense of humour and great work ethic.

269 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alder, Beckett, Cutting, Fernando, Goldspink, Hollebon, Huggins, McMullen, Page, Rowley and Rutland-Barsby.

270 MINUTES - 20 OCTOBER 2021

Councillor Haysey proposed and Councillor Newton seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2021 be confirmed as a correct recorded and signed by the Chairman.

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

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

271 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

272 PETITIONS

There were no petitions to consider.

273 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The questions submitted by the public were provided with a written response after the meeting. The written responses can be found at Appendix A.

274 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The questions submitted by Members were provided with a written response after the meeting. The written responses can be found at Appendix A.

275 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 23 NOVEMBER 2021

The Leader of the Council said that she wanted to thank the staff at East Herts Council for all their extra work over the last year. She said that it was unfortunate to be in a similar situation to this time last year and hoped that by next Christmas, the Council could meet in its own Council Chamber. She urged people to stay safe and follow the 'Hands, Face, Space' guidance.

Councillor Haysey then presented a report setting out recommendations to the Council made by the Executive at its meeting on 23 November 2021.

276 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY

The Executive Members for Neighbourhoods presented the recommendation which was referred to in the Executive report of 23 November 2021. Councillor Boylan said that the policy had been revised and updated by Officers, subject to public consultation and consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He thanked the Overview and Scrutiny

Committee for drawing attention to the previous reference to the Housing Strategy which had now been amended to the emerging Housing Strategy. The policy had also been reworded to address the points raised about the financial assistance on offer.

Councillor Boylan proposed, and Councillor Symonds seconded a motion supporting the recommendation. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy be adopted.

277 TAXI LICENSING POINTS POLICY

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 23 November 2021. She said that the policy had been updated by Officers, subject to public consultation and the Licensing Committee. The council was responsible for the regulation of the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage taxi drivers and the proposed points scheme would allow Officers to take a wider range of enforcement action outside the remit of the Suitability Policy which dealt with serious offences resulting in suspension or revocation of licences. Councillor Goodeve said that the points scheme had been updated following new standards being issued from the Department of Transport.

Councillor Goodeve proposed, and Councillor Bolton seconded a motion supporting the recommendation. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the

motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That the Taxi Licensing Points Policy be adopted.

278 STATEMENT OF GAMBLING PRINCIPLES

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation which was referred to in the Executive report of 23 November 2021. She said that the council were required to update the policy every three years under the Licensing Act 2003. The updated policy had only minor amendments that were subject to consultation. Councillor Goodeve thanked the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods for his work on the policy.

Councillor Goodeve proposed, and Councillor Curtis seconded a motion supporting the recommendation. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That the Statement of Gambling Principles 2022-25 be adopted.

279 HARLOW AND GILSTON GARDEN TOWN TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Leader of the Council presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 23 November 2021. She said that the strategy was part of a suite of documents that would be coming forward for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. The strategy was subject to extensive

consultation and would help in providing a green economy and transport system for the public.

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

Councillor Redfern felt that this was a difficult decision as the decision had been brought forward before the Stortford river crossing planning application had been decided. She said that if a decision had been made on the river crossing, she would have supported the recommendation as it was an excellent document. She felt that the document assumed that the second river crossing would go ahead. She believed the process was the wrong way round and did not feel she could support the recommendation ahead of a planning decision on the crossing. She proposed an amendment to the recommendation to defer the decision until after the planning application had been decided. Councillor Brady seconded the amended recommendation.

Councillor Bell said that the Liberal Democrat Group approved of the document but could not support the policy as a whole as the potential damage of the river crossings had not been explored. She said that the planning application on the council's website had received hundreds of comments about the potential environmental damage.

Councillor Haysey felt that Councillors Redfern and Bell were getting confused between the strategy proposed and the planning application which were not directly

related. The strategy was to ensure sustainable transport across the Garden Town. She said that to defer the decision would not make sense as the strategy was for the whole of the Garden Town and not just one road and could not support the proposal to defer. All five councils involved in the Garden Town were putting the strategy through their own committee system.

Councillor Curtis said that he did not understand the proposal to defer. He said he did not think it was wise to defer and lose out on an investment opportunity. He said that it was disappointing the objections had not been raised earlier.

Councillor Goodeve assured the council that Members would have the opportunity to ask questions when the application came before the Development Management Committee. She urged caution and said that Members should make sure they were not pre-determining their decision on the application.

The motion to defer a decision on the recommendation until the planning application had been determined having being proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and a vote taken. It was declared LOST.

The meeting returned to the original motion that had been proposed and seconded.

Councillor Wilson said that the Eastern Stort crossing was mentioned in the document as a solution. He said that an inevitable result of the Garden Town would be

increased congestion for residents in Bishop's Stortford, Stansted Abbots and Sawbridgeworth. He said he could not support the recommendation presented as a survey had not been carried out on wildlife in the area. He said he would like to see sustainability extended to the wildlife and not just transport.

Councillor Curtis said that he understood elements of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town were controversial but the District Plan had listed this as a key site for development. He said that the decision could not be delayed as the strategy was required to be in place and felt it should be celebrated.

Having been proposed and seconded, the motion was put to the meeting and a vote taken. The motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy be endorsed as a material consideration in the planning process for the preparation of masterplans, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purpose for sites within the Garden Town area.

280 TRANSFORMING EAST HERTS PROGRAMME AND PROPOSED REVISED FEES AND CHARGES POLICY

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the recommendation referred to in the Executive report of 23 November 2021. He said that

the council's Transformation Programme would propose a number of policies to Council in order to improve the council's financial position. The revised fees and charges policy aimed to ensure the council's costs were recovered and provide a framework so they could be set more consistently. He confirmed that the policy was not to exploit customers of the council but to cover costs and if there was any surplus, it would be reinvested.

Councillor Wilson said that he felt the policy was sensible and thanked Officers for their hard work. He said that this would not be necessary if the current government had not cut funding to local authorities by 37% between 2009-2020 and residents would now need to pay more for services.

Councillor Bell said that the Liberal Democrat Group would like to request that Councillor Haysey write to the government as Leader of the Council to ask them to halt or reverse the cuts in funding so the Council did not have to make these decisions.

Councillor Haysey said that she did not feel that writing to the government would achieve anything. She said that she was the Chair of the East of England Local Government Association and they had made representations to the relevant government departments and the Chancellor to express that the funding provided was not adequate. She said that the Council needed to take responsibility for its own finances.

Councillor Ward-Booth said that local residents were

lucky to have a Conservative led Council who managed its finances well. He said that the government had provided immense support to councils during the pandemic.

Councillor Curtis said that the money would need to come from somewhere if the government was to reverse the funding cuts to local authorities. He said that the Council should get on with providing services to residents and everyone had to play their part.

Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Pope seconded a motion supporting the recommendations. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That the revised Fees and Charges Policy be approved.

281 COUNCIL TAX BASE

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the report on the Council Tax Base. He said that it was an annual report that set out the anticipated Council Tax Base and needed Council approval as set out in the regulations.

Councillor Williamson proposed, and Councillor Stowe seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - that (A) the calculation of the Council's tax base for the whole district, and for the parish areas

for 2022/23 be approved; and

(B) pursuant to the report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by East Hertfordshire District Council as its council tax base for the whole area for 2022/23 shall be 62609.7 and for the parish areas listed below for 2022/23 shall be as follows:-

ALBURY	282.88
ANSTEY	172.15
ARDELEY	211.65
ASPENDEN	125.14
ASTON	427.47
BAYFORD	227.43
BENGEO	279.17
BENNINGTON	412.81
BISHOP'S STORTFORD	16494.18
BRAMFIELD	111.85
BRAUGHING	665.37
BRENT PELHAM/MEESDEN	147.73
BRICKENDON	357.37
BUCKLAND	115.37
BUNTINGFORD	3241.43
COTTERED	314.77
DATCHWORTH	736.82
EASTWICK/GILSTON	440.08
FURNEUX PELHAM	268.73
GREAT AMWELL	962.63
GREAT MUNDEN	142.61
HERTFORD	12175.71

HERTFORD HEATH	961.09
HERTINGFORDBURY	332.08
HIGH WYCH	345.83
HORMEAD	355.21
HUNSDON	517.27
LITTLE BERKHAMSTED	272.15
LITTLE HADHAM	538.22
LITTLE MUNDEN	425.90
MUCH HADHAM	968.79
SACOMBE	95.03
STANSTEAD ST. MARGARETS	697.12
SAWBRIDGEWORTH	3853.32
STANDON	1993.37
STANSTEAD ABBOTTS	706.06
STAPLEFORD	268.56
STOCKING PELHAM	82.71
TEWIN	871.41
THORLEY	152.79
THUNDRIDGE	680.56
WALKERN	715.35
WARESIDE	311.77
WARE TOWN	7562.01
WATTON-AT-STONE	1061.90
WESTMILL	161.40
WIDFORD	291.78
WYDDIAL	74.74

282 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

There were no motions submitted.

283 APPENDIX A - RESPONSES TO MEMBERS' AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The meeting closed at 7.57 pm

Chairman
Date

Council – 15 December 2021

Responses to Members' Questions

Question 1

Councillor Ben Crystall to ask Councillor Graham McAndrew, Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability:

The recent cancellation of the Hertford Hydro scheme is regrettable but given the delay and challenges that the project faced, it is understandable.

However this does mean that EHC has now missed an opportunity to harness clean renewable energy to generate income that could be used to cross-subsidise further activities to cut the district's carbon emissions.

Every month that goes by is a further month of opportunity lost in our urgent transition towards zero emissions, meaning we must squeeze more and more action into the diminishing time that remains.

So will EHC use the capital originally earmarked for the hydro scheme to fund new projects that can both cut carbon emissions and generate an income to cross-subsidise further carbon reduction measures?

Response from Councillor Graham McAndrew:

I'd like to thank Cllr Crystall for his question and I agree with him that it was regrettable that the hydro scheme ultimately proved financially unviable despite the council's best efforts to accommodate the increasing requirements placed on it by the Environment Agency.

Capital resources for the hydro scheme were approved. Given the ongoing uncertainty about delivery, however, they were *not*

committed, meaning that they would have only been made available once the scheme was ready to proceed. Thus, the borrowing and associated costs were not included in the budget and Medium Term Financial Plan and so there are no resources that can simply be reallocated.

I'd like to remind members that the council has made considerable investment in various works to reduce carbon emissions, including energy efficiency measures at Hartham and Grange Paddocks Leisure Centres, upgrades at Wallfields and Buntingford Depot and installation of e-vehicle chargers in the district.

The council will wish to continue to look for opportunities to achieve carbon neutrality and I am always open to consideration of new projects which can cover the council's borrowing costs and make a financial return without undue risk to the council. It is in this way that the council can work towards meeting its sustainability and transformation goals.

Question 2

Councillor Ben Crystall to ask Councillor Graham McAndrew, Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability:

The rapid rise in electric vehicle numbers is already helping East Herts Council tackle problems with damaging air pollution. Despite this benefit, the district council seems to lack enthusiasm for providing residents with on-street chargers. Already we are hearing reports of residents who lack driveways running charging cables across pavements and though these cables are often hidden under rubber mats, there are reports of accidents as people trip over them. By delaying the provision of on-street chargers, we are in danger of letting events run away from us, as more people start to resort to these measures. To help prevent that, and reassure our residents

that we are acting, would EHC consider a small scale trial of lamp-post based chargers, at spots with suitable cabling and where lampposts are close to the kerb edge to avoid such trip hazards? These are already being trialled in Watford and there is no clear reason why this can't happen in East Herts too.

Response from Councillor Graham McAndrew:

I'd like to thank Cllr Crystal for his question. I would also like to assure him and all members that I and the administration share his eagerness to expand access to e-chargers in East Herts.

With regard to on-street chargers, I am aware of examples in the county and am assured that learning outcomes, including those relating to safety and technical issues such as the charge speed capacity, are feeding into the e-vehicle strategy currently being drafted by Hertfordshire County Council. We obviously wish to act in partnership with the County Council given that they are the highways authority and, as with all other districts, we have committed to support the strategy once it is finalised early next year at which point we can determine our approach to on-street chargers.

In the meantime, we have commenced feasibility work with a number of town and parish councils with the aim of applying to the Office of Zero Emission Vehicles for funding to install chargers in various village hall and community centre car parks. If successful, this would see a network of chargers with 24/7 access in localities currently ill-served by public charging facilities. We aim to make this bid by the end of March.

I hope I have been able to demonstrate the council's proactive steps towards increasing access to chargers across the district.

Question 3

Cllr Norma Symonds to ask Cllr Peter Boylan, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

We are all very aware of the significant impact Covid-19 has had upon individuals and families across the world. Can the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods please explain how the pandemic has impacted on the numbers turning to the council for help with housing and how our performance compares with other councils in Hertfordshire?

Councillor Symonds chose to defer her question to the next Full Council meeting.

Question 4

Councillor Chris Wilson to ask Councillor Graham McAndrew, Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability:

The Demand Responsive Transport bus service, Herts Lynx, launched on the 19th September. It has, thus far, been more successful and popular than expected and represents one of the few ways rural public transport can be made more viable for our residents.

Can you please update the council with respect to its progress, and advise what measures East Herts can take to promote it further? And are there any plans to extend it to more villages and destinations in our council area?

Response from Councillor Graham McAndrew:

I'd like to thank Cllr Wilson for his question and I most certainly share his delight in seeing the high usage the scheme is already attracting; there have been over 3,300 passenger journeys since its launch in

mid-September. Usage is steadily rising and indeed a special 'free trip' introductory promotional offer has just been launched to further encourage sign-up.

In the main, journeys are taking place from the rural villages into the 'Key Hub Towns', notably Bishop's Stortford in East Herts, in line with the fundamental aim to improve rural accessibility to employment, education, healthcare and shopping.

I am particularly pleased that 43 extra pick-up points were added in November which saw Much Hadham coming into the operational zone. More pick-up points are due to be added in January. East Herts Council is in contact with the team at Hertfordshire County Council to share views on highly used business parks and the like so as to maximise access to key areas in our district.

Looking to the future, the service is currently being run with a fleet of three minibuses but an additional two vehicles have been ordered with an estimated delivery date of Summer 2022. Furthermore, Hertfordshire County Council has made a funding bid to expand the HertsLynx operating zone. The outcome of the bid is as yet unknown, however, if successful, the operational area would be extended into the south of the district to include Hertford, Ware and the surrounding rural areas.

With regard to promoting the service more locally, we have links on our website and will, of course, continue to promote HertsLynx through social media and our other contact with our residents. Also, I was pleased to see the scheme promoted at the Hertfordshire Eco Fair at County Hall last month and we are aiming to use a similar promotional approach via our partners on the East Herts Climate Change and Environment Forum in the new year. In the meantime, I strongly urge all members to spread the word about this excellent service.

Question 5

Councillor Chris Wilson to ask Councillor Graham McAndrew, Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability:

Since the last lockdown, it has been clear to anyone living near or passing through Hockerill Junction in Bishop's Stortford that congestion and pollution are returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Are any figures yet available for the levels of pollution present at this site for 2021, and do you agree it is time we had live monitoring of this site so that we could spread awareness of the issue further and encourage a change in behaviour whenever possible?

Response from Councillor Graham McAndrew:

I'd like to thank Cllr Wilson for his question.

As I have discussed before in response to previous questions raised about this topic, air quality monitoring in the district's air quality management areas is subject to specific criteria and calibration methodologies prescribed by Defra. For this reason, the statistics for any particular year are only published about half way through the following year once discussed with Defra. Therefore, the latest calibrated figures relate to 2020. These are available on our website and show a fall in air pollution at Hockerill junction in 2020, a large degree of which is likely to be due to the drop in traffic during the Covid lockdowns.

The more recent raw, uncalibrated readings up to October 2021 suggest that NO₂ levels are around 10% to 15% higher than last year on the four approach roads to the junction. If this is reflected in the full year, calibrated figures, the air pollution would remain under the 40 micrograms per cubic metre threshold in Stansted Road and Hockerill Street. The threshold would, however, be breached again in

Dunmow Road and London Road although the raw data indicate emissions would be lower than pre-pandemic.

Real time, live monitoring of air quality is an interesting question. In terms of informing action by East Herts Council and Hertfordshire County Council, the highways authority, the current monitoring arrangements work well as we are able to gauge air quality improvements on a robust like-for-like basis each year.

Given the council's limited resources, we feel it is better to focus on tackling the issue of air pollution rather than investing in more monitoring. To help address the issue at Hockerill junction, we, for example, work with local groups to encourage modal shift to greener travel options. To support this joint approach, should a local community group or any other partner wish to investigate the acquisition and installation of real time monitoring equipment, East Herts Council officers would be very happy to advise of the products available.

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Council – 15 December 2021

Responses to Public Questions

Question 1

Beryl Wrangles to ask Cllr Graham McAndrew, Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability:

To ask the executive member for Environmental Sustainability when parking policy will be changed to accommodate RPZs deemed necessary for the granting of planning permission to mitigate the impact of infill development and prevent the deterioration of quality of life for existing residents? I of course am specifically interested in Tamworth Road, Hertford where I have lived for over 30 years, but would appreciate that residents in other areas of the district are potentially similarly affected.

Response from Councillor Graham McAndrew:

We are aware of the issues raised regarding the proposed development at Tamworth Road in Hertford. Our officers concluded a survey in May and June 2021 which determined that the area currently does not qualify for the Resident Permit Zone (RPZ) scheme.

The Council updated the RPZ policy in December 2020, our approach ensures we are able to manage the financial implications of an RPZ scheme and mitigate any unnecessary displacement whilst ensuring new schemes proposed are on a “shared use” basis.

For clarity the approval of an RPZ scheme operates outside of the planning system and therefore the planning permission process does not determine whether an RPZ proposal is approved.

The process requires a formal public consultation with residents and businesses whilst following the criteria approved, the

implementation of such a scheme is not certain until this exercise has been undertaken. It is of course positive that funds are secured with developers should the scheme qualify in the near future.

Officers will repeat the surveys in the summer of 2022. At this stage, given that the policy has recently been updated there is no intention to revisit this policy in the context of proposed new developments.

Question 2

Ann Forbes to ask Cllr Graham McAndrew, Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability:

You will be aware that we had a very successful COP 26 Community Climate Gathering in Bishops Stortford over the weekend of 6/7 November; we are grateful for the Council's financial support towards the cost of the event. We had to move to a bigger venue to accommodate the high level of interest! Over 100 people of all ages attended over the two days with the express aim of discussing positive ways to improve our quality of life in our town. We were delighted to be joined by the few councillors who attended but disappointed that there weren't more who were interested in joining us to listen to ideas from the Bishops Stortford community about improving our town.

Ten working groups are now established as a result of the Gathering, all under the umbrella of the Bishops Stortford Climate Group, working on a range of topics including Solar advice, Vegan offers in the town, waste and recycling, an Eco directory, Community orchard, Community vegetable growing and improved walking and cycling safety.

In what ways will EHDC further support us in this exciting, community led initiative?

Response from Councillor Graham McAndrew:

I would like to thank Ann Forbes for her timely question, following as it does the excellent work conducted in Bishop's Stortford as part of the local response to COP26. The council was very happy to provide grant assistance and we were impressed by the output from the event.

The council takes a genuinely open approach to working with community groups on the climate change agenda; we know we certainly don't have all the answers.

The council's environmental sustainability officers have been proactive and have already met representatives from the Bishop's Stortford Community Climate Gathering to discuss the next steps to take following the COP26 event and I know further meetings have been booked. I'm very pleased to say that similar meetings are being arranged with groups covering Hertford and Ware, Sawbridgeworth and Buntingford.

Officers and local groups have already identified actions where the council and the community can work together, for example with regard to community bulk purchase of solar panels.

We will continue to make a success of community-led initiatives by, among other things, sharing information, putting groups in different parts of the district and county in contact with each other and identifying grant funding opportunities.

I would like to think that the council's leadership and commitment to facilitating community networking across the district is demonstrated by our work to evolve the East Herts Climate Change and Environment Forum into a more community-focused platform for debate and action setting. The Forum meets every two months and in 2022 we will be facilitating community-led sessions as an integral part of the Forum's meetings to build a sense of wider

ownership of the agenda and draw on the community's expertise and enthusiasm across East Herts.