

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY
15 MAY 2024, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor C Horner (Chairman).
Councillors M Adams, D Andrews,
R Buckmaster, P Boylan, C Brittain,
M Butcher, I Devonshire, E Buckmaster,
S Bull, V Burt, R Carter, N Clements,
M Connolly, S Copley, B Crystall, A Daar,
B Deering, T Deffley, J Dumont, J Dunlop,
Y Estop, V Glover-Ward, M Goldspink, C Hart,
G Hill, D Hollebon, A Holt, S Hopewell,
T Hoskin, D Jacobs, S Marlow, G McAndrew,
S Nicholls, A Parsad-Wyatt, V Smith,
T Stowe, M Swainston, J Thomas,
R Townsend, S Watson, D Willcocks,
G Williams, G Williamson, C Wilson, F Woolf,
J Wyllie and D Woollcombe.

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 and Electoral Services Manager
Helen Standen	- Deputy Chief Executive

2 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting and reminded them that the meeting was being webcasted.

The Chairman presented the meeting with the Annual Report video for 2023/24 which highlighted the work of the council over the last year.

The Chairman said that it had been an honour to represent East Herts in his role over the last six months. He said he had attended several events and highlighted those that were profound and moving such as Holocaust Memorial Day and the service in Bishop's Stortford for the Royal British Legion. He said that he had enjoyed his six months as Chairman and thanked Officers for their support and thanked the Members for their consideration and respect given to the office of Chairman in the debates at meetings.

Councillor Deering thanked the Chairman for his work over the last six months.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cox and Redfern.

4 ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN 2024/25

It was proposed by Councillor Glover-Ward and seconded by Councillor Goldspink that Councillor Connolly be elected as Chairman of the Council for the 2024/25 Civic Year. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Connolly be elected as Chairman of the Council for the 2024/25 Civic Year.

Councillor Connolly made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office and took the chair.

5 ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN 2024/25

It was proposed by Councillor Wilson and seconded by Councillor Hoskin that Councillor Adams be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2024/25 Civic Year. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Adams be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2024/25 Civic Year.

Councillor Adams made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office.

6 FURTHER CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked Councillor Horner for his time as the previous Chairman and said that she had been watching carefully and hoped to emulate him. She announced that the charity she would be raising money for was CHIPS – Childrens Integrated Play Schemes’.

7 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader congratulated the Chairman and Vice Chairman into their new roles and said that he had no doubt that they would be a wonderful representation for the district.

The Leader thanked Councillor Horner for his work over the last few months and to Councillor Butcher for his time in the role. He said that a lot of time and effort went into ensuring the council meetings run smoothly.

The Leader referred to the Police and Crime Commissioner election that took place in East Herts on the 2 May 2024 and thanked the Returning Officer and the Elections Team for ensuring the process went well. He also thanked the other staff that helped in the many roles needed to help run a successful election.

8 MINUTES - 28 FEBRUARY 2024

Councillor Brittain proposed, and Councillor Daar seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2024 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Goldspink declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 17 as she was a Member of Stansted Airport Watch.

Councillor Daar declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 17 as she represented a parish council on the Stansted Airport Consultative Committee.

Councillor McAndrew declared a pecuniary interest in item 17 as he sat on the Stansted Airport Consultative Committee and confirmed he would not be speaking or voting on the motion.

Councillor Holt declared a pecuniary interest in item 17 as he sat on the Stansted Airport Consultative Committee and confirmed he would not be speaking or voting on the motion.

Councillor Horner declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 17 as he represented the district council on the Stansted Airport Consultative Committee.

10 PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

11 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The full responses to the submitted Public Questions can be found in the supplementary [here](#).

12 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The full responses to the submitted Members' Questions can be found in the supplementary [here](#).

13 POLITICAL BALANCE AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL 2024/25

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented the report. He said that at its annual meeting, Council was required to approve the decision-making arrangements for the discharge of functions.

He said that the Constitution provided that it was the responsibility of the Leader of the Council to determine the Executive arrangements and the Leader's determination on the size of the Executive for 2024/25, and that the portfolio responsibilities remained unchanged from 2023/24.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services said that appointment to committees and their size was provided in the report. he highlighted that the table at 2.1 should also make

reference to the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Joint Committee, but was unfortunately missed off, this could be seen at page 42, however.

Councillor Hopewell proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Goldspink seconded the proposal.

Councillor Deering referred to the political balance of the Council in the report. He said that Councillor Glover-Ward was no longer a member of the Green group on Hertford Town Council but was sitting on East Herts Council as a member of the Green group. He asked for clarity as to her position as this had impacts on the political balance.

Councillor Glover-Ward responded and said she was a member of the Green Party and a member of the East Herts Green Group. She said she did not sit on the Green group at Hertford Town Council.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that Councillor Glover-Ward counted towards the 17 members of the Green group on East Herts Council.

Councillor Smith referred to page 42 and said she was no longer sitting on the Human Resources Committee.

Councillor Crystall said there had been changes on the committees this year and he thanked the Chairmen from 2023/24 for their work. He said he was keen to give other people the opportunity to have a Chairman role.

Councillor Dunlop referred to the HGGT Joint Committee. He said that Councillor Crystall was the nominated person but asked if there was a nominated deputy.

Councillor Crystall confirmed that Councillor Glover-Ward was the nominated deputy member.

Councillor Deering thanked the outgoing Chairmen of Committees for their work and thanked Councillor Andrews for chairing the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and setting the committee off in a good direction.

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

RESOLVED – That (A) That the Scrutiny Committees, Regulatory Committees and Joint Committees with the number of voting Members listed in paragraph 2.1 be appointed;

(B) the political balance of the Council at Appendix A be agreed

(C) the membership and Chairman of Scrutiny Committees, Regulatory Committees and Joint Committees be as set out in Appendix B, with Members being appointed in accordance with the wishes of the political group to whom the seats on these bodies have been allocated;

(D) That the intention of the Leader of the Council to appoint Members to the Executive (in addition to the Leader) with the portfolio responsibilities as detailed in Appendix C be noted;

(E) That the programme of Council meetings, as detailed at paragraph 4.1, be approved;

(F) That the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make changes in the standing membership of committees, joint committees and panels in (A) above, in accordance with the wishes of the political group to whom seats on these bodies have been allocated;

(G) That 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

(H) The Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make such amendments to the Council's Constitution as may be necessary to account for the decisions in (A) to (G) above.

14 EXPLORING A CHANGE TO THE COUNCIL'S GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

The Leader of the Council presented the report and said this was a result of the discussions from the joint administration about exploring a different governance system. He said that the key principle was to explore the decision-making process at East Herts and to see if the Leader and Executive model could be improved through a different system. He said that this set the scene for the next stage and the report recommended that the Member Constitution Review Group be repurposed as a way for Members to review the current system and look at the challenges and make recommendations on how to move forward.

Councillor Crystall proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Goldspink seconded the

proposal.

Councillor Goldspink said that she was very keen that all Members were involved in discussions about policy matters at the Council. She said this was a chance for Members to contribute and for their voices to be heard.

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

RESOLVED – That (A) the membership of the Member Constitution Review Group be extended from six to nine members;

(B) The Member Constitution Review Group investigate different governance systems and provide recommendations to Council on the best option for East Herts at a future meeting; and

(C) The revised terms of reference for the group be approved.

15 MINOR AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented the report. He said that in accordance with paragraph 2.6.5 of the Constitution any minor changes made to the Constitution by the Monitoring Officer must be notified to Members at the next meeting of the Full Council.

He said that the changes in the report were made under two slightly different parts of the Constitution as set out at paragraphs 2.2 and 2.6 of the report, meaning at the terminological change only requires notification to Council, whilst changes required for the proper administration of the Council requires the approval of Members.

He said that the question around the term "chairman" and "chair" was discussed in 2022, however that was as part of a much more substantial, root and branch review of the Constitution where it was gone through in its entirety, page by page and brought before the Council for approval. He said that this was not the same process and was instead a minor change to one piece of terminology. He said that the change being proposed was only in terms of how those posts are referred to in the Constitution itself, and in committee reports. If an individual Member wishes to be verbally referred to by another term, then there is nothing to stop that Member from asking to be referred to in those terms.

Councillor Daar proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Dumont seconded the proposal.

Councillor Daar said that she was surprised the terminology change had not been done before and felt neutral terminology was better. She felt that women were now being recognised and playing an active role in local politics.

Councillor Woolf said she was shocked that this was a discussion the Council were having and felt there were more pressing issues to discuss. She said she understood Councillor Daar's concerns but would continue to use Chairman.

Councillor Williamson said he was not hung up on the terminology but felt the process was unsettling and wanted to raise his concerns. He felt uncomfortable that as the change had been debated at a previous council meeting, it was now being changed under delegated powers. He said that the Constitution allowed the Monitoring Officer to make a terminology change when it was removing inconsistency and errors.

Councillor Carter said that she appreciated change was difficult but this was a new administration and opinions differ. She said she supported this change.

Councillor Swainston said that society and language evolved and recognised that language should be as gender neutral as possible.

Councillor Hart said she did not feel this change in terminology would achieve much.

Councillor Copley said that she was a mother of a young daughter and felt that the Council needed to move with the times and did not want to return home to her daughter to say the Council had decided to keep the term Chairman.

Councillor Williamson requested a separate vote on the recommendations.

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

RESOLVED - That substitution of the word 'Chairman' with the neutral terminology of 'Chair' throughout the Constitution, other than for the ceremonial role of Chairman of the Council, be noted

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

RESOLVED – That the minor changes to the Constitution in Appendix A be approved.

16 ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2023/24

Councillor Andrews, previous Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, introduced the report. He said that it had been an honour serving as the Chair of the committee and thanked committee members for their support and

understanding for getting the committee underway with new Members. Councillor Andrews acknowledged the support of the Scrutiny Officer.

Councillor Andrews proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. Councillor Horner seconded the proposal.

Councillor Horner said that the report provided a good summary and an accurate account of activities of the committee. He felt that the committee had grown in confidence over the last year. He thanked Councillor Andrews for his work as Chair and looked forward to working with the new incoming Chair.

Councillor McAndrew made some observations about the spelling and grammar in the report. He thanked the Chair for his work over the last year.

Councillor Deering also thanked the outgoing Scrutiny Officer for her support to the committee. He hoped that there would be sufficient officer support going forward for the committee.

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

RESOLVED - That the Annual Scrutiny Report covering the 2023/24 Civic year be agreed and published on the council's website.

17 REPORTS BY MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2023 - 24

The Leader of the Council introduced the report. He said that this report came every year and was an update on the

activities of the outside bodies. He said that the report was also recommending that an outside body review be undertaken to make sure the list was up to date.

Councillor Crystall proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Swainston seconded the proposal.

Councillor Clements asked how Members would know about any changes made.

Councillor Crystall said the review would not be cutting the membership of the outside bodies but would be looking at those that had now become redundant.

Councillor Andrews asked for assurance that the individuals on the outside bodies would not be changed.

Councillor Crystall confirmed that it was a refresh and looking at the bodies members were appointed to.

Councillor Hollebon believed that the Stansted Airport Community Trust had been disbanded.

Councillor Crystall thanked Councillor Hollebon for the information and asked Members to let him know if they knew of any other changes to outside bodies to assist in the review.

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

- RESOLVED** – That (A) the reports of Members appointed to Outside Bodies for the 2023-24 civic year be received and noted; and
- (B) a review of Outside Bodies for 2024/25 be undertaken and reported back at a future Council meeting.

18 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

One motion on notice was submitted.

19 NIGHT FLIGHTS FROM STANSTED AIRPORT

Councillor Goldspink presented her motion on notice. She said that many residents accepted the presence of the airport on their doorstep and appreciated the benefits it brought to the area. She said however one of the downsides was the nuisance of noise at nighttime.

Councillor Goldspink said that Stansted, Heathrow and Gatwick were designated airports and the government had set limits on the number of night flights. The Department of Transport was running a public consultation on the possibility of removing government controls at Stansted airport and move the responsibility to Uttlesford District Council. She said that the best option for residents was Option 3 in the consultation and asked the Council to support this option.

Councillor Wilson seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor McAndrew thanked Councillor Goldspink for bringing the motion to Council. He felt however that the motion did not contain the relevant facts and information for Members to be fully informed. He asked if the Executive Member for Resident Engagement had consulted with residents.

Councillor Devonshire and Councillor Hart said that they were in favour of the motion.

Councillor Deering agreed with Councillor McAndrew that there needed to be more factual evidence. However, he said that the Conservative group were supportive of the motion and many Members represented rural wards. He said that it

was right to say that airports were important as they created jobs but there needed to be a balance.

Councillor Wilson responded to the comments raised. He referred to the comments on data and information and said that there was a nationwide study underway about the impact of noise on people's health, but the study would not be completed until 2025. He said there was a clear demand for air travel and the government needed to find ways of reducing rail fares to reduce domestic air travel.

Councillor Andrews said he agreed with the point about reducing domestic rail fares.

Councillor Stowe said that Luton airport affected areas in the west of the district as well.

Councillor Hollebon said that pollution was also a problem with the airports and said she supported the motion.

Councillor Goldspink responded to the points raised. She said she wanted limits on the number of night flights, not limits of the noise produced by night flights. She again asked the Council to support option 3.

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

RESOLVED – That the Council notes that Stansted, Heathrow and Gatwick Airports are all Designated Airports. This means that it is the Government which sets the limits on the number of night flights which are permitted. At other Airports the government expects the local Planning Authorities to set the appropriate night-time flight numbers and noise controls.

The Council further notes that the Department for Transport (DfT) is currently running a public

Consultation on the possibility of removing Government controls at Stansted Airport. This would mean that night-time flights and noise controls would be solely set and monitored by Uttlesford District Council.

This Council believes that night-time noise from aircraft has an adverse effect on the physical and mental health of people who experience it. Many residents in various parts of East Herts District are affected by this night-time noise, and as a result this Council is vehemently opposed to any possible future increase in the number of night-time flights from Stansted Airport.

East Herts District Council therefore resolves to take part in the Consultation being conducted by the Department for Transport concerning night-time flights from Stansted Airport. It will express support for Option 3, under which the Government’s night -time controls would remain in place.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm

Chairman
Date