

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

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

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mathew Crosby	- Interim Head of Strategic Finance
James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Katie Mogan	- Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Helen Standen	- Interim Chief Executive

1 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked Members for wearing their

Christmas attire to the meeting in support of her chosen charity, CHIPS. She said that she had attended several events since the last Council meeting and that her favourite event was attending a performance of Cinderella and the Glass Slipper at BEAM. She encouraged Members to go and see the show.

2 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader echoed comments from the Chairman about the show at BEAM and said that it was a fantastic show that was running until 1 January 2025.

Councillor Crystall gave his thanks to the former Head of Strategic Finance and Property, Steven Linnett, who had retired after a long and distinguished career in local government. He also said that Claire Bennett, Service Manager for Housing, was retiring after being at the council for 33 years. He wished them both a happy and well-deserved retirement.

Councillor Crystall handed over to Councillor Goldspink who announced a new initiative to provide affordable housing. Councillor Goldspink said that she had been working on a rent reduction scheme with Paradigm housing association so that they could provide reduced rents on four new four-bedroom houses. She said that she had been in contact with other housing associations that were interested in the scheme and hoped that everyone would welcome the approach to lowering rents for residents in the greatest need.

Councillor Crystall thanked all councillors and officers for their hard work in 2024 who continued to provide services to residents despite stretched resources. He wished them all and residents a happy Christmas.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrews, Boylan, Butcher, Carter, Cox, Deffley, Hill and Hollebon.

4 MINUTES - 16 OCTOBER 2024

Councillor Parsad-Wyatt referred to page 13 of the minutes and said the resolution referred to the substantive motion but should be the amended motion.

Councillor Dunlop proposed, and Councillor Copley seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2024, as amended, 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 16 October 2024, as amended, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6 PETITIONS

There were no petitions submitted.

7 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

8 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

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

9 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 19 NOVEMBER 2024

The Leader of the Council presented a report setting out recommendations to the Council made by the Executive at its meeting on 19 November 2024.

9 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2023/24

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the Annual Treasury Management Review 2023/24 which required the council to publish a report twice a year following CIPFA guidance. The report gave the background on the external economic environment and of particular concern to the council was the 10-year gilt rate which had increased over the year. He said that the report also detailed the council's borrowing which had increased from £31.5 million to £50 million, and investments which had fallen from £34.9 million to £30.4 million due to the need to fund the capital programme.

Councillor Brittain proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. Councillor Dumont seconded the proposal.

Councillor Buckmaster asked what qualified as a short-term loan.

Councillor Brittain said that a short-term loan was a loan with up to a one-year term.

Councillor Redfern requested that a brief summary was provided alongside the technical finance reports to help councillors understand the facts.

Councillor Deering referred to the Lothbury Fund and asked for clarification that the investment fund was being wound up.

Councillor Brittain confirmed that was correct and they were selling up assets and returning capital back to investors.

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 Treasury Management Review 2023/24 be approved.

10 APPOINTMENT OF S151 OFFICER

The Interim Chief Executive presented the report. She said that the Council had a duty to appoint a Section 151 Officer and an interim appointment had been made whilst the recruitment to the permanent role took place.

Councillor Wilson proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. Councillor Nicholls seconded the proposal.

Councillor Parsad-Wyatt said this appointment was not time limited unlike the Interim Chief Executive appointment that was approved at the last Council meeting. He asked what the timeline was for the recruitment of a permanent officer.

The Interim Chief Executive said that interviews had already taken place for the permanent role. She said she was expecting to make an appointment and have the successful candidate start by April 2025.

Councillor Deering echoed the Leader's thanks to the former Section 151 Officer and wished him well. He said it was an important role and was pleased to have the Interim Officer in place.

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 appointment of Mathew Crosby as the Council's Interim Chief Financial Officer and Section 151 Officer be approved.

11 COUNCIL TAX BASE 2025/26

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the Council Tax Base report for 2025/26. He said that the report confirmed the base level for 2025/26, including a breakdown by town and parish councils, and the calculation for the council tax base which was governed by statutory regulations.

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

Councillor Holt said that one parish was listed as Bengoe but thought this should say Bengoe Rural.

Councillor Brittain said he would do at this after the meeting.

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 calculation of the Council's tax base for the whole district, and for the parish areas, for 2025/26 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 2025/26 shall be 65,314.04

and for the parish areas listed in the report for 2025/26 shall be as listed in the report.

12 POLLING DISTRICT AND PLACES REVIEW 2024

The Executive Member for Corporate Services presented the Polling District and Place Review 2024. He said that a review had to be undertaken every five years and the proposed changes in the report reflected feedback from electors and the availability of venues. He said that some polling stations had been moved to be more practical and accessible to voters.

Councillor Dumont acknowledged the work of the elections team who had been out to visit new venues and thanked the venues used as polling stations for making themselves available. He referred to page 85 of the agenda and said there had been a typing error in the number of properties in polling district HKI3 and that it should read 1502.

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

Councillor Parsad-Wyatt referred to Appendix B and said that he had proposed alternative locations for the polling districts in Sawbridgeworth but could not see his comments reflected in the report.

Councillor Horner said that the report said that if agreement cannot be reached with the new proposed venues, then usage would revert to the existing polling stations. He said that the Boys School in Bishop's Stortford had been demolished so did not exist anymore.

Councillor Dumont confirmed that the church in Bishop's Stortford had agreed to be a polling station since the report had been published. He said that if a polling

station became unavailable then the team would find a suitable replacement.

Councillor Hopewell referred to the suggestion about using the Community Hub instead of the Sele School.

Councillor Dumont said that nowhere else had been identified in that polling district. He said the team had tried to avoid using schools to minimise disruption to students and would continue to look for alternatives.

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 proposals for Polling Districts and Polling Places in the District, at Appendix A, be adopted and applied to all future elections until the next review in 2029.

13 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

There were no motions on notice.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

Chairman
Date