

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON  
WEDNESDAY 13 MAY 2026, AT 7.00 PM

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

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Jonathan Geall	- Director for Communities and Monitoring Officer
Brian Moldon	- Director for Finance, Risk and Performance
Sara Saunders	- Director for Place
Helen Standen	- Interim Chief Executive
Stephanie Tarrant	- Assistant Director for Democracy, Elections and Information Governance

1 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and

reminded attendees that the meeting was being webcast. The full webcast of the meeting can be viewed here: Council – [13 May 2026](#)

The Council were shown the Annual Report video for 2025-26.

The Chairman reflected on a successful and rewarding year in office and acknowledged the preparatory experience gained during the preceding Vice-Chairman role. He expressed thanks to his predecessor for guidance, to officers for organising engagements and to colleagues for their support.

The Chairman highlighted that throughout the year he had attended a wide range of civic, community and commemorative events, including the County Council Chairmen's lunch, VE Day celebrations, the White Glove Ceremony in Hertford, Holocaust Memorial commemorations and various cultural and charity events.

He highlighted collaboration with fellow civic leaders, including the Lord-Lieutenant, High Sheriff, local mayors, and Members of Parliament, noting the importance of cross-community engagement regardless of political alignment. He commended participation in initiatives such as the Purple Flag accreditation for Bishop's Stortford, recognising contributions from partners in achieving this status.

The Chairman noted memorable community events, including local shows, performances, heritage celebrations and community recognition ceremonies, which demonstrated strong civic pride and engagement across the district. He concluded by stating that the role had been an honour and commended the strength and vibrancy of the district's communities.

## 2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor

Boylan, Councillor Butcher, Councillor Marlow, Councillor Parsad-Wyatt, Councillor V Smith and Councillor Willcocks.

3 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN 2026/27

It was proposed by Councillor Crystall and seconded by Councillor Wilson that Councillor Dunlop be elected as Chairman of the Council for the 2026/27 Civic Year. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that Councillor Dunlop be elected as Chairman of the Council for the 2026/27 Civic Year.

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

4 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN 2026/27

It was proposed by Councillor Goldspink and seconded by Councillor Daar that Councillor Thomas be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2026/27 Civic Year. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that Councillor Thomas be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2026/27 Civic Year.

Councillor Thomas made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office.

Councillor Thomas thanked the Council for electing him to the position of Vice Chairman and said he looked forward to serving in the role.

5 FURTHER CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked Councillor Adams, for his guidance and support in preparing him for the role. He said it had been an honour to take on the position and expressed commitment to undertaking both the chairing and representative aspects of the role to the best of their ability.

The Chairman announced that his chosen charity for the coming year was Space Hertford, highlighting its work in supporting neurodiverse young adults, particularly in employment and the value such individuals bring to the community and workplaces.

The Chairman shared his expectations for concise and focused contributions, aiming to keep meetings efficient and to cover as much business as possible. He encouraged respectful, succinct input from members and proposed short breaks to maintain engagement.

## 6 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader expressed sincere thanks to the outgoing Chairman, Councillor Adams, for his calm and effective leadership over the past year and for his wider representation of the Council and fundraising efforts.

Congratulations were extended to the newly appointed Chairman/Vice-Chairman, with confidence expressed in their ability to serve successfully.

Councillor Jeff Jones was welcomed back to the Council following the Little Hadam and The Pelhams by-election. The long service of Councillor Williamson, who had represented the ward for many years, was acknowledged following his retirement. The Returning Officer and Elections team were thanked for their work in delivering the by-election.

The Deputy Leader informed Members of the successful delivery of 15 new affordable homes in Bishop's Stortford. The scheme had been achieved through partnership

working between the Council, a housing association and Homes England, supported by financial contributions from developer funds. The homes, provided at genuinely affordable social rent levels, had been allocated to local residents in housing need, including individuals who had been homeless, those unable to sustain private rents and households living in overcrowded conditions. The provision was welcomed as a positive outcome for the district.

The Leader made a statement condemning the recent violent attacks against Jewish people and reiterated the Council's opposition to all forms of racism, hate and antisemitism and affirmed its commitment to ensuring that all communities could live safely and peacefully. This position was supported by the Deputy Leader, who also emphasised the importance of protecting the right of individuals to practise their faith freely and without fear.

## 7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

## 8 MINUTES - 4 MARCH 2026

Councillor Burt proposed, and Councillor Copley seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2026, 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 4 March 2026, be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chair.

## 9 PETITIONS

There were no petitions

10 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

11 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

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

12 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 24 MARCH 2026

The Leader of the Council presented a report setting out recommendations to the Council made by the Executive at its meeting on 24 March 2026.

12 THE HERTFORDSHIRE HEALTHY AND SAFE PLACES FRAMEWORK

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the report. Members were advised that the Council had agreed to update the District Plan, with formal work scheduled to commence in autumn 2026. It was noted that the development of the Plan would require a comprehensive and robust evidence base to inform future planning policies and ensure they addressed key local priorities.

The Hertfordshire Healthy and Safe Places Framework, produced by the Hertfordshire Growth Board, promoted the integration of health considerations into planning to support improved outcomes and reduce inequalities. The framework also encouraged the use of health impact assessments, master-planning and community engagement as part of the planning process.

Members were asked to agree that the framework be adopted as part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan and be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Councillor Glover-Ward, the Executive Member for

Planning and Growth proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Swainston seconded the proposal.

Members raised questions regarding the application of the Healthy and Safe Places Framework. Concerns were expressed about the vulnerability of Gypsy and Traveller communities, and whether additional planning considerations could be applied to support their needs. It was confirmed that welfare checks were undertaken where sites were occupied and that further consideration would be given to planning provisions for these communities.

Members also highlighted concerns about whether the aims of the framework could be achieved without sufficient infrastructure funding, particularly in relation to congestion, pollution and sustainable transport. In response, it was noted that improved approaches to developer contributions, including more robust Section 106 agreements linked to occupation thresholds, had strengthened the Council's ability to secure infrastructure delivery.

Support was expressed for the integration of health considerations into planning, particularly the stronger links to air quality and environmental health. However, concerns were raised about wider infrastructure issues, including wastewater capacity and sewage discharges. It was clarified that these matters were largely outside the direct control of the planning system, although mechanisms existed where infrastructure providers indicated capacity constraints. Members were informed that Thames Water were due to attend Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 June 2026, to address concerns.

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 Hertfordshire Healthy and Safe Places Framework (2025) attached as Appendix A, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform the new East Herts District Plan and as a material consideration for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications.

### 13 APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER

The Chief Executive presented the report which outlined proposed interim arrangements following the departure of James Ellis, Director of Legal, Policy and Governance and Monitoring Officer. It was proposed that Jonathan Geall, Director of Communities, be appointed as Interim Monitoring Officer for an initial six-month period.

It was noted that changes had been introduced across the service, including Legal Service Manager support from Broxbourne and revised reporting arrangements, with Elections and Democratic Services now reporting directly to the Chief Executive.

Members were advised that Jonathan Geall had significant experience of the Council's constitution and would be able to provide appropriate advice and support to Members in the role.

Members supported the appointment and wished Jonathan Geall well in the role.

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

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) Council ratified the appointment of Jonathan Geall, Director of

Communities as the Council's interim Monitoring Officer, for an initial period of six months.

#### 14 MINOR AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Monitoring Officer presented the report which set out minor amendments to the Councils constitution. The Monitoring Officer explained that the Constitution required Council to be notified of minor amendments, which were set out within the report and appendix.

It was reported that Council approval was required for the amendments to the terms of reference of the Audit and Governance Committee, with the rationale provided in the report.

Members were informed that arrangements were being made to reconvene the Member Constitution Review Group to consider future amendments to the Constitution prior to submission to Council.

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.

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

**RESOLVED** – that (A) the report be accepted as the notification to Council required by the Constitution of minor changes, these being to the remits of two Executive Members, reference to the Deputy Chief Executive's responsibilities for human resources and amendments consequent to the six-month trial of revised responsibilities for legal services and the Monitoring Officer function.

B) the change to the Audit and Governance Committee's Terms of Reference to ensure compliance with the recently introduced Global

Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) for the UK public sector be agreed.

15 POLITICAL BALANCE AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL 2026/27

The Monitoring Officer presented the report and explained that, at its annual meeting, the Council was required to approve the decision-making arrangements for the discharge of its functions.

It was noted that committees and their number of voting Members had remained unchanged. The membership of these were set out alongside the political balance in the relevant appendices.

The programme of meetings for the coming year had been shared, and it was confirmed that there were no additional changes to the Executive, other than the minor amendment approved as part of constitutional changes.

Councillor Watson proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Townsend seconded the proposal.

The Conservative Group advised that they were happy with the proposals, with one exception, in that the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be selected from their group following a period of being Chaired by the Labour Group.

Councillor Deering proposed that Councillor Wyllie should be Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2026/27. Councillor Hollebon seconded this proposal.

It was stated that, historically, the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny had been drawn from the opposition and, as the largest opposition group, it had been considered appropriate for one of the Conservative Members to undertake the role.

It was clarified that, between 2019 and 2023, the Chair had been a member of the administration rather than the opposition. It was further observed that the current Chair was regarded as an effective and impartial leader, who had significantly improved and advanced the work of Overview and Scrutiny.

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

**RESOLVED** – that (A) 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) 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) the Monitoring Officer 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) the action to be taken by the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Leader, under delegated authority, concerning the appointment of representatives to outside bodies, be noted; and

(H) The Monitoring Officer be authorised to make such amendments to the Council's Constitution as may be necessary to account for the decisions in (A) to (G) above.

16 ANNUAL AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORT 2025/26

The Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee introduced the annual report. Attention was drawn to recommendations made by the Section 151 Officer, which were due to be presented to the committee for consideration in relation to its effectiveness.

Councillor Adams, Chair of Audit and Governance proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Nicholls seconded the proposal.

The Chair and Members of the Audit Committee were thanked for the work they undertook. The importance of the committee in advance of Local Government Reorganisation was acknowledged.

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 Annual Audit and Governance Committee Report covering the 2025/26 Civic Year be noted.

17 ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2025 - 2026

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee introduced the annual report and thanked committee members for their diligence, hard work and approach to the role of scrutiny. This was extended to officers who supported the committee and Executive Members who presented to the committee.

Councillor Jacobs, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Horner seconded the proposal.

The Chair's leadership was commended, and it was noted that several new practices had been introduced during the year, including regular opportunities for Executive feedback at meetings and the establishment of a task and finish group. The work of this group, particularly in relation to housing associations and their communication with the Council, was highlighted as a key achievement.

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 Annual Scrutiny Report covering the 2025/26 Civic Year be agreed and published on the Council's website.

18 REPORTS BY MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2025/26

The Leader of the Council introduced the Outside Bodies report for 2025/26. As with previous years, the Council received and noted reports from Members appointed to outside bodies, with 18 reports for the 2025/26 civic year appended to the paper. Several changes were highlighted, including the cessation of representation on the Hertford Museum trustee board due to its change in status, and two organisation name changes (England

LGA was now Local Government East and the District Council Network was now the Local Council Network). Members serving on outside bodies were thanked for their time and contributions.

Councillor Crystall, Leader of the Council, proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Goldspink seconded the proposal.

Members raised concerns that reports from representatives on some outside bodies had not been provided, particularly in relation to significant organisations such as Lee Valley Regional Park Authority. It was noted that these bodies made an important contribution to residents' health and wellbeing and should be more effectively reported to Council, with a request that missing reports be brought forward to a future meeting.

The issue of attendance and representation at external meetings, particularly those relating to Stansted Airport, was also discussed. Members emphasised the importance of consistent attendance and questioned whether substitute representatives were in place, where appointed Members were unavailable. In response, it was acknowledged that attendance had been impacted by work commitments, although improvements were anticipated. It was confirmed that, where necessary, arrangements would be reviewed, including the potential use of substitutes or changes to representation.

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 2025 - 26 civic year be received and noted.

(B) That the removal of Hertford Museum Trust from the list of Outside Bodies be noted.

(C) That the change in Councillor representation for Ware Charities be noted.

(D) That the change of name for East of England LGA, now known as Local Government East, be noted.

(E) That the change of name for Local Government District Council Network, now known as Local Council Network, be noted.

## 19 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

There was one Motion on Notice.

## 19 MOTION TO PROMOTE ETHICAL SOLAR POWER IN OUR DISTRICT

Councillor Cox presented his motion on notice highlighting that the Council should demonstrate its values in practice by addressing climate change without compromising human rights, acknowledging evidence of abuses linked to solar supply chains and the district's historical responsibility to oppose exploitation. Whilst the motion supported the use of renewable energy it proposed practical steps such as auditing supply chains, improving transparency and promoting ethical sourcing.

Councillor Glover-Ward seconded the motion.

Councillor Copley proposed the following amendment:

- Replace resolution 2) Update Procurement Policy: Formalise an "Ethical Procurement Policy" that requires all future bidders for council-led solar PV projects to provide a full "Supply Chain Transparency Statement," tracing components back to the raw material (polysilicon) stage in accordance with the Solar Stewardship Initiative (SSI) standards on any recognised alternative or successor standards.

- With: 2) Update Procurement Policy: Formalise an "Ethical Procurement Policy" that requires all future bidders for council-led solar PV projects to provide a full "Supply Chain Transparency Statement," tracing components back to the raw material (polysilicon) stage in accordance with the Solar Stewardship Initiative (SSI) standards on any recognised alternative or successor standards. Any procurement requirements arising from this policy shall be applied proportionately, with due regard to accessibility for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The Council shall also, where practicable, support SME participation through the use of recognised independent assurance schemes and proportionate evidence requirements consistent with the aims of this policy.

Councillor Dumont seconded the amendment.

Members debated the proposed amendment and indicated support for its intent, particularly in helping small businesses achieve higher ethical standards whilst maintaining proportionality. Concerns were raised about whether the approach should apply more widely given supply chain and cost implications, but it was explained that larger companies were already subject to requirements under the Modern Slavery Act and that the amendment had therefore been aimed at smaller businesses not currently covered by legislation.

Having been proposed and seconded, the amendment was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

Councillor E Buckmaster proposed the following amendment:

- Replace resolution 4) Provide information to residents: Require that when providing advice, guidance or support to residents on energy efficiency

or domestic retrofit, officers signpost residents to credible information sources on how to acquire ethically produced solar PV panels.

- With: 4) Provide information to residents: Require that when providing advice, guidance or support to residents on energy efficiency or domestic retrofit, including reasonable endeavours through Hertfordshire Climate Change Sustainability Partnership Energy Hubs and Environmental Forums, officers signpost residents to credible information sources on how to acquire ethically produced solar PV panels.

Councillor R Buckmaster seconded the amendment.

Having been proposed and seconded, the amendment was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

Members discussed the substantive motion.

Members expressed support for the principle of the motion, whilst acknowledging wider economic realities, including affordability for residents and reliance on lower-cost imports.

It was noted that importing goods from countries with lower environmental and welfare standards undermined domestic standards and effectively shifted negative impacts overseas. Concerns were also raised about global supply chains, particularly the lower costs associated with production in countries with reduced regulatory standards.

Whilst concerns were highlighted in relation to certain regions in relation to allegations of cultural repression and exploitation, Members noted that manufacturing conditions varied significantly and that not all overseas production involved poor labour practices.

Having been proposed and seconded, the motion as amended was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED. It was noted that Councillors Andrews and Stowe abstained from the vote.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council Notes:

1. That East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC) is committed to its Climate Change Strategy and the transition to renewable energy.
2. The significant increase in planning applications and private sector projects involving large-scale solar photovoltaics (PV) within the district.
3. Credible international reports, including from the UN and the Sheffield Hallam University Helena Kennedy Centre, which identify a "high risk" of state-sponsored forced labour in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of China being used in the production of polysilicon, a compound essential to for synthesising monocrystalline silicon found in modern solar PV panels—with a number of credible sources reporting this to be a key component of 95% of solar panels<sup>1</sup>.
4. That the UK Procurement Act 2023 empowers local authorities to exclude suppliers from bidding for contracts if there is evidence of modern slavery or serious professional misconduct in their supply chains.

The Council Believes:

1. That the transition to "Net Zero" must be a "Just Transition" that does not come at the cost of human rights or the exploitation of forced labour.

2. That as a public body, EHDC has a moral duty and a legal duty under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to ensure its own procurement activities and the developments it encourages are ethically sourced.

The Council Resolves to:

1. Audit Council Procurement: Conduct a review of the council's own supply chains for any planned solar installations, including drafting specifications for solar PV hardware in accordance with the Solar Stewardship Initiative (SSI) standards or any recognised alternative or successor standards.
2. Update Procurement Policy: Formalise an "Ethical Procurement Policy" that requires all future bidders for council-led solar PV projects to provide a full "Supply Chain Transparency Statement," tracing components back to the raw material (polysilicon) stage in accordance with the Solar Stewardship Initiative (SSI) standards on any recognised alternative or successor standards. Any procurement requirements arising from this policy shall be applied proportionately, with due regard to accessibility for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The Council shall also, where practicable, support SME participation through the use of recognised independent assurance schemes and proportionate evidence requirements consistent with the aims of this policy.
3. Planning: Request that the Executive Member for Planning and Growth and the Director for Place include "Supply Chain Ethics" as a recommended advisory note (informative) on all approvals for large-scale solar farms,

encouraging developers to use Solar Stewardship Initiative (SSI) certified hardware or other hardware compliant with any recognised alternative or successor standards.

- 4. Provide information to residents: Require that when providing advice, guidance or support to residents on energy efficiency or domestic retrofit, including reasonable endeavours through Hertfordshire Climate Change Sustainability Partnership Energy Hubs and Environmental Forums, officers signpost residents to credible information sources on how to acquire ethically produced solar PV panels.
- 5. Lobby National Government: Write to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, supporting the "forced labour" amendments to the Great British Energy Bill, urging stronger national import bans on goods produced with forced labour and requesting that central government provides financial and technical assistance to local authorities, businesses and residents on how to ascertain the ethical standards associated with solar PVs thus enabling the most ethical solutions even if they are more expensive.

The meeting closed at 8.56 pm

Chairman .....
Date .....

