

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 7 OCTOBER 2025, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor B Crystall (Leader)
Councillors M Goldspink, C Brittain, A Daar,
J Dumont, V Glover-Ward, S Hopewell,
T Hoskin and C Wilson.

ALSO PRESENT:
Councillors M Butcher, I Devonshire and
S Watson.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Kirsten Brown	- Corporate Procurement Manager
James Ellis	- Director for Legal, Policy and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Brian Moldon	- Director for Finance, Risk and Performance
Oliver Rawlings	- Service Manager (Licensing and Enforcement)
Sara Saunders	- Director for Place
Stephanie Tarrant	- Assistant Director for Democracy, Elections and Information Governance
Ben Wood	- Director for Regeneration, Customer and Commercial Services

182 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

183 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader referred to the recent sad news that former Councillor Norma Symonds had passed away. A formal tribute would be paid at the next meeting of Council.

184 MINUTES - 8 JULY 2025

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods proposed, and The Executive Member for Communities seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2025 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Leader. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

185 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item 5 (Review of Resident Permit Zone Policy), on the grounds that she was a resident of one the roads being considered for a Resident Permit Zone.

186 REVIEW OF RESIDENT PERMIT ZONE POLICY

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability presented a report which proposed targeted amendments to both East Herts District Council's (EHDC) Resident Permit Parking Schemes (RPZs) Operational Guidance and EHDC's Resident Permit Parking Policy.

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability advised that the Council's 2024 Parking Strategy had

committed to reviewing the RPZ approach in response to community concerns about parking availability and enforcement. In early 2025, Citisense was commissioned to independently assess the RPZ guidance and policy. The review made several recommendations as detailed in Appendix B of the report. Two key changes were proposed: reducing the non-resident parking occupancy threshold from 40% to 10% and lowering the requirement for on-street parking capacity from 75% to 50% of households in a proposed zone. These changes aimed to improve flexibility, reflect best practice and better align policy with lived experience in high-stress parking areas.

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability made a minor amendment to the recommendation in the report to highlight the referral to Council. The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability proposed that the recommendation, as amended, be supported. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods seconded the proposal.

Following a request in advance of the meeting to speak on this matter, Mr Ian Bailey was invited to address the Executive. Mr Bailey asked the Executive to review one of the recommendations made by Citisense (to reduce the requirement that more than 50% of households must respond before the consultation is taken forward to engagement stage) as it was not proposed to be adopted. Mr Bailey highlighted that a 50% response rate was an unrealistically high target and provided a local example by where consultation had not progressed due to a 40% response rate. Mr Bailey suggested that the scheme provided provision for officer discretion and requested the proposal in question be reviewed.

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability responded by recognising that the policy aimed to meet most requirements and confirmed reluctance to alter the 50% democratic approach.

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability

noted that the views of residents with a neutral stance needed to be expressed and recognised that hyperlocal elements within zones were important. He thanked Mr Bailey for his contribution and offered him a meeting, alongside the relevant ward Councillors to discuss his local situation.

The Executive Member for Resident Engagement welcomed the proposed changes noting his wards proximity to Stansted Airport and queried if there would be flexibility over restricted parking times. The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability noted that there were several examples across East Herts where parking schemes had been embraced by local communities. These had been developed through consultation with residents, including the introduction of a "spoiler hour" to deter all-day parkers. He acknowledged that whilst this approach might not suit every area, it demonstrated how such schemes could be managed with flexibility.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability queried whether an increase in RPZs would be accompanied by sufficient resources to ensure proper enforcement. The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability confirmed that existing resources were flexible and advised that this would be monitored.

The Executive Member for Wellbeing welcomed the proposal for the non-resident parking occupancy threshold to decrease from 40% to 10%.

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

RESOLVED – to recommend to Council that it adopts the below changes to East Herts Resident's Permit Zone (RPZ) Operational Guidance policy:

- That the requirement that non-resident parking

must exceed 40% occupancy at peak times, as a condition for Page 17 Agenda Item 5 implementing an RPZ, be reduced to 10% of occupancy at peak times;

- That requirement for there to be sufficient kerb space to enable 75% of households in a proposed area to park one vehicle on-street as a condition for implementing an RPZ, be reduced to 50% from the guidance.

187 CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT STATEMENT OF LICENSING PRINCIPLES UNDER THE GAMBLING ACT: 2025-28

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the revised draft Statement of Gambling Principles, following public consultation. The Executive Member for Planning and Growth highlighted that the Council was required to review its gambling policy every three years. It was noted that whilst the district historically held low numbers of gambling licences and received few complaints, it remained important to retain a robust policy.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the Licensing Committee had reviewed the draft statement without highlighting any proposed changes and that the Chair of the Licensing Committee had acknowledged its thoroughness. Two responses were received in response to the public consultation, neither of which raised concerns about the policy itself and therefore no further amendments had been made.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth proposed that the recommendations in the report, be supported. The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability seconded the proposal.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods welcomed the updated gambling policy and thanked the Executive Member and officers for their work, she acknowledged

sections 10.7 and 10.8 of the policy, which highlighted the serious health impacts of problem gambling, including suicide and family breakdown. Whilst supporting the policy, The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods expressed regret over the limitations local councils had in restricting gambling promotion and advertising. In response, it was confirmed that East Herts had a policy prohibiting gambling advertising across its own venues and related areas.

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 following public consultation, the Executive Members reviewed the draft Statement of Licensing Principles under the Gambling Act and recommended the Statement, including any amendments, to Council for adoption.

188 CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT MARKETS POLICY FOLLOWING PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the draft Market Policy, recognising the value of markets to the local economy and community character. Members heard that the Council was keen to maintain a balance of markets within the district and ensure that there was consistency in the way that markets were organised. The new policy sought to set out the basis upon which markets were held and the process by which applications for new markets would be considered.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth explained that previously, markets had shifted from being licensed under market acts to the street trading policy, which limited flexibility, particularly on pricing. Once the new market policy came into effect, all references to markets would be removed from the street trading policy. A public consultation was conducted, with few responses

received, and the resulting changes were detailed within the report. The policy was set to be reviewed every 5 years.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. The Executive Member for Corporate Services seconded the proposal.

The Executive Member for Communities observed that the market in Hertford had been notably busy and acknowledged that whilst the new policy had not yet taken effect, changes made to date appeared to have had a positive impact.

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 Market Policy, as amended following public consultation, be adopted, taking effect from the 1 January 2026.

189 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2024/25 AND DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2024/25

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the Provisional Outturn 2024/25 and Draft Statement of Accounts 2024/25. Members heard that the figures remained provisional subject to auditor approval. The revenue account showed an overspend of £132,000, which marked a significant improvement from the £955,000 forecast at the end of quarter 3. It was noted that this was achieved through capitalisation of interest, a review of the minimum revenue provision and improved service costs. The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability highlighted that the Council had successfully returned to the required reporting schedule after previous delays. It was noted that with a new auditor in place, future timelines were expected to be met.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. The Executive Member for Corporate Services seconded the proposal.

Councillor Devonshire asked why £170,000 for the URC Church Hall had been removed from the capital forecast and whether business rates were still being paid on Charringtons House and the former Lemon Tree restaurant, both of which were vacant.

It was explained that the URC Hall budget had not been spent but was rolled forward into the next financial year, making it a timing issue rather than a budget change. The future of the URC Church Hall remained under review, pending further discussions with community interest groups. In relation to business rates, it was confirmed that rates were still being paid on both properties whilst the properties remained in Council ownership. It was noted that the transfer of the Old River Lane (ORL) scheme, subject to planning approval, was expected to end the Council's liability for Charringtons House. The future of the Lemon Tree building remained under discussion and was dependent on the final design of the ORL scheme, with clarity expected within six months, although delays were possible.

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability expressed gratitude to the finance team for the capitalisation of interest. Members acknowledged the positive impact on the accounts and expressed satisfaction in having audits up to date.

The Leader sought clarity in relation to the spending on refuse and recycling vehicles. It was confirmed that a reduction in spend was anticipated, with the original estimate of £8 million revised to £6.2 million. It was noted that this figure was provisional and likely to be fully confirmed in the Quarter 1 report.

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 general fund revenue outturn of £132k overspend to be funded from the general reserve be noted;

(B) the capital outturn position and approve carry forward budgets of £358k be noted; and

(C) the 2023/24 draft statement of accounts, be received.

190 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2025/26 - QUARTER 1
FORECAST TO YEAR END

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the Financial Management 2025/26 Quarter 1 Forecast to year end.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability advised that there was a £789,000 overspend forecast. He said that key revenue details and variances were outlined in appendices A and B. It was noted that there had been a £270,000 income shortfall for BEAM which was related to the delay in recruiting a chef.

Members were advised that an appointment had now been made, and a food offering was now available which would significantly improve the financial results going forward. In addition, a £210,000 business rates pressure remained under appeal. These pressures were being examined to avoid repetition in the 2026/27 budget.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability said that the capital programme (Appendix C) detailed a £637,000 underspend and the Aged Debt Analysis (Appendix D) reported a £698,000 debt reduction, aided by settlements and write-offs, with further improvements

expected.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. The Executive Member for Corporate Services seconded the proposal.

Councillor Devonshire commented on the delay in appointing a chef for BEAM. Members heard that the delay had stemmed from the theatre director's decision to prioritise stabilising other aspects of the business before launching the food service. In addition, staff turnover had also contributed to this delay. It was noted that in the lead-up to BEAM's opening, the project had been running approximately six months behind schedule and efforts had focused on opening on time.

Members highlighted that Stage Two had only launched in April 2025 and that bookings had taken priority over food, with a successful programme now in place with sold-out events. Members noted that initial operational challenges highlighted the need for caution in future financial planning.

Members commended the work of the Director for Commercial, Customer and Regeneration and noted that alongside his team, they had successfully navigated the challenges faced with BEAM, opening Stage Two and launching a food offering. It was noted that theatre activity was seasonal, and activity was expected to increase from September to December, with pantomime anticipated to be a major income stream.

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability commented on aged debts, highlighting that whilst a significant payment had been received from one of the largest outstanding debtors, aged debt figures had continued to grow since March 2025.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability explained that several large debts had been complex and

required extensive investigation due to their age. Members were informed that these were actively being worked on, with many expected to be resolved within three to six months. The Director of Finance, Risk and Performance added that considerable progress had been made over the past six months, including careful write-offs following due diligence. Efforts had focused on streamlining the debt recovery process through automation, ensuring smoother transitions between stages and reducing delays. The team aimed to manage both old and new debts simultaneously, with a continued emphasis on minimising aged debt.

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 net revenue budget end of year projected overspend of £789k, be noted; and

(B) the capital programme forecast outturn of £637k, be noted.

191 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2024/25 OUTTURN

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the Treasury Management 2024/25 Outturn. Members heard that the Council was required under the CIPFA Code of Practice to approve treasury management reports twice yearly. The report provided an overview of the external economic environment, highlighting the rise in the 10-year gilt rate from 3.94% to 4.69%, which significantly influenced borrowing costs.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability said that over the year, external borrowing increased from £53.6 million to £64.5 million, while investments rose from £33.7 million to £39.3 million, resulting in a net borrowing increase of £5.3 million to support the capital programme. The report confirmed that the Council had complied with

the CIPFA Treasury Management Code by monitoring the required indicators.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability advised that the recommendation should read 'That the Executive recommend to Council that the Treasury Management Outturn and Prudential Indicators for 2024/25 be approved'.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability proposed that the amended recommendation be supported. C The Executive Member for Corporate Services seconded the proposal.

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

RESOLVED – The Executive recommended to Council that the Treasury Management Outturn and Prudential Indicators for 2024/25 be approved.

192 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER MONITORING Q1 2025/26

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the Strategic Risk Register Monitoring Q1 2025/26 and updated Risk Management Strategy. Members heard that a review of the Risk Register had been conducted by the Leadership Team, examining both risk scores and mitigations. Appendix A detailed the findings, which remained largely unchanged.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability said that the main adjustment was a reduced risk score for key contractor failure, following the start of the new waste contract. The accompanying Risk Management Strategy was reviewed annually and remained mostly unchanged. The main update was an enhancement to the risk scoring framework, shifting from a 3x3 to a 4x4 matrix to allow more detailed risk evaluation.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability proposed that the amended recommendation be supported. The Executive Member for Communities seconded the proposal.

Members welcomed the reduction in risk for key contractor failure and thanked the Director of Finance, Risk and Performance and his team for their efforts in compiling the report, acknowledging the time and work involved.

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 2025/26 quarter one corporate risk register and actions being taken to control and mitigate risk was noted; and

(B) the Risk Management Strategy was reviewed and approved.

193 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2026-2031

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2026-2031. The Executive Member advised that despite uncertainty around Local Government Reorganisation, the Council was required to produce a financial plan, which sought to provide a balanced budget by 2028. It was noted that Government funding levels remained unknown which made budgeting largely speculative. Members heard that a cautious approach had been adopted to model worst-case scenarios and prepare accordingly.

Members heard that the Government's Fair Funding review had been a key development, with the Council anticipating a funding reduction of over £2 million across three years. This raised concerns about the district's areas of need and the council's limited flexibility to raise

income to compensate the funding gap.

Members noted that the budget-setting timetable was outlined in section 8 of the report, with updates planned as new information emerged.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability proposed that the amended recommendation be supported. Councillor Goldspink seconded the proposal.

The Leader of the Council thanked officers for the report acknowledging the high-quality presentation, background detail and graphics included.

The Leader of the Council queried the table on page 272 of the report, which detailed EV charge income on Council premises, noting that income appeared to drop after 2026/27. Officers clarified that this was not a reduction and Member heard that there was £25,000 of new income expected in 2026/27, followed by an additional £15,000 in 2027/28, bringing the total to £40,000.

Councillor Devonshire raised a concern regarding the fairness of business rate retention, noting that East Herts had only retained 9% due to being considered a high-revenue area. Members heard that the Government was reviewing the business rates system, however it was unlikely to provide an improved position.

The Executive Member for Corporate Services expressed disappointment at repeatedly facing budget constraints, wishing instead to focus on positive initiatives for the community. The Executive Member commented on the lack of financial clarity surrounding Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), which had demanded significant officer time without adequate funding. Members noted that an update from the Government was expected following the autumn budget in late November 2025.

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 Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2026–2031, as set out in Appendix A, along with the financial assumptions and modelling used to forecast resources and pressures over the MTFP period, be approved;

(B) the projected budget gap of £531k in 2026/27 and the cumulative gap of £2.41 million through to 2030/31, be noted;

(C) the adequacy of General Fund balances and the ongoing review of grants and reserves, with outcomes to be reported as part of the 2026/27 budget report later in the year, be noted; and

(D) the financial planning framework and timetable for future reporting and decision-making, be noted.

194 ANNUAL PROCUREMENT REPORT

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the Annual Procurement report. Members heard that the report summarised procurement activity over the past 12 months, outlined upcoming procurements and detailed actions taken to support the Council's procurement strategy. The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability advised that the report sought delegated authority for the relevant Director, in consultation with the portfolio holder, to proceed with procurement activities, preventing delays at critical stages.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. The Executive Member for Communities seconded the proposal.

The Executive Member for Corporate Services asked whether there was any commentary on the timing and duration of forthcoming contracts in light of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and whether there were risks to achieving best value. Officers advised that contract lengths were being carefully considered to ensure best value currently whilst maintaining a good position to re-procure under a new structure.

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) delegated authority be approved for the relevant Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to commence procurement for the forthcoming procurement activities listed in the table in paragraph 2.2.

(B) Executive have considered the actions and delivery against the procurement strategy to date; and

(C) Executive have considered the activities undertaken by procurement in 2025/26.

195 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8.08 pm

Chairman
Date