

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY
19 MAY 2026, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor V Glover-Ward (Chair)
Councillors B Crystall and J Dumont

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors E Buckmaster, R Buckmaster,
T Hoskin, T Stowe and M Swainston

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Anthony Bateman	- Assistant Planning Policy Officer
Richard Crutchley	- Team Leader (Planning Policy)
Laura Guy	- Principal Planning Policy Officer
Maria Hennessy	- Principal Planning Policy Officer
Peter Mannings	- Committee Support Officer
Kay Mead	- Principal Planning Officer
Claire Sime	- Assistant Director (Place Shaping)
Charlotte Smith	- Planning, GIS and Digital Innovation Officer
Stephanie Tarrant	- Assistant Director for Democracy, Elections and Information Governance

1 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised that the Council had received one representation this afternoon from the Rye House Action Group which officers were reviewing.

The webcast of the meeting can be viewed [here](#).

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

4 MINUTES - 21 SEPTEMBER 2017

Councillor Glover-Ward (Chair) said that the panel were not in a position to approve the minutes as a correct record, as there was no commonality in the membership of the meeting held on 21 September 2017. She said that the panel would note the minutes.

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2017 be noted.

5 LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE AND NOTICE OF INTENTION TO COMMENCE LOCAL PLAN PREPARATION

The Assistant Director (Place Shaping) presented a report that covered the statutory duty of East Hertfordshire District Council to prepare and maintain an up-to-date Local Plan to guide future development in the district.

The Local Plan was central to setting the spatial strategy for East Herts, identifying land for development and protection, and establishing planning policies to support sustainable growth, infrastructure delivery, environmental protection, and community well-being.

Members were advised that the Government had published details of a new plan-making system in

November 2025 intended to deliver local plans quickly, consistently and transparently. The associated regulations for implementing this system came into force on 25 March 2026.

Members were advised that a key feature of the reforms was the introduction of a statutory 30-month timetable for preparing and adopting local plans supported by a series of defined gateway assessments to ensure that plans were properly prepared and sound.

The Assistant Director (Place Shaping) advised that the report represented the first formal step in implementing the new plan making framework for East Herts. The report initiated the required getting ready phase that must be completed before the 30-month period could commence. A local plan timetable must be published along with a notice of intention to commence local plan preparation.

The report sought the approval to publish the East Herts local plan timetable which set out the proposed stages, milestones and key decision points for preparing the new local plan. The timetable also provided transparency for Members, communities and stakeholders and established a clear programme for managing resources, evidence and consultation, which was a prerequisite for progression through Gateway One.

Members were advised that the report sought approval to publish the statutory notice of intention to commence local plan preparation. The notice formally signalled the start of the local plan process, identified the plan area and confirmed the anticipated timing of Gateway One, and explained how stakeholders could access information and engage.

The Panel was advised that national guidance required the notice to be published before, or at the same time as the first formal stage of public engagement. They heard that the report should therefore be read in conjunction with the Local Plan scoping consultation report. Both

reports providing clarity on the statutory requirements and the immediate next steps in the plan making process.

Members were advised that local government reorganisation in Hertfordshire remained subject to Government decision. Councils were, however, expected to continue progressing Local Plans. It was highlighted that preparing the East Herts Local Plan would ensure an up-to-date and robust planning framework remained in place and would provide a strong evidence base to support future governance for plan making arrangements.

The report was presented for scrutiny and comment prior to consideration by the Executive and subsequently Council in accordance with the council's constitution. The Chair thanked the Assistant Director for Place Shaping and officers for their work in reaching this stage and noted that this marked an important first step in reviewing the Local Plan.

The Panel asked for clarity in terms of the LGR process and how the local plan preparations would feed into the new authority. The Assistant Director (Place Shaping) said that the government was looking at transitional arrangements, and the expectation was that the new Local Plan would be taken forward by the new authority and progressed in that respect. She said that the council and neighbouring councils were taking a consistent approach to plan making.

The Panel sought some clarity as to what would happen if the council reached a point 30 months out and the plan-making process was not completed. The Assistant Director (Place Shaping) said that the council was required to keep the timetable under constant review as the process progressed.

The Panel asked if officers could highlight the indicative start and end points in the process when there were periods of public consultation. The Panel were reassured that regular newsletters would be prepared to set out the

three consultations that were prescribed in the regulations. The Assistant Director (Place Shaping) set out the timescales for the three consultations.

Members asked questions of officers in respect of the new regulation numbers and the plan timetable in terms of clarity for the public. The Chair of the panel said that a more graphical and easier to understand document was being prepared for the council's website.

Councillor Crystall proposed, and Councillor Dumont seconded a motion that Council, via the Executive, be advised that (A) the East Herts Local Plan Timetable, attached at Appendix A, be approved for publication and (B) the Notice of Intention to Commence the East Herts Local Plan, attached at Appendix B, be published on the Council's website.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - that Council, via the Executive, be advised that (A) the East Herts Local Plan Timetable, attached at Appendix A, be approved for publication; and

(B) the Notice of Intention to Commence the East Herts Local Plan, attached at Appendix B, be published on the Council's website.

6 LOCAL PLAN SCOPING CONSULTATION

The Team Leader (Planning Policy) presented a report that sought agreement on the scoping consultation document, the approach to engagement and its distribution to the community.

The Panel was advised that the scoping consultation formed the third stage in the plan making process and was guided by government regulations. The panel was being invited to agree the scoping consultation document,

engagement and the distribution in the community to seek comments.

The Team Leader (Planning Policy) said that the scoping consultation was a key part of the getting ready period undertaken within the four-month period prior to the formal 30-month timeline for completing the local plan.

The panel was advised that the regulations specified the bodies that should be invited to make representations during the scoping consultation and the matters about which representations should be made.

The Team Leader (Planning Policy) said that the aim of the scoping consultation was to provide meaningful early engagement in the plan making process from invited groups and members of the community. He set out the issues about which representations could be made and advised that the consultation would run for four weeks between 11 June and 10 July 2026.

The Panel was advised that the consultation should be strategic and high level so as to strike a balance between engaging a wide audience and encouraging constructive focussed feedback to meaningfully inform the next stages of plan making.

The scoping consultation document had 14 questions aimed at delivering short and focused responses about the plan. The Team Leader (Planning Policy) set out the matters that had been set out beforehand in the context of the scoping document. The scoping consultation would provide information from the community on their priorities for the local plan which would inform the next stages in plan making.

The Panel was advised of the communications actions that had been put in place which included social media and a press release. The consultation document would be available for stakeholders and the wider community for the prescribed period between 11 June and 10 July 2026

via a range of means.

The Panel touched on the balance of the questions and the need to achieve a high level of detail instead of a vast quantity of very detailed questions. They also commented on the sensible pitch of the questions and how the consultation would be conducted in terms of using social media, online methods or in person.

The Panel asked if there would be direct communications with parish councils. The Team Leader (Planning Policy) said that the regulations had defined a number of specific consultees and parish councils were included in that. Officers were refreshing the database used for the previous district plan preparation process. There would be a parish and town council forum at the beginning of the consultation period.

The Team Leader (Planning Policy) answered a question about AI generated content in terms of consultation comments. The Chair said that officers could expect AI responses on everything and not just on housing related matters.

Councillor Dumont proposed, and Councillor Crystall seconded a motion that Council, via the Executive be advised that (A) subject to the publication of the Notice to Commence Local Plan Preparation and the Local Plan Timetable, the East Herts Local Plan – Scoping Consultation document (Appendix A) is made available to relevant stakeholders and the wider community to begin a discussion about the district's new Local Plan, and to seek comments in accord with the Regulations; (B) engagement on the Scoping Consultation document should commence, taking place between 11 June and 10 July 2026, through a range of different forums, including online on the Council's website; (C) any minor amendments required to the content of the Scoping Consultation document prior to the consultation period be delegated to the Director of Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth; and (D) a

further report detailing any feedback is prepared for Executive following engagement, with the intention of informing the Local Plan.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) Council, via the Executive be advised that, subject to the publication of the Notice to Commence Local Plan Preparation and the Local Plan Timetable, the East Herts Local Plan – Scoping Consultation document (Appendix A) is made available to relevant stakeholders and the wider community to begin a discussion about the district’s new Local Plan, and to seek comments in accord with the Regulations;

B) engagement on the Scoping Consultation document should commence, taking place between 11 June and 10 July 2026, through a range of different forums, including online on the Council’s website;

C) Any minor amendments required to the content of the Scoping Consultation document prior to the consultation period be delegated to the Director of Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth; and

D) A further report detailing any feedback is prepared for Executive following engagement, with the intention of informing the Local Plan.

7 LOCAL PLAN SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (SA) / STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) SCOPING REPORT

The Principal Planning Policy Officer presented a report that explained that the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) were processes that were separate to the Local Plan but were

carried out alongside it's preparation.

The Panel was advised that the SA was required under Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, with its role to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging plan, when tested against reasonable alternatives, would help to achieve to relevant environmental, economic and social objectives.

The Panel was advised that the SEA process was separate to the SA and was a requirement of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, more commonly known as the SEA Regulations. An SEA focussing solely on the environmental impacts of the plan and the likely significant effects that the plan would have on the environment.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer explained that the SA and SEA scoping document should identify any plans, policies and programmes that may impact on the plan area. This could include local or regional plans such as the local transport plan or international programmes such as the Kyoto protocol or UN sustainable development goals.

The Panel was advised that the SA and the SEA scoping document should also identify the baseline conditions of the area such as population characteristics or greenhouse gas emissions. The document should also identify future trends and what the situation might be like without the implementation of the Local Plan. All of this information led to a number of SA and SEA objectives which created a framework that would be used to test the policies and site options in the emerging Local Plan. The Principal Planning Policy Officer set out the social, environmental and economic issues that should be considered by the scoping document. The list of particular environmental criteria were set out in table 1.1 of the scoping document.

The Panel was advised of a number of changes had been proposed for the scoping document in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth and these were largely in relation to table 11.2 and the indicators that would be used to assess the policies against the objectives.

The Panel asked about the statutory recommendations and the new process about the likely response from the statutory consultees listed in the regulations. The Principal Planning Policy Officer explained that the council had to consult with those three bodies, and this was carried over from the previous local plan system.

The Chair said that the statutory guidance did not preclude anyone else from making comments to the council. The Panel commented on the matter of water quality in the rivers and water supply in terms of what residents and stakeholders could expect to be done in that regard.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer said that a water cycle strategy would identify issues and solutions in the water cycle and the network and create an evidence base to inform future policies. The SA and the SEA would test those policies to ascertain whether they would make a positive impact for the environment and water quality.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer replied to a question on the matter of land designations i.e. Green Belt, grey belt and brownfield land. She said that the SA and the SEA focussed on testing the sustainability of all types of land when these areas come forward. The Panel were advised that this matter would be tested against the objectives of the SA and SEA.

The Team Leader (Planning Policy) explained that officers were already in discussion with HCC education colleagues, and this would inform future thinking about strategy and the likely positioning of communities and where growth might be.

Officers responded to questions relating to Gypsy and Traveller sites and provision of sites for Travelling Showpeople. The Principal Planning Officer commented that the site to the East of Stevenage had been granted full planning permission for the settled community. She said that the Section 106 legal agreement for Gilston would ensure delivery in a timely manner for Gypsy and Traveller provision.

The Panel referred to table 1.2 in the report and the proposed SEA objectives for population health and wellbeing. A question was asked about access and open space and leisure spaces being provided and improved and whether the wording of provided and improved allowed some leeway in access or leisure facilities.

The Chair asked if this matter could be looked in terms of the wording. The Principal Planning Policy Officer said that the decision-making questions in the table that were part of the framework had to be considered in terms of how positive or negative the impact would be.

The Panel made a number of comments regarding the wording in table 3.2 and whether the wording of the third question could be amended to read utility standards instead of water efficiency or energy standards.

The Panel discussed the scoring principles in the context of the methodology for assessing policies. The Principal Planning Policy Officer said that the scoring criteria did not allocate an actual numbered score, and the considerations would include mitigations to push up a score in terms of how they positively or negatively they are marked in table 11.3 of the scoping document.

Councillor Dumont proposed the following amendment:

- C) subject to the approval of the 'Local Plan Scoping Consultation', the SA/SEA Scoping document will be made available alongside the Local Plan

Scoping Consultation and will include a period of activity between 11 June 2026 and 10 July 2026.

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

Councillor Crystall proposed and Councillor Dumont seconded, the substantive motion following the amendment. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the substantive motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - that Council, via the Executive, be advised that (A) subject to the publication of the 'Notice to Commence Local Plan Preparation and the Local Plan Timetable', the content of the SA/SEA Scoping document (Appendix A) is approved;

B) that the SA/SEA Scoping document be formally consulted upon with the Environment Agency (EA), Historic England (HE) and Natural England (NE) in accordance with statutory requirements;

C) subject to the approval of the 'Local Plan Scoping Consultation', the SA/SEA Scoping document will be made available alongside the Local Plan Scoping Consultation, and will include a period of activity between 11 June 2026 and 10 July 2026 through a range of different forums, including online on the Council's website; and

D) any minor amendments required to the content of the SA/SEA Scoping document prior to the consultation period be delegated to the Director of Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.

INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (LCWIP)

The Principal Planning Policy Officer presented a report that explained that Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) form a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements that are needed at a local level. LCWIPs enable a long-term approach to the development of local cycle and walking networks, which the government had suggested should ideally be over a 10-year period.

The Panel was advised that LCWIPs were being developed for each of the Hertfordshire Districts and Boroughs with Hertfordshire County Council taking the lead together with consultants and working collaboratively with each district and borough to produce a document for each area, whilst also considering potential cross boundary links.

The Panel was advised that LCWIPs allowed greater access to funding streams, such as the active travel fund, and provided an excellent basis on which to inform active travel measures being sought through Section 106 agreements. LCWIPs form part of the government's strategy to increase the number of trips made by on foot or by bike or by wheeling.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer said that the East Herts LCWIP was a high-level document clearly linking to other strategic planning documents such as the Local Transport Plan. She set out the main outputs of the LCWIP, which included network mapping and a written report that sets out the underlying analysis and provides a narrative to support identified improvements.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer said that while the LCWIP covered the whole district, due to resource constraints, it had needed to focus on the five main towns and the eight settlements listed as Group 1 Villages in the District Plan and the key linkages between them, with potential for future expansion to other areas in the future.

The Panel was advised that the joint partnership initiative between HCC and East Herts Council had seen the work underpinned by extensive community involvement through interaction with key stakeholder groups and two separate strands of public engagement and consultation periods.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer said that there were two key benefits of the longer than envisaged time taken in the production of the LCWIP. The additional public engagement phase had resulted in a huge level of response which had been invaluable in informing the development of the walking and cycling networks at an important stage.

The Panel was advised that the second benefit was that the emerging new Local Plan would require a number of technical documents to form part of its evidence base. The later than planned adoption of the LCWIP meant that it would be a more recently produced document when it reached the examination stage and more up to date as evidence.

The Chair thanked the officers for preparing the report on what had been a massive undertaking in preparing the significant volume of material. The Panel talked about the long-term evidence base and the huge level of response and the evidence base impacting on future funding.

A concern was expressed that funding needed to be put in place at a national level to ensure that cycle paths and networks were in place to make it easier for people. The Principal Planning Policy Officer said that once the LCWIP was adopted, the two councils would have the ability to apply for funding mechanisms and approach developers for the development and implementation of identified schemes, alongside seeking to resolve existing issues, such as tow-path repairs.

The Panel commented on managing the level of

expectation regarding the new routes coming into place and also managing the sense of frustration about the funding provision not having been in place to deliver schemes previously identified. Cycling and walking groups were very passionate about the LCWIP.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer said that there was now a much greater emphasis at both national and local levels on how people could move actively between locations. She said that having this document in place would facilitate applications for funding streams.

A question was asked about changes to network mapping, and an error in the document regarding a road in Sawbridgeworth that was listed as being in Bishop's Stortford.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer stated that the locational typographical error for Sawbridgeworth would be corrected, alongside a second instance for a comment that should apply to Hertford, before the document was finalised.

Councillor Dumont proposed, and Councillor Crystall seconded a motion that the Executive be advised that (A) the East Herts Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), attached as Appendices E and F (1 to 7) be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform the new East Herts Local Plan and as a material consideration for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications; and (B) any minor amendments to the content of the East Herts Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) be delegated to the Director for Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that that the Executive be advised that (A) the East Herts Local Cycling and Walking

Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), attached as Appendices E and F (1 to 7) be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform the new East Herts Local Plan and as a material consideration for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications; and

(B) any minor amendments to the content of the East Herts Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) be delegated to the Director for Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.

At 20:24 (8:24 pm), Councillor Glover-Ward proposed, and Councillor Crystall seconded, a motion for a short adjournment for a comfort break. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - the meeting be adjourned for a short comfort break.

The meeting reconvened at 20:30 (8:30 pm).

9 EAST HERTS OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

The Principal Planning Policy Officer presented the Open Space Assessment and stated that it will update the existing 2017 study. It provides robust, updated evidence, which will support the new Local Plan and inform development management decisions.

The Panel was advised that national planning policy requires that local plans are underpinned by robust up to date assessments of open space, sport and recreation. Public open space provides a range of social, environmental and community benefits. It is important for the council to know what provision currently exists and also to ascertain future demand.

The Panel was advised that population growth and

changes to open space provision had taken place since the last assessment. Recent housing developments have delivered new open spaces and the assessment, undertaken by the consultant Knight, Kavanagh and Page, has provided a comprehensive audit of over 570 publicly accessible open spaces across East Herts. The audit has evaluated quantity, quality and accessibility across 6 open space typologies supported by site visits, stakeholder and consultation with town and parish councils.

The Panel was advised that the findings showed that there are approximately 1680 hectares of public open space in East Herts and, whilst some gaps exist, overall provision is of good quality and widely accessible. It is important to recognise that open spaces are often multi-functional, and the study has identified where gaps in provision maybe served by other forms of open spaces.

The Panel noticed how under provisioned Ware is compared to the other four main towns. A question was asked about the inclusion of the community garden in Bengoe and the community garden areas in Pinehurst. A question was also asked about whether this was a live document in terms of updating it as more public open spaces came in.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer explained that the threshold for inclusion was 0.2 hectares, and the community gardens are recognised as an important and valuable area. The Panel was advised that whilst the document will not be amended continuously, the planning policy team will monitor and collate changes to open space as the new Local Plan progresses, so that understanding of open space remains up to date.

The Panel asked if the location of Castle Garden and Castle Park is in Hertford or Bishop's Stortford. The Principal Planning Policy Officer clarified the location of these green spaces. The Chair explained that a reference to a parish council should have read Bengoe Rural Parish

Council. The officer confirmed that this error would be changed before the document was finalised.

The Panel commented on the management of Rye Meads Nature Reserve passing over to Thames Water from the RSPB. The Principal Planning Policy Officer responded to a query regarding Datchworth Green and the recreation ground in Brookbridge Lane which comprised allotments, a football pitch, play equipment and equipment for table tennis for all ages, confirming they are included in the assessment.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer responded to a question regarding privately owned parcels of land that were included in the local nature recovery strategy. She said that to be included in the assessment, the open space does not need to be publicly owned but needs to be publicly accessible. If any parcels of land were not publicly assessable and had been included incorrectly then officers could look into that.

Councillor Crystall proposed, and Councillor Dumont seconded a motion that the Executive be advised that the Open Space Assessment, attached as Appendix A, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform the new East Herts Local Plan and as a material consideration for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be advised that the Open Space Assessment, attached as Appendix A, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform the new East Herts Local Plan and as a material consideration for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications.

REVIEW

The Assistant Planning Policy Officer presented a report that referred to the employment land review (ELR) was an assessment of the district's allocated employment areas which had been undertaken in order to inform the preparation of the new Local Plan and therefore contributing towards the NPPF requirement for the preparation and review of all policies to be underpinned by relevant and up to date evidence.

The Panel was advised that amongst the evidence due to be updated was that which related to employment and the economy.

The Assistant Planning Policy Officer said that the last ELR was undertaken in 2013 and was now out of date. He said that the national planning policy context and the classifications had evolved and there had been major societal changes following Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the districts allocated employment sites had changed significantly, and this updated ELR had captured and considered those changes.

The Assistant Planning Policy Officer said that, as outlined in the methodology, this review assesses all 33 of the district's established employment areas which were allocated for industry in according with policy ED1 of the 2018 District Plan. He said that all of the assessments had been conducted through a combination of site visits and desk-based research.

The Panel was advised that the bulk of the review was made up by employment land assessments within chapter 4, which covered the main settlements followed by the village sites.

The Assistant Planning Policy Officer said that overviews of each settlement and the villages were respectively followed by more in-depth assessments of each individual employment area. These assessments were effectively a

detailed audit of how the district's allocated employment areas were being used and how this had changed since the last ELR in 2013.

The Assistant Planning Policy Officer said that the ELR had set out specific conclusions and recommendations which were also broken down by settlement and this chapter had set out how each site should be considered moving forward. The Panel was advised of the three types of recommendations that were set out in the report.

The Panel was advised that the ELR was supported by consultation with planning officers, where necessary, in terms of relevant planning history or background information. External consultants AECOM had worked on related employment studies for each of the district's main settlements. The ELR would inform the new East Herts Local Plan as part of the evidence base and would be a material consideration for the determination of planning applications.

The Panel was advised on the slow reduction in the amount of employment land and whether there was anything in the new NPPF that counteracted that trend in anyway. The Assistant Planning Policy Officer detailed that, with regard to the 2018 District Plan, there were caveats in Policy ED1 regarding the loss of employment land.

The Assistant Planning Policy Officer referred to the changes to use classes in the new version of the NPPF and said that there was a challenge between the provision of housing and strong economic growth. The Chair commented on the change in working patterns in commercial offices due to the emergence of hybrid working.

Councillor Dumont proposed, and Councillor Crystall seconded a motion that the Executive be advised that the Employment Land Review, attached as Appendix A, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform the new

East Herts Local Plan and as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be advised that the Employment Land Review, attached as Appendix A, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform the new East Herts Local Plan and as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

11 BISHOP'S STORTFORD EMPLOYMENT STUDY

The Principal Planning Policy Officer said that the Bishop's Stortford Employment Study provides an updated assessment of the employment market in the town and makes recommendations about the types of jobs and employment land likely to be required.

The Panel was advised that the Council had commissioned consultants AECOM to produce the study, which would serve to update a previous document produced in 2013. Since the previous study, there has been changes to the town's employment sectors including new development, societal changes and an overall change to the use class order.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer said that the study has considered a range factors including the town's socio-economic profile, the performance of its office and industrial markets, the role of and condition of existing employment sites and the potential for future employment development.

The Panel was advised that the study had also taken account of wider influences, changes to working patterns, economic trends and the strategic role of Stansted Airport. The study had also identified that Bishop's Stortford had experienced significant recent growth with

further housing and employment still to come forward.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer said that ensuring an appropriate balance between homes and jobs would be critical to delivering sustainable development and supporting the local economy moving forward. She said that whilst demand for office space was currently more limited, there was a clear and ongoing need for industrial and logistics space with relatively low vacancy rates indicating a constrained supply.

The Panel was advised that the study therefore highlights the importance of safeguarding existing employment land, supporting the delivering new employment floorspace and considering the potential need for additional provision in the future. This study would support decisions for the future economic strategy Bishop's Stortford.

The chair referred to the three sites coming forward in the town, which provide good mixed-use developments with a mix of housing and employment land. The Principal Planning Policy Officer responded to a question in terms of whether officers had worked with the county council on this report. The council was working with the HCC more generally in terms of the development of the new Local Plan.

The Council had taken account of the recently published Hertfordshire Economic Strategy which covered the whole of Hertfordshire. The Panel was advised that the work of the consultants had identified the potential for the growth of AI in Hertfordshire. Whilst the focus for large strategic employment sites is generally more to the south of the county, there is evidence that the proximity of the town to the M11 means that there is demand for industrial floorspace and this should be considered moving forward.

Councillor Crystall proposed, and Councillor Dumont seconded a motion that the Executive be advised that the Bishop's Stortford Employment Study, attached as Appendix A, be agreed as part of the evidence base to

inform the new East Herts Local Plan and as a material consideration for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - that the Executive be advised that the Bishop’s Stortford Employment Study, attached as Appendix A, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform the new East Herts Local Plan and as a material consideration for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications.

12 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

13 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (IF REQUIRED)

There was no urgent part 2 business.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm

Chairman
Date