

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 30 JANUARY 2013, AT 7.00
PM

PRESENT: Councillor J Taylor (Chairman).
Councillors D Abbott, M Alexander,
D Andrews, W Ashley, P Ballam,
R Beeching, E Buckmaster, S Bull, A Burlton,
M Carver, Mrs R Cheswright, A Dearman,
J Demonti, T Herbert, Mrs D Hone,
A Jackson, G Jones, G Lawrence, J Mayes,
G McAndrew, M McMullen, P Moore,
M Newman, P Phillips, M Pope, J Ranger,
S Rutland-Barsby, N Symonds, M Tindale,
A Warman, G Williamson, N Wilson, J Wing,
M Wood, C Woodward, B Wrangles and
J Wyllie.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

559 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed the press and public to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was being webcast.

She referred to the recent events she had attended and highlighted the Christmas carol service. She reminded Members of a forthcoming charity event on 17 February 2013, at the Ancient Raj, Sawbridgeworth.

Finally, she advised that Councillor A Warman would be representing the Council at the Royal Garden Party.

560 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2012, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

561 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D Andrews asked Council to note the declaration made at the Development Control Committee meeting held on 9 January 2013 in respect of Minute 529 – Application 3/12/1040/OP.

562 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 8 JANUARY 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 8 January 2013, be received.

(see also Minutes 563 – 565)

563 HOUSING STRATEGIC TENANCY STRATEGY 2012 - 15

RESOLVED – that (A) the comments of the Community Scrutiny Committee be received: and

(B) the Tenancy Strategy as now submitted, be adopted.

564 LOCAL AUTHORITY MORTGAGE SCHEME

In response to comments made by Councillor M Wood, the Leader stated that improving publicity for the scheme would be discussed with Lloyds Bank. The Executive Member for Finance referred to the role of all Members in raising awareness with residents.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Council's Local Authority Mortgage Scheme, approved at its meeting held on 22 February 2012, be amended as follows:

The maximum loan amount that can be awarded per property be increased from £160,000 to £190,000.

(B) the Monitoring Officer be further indemnified in giving an Opinion Letter in respect of the amendment in (A) above confirming that the Council is able to enter into the Deed of Amendment and is bound by it.

565 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

Councillors J Wing and M Wood expressed their opposition to the proposed scheme on the basis that they did not believe that the more vulnerable sections of society should be shouldering the extra burden. They indicated that they would not be supporting the proposals.

The Leader reminded Members that the new council tax benefits regime had been implemented by the Coalition Government. He believed the proposed scheme in East Herts was fair and proportionate.

After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the proposals were CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the forecasted financial implications arising from the recommended scheme for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTS), with effect from 1 April 2013 and the risks and assumptions attached to these, be approved; and

(B) the CTS Scheme as now detailed in the report submitted, be approved.

566 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 9
JANUARY 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 9 January 2013, be received.

567 JOINT MEETING OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES: MINUTES -
15 JANUARY 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees held on 15 January 2013, be received.

568 HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 16
JANUARY 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 16 January 2013, be received.

(see also Minute 569)

569 PAY POLICY STATEMENT

RESOLVED – that the Pay Policy Statement 2013/14, as now amended be approved.

570 AUDIT COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 23 JANUARY 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 23 January 2013, be received.

(see also Minute 571)

571 RESPONSE TO AUDITOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS
RELATING TO AN OBJECTION TO 2011-2012 ACCOUNTS

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received: and

(B) the proposed response to the external auditor's recommendations, as now submitted, be approved.

572 CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2013/14

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report recommending the calculation of the council tax base for the whole District and for each parish and town council for 2013/14.

Council approved the recommendations as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the calculation of the Council's tax base for the whole District, and for the parish areas, for 2013/14, as now detailed, be approved;

(B) pursuant to the report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by East Hertfordshire District Council as its council tax base for the whole area for 2013/14 shall be 55084 and for the parish areas for 2013/14 as listed in the report submitted.

573 NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES (NNDR)
CALCULATION

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report recommending the calculation of the National Non Domestic Rates Budget 2013/14.

Council approved the calculation as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that in accordance with the Non-Domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013

(due to gain parliamentary approval by mid February 2013), the amount calculated by East Herts Council for the year 2013/14 shall be £42,975,193 (net yield after transitional arrangements and rate retention).

574 THE STANDARDS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report outlining progress on implementing the new standards regime, which also proposed changes to the complaints procedure.

In response to a question from Councillor M Wood, the Monitoring Officer stated that updates to guidance on the code of conduct would be included within the annual review of the Constitution.

Councillor M Wood referred to recent complaints dealt with by the Standards Sub-Committee and the length of time taken for the cases to be heard. He believed that the complaints procedure should include some time limits for investigations to be carried out and reported back.

The Monitoring Officer suggested that the recent history had been complicated by the transition from the old regime to the new and believed that the new process would reduce the length of time taken.

Councillor E Buckmaster moved, and Councillor M Wood seconded, a proposal that the complaints process include a best endeavours timeframe of three months for investigations to be reported back to Members. After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, this proposal was CARRIED.

Council approved the complaints procedure, as now amended.

RESOLVED – that the complaints procedure, as now amended, be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.31 pm