

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 16 DECEMBER 2015, AT
7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor P Moore (Chairman).
Councillors D Abbott, A Alder, D Andrews,
P Ballam, R Brunton, K Brush,
E Buckmaster, S Bull, J Cartwright, M Casey,
Mrs R Cheswright, S Cousins, K Crofton,
B Deering, I Devonshire, H Drake,
M Freeman, J Goodeve, B Harris-Quinney,
L Haysey, R Henson, A Jackson, G Jones,
J Jones, J Kaye, P Kenealy, G McAndrew,
M McMullen, W Mortimer, D Oldridge,
M Pope, S Reed, P Ruffles, S Rutland-
Barsby, S Stainsby, M Stevenson,
N Symonds, J Taylor, K Warnell,
G Williamson, C Woodward and J Wyllie.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Lisa Gazeley	- Communications Officer
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services
Liz Watts	- Chief Executive

462 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded Members that the meeting was being webcast. She advised that, following a draw, Councillor D Andrews and herself had been selected to represent the Authority at a Royal Garden Party in 2016.

The Chairman also advised that this was the last Council meeting that Simon Drinkwater would be attending before his retirement in January 2016. At the Chairman's invitation, the Leader of the Council thanked Mr Drinkwater for his 40 years of local government service, 27 of which were in East Herts. She wished him well in his retirement.

The Ambassador and Executive Member for Shared Services also thanked Mr Drinkwater for his service and wise counsel, particularly at the time of the establishment of the executive arrangements and in supporting his time as Leader. Simon Drinkwater thanked Members and spoke of his enjoyment at East Herts. He wished everyone well for the future.

The Chairman referred to the events she had attended recently and highlighted a visit to a conference on Mental Health in Liverpool. She spoke of the profound impact of mental health issues in society and urged Members to sign the pledge in the chamber tonight.

She also advised Members of progress being made in the East Herts Got Talent competition. Finally, she invited everyone to join her after the meeting for some light refreshments

463 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 28 October 2015, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

464 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Question 1

Councillor J Goodeve stated that access to primary care was under increasing pressure due to the combination of an ageing population, GPs taking early retirement due to pension changes, failure to attract GPs who preferred to work in modern health centres rather than the converted old houses in the District and significant numbers of new properties being built adding to patient numbers. She also understood that, given doctors now had significant student debt to deal with as well as the struggle to buy a home, they were understandably reluctant to take on further debt to buy into a GP practice. The GPs were struggling to cope and there were queues in the cold and rain in one area where appointments were rarely available in advance. She asked the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing what the Council was doing by way of liaising with the relevant authorities to ensure appropriate provision going forward for residents, especially given the pressure to provide significant further numbers of new homes.

In reply, the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing commented on the complexity of this issue. He reminded Members that the Council had no direct control over GPs, but could influence health professionals through a variety of channels, such as patient participation groups, the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Local Strategic Partnership and the County Council's Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. In respect of potential housing growth, the Planning Policy team engaged with NHS England, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and the County Council.

The Executive Member spoke of the challenges facing health providers and did not believe that there was lack an inclination among GPs to change and improve their services. However, they operated as individual business entities with premises possibly restricted by mortgages and limited opportunity for expansion. The Executive Member spoke of his engagement with East and North Herts CCG and believed Members had a role as community champions to facilitate change. Such change could involve using premises more effectively, having different or longer opening hours and developing travel plans that would increase patient accessibility. The Executive Member concluded by referring to the motions for debate

elsewhere on the agenda, which he believed demonstrated the Council's commitment to seek improvements.

465 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 3 NOVEMBER 2015

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 3 November 2015 be received.

(see also Minutes 466 – 469)

466 WEST ESSEX AND EAST HERTFORDSHIRE STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT (SHMA), SEPTEMBER 2015

RESOLVED – that the West Essex and East Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), September 2015, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support preparation of the East Herts District Plan, and for housing strategy purposes.

(see also Minute 465)

467 ECONOMIC EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OAHN FOR WEST ESSEX AND EAST HERTS, SEPTEMBER 2015

RESOLVED – that the Economic Evidence to Support the Development of the OAHN for West Essex and East Herts, September 2015, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support preparation of the East Herts District Plan.

(see also Minute 465)

468 DISTRICT PLAN TRANSPORTATION – A414, HERTFORD

RESOLVED – that (A) the contents of the letter dated 27 July 2015 from Hertfordshire County Council Highways Development Management in respect of transportation issues identified on the A414, Hertford, be noted; and

(B) Hertfordshire County Council be urged to give highest priority to expediting the completion of its COMET transportation model and publication of its emerging Transportation Vision and that East Herts Council was most willing to assist this process, if considered appropriate.

(see also Minute 465)

469 DELIVERY STUDY, SEPTEMBER 2015

RESOLVED – that the Delivery Study, September 2015, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support preparation of the East Herts District Plan.

(see also Minute 465)

470 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 1 DECEMBER 2015

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 1 December 2015 be received.

(see also Minutes 471 – 472)

471 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

RESOLVED – that (A) the forecasted financial implications arising from the recommended scheme for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTS) with effect from 1 April 2016 and the risks and assumptions attached to these, be received; and

(B) the CTS scheme detailed within the report submitted, be approved.

(see also Minute 470)

472 CHARRINGTON'S HOUSE, BISHOP'S STORTFORD
CAPITAL BID

RESOLVED - that the proposed addition to the capital

programme for the proposed refurbishment of a vacant office suite at Charrington's House, Bishop's Stortford, as now submitted, be approved.

(see also Minute 470)

473 ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 10 NOVEMBER 2015

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10 November 2015, be received.

474 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 11 NOVEMBER 2015

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Management Committee meeting held on 11 November 2015, be received.

475 COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 17 NOVEMBER 2015

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Community Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 November 2015, be received.

476 LICENSING COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 19 NOVEMBER 2015

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 19 November 2015, be received.

(see also Minute 477)

477 DRAFT GAMBLING POLICY 2016-19

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received; and
(B) the revised Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act 2005, as now submitted, be approved.

(see also Minute 476)

478 CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
MINUTES - 24 NOVEMBER 2015

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 24 November 2015, be received.

479 AUDIT COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 25 NOVEMBER 2015

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 25 November 2015, be received.

480 HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
MINUTES - 8 DECEMBER 2015

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 December 2015, be received.

481 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES -
9 DECEMBER 2015

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Management Committee meeting held on 9 December 2015, be received.

482 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW REQUEST –
BISHOP'S STORTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

Council considered a report detailing a request from Bishop's Stortford Town Council for a Community Governance Review (CGR) of its electoral arrangements. Under provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement Act 2007, Council had the power to review and make changes to community governance within its area. The Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services outlined the options available to Council in dealing with the request, namely to undertake a review of the governance arrangements in Bishop's Stortford only, to review the governance arrangements across the

whole District or to reject the request.

Various Members spoke in support of accepting the request to review the governance arrangements in Bishop's Stortford only. A couple of Members believed that governance arrangements in Buntingford needed to be reviewed, given the current and projected housing growth.

In response to Members' questions, Officers advised that although the costs of any review were difficult to quantify, it would be time consuming and that potentially, additional resources might be necessary.

Councillor G Jones moved, and Councillor D Andrews seconded, a motion that a Community Governance Review of the electoral arrangements of Bishop's Stortford Town Council (including its town boundary) be undertaken.

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

RESOLVED – that a Community Governance Review of the electoral arrangements of Bishop's Stortford Town Council (including its town boundary) be undertaken, with the detailed terms of reference for, and the timing of, the review to be determined by the Chief Executive.

483 STATUTORY OFFICER APPOINTMENTS

The Leader of the Council submitted a report proposing the appointment of Officers to statutory positions. The Chief Executive and the Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services left the chamber whilst this matter was considered.

The Leader advised that, given the impending retirement of the Director of Neighbourhood Services, the Council needed to review its statutory officer arrangements.

Council approved the proposals now detailed.

RESOLVED – that the (A) Chief Executive be appointed under the provisions of the Representation

of the People Act 1983 to be the Returning Officer for the election of district and parish/town councillors, and to be the Electoral Registration Officer for the (parliamentary) constituencies either wholly or partly, within East Hertfordshire with effect from 1 January 2016; and

(B) Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services be designated as (acting) Monitoring Officer for the Authority pursuant to the provisions of Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 on the basis detailed in the report now submitted.

484 CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2016/17

The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services submitted a report recommending the calculation of the council tax base for the whole District and for each parish and town council for 2016/17.

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 2016/17 be approved; and

(B) pursuant to the report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by East Hertfordshire District Council as its council tax base for the whole area for 2016/17 shall be 57254.9 and for the parish areas 2016/17 as listed in the report now submitted.

485 MOTION ON NOTICE - MENTAL HEALTH

Councillor N Symonds moved, and Councillor P Moore seconded a motion as follows:

This Council notes:

- 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem

in any given year.

- The World Health Organisation predicts that depression will be the second most common health condition worldwide by 2020.
- Mental ill health costs some £105 billion each year in England alone.
- People with a severe mental illness die up to 20 years younger than their peers in the UK.
- There is often a circular relationship between mental health and issues such as housing, employment, family problems or debt.

This Council believes:

- As a local authority we have a crucial role to play in improving the mental health of everyone in our community and tackling some of the widest and most entrenched inequalities in health.
- Mental health should be a priority across all the local authority's areas of responsibility, including housing, community safety and planning.
- All councillors, whether members of the Executive or Scrutiny and in our community and casework roles, can play a positive role in championing mental health on an individual and strategic basis.

This Council resolves:

- To sign the Local Authorities' Mental Health Challenge run by Centre for Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, Mental Health Providers Forum, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, Royal College of Psychiatrists and YoungMinds.
- To commit to appoint an elected member as 'mental health champion' across the Council.
- To seek to identify a member of staff within the Council to act as 'lead officer' for mental health.

The Council will also:

- Support positive mental health in our community, including in local schools, neighbourhoods and

workplaces.

- Work to reduce inequalities in mental health in our community.
- Work with local partners to promote effective support for people with mental health needs.
- Use its powers of influence to help tackle discrimination on the grounds of mental health in our community.
- Proactively listen to people of all ages and backgrounds about what they need for better mental health.

Councillors N Symonds and P Moore both referred to the wide ranging issues in society that exacerbated the mental health problems faced by many residents. They both urged Members to sign the Mental Health pledge.

Various Members spoke in support of the motion.

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

RESOLVED – that the following motion be approved:

This Council notes:

- 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem in any given year.
- The World Health Organisation predicts that depression will be the second most common health condition worldwide by 2020.
- Mental ill health costs some £105 billion each year in England alone.
- People with a severe mental illness die up to 20 years younger than their peers in the UK.
- There is often a circular relationship between mental health and issues such as housing, employment, family problems or debt.

This Council believes:

- As a local authority we have a crucial role to play in improving the mental health of everyone

in our community and tackling some of the widest and most entrenched inequalities in health.

- Mental health should be a priority across all the local authority's areas of responsibility, including housing, community safety and planning.
- All councillors, whether members of the Executive or Scrutiny and in our community and casework roles, can play a positive role in championing mental health on an individual and strategic basis.

This Council resolves:

- To sign the Local Authorities' Mental Health Challenge run by Centre for Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, Mental Health Providers Forum, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, Royal College of Psychiatrists and YoungMinds.
- To commit to appoint an elected member as 'mental health champion' across the Council.
- To seek to identify a member of staff within the Council to act as 'lead officer' for mental health.

The Council will also:

- Support positive mental health in our community, including in local schools, neighbourhoods and workplaces.
- Work to reduce inequalities in mental health in our community.
- Work with local partners to promote effective support for people with mental health needs.
- Use its powers of influence to help tackle discrimination on the grounds of mental health in our community.
- Proactively listen to people of all ages and backgrounds about what they need for better mental health.

486 MOTION ON NOTICE - PRINCESS ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL

The Leader moved, and the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing seconded, a motion as follows:

This Council notes with extreme concern recent press articles on the financial state of Princess Alexandra Hospital, comments from the hospital's Chairman and Chief Executive that the hospital is not sustainable in the medium term and the increasing likelihood of cuts to hospital services for the communities it serves. It also notes that the West Essex health system has been excluded from the NHS Essex Success Regime despite the severe financial challenges it faces. Given the growing need for acute and other health services for the communities of Harlow and the surrounding areas as they continue to grow, this Council resolves to urge the Government to:

1. Urgently address the significant funding and systemic issues at the Princess Alexandra Hospital and in the West Essex health system to ensure adequate and accessible health service provision to the residents of Harlow and the surrounding areas for the short and medium terms.
2. Develop, in consultation with the Councils of West Essex and East Hertfordshire, a longer term plan to secure financially sustainable, appropriate and sufficient access to health services for the communities served by the Princess Alexandra Hospital and the West Essex CCG.

The Leader referred to the systemic problems at the hospital and recent meetings she had attended with representatives of Uttlesford, Epping Forest and Harlow Councils. They had all recognised the growing difficulties and had written to the Secretary of State for Health seeking greater support and funding. The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing also referred to the need for greater strategic support from the government.

Councillor J Wyllie suggested an amendment at the end of the

first paragraph by inserting “East Herts” before “Harlow”. This was accepted by the Leader.

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

RESOLVED – that the following motion be approved:

This Council notes with extreme concern recent press articles on the financial state of Princess Alexandra Hospital, comments from the hospital’s Chairman and Chief Executive that the hospital is not sustainable in the medium term and the increasing likelihood of cuts to hospital services for the communities it serves. It also notes that the West Essex health system has been excluded from the NHS Essex Success Regime despite the severe financial challenges it faces. Given the growing need for acute and other health services for the communities of East Herts, Harlow and the surrounding areas as they continue to grow, this Council resolves to urge the Government to:

1. Urgently address the significant funding and systemic issues at the Princess Alexandra Hospital and in the West Essex health system to ensure adequate and accessible health service provision to the residents of Harlow and the surrounding areas for the short and medium terms.
2. Develop, in consultation with the Councils of West Essex and East Hertfordshire, a longer term plan to secure financially sustainable, appropriate and sufficient access to health services for the communities served by the Princess Alexandra Hospital and the West Essex CCG.

The meeting closed at 8.17 pm