

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2016, AT
7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor K Crofton (Chairman).
Councillors D Abbott, A Alder, M Allen,
D Andrews, P Ballam, P Boylan, R Brunton,
E Buckmaster, M Casey, Mrs R Cheswright,
S Cousins, G Cutting, B Deering,
I Devonshire, H Drake, M Freeman,
J Goodeve, L Haysey, R Henson, A Jackson,
G Jones, J Jones, J Kaye, G McAndrew,
M McMullen, P Moore, T Page, M Pope,
S Reed, P Ruffles, S Rutland-Barsby,
S Stainsby, R Standley, N Symonds,
J Taylor, K Warnell, G Williamson,
C Woodward and J Wyllie.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Philip Gregory	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
Tess Michaels	- Legal and Democratic Services Apprentice
Helen Standen	- Director
Adele Taylor	- Director
Liz Watts	- Chief Executive
Kevin Williams	- Acting Head of Legal and Democratic Services

489 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Members, Honorary Aldermen, Officers and the public to the meeting and reminded them that the meeting was being webcast.

The Chairman advised that he had agreed to accept onto the agenda as an urgent item a late report relating to NNDR, which had been circulated as part of the supplementary agenda. This determination, if approved, would enable Officers to make the Authority's submission in January 2017 without the need for an extra Council meeting.

The Chairman referred to a short survey on refreshments that had been circulated in the chamber and asked Members to complete this and leave it on the table for collection at the end of the meeting.

He asked Members to note that Kevin Brush had tendered his resignation as a District Councillor and that the appropriate notice of a casual vacancy would be advertised in the next few days. On behalf of Members, he thanked him for his time serving residents of Hertford Castle ward.

The Chairman also advised Members that, following a draw, Councillors Mortimer and Page had been selected to attend a Royal Garden Party in 2017. Officers would be contacting the relevant Members with further details.

The Chairman thanked his Vice-Chairman for his continued support and highlighted the various events he had attended. In particular, he referred to the Remembrance Day event in Hertford and a visit to the Hertford Post Sorting Office. He also highlighted the launch of the "East Herts Got Talent" competition.

The Chairman read a letter from John Davis, of the Ware Arts Centre, thanking the Council for its continued support and the signing of a 30 year lease for the Arts Centre to take over the Southern Maltings.

Finally, the Chairman advised of a special announcement and invited Honorary Alderman Mike Carver to address the meeting.

Alderman Carver advised Council that Peter Ruffles had now completed 40 years as an East Herts District Councillor. He had also been a Town Councillor for 30 years and a County Councillor since 2001. Known locally as “Mr Hertford”, he was a community champion second to none, devoted to serving the residents of Hertford. Alderman Carver referred to his passion for all things Hertford and the award of an MBE for his services to education. He presented him with a medal and a certificate.

Councillor P Ruffles thanked Alderman Carver and the Council.

490 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 October 2016, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

491 PETITIONS

Nicky Lawson, a resident of Park Road, Hertford, submitted a petition comprising 57 signatures requesting a resident parking zone. The petition read:

“As residents of Park Road, we are increasingly frustrated by the escalation of commuter parking. Commuters are parking in the bays as well as off road, ruining the grass verges, causing unnecessary inconvenience and stress on residents who come and go throughout the day. Park Road is very close to the town centre, is a short walk from Hertford East Station and with recent town planning due to considerably increase amenities in coming years, the problem will only worsen. We feel strongly that urgent consideration be taken for the installation of a Residents Parking Zone to alleviate the detrimental effect this issue is having on residents.”

Ms Lawson referred to the problems residents faced with parking by commuters, sometimes across grass verges. She

believed that the current problems would be exacerbated by future planning developments in the area and on behalf of local residents, called for the introduction of a Residents Parking Zone (RPZ).

In response, the Executive Member for Economic Development thanked the petitioner and acknowledged the problems in this area, which he had been aware of for some time. He reminded Council of the review of RPZ policy he had instigated when taking over the parking portfolio and how the Parking Service now considered requests for RPZs.

492 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Alderman Mione Goldspink, a resident of Bishop's Stortford, asked the Leader of the Council what action East Herts Council was planning to take in order to reduce the terrible level of air pollution at Hockerill crossroads in Bishop's Stortford.

In response, the Leader gave a very detailed reply. She explained that the Hockerill junction in Bishop's Stortford was one of three Air Quality Management Areas in East Herts subject to elevated levels of air pollution, principally nitrogen dioxide. She referred to the wider context of seeking to ease congestion and the need for robust partnership working with Hertfordshire County Council, national government and road users themselves.

The Leader believed the County Council's 'Towards Better Transport in Hertfordshire' plan was crucial and that East Herts Council had completed its actions in the County's latest update report published in 2014. She did not consider substantive junction improvements other than amendments to the phasing of the traffic lights as practicable nor was a park-and-ride scheme in the town.

The Leader advised that the District Council continued to play a pivotal enabling role by monitoring air quality at the crossroads, bringing together partner agencies and exploring new ideas to promote behaviour change, such as developing

with the London Sustainability Exchange the 'Cleaner Air 4 Secondary Schools Toolkit' to help secondary school students better understand the impact of travel options on the environment. The Council had also made a bid to DEFRA that, if successful, would promote greater uptake of electric, low emission vehicles.

The Leader also referred to the national context where there had been a 5.4% increase in road usage. Curbing these emissions would require a joined-up national effort, such as the radical examples emerging globally, such as banning diesel vehicles, road charging and major investment in electric vehicle infrastructure.

The Leader commented that a Member task and finish group was currently looking at sustainable transport options and was due to report early in the new year. She detailed some of the options being explored.

The Leader stated that concerted action could have an impact and was encouraged that over the last three years, the nitrogen dioxide concentrations at Hockerill crossroads had decreased by 8.8%. However, further efforts were needed and to this end, in October 2016, key partners had come together to begin to thoroughly revisit what could be done to further reduce pollution locally. This officer group was expected to report early in the next financial year.

The Leader gave assurance that East Herts Council continued to support County colleagues, national government and road users themselves, to help find sustainable ways to further reduce air pollution at Hockerill crossroads and throughout the District.

In response to a supplementary question, the Leader advised that the suggestion for changing the phasing of the traffic lights at the junction could be taken up by County Members in Bishop's Stortford.

493 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Question 1

Councillor R Henson commented that many residents in Sele had expressed concern about the impact on local street parking, following the closure of the Bridge House car park, which would affect residents in other parts of Hertford too. He asked the Executive Member for Economic Development if he would set out the measures being considered to help ensure that the impact on residents was as small as possible. He also asked if he agreed that Network Rail should play its part and work with the Council to find solutions to this challenge.

In reply, the Executive Member for Economic Development regretted the closure which had been outside of the Council's control. Officers had looked at alternative parking options in the vicinity, but much of the area was subject to parking controls, thus the negative impact on commuters. He further advised that talks with Govia Thameslink Railway were ongoing and various options were being explored. However, there was unlikely to be an immediate solution.

Question 2

Councillor P Ruffles asked the Chairman of the Environment Scrutiny Committee if he would provide information about his task and finish group looking into sustainable transport and give an update about progress so far. Given the very high figures for car ownership in the District, he wondered what alternatives were being considered and how members of the public could become involved to share their knowledge and expertise.

In response, the Chairman of the Environment Scrutiny Committee stated that two meetings had been held so far with evidence gathered from a number of expert witnesses. Further meetings were scheduled and the group would be reporting early in 2017. Any suggestions or ideas would be welcome and a specific email address had been set up and publicised to encourage public input.

Question 3

Councillor B Deering commented on the acute pressure in relation to commuter parking at both Hertford North and Hertford East stations. Residential parking zones could have the unintended consequence of relocating parking pressures to other areas to the detriment of those local residents, or even reducing the total available car parking capacity, which could give rise to traffic management and safety issues. For example, commuters from Hertford East believe that many spaces reserved for residents in the nearby RPZ are empty during the day but still unavailable for others to use, which forces commuter parking into other streets and areas of the town. Elsewhere, there were schemes which permitted limited stranger parking in residential streets in RPZs. He asked the Executive Member for Economic Development if he could liaise with Officers to bring forward proposals that would enable more parking for commuters, thereby better safeguarding residents' parking requirements.

In reply, the Executive Member for Economic Development referred to the revised policy on RPZs that had been agreed in October 2015, which had included a number of actions relating to "shared use" parking. Officers were investigating and a report would be submitted in 2017. He acknowledged that this issue might be controversial in some areas but needed to be looked at as a way of achieving better efficiencies.

494 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 25 OCTOBER 2016

The Leader congratulated Councillor P Ruffles on his long service award. She commented on how busy 2016 had been and referred to the significant changes that had taken place. She thanked the staff for their continued hard work and commitment and pointed towards more challenges that would need to be faced in 2017. The Leader also referred to the resettlement of two Syrian refugee families and thanked Network Housing, the Refugee Council, Herts Welcomes Syrian Refugees and Alderman Mione Goldspink for their

efforts. Finally, she wished everyone a happy new year.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 25 October 2016 be received.

(see also Minutes 495 - 499)

495 WALKERN CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

RESOLVED – that (A) the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals be supported;

(B) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Development Management and Council Support, to make any further minor and consequential changes to the document which may be necessary; and

(C) the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals be adopted.

(see also Minute 494)

496 SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF THE STRATEGIC SPATIAL OPTIONS FOR THE WEST ESSEX AND EAST HERTFORDSHIRE HOUSING MARKET AREA, SEPTEMBER 2016

RESOLVED – that the Sustainability Appraisal of the Strategic Spatial Options for the West Essex and East Hertfordshire Housing Market Area as detailed at Essential Reference 'B' to the report submitted, be agreed as part of the evidence base to support the East Herts District Plan.

(see also Minute 494)

497 EAST HERTS DISTRICT PLAN – INTERIM DUTY TO CO-OPERATE COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

RESOLVED – that the Interim Duty to Co-operate Compliance Statement be agreed in support of the Pre-Submission District Plan.

(see also Minute 494)

498 EAST HERTS DISTRICT PLAN – INTERIM CONSULTATION STATEMENT

RESOLVED – that the Interim Consultation Statement, as detailed at Essential Reference 'B' to the report submitted, be agreed as a companion document to the East Herts District Plan, Pre-Submission Version, 2016, for consultation purposes.

(see also Minute 494)

499 AIR QUALITY PLANNING GUIDANCE, OCTOBER 2016

RESOLVED – that the Air Quality Planning Guidance, October 2016, as now submitted, be agreed as guidance to inform Development Management decisions.

(see also Minute 494)

500 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 6 DECEMBER 2016

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 6 December 2016 be received.

(see also Minutes 501- 503)

501 BRAUGHING CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

RESOLVED – that (A) the responses to the public

consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Braughing Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals be supported;

(B) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Development Management and Council Support, to make any further minor and consequential changes to the document which may be necessary; and

(C) the Braughing Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals be adopted.

(see also Minute 500)

502 EXTERNAL AUDITOR APPOINTMENT

RESOLVED – that East Herts Council “opts in” to the appointing person arrangements made by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the appointment of External Auditors.

(see also Minute 500)

503 RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY - UPDATE

RESOLVED – that (A) the comments of Audit Committee be received; and

(B) the updated Risk Management Strategy, as now submitted, be approved.

(see also Minute 500)

504 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Management Committee meetings held on 9 November and 7 December 2016, be received.

505 HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
MINUTES - 15 NOVEMBER 2016

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 November 2016, be received.

506 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 23
NOVEMBER 2016

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee meeting held on 23 November 2016, be received.

507 CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
MINUTES - 29 NOVEMBER 2016

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 29 November 2016, be received.

508 CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2017/18

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 2017/18.

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, as now submitted for 2017/18, 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 2017/18 shall be 58674.0 and for the parish areas as listed in Table 1 of the report submitted

for 2017/18.

509 NNDR1 - DELEGATION TO OFFICERS

The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services submitted a report seeking approval to delegate authority to Officers to ensure an appropriate approval process is in place for the setting of the National Non-Domestic Rates Budget for 2017/18 and future years. This would enable submission of the National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR1) return to the Government and Hertfordshire County Council by the statutory deadline of 31 January 2017 without the need for additional Council meetings. The Executive Member explained that Officers would not be able to complete the submission until the end of year software release from Capita in late January 2017.

RESOLVED - that (A) authority to approve and submit the annual National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR1) return to Central Government be delegated to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Support Services for 2017/18 and future years; and

(B) the delegation scheme in the Council Constitution be amended to reflect this authorisation and the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make the consequential textual amendments.

The meeting closed at 7.54 pm

Chairman
Date