

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 12 JUNE 2018, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor L Haysey (Chairman/Leader)
Councillors E Buckmaster, J Goodeve,
G Jones, G McAndrew, S Rutland-Barsby
and G Williamson.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors A Alder, R Brunton, M Casey,
M McMullen, P Moore, T Page, M Pope and
R Standley.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Aley	-	Interim Legal Services Manager
Claire Hamilton	-	Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Director
Martin Ibrahim	-	Democratic Services Team Leader
Claire Sime	-	Service Manager (Planning Policy)
Helen Standen	-	Director
Liz Watts	-	Chief Executive

43 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader welcomed Members, Officers and the public
and reminded everyone that the meeting was being

webcast.

44 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 24 April 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

45 UPDATE FROM PERFORMANCE, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Executive received a report from the Performance, Audit and Governance Scrutiny Committee detailing its comments and recommendations on various matters considered at its meeting held on 22 May 2018, including on:

- Appointment of Vice Chairman
- Housing and Health Strategy Update
- Draft Annual Report 2017/18
- Castle Weir Micro Hydro Scheme
- Work Programme 2018/19.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

46 GILSTON AREA CONCEPT FRAMEWORK AND PLANNING PROCESS

The Leader of the Council submitted a report on the Gilston Area Concept Framework document, which sought agreement to use the Concept Framework to inform further work, as now detailed, and act as a benchmark when considering future Development Management decisions in relation to the Gilston Area.

The Leader expressed her appreciation for the amount of hard work and effort put in by the communities of Hunsdon, Gilston and Eastwick and in particular, the members of the neighbourhood plan team. She reiterated the commitment she had given to the local communities of an expectation that high quality design and build will be delivered by the developers.

The Leader referred to the relationship between Gilston and the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town project. She introduced Claire Hamilton, the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Director, who gave a brief overview of her role.

The Leader responded to a number of questions raised by Councillor R Brunton on behalf of the neighbourhood plan team, as follows:

1. Would the Executive note and support the work put in by the community to date and the value it had added to the process so far?

The Leader reiterated her thanks to the local communities and recognised the efforts of the neighbourhood plan team. The Council had established the Gilston steering group, involving the developer, the Council and community representatives. Whilst some of these meetings had been challenging, she believed that much progress had been made, in large part due to the community's willingness to contribute their time and energy to a project which was not one they would have chosen. She expected the critical friend challenge to continue. She also believed that the reallocation of the designated neighbourhood plan area for Hunsdon to exclude the strategic site of Gilston had

been helpful, as it allowed focus on the needs of this area.

2. Given the preparation of neighbourhood plans for the parishes of Eastwick & Gilston and Hunsdon, will these be recognised in the planning process?

The Leader reiterated the importance of these plans as they went through due process and that once “made” by the Council would carry full weight when considering planning applications.

3. Why was the Concept Framework document not being taken forward as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in its own right?

The Leader reminded Members that the Concept Framework had been prepared to demonstrate the deliverability of the Gilston Area allocation to the District Plan Inspector. It had never been intended to be a formal SPD and did not meet the requirements for producing such a document as set out in the regulations. The framework identified high level design principles, potential land uses, infrastructure requirements and phasing, and illustrated the form that development might take. As such, it would be used as a benchmark in reviewing any future proposals that came forward.

The Leader added that prior to the submission of any planning application, further design work through the pre-application engagement process would be required as set out in paragraph 2.18 of the report submitted. In particular, a Development Charter would be prepared for the site setting out specific principles for delivering the site in accordance with the Gilston Area Policy, the Concept

Framework and emerging Garden Town Spatial Vision. It was intended that this Development Charter would be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document, building upon and providing more detailed advice and guidance on the policies in the District Plan once finalised.

4. Would the Executive endorse the changes proposed by the neighbourhood plan team to the December 2017 version of the Concept Framework?

The Leader thanked the neighbourhood plan team for their input and advised that these changes would be considered at this meeting and by Council. If approved, they would be included in the documentation formed for the District Plan and be submitted to Council accompanied by the schedule of changes.

5. Would the Executive endorse an additional request by the neighbourhood plan team for a Land Value Capture Report setting out the benefit for the community in respect of providing infrastructure over and above the statutory requirements and assuring the specific ownership of any community assets?

The Leader agreed that the community should benefit from any land capture value as one way to ensure essential infrastructure was provided. This principle had already been written into the Gilston policy in the District Plan as part of the Garden Town principles. Also included was the principle of long-term ownership of land and stewardship of assets. The Council was looking at stewardship models which would apply to most of the strategic sites allocated within the District Plan, and as far as Gilston was concerned, this would be discussed at the steering group

meetings.

6. Would the Executive endorse the neighbourhood plan team's request for further analysis of the highways changes, particularly in respect of the A414 extension, as a matter of urgency?

The Leader referred to the Council's work with the County Council to ensure developers worked within the framework given in LTP4, as sustainable transport had to be a fundamental issue. She was aware that the developers, Places for People, had already had one consultation with the community and specifically with those affected by the proposed route of the A414 onto a second Stort crossing. These plans were still evolving and needed significant work through the highways authorities at both Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils.

7. Would the Executive recognise the concerns regarding the potential location of a hospital and accept that a further impact of emergency traffic on the local communities be agreed?

The Leader referred to the existing hospital's major estate issues, which constrained its ability to improve. Progress will continue to be hampered until a solution was found for either a rebuild on the existing site or a new site. The Council favoured a new site, and had been proactive in working with the hospital to consider options. A number of sites were currently under consideration by the hospital, across all three districts (East Herts, Epping and Harlow), and part of the analysis being undertaken by Princess Alexandra Hospital would include the impact of all traffic, including emergency traffic. Therefore, this issue was in

hand, and she expected to see the results of the hospital's work later this year.

8. Would the Executive support the need to bring forward the Development Charter with the full engagement of the local community?

The Leader referred to her report now submitted, which identified this need within this top layer of strategic plans. This would be informed by the District Plan, the Concept Framework and the emerging Garden Town Spatial Vision. It would set out principles for delivering the allocation in accordance with the Concept and the Vision. This Charter had yet to be prepared and would be subject to public involvement and consultation. Again, she thanked the neighbourhood plan team for its continued commitment to engage.

9. Given the recent unhelpful response from the Council to a request from the neighbourhood planning team for financial assistance for independent expert support on the complex technical issues arising from the emerging planning process, would the Executive reflect on this position and support the need for the local community to be properly resourced?

The Leader expressed sorrow that the response was considered unhelpful. The Council had committed significant time and resource in supporting the community through the Gilston Steering Group, and the general principle was that the party seeking to run the engagement should be responsible for ensuring it was advertised and presented in a clear way. On certain occasions, it might be appropriate to look at other ways of facilitating

engagement, such as using specialist tools or consultants and the Council would consider these with applicants and discuss this with the community. However, this needed to be based upon achieving specific outcomes to support broad engagement and could not be provided to individual groups as a financial award. This was the Council's position, and she hoped to continue to work constructively with the neighbourhood plan team, building on the relationships which had been created over the last year or so.

Councillor R Brunton thanked the Executive and undertook to feedback these responses to the neighbourhood plan team.

The Leader moved, and Councillor S Rutland-Barsby seconded, each recommendation in turn. After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the recommendations were declared CARRIED.

The Executive supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the Gilston Area Concept Framework, as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'B', and as to be revised in accordance with the schedule of proposed changes, as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'C', together with the report submitted, be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes;

(B) the pre-application engagement process and areas of further design work, as set out within this

report, be endorsed; and

(C) the Concept Framework be used as a benchmark against which future development proposals will be assessed, as set out within the report submitted.

47 DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2017/18

The Executive Member for Finance and Support Services updated the Executive on progress against corporate strategic plan priorities for the previous year. The draft annual plan for 2017/18 showed progress against what had been achieved with detailed comments from Officers. Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report submitted contained updates on all the key actions and Essential Reference Paper 'C' updated all the key performance indicators.

The Performance, Audit and Governance Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 22 May 2018, had considered this report and had recommended it to the Executive.

Councillor G Williamson Jones moved, and Councillor S Rutland-Barsby seconded, a motion that the report be noted. After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

The Executive noted the report.

RESOLVED – that progress against corporate strategic plan priorities over 2017/18 be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm

Chairman

Date