

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 6 JULY 2021, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor L Haysey (Chairman/Leader)
Councillors L Haysey, P Boylan,
E Buckmaster, G Cutting, J Goodeve, J Kaye
and G Williamson.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors P Ruffles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Richard Cassidy	- Chief Executive
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager
George Pavey	- Principal Planning Officer
Helen Standen	- Deputy Chief Executive
Tyron Suddes	- Information Governance and Data Protection Manager
Victoria Wilders	- Legal Services Manager

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Graham McAndrew.

84 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Haysey welcomed Members and Officers back to the Council Chamber. She gave her thanks to staff for their hard work over the last 18 months and acknowledged that residents had experienced difficult times and reassured them that the Council was here to help them wherever they could.

Councillor Haysey said at the last Council meeting, Councillor Ken Crofton was made Chairman for 2021/22 but did not announce what his chosen charity would be. He had asked Councillor Haysey to announce that he had chosen to support Macmillan Nurses charity. Councillor Haysey asked Members to support the Chairman where they could and attend events as they start after restrictions had been lifted.

85 MINUTES – 30 MARCH 2021

Councillor Haysey proposed, and Councillor Williamson seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Leader. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

86 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

87 HERTFORD HYDRO

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented a report on the proposal to cease the Hertford Hydro project. He explained that there had been continual efforts to move the scheme forward but it had become increasingly problematic. There were a range of factors that had meant the payback period for the project had increased from seven to over 50 years and there was still the risk that the Environment Agency would not support a planning application. He said that, with considerable regret, the decision had been made to draw a line under the project and continue with alternative sustainability measures introduced by the Council.

Councillor Ruffles said he was sad to see that the project could not continue as he had been involved from the beginning. He mentioned the distinct shortage of enthusiastic support from the Environment Agency for the project which was disappointing.

Councillor Haysey said that this was not an easy decision to come to and accept and she concurred with Councillor Ruffles that the Environment Agency had not been supportive.

Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Haysey seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Hertford Hydro project should be ceased in light of increasing costs and reduced benefits associated with delivery and the alternative sustainability measures being introduced by the Council.

88 TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

The Leader of the Council presented a report on the Transformation Programme. She said that every Council had to look at how they should be managing their finances in the coming years. The report outlined the key areas of the transformation programme; a flexible workforce, reduced costs of services and a digital by default culture. The Council would need to become more commercial and create efficiencies. The report notes that an update would be brought back to the Executive in the autumn.

Councillor Buckmaster said that it would be important to work together to create something better moving forward. He said that there were many positive elements to flexible working and thought the Council would come out stronger after the Transformation Programme was complete.

Councillor Williamson said that the Council was in unprecedented times and the Council budget shortfall was due to reduced funding and an increased demand

for services. This would be an opportunity to turn a negative into a positive and he supported the vision expressed in the report.

Councillor Haysey proposed and Councillor Goodeve seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the vision for the Transforming East Herts Programme that ‘By 2025 East Herts Council will be a customer focused, financially sustainable, effective organisation with flexible, empowered employees’ be approved;

(B) the Head of Strategic Finance and Property be authorised to allocate such funding as required from the Transformation Reserve to deliver the Transforming East Herts Programme; and

(C) Authorisation is given to officers to commence the ‘discovery’ phase of the programme, with an update to be brought back to Executive in Autumn 2021.

89 ANNUAL PLAN AND REFRESHED CORPORATE PLAN

The Leader of the Council presented the Annual Plan 2020/21 and Refreshed Corporate Plan report. Most Councils had a corporate plan to set out ambition for strategic direction. The East Herts plan was reviewed every year and adapted as required and this year, had

taken into account the responses and priorities following the pandemic. The plan had been reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Leader said that communities had been through a lot in the 18 months and demonstrated great acts of volunteering but also suffered difficult times and the Council was here to help.

Councillor Haysey proposed and Councillor Williamson seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – To recommend to Council that the refreshed Corporate Plan be adopted.

90 DRAFT EQUALITIES, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY FOR EAST HERTS

The Executive Member for Communities submitted a report on the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for East Herts. Councillor Kaye said that there had been engagement with voluntary organisations, a presentation to elected members and the report was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 June 2021. The strategy would champion equality and diversity in a way that would give residents confidence that the Council was taking the issue seriously. Councillor Kaye highlighted dates in the East Herts calendar to be more mindful of such as the International Day of Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition in August and LGBT+ Awareness Month in February. There were many communities the

Council should reach out to and the published results of the Census may show a change in the District's demographics. He thanked Corinne Crosbourne and Ben Wood for their work on the strategy and further engagement would continue over the next few weeks before it is adopted at Council on 28 July 2021.

Councillor Kaye proposed and Councillor Cutting seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – To recommend to Council that the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy be adopted.

91 STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods submitted a report on the Statement of Licensing Policy. As the Licensing Authority, the Council were required to publish and adopt a policy once every five years. The document set out the principles the Council will apply when carrying out licensing function under the Licensing Act 2003. The consultation had engaged with a range of stakeholders, a cross party group of elected members and other agencies such as the police. Councillor Boylan said new additions had been made to the policy such as a new section on pre-application engagement and advice and the introduction of a Sensitive Licensing Area.

Councillor Boylan proposed and Councillor Goodeve

seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – To recommend to Council that the Statement of Licensing Policy 2021-26 be approved.

92 ACCESS TO INFORMATION POLICY

The Executive Member for Corporate Services submitted a report on the Access to Information Policy.

Councillor Cutting proposed and Councillor Buckmaster seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That (A) The draft Access to Information Policy be adopted; and

(B) That the Information Governance and Data Protection Manager be authorised to make any minor amendments that may be required, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

93 DATA RETENTION POLICY

The Executive Member for Corporate Services

submitted a report on the Data Retention Policy.

Councillor Cutting proposed and Councillor Kaye seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That (A) The revised Data Retention Policy and its related schedule are adopted; and

(B) The Information Governance and Data Protection Manager be authorised to make any minor amendments that may be required, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

94 DATA BREACH POLICY

The Executive Member for Corporate Services submitted a report on the Data Breach Policy.

Councillor Cutting proposed and Councillor Boylan seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That (A) the revised Data Breach Policy and its related procedural documents are adopted; and

(B) the Information Governance and Data Protection Manager be authorised to make any

minor amendments that may be required, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

95 ADOPTION OF BENGEO NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA PLAN FOLLOWING REFERENDUM

The Leader thanked George Pavey who had put together the Neighbourhood Plan documents and said that they were documents everyone could be proud of.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth submitted a report on the Adoption of the Bengo Neighbourhood Area Plan. She said the plan respected the local history and heritage and reflected Bengo's future ambitions. She invited Councillor Ruffles to speak as the local ward member.

Councillor Ruffles said that he felt the plan was positive and would make clear to planners and developers what aspirations the area has and what things were cherished. He also thanked George Pavey for his work and had been helpful to the Town Council and the local steering group. Councillor Ruffles mentioned that the referendum had a 50% turnout with 90% of the people voting in support of the plan and this was a tremendous endorsement of the plan.

Councillor Goodeve proposed and Councillor Kaye seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - To recommend to Council that the

Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Development Plan 2019-2033 be formally 'made'.

96 ADOPTION OF SELE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA PLAN
FOLLOWING REFERENDUM

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth submitted a report on the adoption of the Sele Neighbourhood Area Plan. She commented that the plan included an allocation of two substantial developments and set out a vision on the environment and transport.

Councillor Ruffles said that the plans illustrated the positives of the neighbourhood plan process with the contrast in communities and terrains and the plans were adaptable to fit local needs and requirements.

Councillor Goodeve proposed and Councillor Williamson seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - To recommend to Council that the Sele Neighbourhood Area Development Plan 2018-2033 be formally 'made'.

97 ADOPTION OF THUNDRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
FOLLOWING REFERENDUM

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth submitted a report on the adoption of the Thundridge Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Goodeve said that the

plan was for local people and respected the rural character of the area. The plan had been delayed due to the pandemic as a referendum could not be held until restrictions were lifted.

Councillor Goodeve proposed and Councillor Boylan seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - To recommend to Council that the Thundridge Neighbourhood Area Development Plan 2018-2033, be formally 'made'.

98 ADOPTION OF GILSTON AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOLLOWING REFERENDUM

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth submitted a report on the adoption of the Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Goodeve explained that the Gilston plan was the only plan to undergo a hearing with an examiner. The plan also won two 2021 Planning Awards in the 'Plan Making' and 'Editor's Award' categories. The referendum result was 98% in favour of the plan.

Councillor Buckmaster spoke as the local ward member and said that it was a great achievement to win the planning awards. He said there was a challenging public examination and got the revisions required to the plan. The Editor's Award recognised the most exceptional achievements and praised East Herts' exemplar approach to neighbourhood plans in areas of growth.

Councillor Goodeve proposed and Councillor Buckmaster seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - To recommend to Council that the Gilston Neighbourhood Area Development Plan 2020-2033, be formally 'made'.

99 UPDATE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There was no update.

100 UPDATE FROM AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Councillor Pope said the Audit and Governance Committee looked at the data protection policies at their meeting on 27 May 2021.

101 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.45 pm

Chairman
Date

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