

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 1 MARCH 2022, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor K Crofton (Chairman).
Councillors J Kaye, A Alder, T Beckett,
S Bell, R Bolton, M Brady, E Buckmaster,
S Bull, B Crystall, A Curtis, B Deering,
I Devonshire, H Drake, J Dumont,
J Frecknall, M Goldspink, J Goodeve, A Hall,
L Haysey, I Kemp, S Newton, T Page,
M Pope, C Redfern, S Reed, C Rowley,
P Ruffles, S Rutland-Barsby, D Snowdon,
T Stowe, N Symonds, R Townsend, A Ward-
Booth, G Williamson and C Wilson.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Steven Linnett	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager
Helen Standen	- Deputy Chief Executive
Ben Wood	- Head of Communications,

357 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting and those watching on the webcast.

The Chairman said that civic events and visits had continued and were close to pre-pandemic level. He said that the Council was successful with two bids for funding from a covid recovery reconstruction grant and he and the Vice Chairman had visited 18 new businesses that had benefitted from £85,000 of grant money. He said he attended a Holocaust Memorial Day hosted by Councillor Kaye and welcomed distinguished guests and three young speakers from Germany. He said that he also marked the event by the planting of an oak tree to mark the national event '80 Trees for 80 Years'.

The Chairman referred to the tragic events in Ukraine and said he believed that he reflected the views of all Members and the nation in condemning the actions of President Putin. He said that he had asked the Leader to fly the Ukrainian flag over the building to show the council's support.

The Chairman announced that three East Hertfordshire residents had received honours in the Queen's New Year Honours List:

- Dr June Munro Raine CBE was awarded a DBE for

services to Healthcare and the Covid-19 response.

- Jonathan Coggan was awarded a MBE for services to Wheelchair Rugby
- James Penry Roberts was awarded a MBE for services to Wheelchair Rugby.

James Roberts was in attendance at the meeting. He thanked the Council for inviting him to the meeting and he explained the classification procedure in Wheelchair Rugby.

358 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrews, R Buckmaster, Boylan, Burmicz, Cutting, Fernando, Hollebon, Huggins, Jones, McAndrew, McMullen, Stevenson and Wyllie.

359 MINUTES - 15 DECEMBER 2021

Councillor Wilson referred to page 14 and said the "East Stortford crossing" should be the "Eastern Stort crossing". He also referred to page 15 and said that he mentioned residents in Bishop's Stortford, Stansted Abbots and Sawbridgeworth not just those in Bishop's Stortford.

Councillor Haysey proposed and Councillor Rutland-Barsby seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2021, as amended, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RESOLVED - That the Minutes of the meeting

held on 15 December 2021, as amended, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

360 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Snowdon declared a personal and pecuniary interest in three items on the agenda as he worked for the parent company of the company named in Items 8a, 8b and 13. He confirmed he would leave the Chamber for the duration of those items.

361 PETITIONS

A petition was submitted by Sheila Beetles titled 'Woodland North of Hare Street Village – East of B1368 opposite Mill View'. Sheila Beetles was not present at the meeting but the Executive Member for Planning and Growth gave the following response:

"Thank you for raising your concerns with the Council. We understand this is something residents are clearly passionate about. Looking at our records the area described does not qualify for woodland TPO protection. We are not aware of any felling licences granted by the Forestry Commission and would advise residents to report any felling to the Forestry Commission. We will of course do the same as a Council. I'm sorry this is not what you wanted to hear."

362 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Shaun Balding to ask Councillor Geoff Williamson, the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability

"In respect of the reasoning for such a substantial change to the parking permit costs can I ask the following.

The Total Costs RPZ 2021, which appear to have been used to calculate the 2022 values, were £214,818.18

1. In this figure what is the role of Business Support Engagement and a Customer Support Engagement - why are residents having to pay for a Business Support Role?
2. How has 15% of the contractors been measured to make sure its 15%?
3. Why have has the hard copies allowance been used for 2022 budget calculation. We no longer have paperless vouchers.
4. What is the "Income RPZ Related (Permit and Voucher Sales) value made up from?"

Response from Councillor Geoff Williamson

"I would like to begin by thanking Mr Balding for his questions.

On the first question, the Business Support Officers process enquiries through emails, telephone calls, and also online when validating Resident Permit applications and undertaking database administration. The function includes a range of activities that allow the Resident Permit Zone schemes to operate, which in summary include:

- Providing technical assistance relating to Resident Permit applications and Penalty Charge Notice challenges.

- Issuing visitor vouchers, processing, renewals, vehicle dispensations, managing expired permits, taking payments and making refunds.

The Customer Service function duties involve helping customers walking in to the Council's offices. These customers are generally those that prefer not to use the online system. The team process the permit application end to end on behalf of the customer.

An assessment of overall costs took into account the percentage of officers' time in "Business Support" and "Customer Services" when engaged specifically in delivering this service to residents, and these needed to be included as part of the calculations to achieve full cost recovery.

On the second question, in order to effectively manage Resident Permit Zones, Civil Enforcement Officers patrol daily and record this time on their hand held computers. The data was analysed using the council's parking enforcement IT system and the report verified that 15% of the total patrol time in East Herts was undertaken within the Resident Permit Zone boundaries.

On the third questions, visitor vouchers continue to be available in hardcopy form to supplement the virtual type available online. Some residents prefer to purchase hardcopy versions and the vouchers can be purchased in the council's offices. Whilst the residents' Permits themselves are of the virtual type (hardcopies are no longer issued) the visitor vouchers continue to be offered as an option to residents.

Finally, the income relates to the sale of Residents' permits, Residents' visitor vouchers and Carers' permits."

There was no supplementary question.

Robert Beahan to ask Cllr Geoffrey Williamson, the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability

"I understand the need for Residents' Parking Zones to be funded by users to ensure a balanced overall budget for the council.

However, the lack of debate and scrutiny on this matter at both the Audit and Governance Committee and the Executive Committee has been very disappointing.

Having written to all members of both committees, I'm still waiting for anyone to respond to me, so my question remains:

Why has East Herts Council created this situation, whereby residents are facing more than a 70% increase in permit cost for 2022? Should a higher increase not have been administered in previous years rather than allowing this huge hole in the finances to develop?"

Response from Councillor Geoff Williamson

"Previously the Council has subsidised the cost of RPZ permits and only uplifted the fees in line with the council's general fees and charges increases which are applied each year, which has generally been at 2.5%.

Following the approval of the Council's new Fees and Charges Policy in December 2021 which includes the need to recover the full cost of services, the RPZ costs uplift is now proposed for implementation as the previous uplifts have not achieved full cost recovery. As a result arguably holders of RPZ permits have benefitted from this situation over the years, and even at the new levels, the fees are still lower than can be seen elsewhere, for example North Herts where a 12-month permit costs £84."

There was no supplementary question.

Gary Jones to ask Cllr Geoff Williamson, the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability

"As a practising Christian I am very concerned about turning Sunday into a day like any other. For many, it is a day of rest and a family day. Today, the Council budget recommendation is to charge for all East Herts car parks on Sundays. My question is about whether that is a sensible course.

The Council papers describe a calculation based on a proportion of weekly revenue. The additional revenue in the next year is only £70,000. There is no reference to costs in that year. What would be the extra costs associated with Sunday parking charges across East Herts for:

- Additional enforcement officers on Sundays 7.30am to 8pm annually
- Changing all existing Monday to Saturday restrictions to include Sundays, so that 30 minute and 1 hour restrictions and other single yellow line restrictions can operate as on weekdays, and only those with RPZ permits can use RPZ designated spaces on Sunday?"

Response from Councillor Geoff Williamson

“Thank you Mr Jones. I will start by saying that we think it is important that we recognise that there are a range of faiths within East Herts, and also those who have no faith. By introducing Sunday charges we don’t believe that we are treating one religious group more or less favourably than any other.

To answer your specific points:

Firstly, there are actually no extra costs are associated with Civil Enforcement Officers patrolling the car parks on Sundays, as they currently patrol on Sundays already, in line with the existing parking enforcement framework.

Regarding the potential for vehicle transfer from car parks to the public highway, it is not possible for us to calculate the costs involved in changing the on-street parking controls without knowing the number of roads that might be involved, but East Herts officers will work together with Hertfordshire County Council to keep the situation monitored.”

Supplementary question from Gary Jones

Does the Executive Member acknowledge the implications of Sunday charging on residents, churches, workers, businesses and town centres, for example the young family with a Residents Permit, the church volunteer, the weekend worker and the small independent business in the town centre?

Response from Councillor Geoff Williamson

There is a broader point that this allows users of the car parks across the week to be treated equally across the week and those users of car parks on a Sunday have not been singled out specifically.

363 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The Chairman noted that Councillor Crystall had submitted two questions but had agreed to defer them to the May meeting as Councillor McAndrew had sent his apologies.

Councillor Alastair Ward-Booth to ask Councillor Jan Goodeve, Executive Member for Planning and Growth

“Does the Executive Member for Planning and Growth agree with me that it is important that developers on the Stortford Fields estate are held accountable for their failure to adhere to the conditions of their planning application, and what steps will the Council take ensure compliance with their planning conditions?”

Response from Councillor Jan Goodeve

“Thank you Councillor Ward-Booth. You raise a very important question about situations where development is not being carried out in accordance with the conditions attached to the planning permission.

You specifically mention the development at Stortford Fields which is a key part of Bishop’s Stortford North.

The Bishop's Stortford North area benefits from planning permission for up to 2,200 homes and associated infrastructure, and is currently being built out.

I agree that compliance with the conditions attached to the planning permission is important and understand that a number of concerns have been raised by local residents.

I can confirm that the matter of planning compliance and enforcement at Stortford Fields is being progressed as a matter of priority by the Council. Officers, including the Head of Planning and Building Control, have spoken directly to the consortium of housebuilders at Stortfields Fields about the need to ensure that plans and conditions are adhered to. The seriousness of this has also been raised in writing.

Alongside this, a planning enforcement officer has been identified to investigate all alleged breaches. An action plan has been developed in order to help track and resolve specific issues, with the enforcement officer working closely with the planning officer.

This is overseen by the Service Manager for Development Management and now a regular item on the agenda when officers meet with the Consortium.

Addressing breaches or non-compliance without formal action can often be the most appropriate and proportionate approach but in some instances formal action may be considered necessary, and officers will make a judgement based on the extent of the breach

and whether it is expedient to take formal action.

Officers are in contact with local residents and will be reporting progress to the next Steering Group meeting which includes local councillors. In addition, local councillors will continue to be kept informed as progress is made, and matters are hopefully resolved.”

There was no supplementary question.

Councillor Rosemary Bolton to ask Councillor Jan Goodeve, Executive Member for Planning and Growth

“What is this Council doing to support local business owners and help them learn new skills to foster further economic growth in our District?”

Response from Councillor Jan Goodeve

“We continue to administer our highly successful new premises grant scheme for which we have had 42 applications so far. The scheme has had good coverage on local social media and also in the Mercury and Bishop’s Stortford Independent. We have been pleased to support the creation and expansion of so many businesses in the district and it bodes well for our future economic wellbeing that so many people are willing to invest in East Herts. Our approach has been so successful we have been invited by North Herts Council to administer a similar scheme for them which we are now doing, taking a small fee to cover the costs of doing so of course.

The economic development team at East Herts is also

leading a countywide programme of business support using funding from the Health Protection board to support Covid business recovery. This funding will last until June this year and on behalf of nine districts in Herts we are running different business support activities around social media, mental wellbeing and entrepreneurship through a mixture of on-line and in person events.

Some good examples include a “Growth Through Sustainability” event held on the 11th February at the University of Hertfordshire and attended by over 100 people. Some of you may also have come across the Mama Hive group in Hertford and we are collaborating with them to run a series of workshops and networking sessions throughout March, focusing on women in business linked to International Women’s Day.

We also have the Rebel Business School who will be running events on starting and growing your own business, particularly targeted at disadvantaged groups across the county. You may have also seen we also have Jay Blades (from the BBC’s Repair Shop) providing a key note speech and Q&A at an entrepreneurship online event on the 9th March. Once these are completed we will be organising events in April and May on supporting blogging and vlogging skills for business owners amongst other initiatives.

All these events can be found on LinkedIn and Eventbrite so do please have a look if you want more details.

As well as running events and networking sessions we are also helping in more direct ways. A good example is working with Street Food Heroes to get the market back to Hertford and we are using some of the Health Protection Board funding to cover costs of running these events on 31st March, 28th April, 26th May, 30th June, 28th July, 25th August, and 29th September.”

There was no supplementary question.

364 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 8 FEBRUARY 2022

The Leader of the Council welcomed Members back to the Council Chamber at Wallfields and made a statement on the current crisis in Ukraine.

“March 1st is the first day of spring, the beginning of sunshine and renewed hope after the grey and bleak winter. But this is not the case in Ukraine. East Herts Council condemns absolutely these aggressive actions of Putin and our thoughts and support are with the people of Ukraine.

“I doubt if any of us can imagine the horrors of those trying to reach safety and the worry and angst of our residents with relatives or friends in the Ukraine and what they are experiencing. I am the Chair of the East of England LGA and in regular contact with the Regional Strategic Migration Partnership, the SMP, which works with all refugees who come into the East of England region.

“East Herts has welcomed Syrians and we have made

homes available for those who fled Afghanistan and we will do the same for those from Ukraine when we are asked to. I'd also like to raise something which isn't getting a great deal of publicity at the moment and that is the medical issues that those fleeing into Poland and other countries are going to be facing.

"The vaccination rates of those in Ukraine is very low, so not only are they having to suffer major traumas both mentally and physically; I do hope that the rest of the world will make available to Poland and surrounding countries, sufficient vaccine levels such that all those who wish to be vaccinated who are fleeing can have a vaccination - at least one, two and then three. We do not want to see any further suffering over and above what they already have to face.

"But what can we do practically? I request that you make monetary donations to the Red Cross or Save The Children or other reputable charities, not clothing or the like.

"And this afternoon I was speaking with a long term resident who was born in Poland but has chosen to make his home here and raise his children here. His family in Poland live very close to the border with Ukraine and he is obviously very distressed.

"But he described what was going on over there. There were lorries queuing up outside community centres, halls and warehouses waiting to be unloaded with stuff - clothes and halls and warehouses waiting to be unloaded with clothes and everything which has

already been very generously donated. But there are no volunteers to unload them so that is why I suggest that we all donate money to the Red Cross and other charities actually working on the ground.

“He also told me about a vigil of gathering in Stevenage which is taking place on Friday at 5pm in the Town Square, and he said this is very much another way we can show support to the residents and those who are fleeing.

“I’d also like to propose, and I invite opposition leaders to join with me, in writing to the Ukrainian Ambassador in London expressing our support for his people. And if you are happy with that I will ask for a letter to be drafted and we will put all our signatories on that, so thank you very much indeed.”

Councillor Goldspink said that the Liberal Democrat group supported the Leader’s statement. She said their hearts go out to people in Ukraine and she said the group fully support and would be happy to sign the letter to the Ambassador.

Councillor Haysey then presented a report setting out recommendations to the Council made by the Executive at its meeting on 8 February 2022.

364 ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT 2020/21

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 8 February 2022. Councillor Williamson said that the annual report reviewed the

Council's treasury management activities for the last financial year, including the prudential indicators and identified the associated impact on the current year's treasury management strategy.

Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Ruffles 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 Annual Treasury Management Review and Prudential Indicators 2020/21 be approved.

364 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2021/22 MID-YEAR REVIEW

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 8 February 2022. Councillor Williamson said the review covered the first six months of the current year.

Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Ward-Booth 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 Treasury Mid-year Review and Prudential Indicators for the first 6 months of 2021/22 be approved.

364 EXTERNAL AUDIT NATIONAL PROCUREMENT OPT IN

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 8 February 2022. Councillor Williamson said that the current arrangements for the appointment of the council's external auditor through Public Sector Audit Appointments expired next year. Therefore the council had to consider the options available to put in place new arrangements in time to make the appointment of the external auditor for the five financial years beginning April 2023 by 31 December 2022. The alternative would be to undertake a procurement exercise but there was a risk that there would be no suitable firm bidding, or ending up with higher audit fees. The recommendation was therefore to opt-in to the PSAA scheme.

Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Kemp 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 under Regulation 19 of the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015, East Hertfordshire District Council opts into the sector led body for audit appointments provided by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited.

364 CORPORATE PLAN REFRESH 2022/2023

The Leader of the Council presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the

Executive report of 8 February 2022. Councillor Haysey said that the Corporate Plan was the council's guiding principles and its aspirations. The plan was produced every year and the 2022-23 version was focussed on economic recovery. She thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their consideration and comments on the report.

Councillor Haysey proposed that the recommendation in the Executive report be supported. Councillor Curtis seconded the proposal.

Councillor Goldspink said that the Liberal Democrat Group was happy to support the recommendation. She said she was happy to see the inclusion of the promotion and undertaking of tree planting.

Councillor Wilson commented that he hoped the Council could act on its commitment to be sustainable in everything it did. He said that residents still have to put their food waste in residual bins and the bridge over the River Stort had been approved which would reduce wildlife.

Councillor Crystall thanked Officers for their time in producing the Corporate Plan. He said he was delighted to see climate change mentioned. He said an assessment of climate action plans from England's councils had ranked East Herts fairly low. He hoped this would improve through the implementation of the climate change strategy.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting

and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That the refreshed Corporate Plan 2022/23 be approved.

364 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Wellbeing presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 8 February 2022. Councillor Buckmaster said that the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy would operate closely with the council's wider plans in its corporate objectives and its Environmental Sustainability Strategy, Cultural Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Strategy identified cost effective services and inventive solutions to meet the needs of the community whilst maintaining a sustainable income.

Councillor Buckmaster proposed that the recommendation in the Executive report be supported. Councillor Symonds seconded the proposal and said that she was pleased to see that the council's parks would be inclusive for children with disabilities.

Councillor Goldspink said that the Liberal Democrat group were happy to support the recommendation.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy be approved.

364 UPDATED MASTERPLAN FOR THE GOODS YARD

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 8 February 2022. Councillor Goodeve said that the site already benefited from a masterplan and a hybrid planning application however, a combination of events had required a review including the decision from Network Rail to retain the railway sidings which had reduced the developable area.

Councillor Goodeve proposed that the recommendation in the Executive report be supported. Councillor Drake seconded the proposal.

Councillor Goldspink said the Liberal Democrat group were happy to support the recommendation. She said she was pleased to see the mention of step free access at the east side of the station which was important for residents in Bishop's Stortford who could not use the stairs.

Councillor Haysey said that the developers that worked with the council on the masterplan were exemplary and listened and worked with the council's vision. She spoke to developers and said that if they did not engage in a masterplan document, they were unlikely to get planning permission. She said that this item and the next item were two great examples of better developments by working with Officers, Members and residents.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That the Refined Masterplan Document for the Goods Yard, Bishop's Stortford be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.

364 MASTERPLAN FOR LAND TO NORTH WEST OF BUNTINGFORD

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 8 February 2022. She said that the developers on this site had worked positively with the council and would provide a mix of dwelling types. She thanked those who gave their time to participate in the steering group to progress the masterplan document.

Councillor Goodeve proposed and Councillor Bull 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 Land North West of Buntingford Masterplan Document be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.

365 HERTFORD THEATRE CAPITAL PROJECT - UPDATE ON CAPITAL SCHEME BUDGET AND FINANCING

The Executive Member for Wellbeing presented the recommendations in the report. Councillor Buckmaster reminded Members that the principle of the theatre project had already been agreed by Council and the recommendation was a request for additional funding due to inflation. He said that when the Council embarked on the project, they were aware of the Brexit risk but could not foresee the pandemic. The tender responses that were received back were over the original budget.

Councillor Buckmaster said that Members had received a briefing on the revised business case which had been supported by external consultants. He said that the nearest multiplex was nine miles away and younger adults were travelling to other areas so the catchment area for the theatre would be large. He said that residents in Hertford were expecting the Council to deliver to the scheme and had a duty to do so for cultural and wellbeing reasons. He acknowledged that times were hard and the world was in crisis but the council needed to look ahead into the future and make a decision on balance of what was best for the current circumstances. He urged caution that putting the theatre back to its original configuration would have considerable costs.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability said that funding for the project using external borrowing had already been approved by Council and there was no wish to undertake any additional external borrowing with the further interest payments and Minimum Revenue Provision that would ensue.

Councillor Williamson said that the proposal was to use internal borrowing, taking £3 million from the New Homes Bonus Fund which had been steadily accruing from the 25% of New Homes Bonus receipts which had been retained within the Priority Spend Reserve. This reserve currently stands at £8.3 million and it was set up specifically as a fund for projects as decided by Members, so this proposal constitutes a perfectly legitimate use of these funds. Furthermore, given the higher than originally anticipated income that the theatre will produce according to the latest business plan, there is the option to pay back the money into the reserve over time so it can be used again for future priorities. As internal borrowing, there were neither interest payments nor Minimum Revenue Provision to be allowed for.

Councillor Williamson explained that the balance of a maximum £1 million would be taken from contingency sums within the overall Capital Programme. This meant that controls on using these contingencies must be tightened and details on how this would be achieved were included in the report that was considered by the Executive on 8 February 2022.

Councillor Williamson proposed that the two recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Deering seconded the proposal.

Councillor Goldspink expressed her disappointment that the Liberal Democrat group had tried to submit an amendment but were told it was not allowed. She referred to the three options in the report and felt it

was undemocratic that the Council were only being asked to vote on one of those options which happened to be the most expensive. Councillor Goldspink requested a vote on all three of the options in the report.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Council were being asked to vote on the recommendations in the report and would not be able to hold a separate vote on the three options.

Councillor Goldspink said that she was angry that the Council were being denied a democratic vote on the options. She said that the Council had already spent £20 million on the project and were now asking for an additional £4 million. She felt that the less expensive options would be more prudent and less risky for the Council and its residents. She said that the Liberal Democrat group would support the reinstatement of the previous auditorium and just one new cinema screen as they were not satisfied the business case was robust. Councillor Goldspink questioned how the Council knew enough people would come to the theatre and cinema and said it was alarming that the risks of this project were linked to the Old River Lane project and could jeopardise all of the Council's capital projects.

Councillor Redfern said that there was no shame in going back on the decision made previously before the country experienced the consequences of Brexit and the pandemic. She said that not everyone would use the theatre and it was unfair to expect taxpayers to contribute more money to the project which could

create debt to repay over years to come.

Councillor Ruffles said he would be supporting the recommendations unless he heard anything new and compelling not to in the debate. He said that he was confident in the forecast and prediction figures for users and costs. He said he had heard from the lead project officer at the Executive meeting who had answered questions and gave detailed and upbeat answers. Councillor Ruffles said that what was proposed was rare in present times and many councils who had been less prudent would be in no position to contemplate this vision in its largest towns. He said this was something exceptional and something to be proud of.

Councillor Dumont said that they were not saying that the town did not need culture but it was the extent of what was being proposed. He said he was concerned by the rising cost of the project and thought the margins were too tight. He said there was no shame in stepping back and hard decisions had to be made in the current climate. He said culture would not be lost if the smaller option was progressed.

Councillor Bell said that her first memory of Hertford Theatre was when she performed there with her primary school in 2003 and her association with the theatre has grown. She said she fully appreciated the importance of having a cultural centre and welcomed the investment proposed. However, there had been multiple revisions over the years about the funding required and the current climate was not considered when the original project was proposed. Councillor Bell

felt the Council should seriously consider the alternative, smaller option which was already a big improvement.

Councillor Buckmaster responded to the points raised. He said that theatre in its current configuration was inflexible and could only run one performance at a time. He said that external consultants had supported the business case and urged Members to vote for the proposals as recommended in the report.

Councillor Kemp said that costs had escalated due to a universal escalation in materials, not due to bad practice. He said that the option proposed by the Liberal Democrat group had not been costed or modelled. He said it was disappointing that costs had risen beyond the council's control but the alternative proposal was likely to cause serious delays and said he supported the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Curtis said that inflationary pressures had led to the request for additional funding. He said he had concerns over the cost but any further delays would only increase prices further in the current climate.

Councillor Townsend said he supported the theatre and its cultural events. He said his concerns related to the rapidly rising costs and the unknowns in the future. He said residents would need to cut non-essentials in order to eat and heat their homes and they would rely on home entertainment systems instead of going out. He said he disagreed with the current proposal and would be abstaining from the vote.

Councillor Wilson said it was a gamble to predict what would happen to the entertainment industry in thirty years. He said it was astounding to make that gamble and base the budget on these predictions.

Councillor Alder said the Council needed to grasp the opportunity to give its residents hope that the future would be better. She felt the Council should continue with the project with the additional funding and get people through the doors. She said that the Council should have faith in its own decisions.

Councillor Dumont clarified that the Liberal Democrats were not saying they do not want a theatre but they were questioning the scale of it.

Councillor Buckmaster said he understood the reservations but a majority of the theatre would be available for live performances which had been going on for thousands of years. He said Hertford Theatre had traditionally offered good value for money and would be a good local alternative to the West End.

Councillor Deering said the Council had committed to the project and the £3 million from the New Homes Bonus was a fund provided by central government and was not attributable to council tax payers. He said that the Council had employed a raft of external experts and the last thing the Council should be doing was to delay and slow the project down. He felt the Council should show leadership and deliver the project for the benefit of its residents.

Councillor Williamson said the theatre was subsidised

by a significant degree and the proposed project would turn a profit to support council services. He felt it was the right thing to do and was comfortable with the funding arrangements as the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability.

After being requested by six Members of the Liberal Democrat group, a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations in the report, the result being:

FOR

Councillors Alder, Bolton, Buckmaster, Bull, Crystall, Curtis, Deering, Devonshire, Drake, Frecknall, Goodeve, Haysey, Kaye, Kemp, Newton, Page, Pope, Reed, Rowley, Ruffles, Rutland-Barsby, Snowdon, Stowe, Symonds, Ward-Booth, Williamson

AGAINST

Councillors Dumont, Goldspink, Wilson

ABSTAIN

Councillors Beckett, Bell, Brady, Crofton, Redfern, Townsend

For: 26

Against: 3

Abstain: 6

RESOLVED - That (A) the increase in the Hertford Theatre capital scheme budget by £4 million for the delivery of the Hertford Theatre

Growth and Legacy Project, of which £3 million will be funded Earmarked Reserves, and up to £1million in additional borrowing from the capital programme contingency be approved.

(B) Any surplus receipts over and above those originally forecast and built in to the Medium Term Financial Plan be used to repay the funding from Earmarked Reserves and to contribute to future savings requirements within the Medium Term Financial Plan, those amounts to be determined by the prevailing need to make savings and the priorities of Council at the time be approved.

366 BUDGET 2022/23 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022-25

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the recommendations in the Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-25 report. Councillor Williamson ran through the key highlights of the report as follows:

- Budgets have been set around an increasingly challenging background, with diminishing funding from government and many uncertainties about future funding, limited means by which the Council can now raise its own revenue, and more recently the position has been exacerbated by the higher costs and reduced income brought about by Covid.
- The Financial Sustainability Strategy that focused on income from commercial property

development was voided after the Treasury announcement in November 2020 which effectively stopped access to the borrowing that would have been required.

- Within the 2022 planned savings, areas where the council could improve its income position were looked at, including £444k for increasing car parking revenue through a general uplift in tariffs, and introducing charges for evenings and Sundays.
- For a period of several years this Council successively either frozen, reduced or introduced only limited increases. The Government have expected local authorities to raise their own funds so need to increase Council Tax by the maximum allowed (without a referendum), which was £5 per year on a Band D property.
- Despite these plans, still not enough to close the gap in the budget. The Leadership Team were able to identify a further £238k of operational savings, making a total reduction in internal operational costs of £1m across this last year and the next. However, this still leaves a gap of £481k.

Councillor Williamson ran through the main savings proposals:

- The Fees and Charges Policy seeks to reclaim the full cost of provision where a service is non-statutory. Residents Parking Zones is one service where the revenue received has dropped significantly behind the actual cost of provision and by raising the price to meet the cost removes £100k of subsidy to this service.

- Sunday parking charges would be treated like the other days of the week. This would produce a further £70k of revenue.
- The Community Grants budget would be reduced by 25%. However there was no longer a split between revenue and capital grant pots so more of the budget could be used to support revenue funding for projects. A further £8k will be removed from the budget and replaced from the East Herts Lottery Community Chest Fund.
- The Citizens Advice Service would get a reduction in funding from the current £152k by £13k next year then £10k for each of the following two years. The Council would continue make very pro-active efforts to find external funding sources for the CAB, along with other ways we already support the CAB financially outside of our own funding.

Councillor Williamson said that the proposals in the report have identified sufficient savings to bridge the gap, enabling a balanced budget. The Medium Term Financial Plan showed that the Council's total net expenditure for the next year is £11.526m.

Councillor Williamson said that whilst the proposals presented a balance budget, there would need to be further substantial savings in the future. The Council's Transformation Programme would be covering areas such as resourcing, procurement, income streams, and operational needs. It would enable the Council to ensure resources were focussed on the corporate plan priorities.

Councillor Williamson said that the Department of

Levelling Up, Housing and Communities announced a roll-forward of funding which will provide the Council with an unexpected £1.4 million of New Homes Bonus money. He said that it was proposed to put it straight into the reserves in order to improve financial resilience.

Councillor Williamson said the total amount of capital investment across the district next year would be £27.6 million, of which the main projects represent £21.7m.

Councillor Williamson proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported.
Councillor Pope seconded the proposal.

Councillor Goldspink proposed an amendment to Recommendation C. She proposed the following:

- 1) “In the section on Revenue Budget Proposed Savings and Charges for Residents’ Parking Zones (RPZs), We propose that the new charges should be £60 for the first permit and £110 for the second one, whilst a Full Consultation is held with all the residents who presently live in these Zones, to ask them if they would consent to a less-costly scheme –(an RPZ-lite) which could possibly be brought in in 2 years’ time when the present contract ends.

We understand the wish to recover the full cost of the services which the Council runs, but this parking Zone Scheme is enormously expensive and it has been heavily subsidised for many years. We think that very few people knew the size of the

subsidy, and the dramatic increase in proposed charges has come as a huge shock. Residents are being asked to pay £72 when they previously paid only £41, and £144 instead of £82. These increases are way above the rate of inflation and we consider them to be unreasonable. So, we are proposing smaller increases, which would still reduce the Council's subsidy, but by a smaller amount. We propose that the charges should be £60 and £110. The deficit to the Council's Revenue would be funded from general reserves.

Therefore the Budget be amended as follows:

- a) Appendix A MTFP be deleted and replaced with an amended Appendix A attached as Annex 1 to this amendment;
- b) Appendix B Savings Proposals, the page on RPZ permit costs be deleted and replaced with the pages attached as Annex 2 to this amendment; and
- c) Appendix G Fees and Charges, the page on parking be deleted and replaced with the page attached as Annex 3 to this amendment."

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Wilson.

Councillor Goldspink said that she understood the wish to recover the full cost of services but the Residents Parking Zone (RPZ) scheme was enormously expensive as it had been heavily subsidised but residents were not aware of this. She said the increases were way above inflation and considered them to be unreasonable. Councillor Goldspink said

that the deficit to the revenue would be funded through the general reserves and she would like to see a consultation happen with all residents in the RPZs to gauge their opinion on a modified scheme. This would cost £21k again funded by general reserves.

Councillor Williamson said that the RPZs were enormously expensive and had benefitted from a heavy subsidy and therefore the fees had to be adjusted. He said if the Council maintained the subsidy and did not recover the full cost; it would negate the Fees and Charges Policy that was approved by Council in December 2021.

Councillor Wilson felt it was unconscionable to raise the RPZ fee by 75%. He said residents were already suffering from a rise in other household bills and the Conservative administration was proposing to deliver a further blow to finances. He said there had been a failure to introduce new cycling routes meaning residents had to use a car. Councillor Wilson believed that a smaller increase in fees and a revised scheme would be a better proposal. He queried if the Council would be open to a legal challenge as the proposed increase had not been out to consultation yet.

Councillor Goldspink closed the debate by acknowledging that the scheme had been highly subsidised but residents were not aware of the real cost and had not been given a choice in the matter. She said she had received many distressed emails and phone calls from residents about the increase and said if the Council approved this amendment, it would show the council cared.

A recorded vote was held on the amendment proposed by Councillor Goldspink. The result was as follows:

FOR

Councillors Beckett, Bell, Brady, Crystall, Dumont, Frecknall, Goldspink, Redfern, Townsend, Wilson

AGAINST

Councillors Alder, Bolton, Buckmaster, Bull, Curtis, Deering, Devonshire, Drake, Goodeve, Haysey, Kaye, Kemp, Newton, Page, Pope, Reed, Rowley, Ruffles, Rutland-Barsby, Snowdon, Stowe, Symonds, Ward-Booth, Williamson

ABSTAIN

Councillor Crofton

For: 10

Against: 24

Abstain: 1

The motion to amend the recommendation was LOST.

Councillor Dumont then proposed an amendment. He proposed the following:

“We are acutely aware that many people in East Herts are being hit very hard by the rising cost of living at the moment, and many are really struggling to pay their bills. They are worried for themselves and for their children. By using part of the unexpected New Homes Bonus the Council would reduce the tax burden a little and would demonstrate its care for its residents. We

therefore propose the following amendment:

- a. That the New homes Bonus transfer to reserves be reduced by £156,670;
- b. That £156,670 be transferred from the General Fund to the Collection Fund to create a discretionary council tax discount under section 13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and that discount to be proportionate to a maximum of £2.50 at Band D to be applied only to a liability balance, i.e. credits will not be applied to exempt properties, properties in receipt of 100% Council Tax Support or where other discounts have reduced the liability by 100%;;
- c. That Council notes this will reduce the increase in the East Herts Council Tax **payable** by residents by 50% but will protect resources going forward as the full £5 increase will have been set for Council Tax Referendum purposes.
- d. Appendix A MTFP be deleted and replaced with an amended Appendix A attached as Annex 4 to this amendment
- e. Appendix D Reserves be deleted and replaced with an amended Appendix D attached as Annex 5 to this amendment.
- f. Consequent on this amendment passing then Item 11 Council Tax Resolution be amended as shown in yellow on the Council tax Resolution attached as Annex 6 to this amendment."

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Townsend.

Councillor Dumont thanked the Chief Financial Officer for his additional work on the amendment. He said

that he was proposing that £156,670 of the unexpected New Homes Bonus windfall be transferred to the general fund to create a discretionary council tax discount of £2.50. Councillor Dumont said that this would soften the blow of the rising cost of living and the proposal would not affect the Council's ability to raise Council Tax in the future.

Councillor Kemp said all Members wanted to help residents and sympathise with them when facing an increased cost of living. However, he said that the £2.50 discount would equate to 20 pence a week and queried how much this would help set against £156k disappearing out of reserves which could be of more use in the future.

Councillor Williamson recognised that some residents faced financial hardship and the council had measures in place to assist them. He said that the council's Council Tax support scheme was the most generous in Hertfordshire. He said that if a £2.50 discount was applied for the coming year, residents could face an increase of £7.50 the following to make up the shortfall in funding. Councillor Williamson said that the council had reduced its dependence on the New Homes Bonus and said it would be a mistake to go back.

Councillor Ward-Booth referred to the £150 Council Tax discount funded by the Chancellor's £9 billion support package. He said this was a contrast to just the £2.50 discount offered by the Liberal Democrats.

Councillor Curtis said that the discount would not have any practical effect on residents but it would be

complicated to deliver and administer.

Councillor Dumont thanked the Council for considering the amendment and said it would have been a gesture to residents.

A recorded vote was held on the amendment proposed by Councillor Dumont. The result was as follows:

FOR

Councillors Beckett, Bell, Dumont, Goldspink, Townsend, Wilson

AGAINST

Councillors Alder, Bolton, Buckmaster, Bull, Curtis, Deering, Devonshire, Drake, Goodeve, Haysey, Kaye, Kemp, Newton, Page, Pope, Reed, Rowley, Ruffles, Rutland-Barsby, Snowdon, Stowe, Symonds, Ward-Booth, Williamson

ABSTAIN

Councillors Brady, Crofton, Crystall, Frecknall, Redfern

For: 6

Against: 24

Abstain: 5

The motion to amend the recommendation was LOST.

Councillor Snowdon then proposed an amendment to the recommendations. He proposed the following:

“Insert into Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan as recommendation F.

That Council agrees the following:

This Council notes:

- That at the 15th December 2021 Full Council meeting, Council backed the Fees and Charges policy which gave rise to the new RPZ policy
- That as a general principle non-statutory services should be provided on a full cost recovery basis.

This council believes:

- That costs for non-statutory services should be as low as possible
- That those who don't use non-statutory services should not be asked to cross-subsidise those that do
- The charging policy provides for full cost recovery. This council will endeavour to reduce the cost base of its services, so that full cost recovery charges are as low as possible
- That full cost recovery charges can go down in future years as well as up

This council resolves:

- That the principle of the Fees and Charging policy is that any future reductions in the cost base (or increases in the revenue from the scheme) will

feed through to lower RPZ permit costs

- To ask the Audit and Governance Committee to investigate the cost base of the RPZ scheme
- To invite resident groups in RPZ scheme areas who no longer wish to have an RPZ to approach the council to look at further options."

Councillor Ward-Booth seconded the amendment.

Councillor Snowdon said that Members have received a lot of correspondence in relation to the RPZs. He said the Council approved a Fees and Charges policy in December 2021 to recover the full cost of services; this could either go up or go down. The amendment proposed that the Audit and Governance Committee investigate the cost base of the service to ensure it provided the best value for money.

Councillor Haysey thanked Councillor Snowdon for the amendment and thought it was a sensible approach to look at services moving forward.

Councillor Wilson welcomed the idea about talking to residents about the RPZs but felt it was too late to do this. He revisited his earlier question about there being no consultation undertaken and questioned whether any future consultation had been pre-empted.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the proposals in front of Members were within the legislation and a decision on the budget would not pre-determine future decisions.

A recorded vote was held on the amendment

proposed by Councillor Snowdon. The result was as follows:

FOR

Councillors Alder, Bolton, Buckmaster, Bull, Curtis, Deering, Devonshire, Drake, Goodeve, Haysey, Kaye, Kemp, Newton, Page, Pope, Reed, Rowley, Ruffles, Rutland-Barsby, Snowdon, Stowe, Symonds, Ward-Booth, Williamson

AGAINST

None

ABSTAIN

Councillors Beckett, Bell, Brady, Crofton, Crystall, Dumont, Frecknall, Goldspink, Redfern, Townsend, Wilson

For: 24

Against: 0

Abstain: 11

The motion to amend the recommendation was CARRIED and become part of the substantive recommendations.

A recorded vote was then held on the substantive recommendations and the result was as follows:

FOR

Councillors Alder, Bolton, Buckmaster, Bull, Curtis,

Deering, Devonshire, Drake, Goodeve, Haysey, Kaye, Kemp, Newton, Page, Pope, Reed, Rowley, Ruffles, Rutland-Barsby, Snowdon, Stowe, Symonds, Ward-Booth, Williamson

AGAINST

Councillors Beckett, Bell, Brady, Crystall, Dumont, Frecknall, Goldspink, Redfern, Townsend, Wilson

ABSTAIN

Councillor Crofton

For: 24

Against: 10

Abstain: 1

RESOLVED – That (A) the East Herts share of the Council Tax for a Band D property in 2022/23 be set at £184.09, an increase of £5, the maximum permitted within the Council Tax Referendum principles;

(B) The Budget 2022/23 and the Medium Term Financial Plan 2022 – 2027 as shown In Appendix A be approved;

(C) The savings plans summarised in Appendix B be approved for implementation and that Council require that compensating savings, delivered to the same timescales, have to be put in place and reported to the next Council meeting should the Executive decide that any

savings proposals should not proceed, or are reduced by 10% or more;

(D) The capital programme set out in Appendix C be approved;

(E) The schedule of charges for 2021/22 set out in Appendix G, with an average increase of 5%, be approved; and

(F) This Council notes:

- That at the 15th December 2021 Full Council meeting, Council backed the Fees and Charges policy which gave rise to the new RPZ policy
- That as a general principle non-statutory services should be provided on a full cost recovery basis.

This council believes:

- That costs for non-statutory services should be as low as possible
- That those who don't use non-statutory services should not be asked to cross-subsidise those that do
- The charging policy provides for full cost recovery. This council will endeavour to reduce the cost base of its services, so that full cost recovery charges are as low as possible
- That full cost recovery charges can go down in future years as well as up

This council resolves:

- That the principle of the Fees and Charging policy is that any future reductions in the cost base (or increases in the revenue from the scheme) will feed through to lower RPZ permit costs
- To ask the Audit and Governance Committee to investigate the cost base of the RPZ scheme
- To invite resident groups in RPZ scheme areas who no longer wish to have an RPZ to approach the council to look at further options.

Councillor Ward-Booth proposed and Councillor Curtis seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting after Item 15, Pay Policy Statement. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the meeting be adjourned after Item 15, Pay Policy Statement.

367 COUNCIL TAX SETTING

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the recommendations in the report. Councillor Williamson proposed a motion to support the recommendations, which required a recorded vote. This was seconded by Councillor Snowdon.

A recorded vote was taken, the result being:

FOR

Councillors Alder, Beckett, Bell, Bolton, Brady, Buckmaster, Bull, Crystall, Curtis, Deering, Devonshire, Dumont, Frecknall, Goodeve, Haysey, Kaye, Kemp, Page, Pope, Redfern, Reed, Rowley, Ruffles, Rutland-Barsby, Snowdon, Stowe, Symonds, Ward-Booth, Williamson

AGAINST

None

Abstain

Councillors Crofton, Goldspink, Townsend, Wilson

For: 29

Against: 0

Abstain: 4

RESOLVED – that (A) the Council Tax resolution, as submitted, be approved;

(B) the local precepts as set out at Appendix 'A' be noted; and

(C) that the Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Police Authority precepts be noted.

368 CAPITAL STRATEGY AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY 2022/23

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability

presented the recommendations in the Capital Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy report. Councillor Williamson said that the need for the Council to produce an annual Capital Strategy was introduced following strengthening of government and Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance.

Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Ward-Booth seconded a motion supporting the recommendation. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That the Capital Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision policy 2022/23 onwards be approved.

369 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2022/23

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the recommendation in the Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategy report. Councillor Williamson said that the strategy was an important document that helped the Council deliver on its programmes and provided a basis to manage the funds to cover general expenditure. He said that good treasury management was vital to the effective functioning of the Council and all its services. The Council was required to provide three treasury reports at stages during each year of which this was the first, being the forward-looking report for the next financial year.

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

RESOLVED – That the Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategy 2022/23 and Prudential Indicators be approved.

370 MILLSTREAM 30 YEAR BUSINESS PLAN AND COUNCIL CASHFLOWS

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the recommendations in the Millstream 30 Year Business Plan and Council Cashflows report. Councillor Williamson said that Millstream had been trading for four years and as shareholder, it would have been the council's intention to look ahead at the company's plans for further growth, increasing its stock which it would fund through extending its borrowing from the Council, and thereby increasing the revenue flow to the Council but this was no longer possible. Nonetheless, the company was still required to update its Business Plan each year and the Council as the company shareholder were still required to approve it.

Jonathan Geall, Director of Millstream Property Investments Ltd, said that the business plan was always on the same agenda as the Council's budget proposals given that income derived from Millstream's activities provided an important revenue stream for the Council. He said that over the last 12 to 18 months,

there have been a number of significant changes to how the council can fund capital expenditure and Millstream's directors have worked closely with the council's Head of Strategic Finance and Property to assess how these various changes impact on how the council could fund Millstream and thus how the company operates.

The Director of Millstream Property Investments Ltd said that the model that the council and Millstream had used to date to acquire 17 properties and managed a further property in the council's ownership, was no longer viable. This was because the council would now need to borrow money to lend to the company and it would require income from the company to cover the interest due on all monies lent plus the minimum revenue provision the council would need to make. The requirement to make a minimum revenue provision each year was only introduced by CIPFA after Millstream had been trading for a few years. Unfortunately, this unforeseen change to the accounting rules means that the established funding model for Millstream no longer works.

The directors together with the council's Head of Strategic Finance and Property have explored a series of other funding models, as discussed in section four of the report; however none of these are viable. Thus, the revised business plan proposed that Millstream would not acquire or develop any new properties but continue to rent its existing portfolio in the private rental market.

Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Stowe

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

RESOLVED – That the Millstream Property Investment Ltd’s 2022/23 30 Year Business Plan be approved.

371 PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The Chairman of the Human Resources Committee, Councillor Bolton, presented the recommendation in the report.

Councillor Bolton proposed and Councillor Bull seconded a motion supporting the recommendation. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23 be approved.

372 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S GRANT PRIORITIES

The meeting was adjourned after Item 15.

373 PLATINUM JUBILEE

The meeting was adjourned after Item 15.

374 NO CONFIDENCE IN PRIME MINISTER

The meeting was adjourned after Item 15.

The meeting closed at 10.40 pm

Chairman
Date

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