

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 27 JULY 2022, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor I Devonshire (Chairman).
Councillors A Alder, D Andrews, R Bolton,
P Boylan, M Brady, S Bull, J Burmicz,
K Crofton, B Crystall, A Curtis, G Cutting,
H Drake, J Dumont, R Fernando, J Frecknall,
M Goldspink, J Goodeve, L Haysey,
A Huggins, J Jones, J Kaye, I Kemp,
G McAndrew, S Newton, M Pope,
C Redfern, S Reed, P Ruffles, S Rutland-
Barsby, D Snowdon, M Stevenson, T Stowe,
N Symonds, R Townsend, A Ward-Booth,
G Williamson, C Wilson and J Wyllie.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Richard Cassidy	- Chief Executive
James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager
Helen Standen	- Deputy Chief Executive

109 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded Members that the meeting was being webcast online.

The Chairman announced that four East Herts residents had been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2022 and he read out a list of their achievements for each recipient:

- Nick de Bois – Awarded a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for services from Tourism and to the Economy
- Harry Theochari – Awarded an Officer to the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to the Maritime Sector
- Verity Naylor – Awarded a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to Paralympic Sport
- Diane George – Awarded a Medal of the Order of the British Empire (BEM) for services to the community in Buntingford, Hertfordshire.

Nick de Bois and Harry Theochari were in attendance and thanked the Council for recognising their achievements.

The Chairman outlined the civic events he had recently attended, including summer art and music festivals, an ABBA tribute night, events ran by Hertfordshire County Council and a visit to Urbaser's depot in Buntingford to

see the great work of the refuse teams.

110 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader congratulated the Chairman on his recent activities and thanked the recipients of the Queen's birthday honours.

The Leader thanked the refuse teams for their astounding job collecting waste during the heatwave. She also gave her thanks to the staff who had continued to provide a service in the heat.

111 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Beckett, Bell, E Buckmaster, R Buckmaster, Deering, Hall, Hollebon, McMullen, Page and Rowley.

112 MINUTES - 11 MAY 2022

Councillor Haysey proposed, and Councillor Williamson seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2022 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

113 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

114 PETITIONS

There were no petitions received.

115 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question 1

James Clark to ask Councillor Jan Goodeve, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Can the Executive Member for Planning and Growth update residents on plans to bring the Caxton Hill Industrial Estate back into employment use?

Response from Councillor Jan Goodeve

“The previous owners of Caxton Hill Industrial Estate proposed 200 apartments, 5 storeys high on a hill as part of a mixed use development claiming that the site was not viable without the residential element. Castle Ward members found this wholly unacceptable as did community groups and we resisted this. EHDC commissioned its own study to challenge the developer’s viability claims. Ownership of the site subsequently changed, Caxton Capital Partners (backed by Blackrock) have been meeting with local elected members and it is encouraging to hear that they propose that the site will be for 100% employment use in accordance with the district plan. The developer is now seeking PPA and in due course a planning application will be submitted to East Herts

District Council and published for public consultation in the usual way.”

Supplementary question from James Clark

What steps will the Council take to ensure that the developer builds as sustainably as possible?

Response from Councillor Jan Goodeve

“We want our towns to be sustainable in their own right; places where residents can obtain goods and services and people can go to work locally and not to become dormitory towns.

On questioning we have been pleased to learn that the developer is proposing to bring forward:

- a BREEAM Excellent standard of building sustainably
- will include both EV charging points and solar panels on site; and that
- demolished building materials will be used onsite where possible

Caxton Capital Partners have also met with Hertford Town Council, Hertford Civic Society and have arranged to meet with the LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) as part of their pre application community consultation.

I’d like to thank Mr Clark for his questions.”

Question 2

Jill Goldsmith to ask Councillor Geoff Williamson, the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability

Have the Development Agreement and Development Management Agreement with Cityheart now been signed and when will they be disclosed on the Contracts Register? Why has the Contracts Register not been updated in June?

Response from Councillor Geoff Williamson

“Thank you for the question.

The Development Agreement with Cityheart has not yet been signed which is why it is not referenced in the Contracts Register. I know early last year I stated that we hoped it wouldn't be too long before we signed it but there have been a few issues which needed to be resolved with regards to both parties sharing the risk and elements to work through regarding the land assembly and the Waitrose car park. We are now at the closing stages and anticipate signing the Development Agreement in a matter of weeks as opposed to months.

In terms of the Contracts Register, this should be updated every financial quarter so that information as at the end of June should be available on the website. I have spoken to Officers who have made it a priority to have the information published. Once the Development Agreement has been signed, the contract with Cityheart will be referenced on the register and available for public viewing by the end of September.”

Supplementary question from Jill Goldsmith

Why was it left until September after the consultation on the Supplementary Planning Document to release any information to residents on the nature of the contract between the Council and Cityheart?

Response from Councillor Geoff Williamson

He said that the Development Agreement was due to be signed imminently and the next version of the Contracts Register would be published on the website in September. The Old River Lane Board meeting minutes were on record and if the agreement was signed before September, the minutes would record this.

116 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Question 1

Councillor Andrew Huggins to ask Councillor Jonathan Kaye, Executive Member for Communities

As East Herts' champion for the Armed Forces I joined the Deputy Chairman and others, at County Hall to mark Armed Forces Day, which is a time to celebrate the incredible commitment and sacrifices made by our Armed Forces personnel and their families. Does the Executive Member for Communities agree with me that we in local government have a duty to these extraordinary people to uphold the Covenant and the newly enshrined Armed Forces Bill 2021?

Response from Councillor Jonathan Kaye

"I would like to thank Councillor Huggins for his question.

As the Executive Member for Communities, I was particularly pleased to see observation of the Armed Forces Covenant enshrined into law by the Armed Forces Act which gained Royal Assent in December last year. That said, however, the council has already voluntarily signed up to the covenant, having done so shortly after its introduction by the Armed Forces Act 2011.

The main aspect of the covenant that relates to a district council is the requirement to afford Forces personnel and their families additional priority for social housing, when they have a need and that need is urgent. I feel sure members will be pleased to know that our housing policies fully incorporate this.

Although the number of Forces personnel approaching us are small, the Housing team works hard to assist them into suitable housing. Last year, the family of someone the Housing team awarded higher priority because of their service within the previous five years was accommodated far more quickly than they would have been otherwise, just as the covenant would expect. The Housing team is currently working with two former Armed Forces personnel.

The council's commitment is further underlined by our voluntary participation in the national Defence Employer Recognition Scheme. While the scheme has been designed primarily to recognise *private sector*

support, we feel its aim to publicly demonstrate an organisation's support for the Armed Forces community is closely aligned with our outlook and so we have already pledged our support at the bronze award level.

We don't wish to stop there, however, and so tonight I would like to invite Cllr Huggins to work with myself and officers in applying for a silver award under the scheme as a means of emphasising our continued commitment to assisting the current and former Forces personnel in our district."

Supplementary question from Councillor Andrew Huggins

Councillor Huggins accepted the invitation from Councillor Kaye and said he would be honoured to be involved in obtaining the silver award. He said that the Armed Forces Bill also put an emphasis on councils to have due regard to the Armed Forces community when implementing any policy. He asked if this was the case at East Herts?

Response from Councillor Jonathan Kaye

Councillor Kaye said this was the case and within a district council, housing tended to be the key area. He said this was relevant across all departments of the council.

Question 2

Councillor Chris Wilson to ask Councillor Graham

McAndrew, the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability

This council has committed to be sustainable in all that we do. This, of course, includes the promotion of sustainable transport and modal shift. Can Cllr McAndrew detail why there has been such an extensive delay to the long-proposed and long-delayed cycle route from Rye Street through to Grange Paddocks, and what East Herts role has been in this delay. Can he commit to a date when this long-awaited cycle path will be constructed and in place as a much-needed alternative to the use of the car for existing and new residents of Bishop's Stortford and surrounding areas?

The Chairman responded to Councillor Wilson and said that the Executive would not be able to answer the question as the project was being led by Hertfordshire County Council and politely and respectfully asked Councillor Wilson to approach his county councillor.

Question 3

Councillor Norma Symonds to ask Councillor Jonathan Kaye, the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability

The general cost of living has seen a large rise in recent times brought on by a number of circumstances, and inflation is now moving up from the low level that had been maintained for many years.

Can the Executive Member please explain what the

council is doing to help our residents who are struggling to pay their bills?

Response from Councillor Kaye

“In conjunction with the County Council and other councils in Hertfordshire we are signposting residents on our website and through social media to where they can get help, advice and support. This information is broken down into different demographic groups such as older people, families with young children and those on lower incomes. This information includes the government’s recently launched “Help for Households” scheme which offers assistance at the checkout with retailers such as Amazon, Asda and Morrisons. Members may recall earlier in the year when asked a similar question I mentioned the money we had received via the Department for Work and Pensions on the Household Support Fund. We received £30,000 for food support and a further £40,000 for energy support. Funds were administered via the CVS and went into supporting food banks and fuel poverty.

This was mostly a targeted approach by focusing on people in receipt of discretionary housing payments instead of inviting applications from all. In the initial reporting period, an estimated 1,835 residents were supported via foodbanks and 42 residents accessed fuel support. Revised, final numbers for the first round of support are expected shortly. We expect to see both figures increase.

We are also pleased to announce there will be another round of this funding with £30,000 for food support

and £20,000 for energy support. We are working with the CVS to ensure this money reaches those most in need and will be collaborating with housing associations regarding the fuel support funding.”

There was no supplementary question.

117 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 12 JULY 2022

The Leader presented a report setting out recommendations to the Council made by the Executive at its meeting on 12 July 2022.

118 ANNUAL CORPORATE PLAN REPORT 2021/22

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 12 July 2022, regarding the Annual Corporate Plan for 2021/22.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability said the annual report covered progress on achievements in relation to the Corporate ‘SEED’ Priorities and there were 72 separate corporate actions within the report. A short video highlighting the successes of the council was shown to the meeting.

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

Councillor Goldspink confirmed that the Liberal Democrat Group were happy to support the recommendation.

Councillor Redfern referred to the 152 affordable homes delivered in 2021-22 which was down from 326 in 2020-21. She said the report highlighted the positives but the level of customer satisfaction had also dropped and the council was not doing well in all areas.

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

RESOLVED - That the Annual Report 2021/22 be approved.

119 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 12 July 2022, regarding the Climate Change Strategy.

Councillor McAndrew said that the strategy clearly and succinctly laid out the council's vision and approach and it made clear what changes needed to be implemented between now and 2030 to reach carbon neutrality. He said that the strategy went out to consultation and received 35 responses. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered the strategy and made suggested changes. He thanked Officers and contributors who were involved in preparing the strategy.

Councillor McAndrew proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. Councillor Pope seconded the proposal.

Councillor Wilson said that the strategy was great and was glad it had been put together but said there was still a lot of work to do and did not feel the council was doing everything it could do. He said that the council aimed to be sustainable in all that it did yet when it came to difficult decisions like charging for green waste or building a bridge that destroys wildlife the council needed to start making sustainable choices. He said when the next District Plan was developed; there should be emphasis on more sustainable building standards.

Councillor Frecknall said he was pleased to see that comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been incorporated into the report. He said there was an opportunity for the District Plan review to be included as this would have a huge impact on sustainability targets.

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

RESOLVED - That the East Herts Climate Change Strategy 2022-2026 be approved.

120 EAST HERTS COUNCIL GYPSY AND TRAVELLER
ACCOMMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT (GTANA) MAY
2022

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 12 July 2022, regarding the East Herts Council Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA).

Councillor Goodeve said that in accordance with national legislation and policy, the Council had a duty to plan for a mix of housing that met the needs of the district's communities, such as provision for older people, affordable housing and accommodation for Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Show People. The GTANA will replace the now outdated study published in 2016; and strengthen the Council's position in relation to being able to demonstrate identified accommodation needs; assess its 5-year land supply position; and, inform discussions with applicants of the relevant key strategic sites. It will influence future policy outcomes; and be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

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

Councillor Goldspink said that she welcomed the report and thought it was an excellent piece of work. She said the Gypsy and Traveller Community were a valuable part of the community and should be treated fairly and equally.

Councillor Crofton said he recognised the important of providing sites for the Gypsy and Traveller Community

and asked what provision had been made if the sites were no longer required by the community.

Councillor Goodeve said it would be set out in the conditions of the planning application but would get a detailed response to Councillor Crofton after the meeting.

Councillor Huggins said that his ward had a number of these sites and he welcomed the report so that the need was clearly defined and provided greater protections. He said he offered his services if there were opportunities for working groups to work on the strategy and how it would be implemented.

Councillor Wilson asked if Councillor Goodeve had a view on the policy and practice of negotiated stopping and whether the council was likely to use that.

Councillor Goodeve said she would provide a written response.

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

RESOLVED – That (A) the East Herts Council Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) May 2022, as detailed at Appendix D to this report, be agreed as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications; and

(B) the East Herts Council Gypsy and Traveller

Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) May 2022, as detailed at Appendix A to this report, be agreed as technical evidence to support any future review of the East Herts District Plan, October 2018 and any potential local planning guidance.

121 BISHOP'S STORTFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS - ADOPTION

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 12 July 2022, regarding the Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plans Adoption.

Councillor Goodeve said that the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 identified the process for reviewing 'made' neighbourhood plans and Bishop's Stortford Town Council had undertaken a review of the two neighbourhood plans in the town. The two neighbourhood plans were closely integrated so have been examined together by one independent examiner. The examiner of the two Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plans decided that the proposed modifications are not material and therefore a referendum was not necessary for either plan.

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

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

RESOLVED – that (A) the recommendations and modifications made by the Independent Examiner of the two Bishop’s Stortford Neighbourhood Plan Revisions, as detailed in Appendix E to this report, be received and considered;

(B) the Bishop’s Stortford Neighbourhood Plan for Silverleys and Meads wards (1st Revision) 2021- 2033, as detailed at Appendix Ei to this report, be formally ‘made’; and

(C) the Bishop’s Stortford Neighbourhood Plan for All Saints, Central, South and Parts of Thorley (1st Revision) 2021- 2033, as detailed at Appendix Eii to this report, be formally ‘made’.

122 UKRAINIAN REFUGEE HOUSING

Councillor Goldspink proposed the following motion on notice:

“Our Westminster Government has expressed its support for the people of Ukraine and has encouraged British residents to open their homes and to offer places of safety to the Ukrainian refugees. East Herts Council would like to take this opportunity to thank those residents who have responded to this encouragement and who have provided space in their homes for Ukrainian refugees during this war. The Council also wishes to thank all the residents who have contributed to helping the Ukrainians in many different ways during this difficult time. This Council

also acknowledges the moral responsibility to give fair, humane and equal support to refugees and asylum seekers from many other countries, and especially to those who have put their own lives at risk by giving us assistance.

Under the “Homes for Ukraine” scheme many kind-hearted, generous East Herts residents have signed up to share their homes with refugees for 6 months. Unfortunately, there do not seem to be any plans for what comes next. Nobody seems to know where the refugee Guests will be housed when the 6 months are over.

East Herts District Council notes that it has responsibilities in relation to Affordable Housing. It further notes that it has a statutory duty to house the Homeless.

The Council also notes that private sector rents in East Herts are expensive and likely to be beyond the reach of refugees on lower- than- average incomes.

This Council therefore calls on the Government to work out a proper Plan for housing the hundreds of Ukrainian refugees in East Herts and the country as a matter of the utmost urgency. This Council resolves to write to the Prime Minister and to the Home Secretary with this request. The letters to be signed by the leaders of all 4 political groups.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Townsend.

Councillor Goldspink spoke to her motion and said that

it was heart-warming to see so many generous people had signed up to open their homes to Ukrainian refugees. She said that hosts were happy to open their homes for six months and expected to have a plan about what comes next but there was currently no clear plan. She said that the council had excellent housing officers that were willing to help but there was no affordable housing and private rent was expensive. She was asking the Council to ask the government to come up with an urgent plan.

Councillor Boylan thanked Councillor Goldspink and Councillor Townsend for putting forward the motion. He said that on behalf of the Executive, they would support the motion and said that there were currently 154 hosts in Eats Herts that have been matched with a Ukrainian guest. Councillor Boylan said that East Herts had the second highest number of hosts and Ukrainian guests in the county after St Albans.

Councillor Boylan gave his sincere thanks to those who had been hosting refugees. Hertfordshire County Council had asked all host households what their intentions were after the six month period had ended and only 20% had currently replied; 60% of those reporting that they will be able to keep their guests for longer. He said that East Herts Officers were working closely with the County Council and voluntary sector to provide information to hosts as and when it becomes available. Housing Officers together with their counterparts in Hertfordshire were raising issues and questions with the government and the Council was adding its voice to the debate in how best to support refugees until it was safe for them to return home. He

welcomed all group leaders to come together to seek greater clarity from the government.

Councillor Curtis said he was in favour of the motion and thought it was much needed. He wanted to note that whilst the council were asking the government to published detailed plans, the government had done some outstanding work on the conflict with Ukraine. He wanted to acknowledge that whilst calling for detailed plans, it did not take away from the work in supporting refugees.

Councillor Townsend said that he was surprised that it seemed necessary to pull politics into the motion. He hoped that all councillors would support and stand by the motion regardless of politics and opinions.

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

RESOLVED – That the following motion be approved:

“Our Westminster Government has expressed its support for the people of Ukraine and has encouraged British residents to open their homes and to offer places of safety to the Ukrainian refugees. East Herts Council would like to take this opportunity to thank those residents who have responded to this encouragement and who have provided space in their homes for Ukrainian refugees during this war. The Council also wishes to thank all the residents who have contributed to helping the Ukrainians in many

different ways during this difficult time. This Council also acknowledges the moral responsibility to give fair, humane and equal support to refugees and asylum seekers from many other countries, and especially to those who have put their own lives at risk by giving us assistance.

Under the "Homes for Ukraine" scheme many kind-hearted, generous East Herts residents have signed up to share their homes with refugees for 6 months. Unfortunately, there do not seem to be any plans for what comes next. Nobody seems to know where the refugee Guests will be housed when the 6 months are over.

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This Council therefore calls on the Government to work out a proper Plan for housing the hundreds of Ukrainian refugees in East Herts and the country as a matter of the utmost urgency. This Council resolves to write to the Prime Minister and to the Home Secretary with this request. The letters to be signed by the leaders of all 4 political groups."

See attached document.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm

Chairman
Date