

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2022, AT 7.00
PM

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

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Richard Cassidy	- Chief Executive
Helen Standen	- Deputy Chief Executive
James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Steven Linnett	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager

222 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman ran through the events he had attended since the last Council meeting in July:

- He attended events over a two-week period after the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the proclamation of King Charles III. He said it was the greatest honour of his life to be involved in these events and he had received a card from the King thanking the Council for their kind condolences.
- The charity race night raised £1,250 for his charity.
- He and the Vice Chairman had attended Remembrance Sunday events across the four main towns.
- He announced a further fundraising event on 15 April 2023 which would be an afternoon tea/BBQ event with a brass band. Invites would be sent to all county, district and town/parish councillors.
- He said that he would be joining an initiative with the Mayor of Hertford to demonstrate how to cook cheap and easy meals to help families with the cost of living crisis and promote the reuse of food.

The Chairman announced that the Bishop's Stortford BID had been re-elected for another five-year term and the Economic Development Team had won an award from the Federation of Small Businesses for their role in administering the covid grant schemes.

223 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council said she was proud that the Council had played such an important role in the sad events following the death of Queen Elizabeth II and the celebrations following the accession of King Charles III. She said it was a sad but historic event.

224 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrews, Frecknall, Hollebon, Huggins, McMullen and Ward-Booth.

225 MINUTES - 27 JULY 2022

Councillor Haysey proposed, and Councillor Kaye seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 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 27 July 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

226 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Haysey, Williamson, E Buckmaster and Snowdon declared an interest in Item 9c – Old River Lane Supplementary Planning Document as they were members of the Old River Lane Delivery Board. They declared that they would take no part in the discussion

or voting of the item.

Councillor Beckett and Townsend declared an interest in Item 11 – Private Bill – Bishop’s Stortford Town Council Cemetery as they were members of Bishop’s Stortford Town Council. They declared that they would take no part in the discussion or voting of the item.

227 SAVE BENGEO FIELD LANDSCAPE

Veronica Fraser presented the following petition to the Council which had received 573 signatures online.

“We the undersigned petition the Council to protect the unique and outstanding landscape of the area north of Bengoe, known locally as Bengoe Field, for the whole community of Bengoe and Hertford. We ask that the East Herts District Council reject any further residential development, which would also place further stress on the local infrastructure with regards to highways, wastewater drainage, local health services, and schools.”

“We believe Bengoe Field needs to be protected from further development to prevent the destruction of a beautiful landscape that is much loved and utilised by the community. This area provides a much valued amenity thanks to the highly popular Byway 1. The pathway through Bengoe Field, which passes by the Lonely Oak, is extremely popular and surveys provide evidence that increasing numbers of people use it for a variety of activities. The unique views it offers to walkers across Rib Valley makes it imperative that we

preserve this locally important landscape, which was described as having exceptional value by the Landscape Officer of Hertfordshire County Council. The landscape was also found to be of outstanding value by the Planning Inspector at the Planning Inquiry which rejected minerals extraction: "These landscapes are especially important as a foil to urban settlements [...] I consider that the appeal site is a landscape resource and visual amenity of considerable importance because of its proximity to the urban area. It seems contrary to that finding to allow residential development to destroy the same landscape."

The Chairman said that the local Ward Members for Hertford Bengoe were members of the Development Management Committee (DMC) and had chosen to remain neutral on the petition so not to pre-determine any potential future application that might come before the committee. He said if any of the local Ward Members felt strongly either way about the petition, they would be able to speak but would need to bear in mind that this may exclude them for determining an application at DMC.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth replied to the petition. She said that as a strategic site allocation, which formed part of the Council's overall approach to meeting its evidenced housing needs by 2033, the HERT4 site was removed from the Green Belt in its entirety on adoption of the District Plan in 2018. The principle of development in this location has therefore already been established, subject to the detailed criteria in Policy HERT4 being met. Any future planning application would be assessed against the

contents of this policy and all other relevant policies in the Plan.

228 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

David Royle, on behalf of the Sustainable Sawbridgeworth community group to ask Councillor Graham McAndrew, the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability

“Sawbridgeworth Town Council produced its own Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (LCWIP) in August 2018, over four years ago. It has not yet been implemented.

We note that in North Hertfordshire there has just been a consultation on the proposed walking and cycling improvements in Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock, Royston and Knebworth, as part of their Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.

Can we please ask how the East Herts LCWIP work is progressing, has it actually started, what stage is it at, when and how can local groups feed into it and when is it due for completion?”

Response from Councillor Graham McAndrew:

“An LCWIP to cover the district is being jointly prepared in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), the lead authority on this project. While East Herts Council is ready to commence work on the LCWIP at the earliest opportunity, a change in HCC staff has meant that this Council has been awaiting confirmation on the timeline for the next steps to progress this work.

HCC has recently advised that a new member of staff is due to start shortly and also that a Project Manager has been identified at the consultancy who will be supporting the project, so it is therefore expected that initial work will commence in coming weeks.

Public consultation is a key element of LCWIPs and this will certainly occur as part of the East Herts project, the expected timeline for which will be finalised when the full programme is confirmed in due course."

There was no supplementary question.

James Dean to ask Councillor Graham McAndrew, the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability

"What are the council intending to do to mitigate the impact of the new parking proposal on residents who have no option but to park in public car parks?

The only parking we have near our house is a public car park, Crown Terrace in Bishop's Stortford. My partner works Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday, leaving before 8.30am and returning around 6.30pm, parking overnight, and then paying for Fridays. The introduction of the new proposals will mean we have to pay for half a day (£3.60 - the car park opposite our house only does half and full day during the week) just to cover the additional 6.30pm to 8.30pm charging period, for an additional 5 days a week. Plus also £1.50 for Sundays. That means an additional £78 a month on top of what we already pay for parking to cover various eventualities here and there. We understand the need for the council to raise more money, and your

proposals as stated are targeting commuters and shoppers who have at least one alternative option (bus, cycling, walking etc). But we have no other options. We have a 2 year old son as well, so can't just park miles away."

Response from Councillor Graham McAndrew

"I understand and appreciate that a small number of residents make use of the council's car parks overnight due to limited parking options on street. The council has decided to make better use of its car parks by ensuring that the user pay for the service. It is therefore important that we seek to balance the needs of car park customers, and also local residents, against the council's responsibility to ensure a fair return on its investment that delivers value for money for the taxpayer. When evening car park charges are introduced, there are options that we can consider including implementing a permit type arrangement with eligible residents who have no on street parking options available to them.

I note that Crown Terrace itself is controlled by a single yellow line waiting restriction that stops at 6.30pm. Residents may therefore legitimately park on-street from 6.30pm until 8.30am in the morning, should they wish to."

Supplementary question from James Dean

"We would like to put forward the idea of residents having a permit that allows them to not to have to pay for the additional charge time of 6.30pm to 8.30pm on weekdays. It's not us asking to not pay at all. Just to not have to pay for that additional charge time which

would cause increased financial and logistical pressure.”

Response from Councillor Graham McAndrew

“Officers will investigate this option and will be in contact.”

229 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Councillor David Snowdon to ask Councillor Jan Goodeve, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Could the Executive Member please make a statement about the future of Launchpad once the Old River Lane works commence?

Response from Councillor Jan Goodeve

“We are aware that Launchpad is a popular and well used facility in the town and many businesses there are getting nervous about its future within the ORL development. We are actively seeking a new venue and have identified two possible options, one of which is quite advanced in terms of negotiations. We hope to have resolved the issue before Christmas and be in a new venue from 1 April 2023. Chris Smith, our award winning Economic Development Manager, is liaising closely with the businesses in the Launchpad about the options and I know several of them have committed to stay with us if and when we do move.”

There was no supplementary question.

Councillor Ben Crystall to ask Councillor Jan Goodeve, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth

In May this year the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea ruled that all Grade II listed and most Grade II* listed properties can install solar panels without seeking listed building consent. In an order applying the change, the council said solar panels "would appear as an honest and clearly modern intervention, and normally read as part of the equipment necessary to service the uses conducted within the building", similar to water tanks, television aerials and other equipment.

Will East Herts Council introduce a similar change?

Response from Councillor Jan Goodeve

"The permission for solar panels on Listed Buildings referred to is as a result of a Local Listed Building Consent Order. These were introduced by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 but have not been widely used as of yet. If introduced, they can grant blanket consent for "works of any description for the alteration or extension of listed buildings" and means that the owners of those listed buildings specified in the Order will not have to make individual applications, but will be able to proceed with the works, provided they comply with any conditions that may be attached to the Order.

East Herts has around 4000 listed buildings (comprised of around 3100 listings), a similar total number to Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, but the

context is very different. We could not serve any sort of blanket order in the same way due to the variety of our building stock and the many vernacular buildings with features such as thatched roofs that would not be suitable for the introduction of solar panels. In many instances in predominantly rural areas like East Herts, solar panels are best placed within the grounds of a building or on outbuildings, rather than on the main roof of a Listed Building, where they could result in avoidable harm to the character and special interest of the Listed Building. There are many instances whereby solar panels can be installed on Listed Buildings without harming their character and special interest, such as where there are parapets that hide view of the roof from street level. The example in given in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is of predominantly urban terraces of listed buildings, with roofs that are not prominent within the street scene.

In order to put in place a similar Local Listed Building Consent Order in East Herts we would need to survey all 4000 listed buildings within our district to ascertain which would be suitable for inclusion within the order. This would be a sizeable task and resources would need to be put in place in order to undertake both the survey work and the serving of the order.

It should be noted that if East Herts were to grant such an order, if in the future it was to be revoked, compensation would be payable for the withdrawal of consent. There are therefore financial implications for the Council which would have to be carefully considered, and specialist legal advice would need to be obtained on this point."

Councillor Chris Wilson to ask Councillor Jan Goodeve, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth

I recently asked a question at a previous full council meeting about the lack of progress of the cycle route through the Meads and Grange Paddocks in Bishop's Stortford and was told this was a County Council project and that therefore there was no information that could be given to me by East Herts. However, it is the case that this route is not an official cycleway, and so not necessarily wholly within the remit of the County Council. It is also a route that goes partly through East Herts Council-owned land, and is, at least theoretically, partly funded through Section 106 money from an East Herts development, In light of this, I again ask, what role has East Herts had in the delay to this cycle route and what are our plans with respect to the part of it that goes through East Herts-owned land? What negotiations have been done with the department of the County Council that are dealing with this proposed route?"

Response from Councillor Jan Goodeve

"The Rye Street – Grange Paddocks cycle route is a concept which is supported in principle by all interested Local Authority parties. Our Parks and Open Spaces team have recently been working with HCC's Countryside and Rights of Way service to confirm a preferred route and establish delivery costs. Currently Section 106 contributions from the Bishop's Stortford North development held by East Herts Council make up approximately 40% of projected delivery costs. Work to establish a mechanism to

secure further funding, as well as delivery, adoption and ongoing maintenance responsibility is ongoing.”

Councillor Chris Wilson to ask Councillor Eric Buckmaster, the Executive Member for Wellbeing

“The recent Castle Park redevelopment in Bishop’s Stortford, while mainly successful, has included a failure with respect to the contractors who were employed to construct the new skate park. My understanding is that these contractors failed to complete their assignment and honour their contract and are due to be replaced. They have, however, pocketed public money in the process to the tune of more than £100,000. While I am aware that it was Bishop’s Stortford Town Council (BSTC) that ran this project, East Herts are partners in this exercise and our money and our resources have been used to help fund the redevelopment. Can I therefore ask if the council has asked BSTC if they performed due diligence and for an explanation as to why such funds have been misspent?”

Response from Councillor Eric Buckmaster

“The Castle Park project is a joint project with Bishop’s Stortford Town Council (BSTC) led by East Herts District Council (EHDC) and therefore it was EHDC that let the contract to construct the skate park development. A tender process was carried out to commission the company which included financial checks and the normal due diligence you would expect i.e. insurance, references etc. Following an assessment of works completed we can confirm the company only received funds for works carried out and therefore funds were

not misspent.”

There was no supplementary question.

Councillor Tim Page to ask Councillor Jan Goodeve, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Can the Executive Member for Planning and Growth please explain to the Council, and specifically Stortford Fields residents, the reasons for the delay in establishing a working Community Management Trust that meets the Council’s planning conditions and can demonstrate that it is both accountable to the Council, and fit for purpose?

Response from Councillor Jan Goodeve

“The Legal Agreement that was secured as part of the original planning permission for Stortford Fields requires the developer consortium to establish a Community Trust in accordance with the provisions within the agreement. To clarify, whilst the Trust needs to be set up in accordance with the provisions in Section 106 agreement, it won’t be accountable to the Council. It will however, manage and maintain the community buildings and community infrastructure within Stortford Fields such parks and landscaping and will include representatives from the council and the residents of Stortford Fields as well as the consortium of housebuilders, who collectively will be party to decision making and finance governance associated with the activities of the Trust.

Over time the housebuilders involvement in the Trust will diminish in favour of greater resident control.

We are aware that the developer consortium has set up the Stortford Fields Estate Management Company (SFEMC) which has taken on responsibility of the community assets delivered to date.

The Council acknowledges that progress on the establishment of the Community Trust has been slow and it has been a bigger task than anticipated. It is recognised that this needs to be addressed as a priority and officers are starting to make good progress.

We are currently working closely with the consortium to understand the workings of the Stortford Fields Estate Management Company in more detail and to ensure that a Community Trust is established over time that fully meets the provisions of the legal agreement. This will take some time but remains a key priority for us going forward and we will ensure that residents are kept informed when there are updates to share.

Meetings between Council officers and representatives for the consortium have recently taken place in order to ensure that the shadow board is up and running over the next couple of months. The Council is also bringing in specialist support to advise of detailed matters."

Supplementary question from Councillor Tim Page

The Executive Member suggests that a Community Trust will be set up in the next few months. Councillor Page asked if Councillor Goodeve could give a more

precise target.

Response from Councillor Jan Goodeve

Councillor Goodeve said some arrangements would be in place before Christmas.

230 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 6 SEPTEMBER AND 25 OCTOBER 2022

The Leader of the Council presented a report setting out recommendations to the Council made by the Executive at its meetings on 6 September and 25 October 2022.

230 MUCH HADHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - ADOPTION

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 6 September 2022, regarding the Adoption of the Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan.

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

The Chairman, as the local ward member, thanked the Neighbourhood Plan steering group and its Chairman Ian Hunt who had put in a great deal of work over many years.

Councillor Goldspink referred to the Executive minutes included in the agenda and wished to ask a question on the Parking item.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services said that the Council were not being asked to agree the minutes from the Executive meeting and they had been included in the agenda for information.

Councillor Goldspink wanted to ask when the car parking charges were being brought in.

Councillor Haysey said that the Council were being asked to make the decisions presented in the Executive report. She said the minutes would be agreed at the next Executive meeting.

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

RESOLVED - That the Much Hadham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019-2033 be formally 'made'.

230 HUNSDON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ADOPTION

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 25 October 2022, regarding the Adoption of the Hunsdon Neighbourhood Plan.

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

Councillor E Buckmaster said that this was another great Neighbourhood Plan for the ward and thanked

all those involved for their hard work in producing it.

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

RESOLVED - That the Hunsdon Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019-2033 be formally 'made'.

230 OLD RIVER LANE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendations, which were referred to in the Executive report of 25 October 2022, regarding the Old River Lane Supplementary Planning Document.

Councillor Goodeve said that Old River Lane was a development site allocated in the East Herts District Plan 2018 (Policy BISH8) which formed a key opportunity for sustainable redevelopment in the heart of Bishop's Stortford and an opportunity to complement the retail, community, and leisure provision in the town centre. The Old River Lane sets out a clear vision and development objectives, establishing placemaking and design principles, and by setting out a strategic master planning framework to bring forward appropriate redevelopment at Old River Lane.

Councillor Goodeve said that when adopted, the SPD would become a material consideration in assessing the quality of proposals on the site and in decision

making on planning applications. She said that a draft version of the Old River Lane SPD was published for public consultation for four-weeks between 5 July and 2 August 2022. The consultation received over 400 comments from nearly 100 individual consultees.

Councillor Goodeve proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Wyllie seconded the proposal and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Goldspink said that she welcomed the report and supported its objectives. She was pleased to see reference had been made to the number of new dwellings remaining at around 100. She felt it was a little vague in some respects but felt it was a good report overall and was happy to support it.

Councillor Curtis referred to the tracked changes document which he felt did not reflect the number of consultation responses. He questioned if the council had got the balance right from the consultation and asked if the loan had been taken out yet to develop the cinema.

Councillor Goodeve said that the council could only take loans when it was required.

Councillor Wyllie said he supported the report but did have some concerns about over development. He said that he was concerned about any future developers trying to get out of any agreement and wanted to make sure that this agreement was watertight to ensure that Bishop's Stortford got what it needed and

not what future developers wanted.

Councillor Goodeve reminded the Council that the report was about the Supplementary Planning Document and not about a future planning application or any negotiations around a Section 106 agreement.

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

RESOLVED – That (A) the responses to the consultation be noted and the officer responses and proposed changes to the Old River Lane Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) be supported;

(B) the Old River Lane Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), be agreed for adoption; and

(C) In accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 it has been determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Old River Lane Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is not required as it is unlikely to have significant environmental effects beyond the District Plan policies.

230 WASTE SERVICE CONTRACT DESIGN

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 25 October

2022, regarding the Waste Service Contract Design.

Councillor McAndrew said that the Executive were asked to give authority to proceed with a competitive dialogue for the waste and street cleansing contract. He said that there were 21 recommendations for Executive with one needing agreement by Council. He said that the Council were being asked to approve the capital and estimated revenue spend in relation to the new contract. He thanked Officers who had spent a considerable amount of time on the project.

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

Councillor Goldspink said she was delighted to see that there would be weekly food waste collections and was happy to support the recommendation.

Councillor Burmicz said that he had previously lived in Germany where they had food waste collections and there were massive problems with maggots and flies in the summer months. He said that he did not feel it was a good move.

Councillor McAndrew said that food waste collections would be weekly.

Councillor Townsend sought clarification on the 23 litre caddies and how they would be transported, as 23 litres roughly translated to 23 kilograms and could therefore be quite heavy to carry.

Councillor McAndrew said they were used across the country and would almost never be full.

Councillor Curtis referred to paragraph 3.16 of the report and asked if the Executive Member would commit to having two separate options for the contract; have three weekly collections or remain at existing frequency. He said the council needed to make changes to its waste collection but wanted to make sure it had been thought through.

Councillor McAndrew said that the contract would be for a three weekly residual collection and weekly food waste.

Councillor E Buckmaster said there would be an educational element around the project. He said that a bin composition analysis had been undertaken across the county and it had found that 25-30% of waste in residual bins was food related. He said if the public disposed of waste correctly, it would mean less would be going into the black bins. He said that he was comfortable this was the correct route to go down.

Councillor Kemp said many other local authorities currently collect food waste separately and the results had been good.

Councillor Beckett said he supported the comments in favour of a separate food waste collection. He asked if the council would be providing bin liners to residents.

Councillor McAndrew said he would ask Officers to look into that.

Councillor Haysey said that we should all be looking at what waste we were producing. She said that the council needed to note that the government would be bringing in legislation that food waste should be collected separately.

Councillor Kaye said that within East Herts, 43% of waste in the residual bins should not be in there and this project would encourage residents to think differently about their waste.

Councillor Snowdon said it was his understanding that those with special needs or medical needs would have access to more frequent collections.

Councillor McAndrew said that there were mitigating circumstances and they would be dealt with on an individual basis.

Councillor Boylan asked if bins would be replaced with the smaller ones as and when required.

Councillor McAndrew said there would be communication on how the bins would be distributed. He said that all new developments would get the 180L bins and the existing bins would not be replaced overnight.

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

RESOLVED - That the Capital and estimated

revenue spend in relation to the introduction of a new weekly separate food waste collection service in 23L caddies for houses and in wheeled bins for flats in East Hertfordshire from 2025.

231 ELECTORAL REVIEW OF EAST HERTS - OUTCOME AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Leader of the Council presented the Electoral Review of East Herts report. She said that the Local Government Boundary Commission had completed its Electoral Review of East Herts and published its final recommendations in August 2022. In summary, she said that the Commission had agreed to leave the number of councillors representing East Herts at 50, however from May 2023, the District will be split into 26 wards instead of 30.

Councillor Haysey said that the report sets out a number of actions necessary including a Polling District and Polling Place review which will be undertaken between now and January 2023. She said that Members were encouraged to contribute to the review especially if they were aware of any local premises suitable to be used as a polling station. She said the register would be republished in February 2023 to incorporate these changes.

Councillor Haysey said that there were a couple of areas where the council may wish to carry out a Community Governance Review on certain parish boundaries. A list of suggested changes had been provided by Ware Town Council however, it was not

possible to conclude all the statutory stages in time to implement before the May 2023 elections so it was proposed that Officers report to Council after the elections with the proposed terms of reference for the reviews.

Councillor Haysey proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Snowdon seconded the proposal and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Curtis referred to the Community Governance Review in Ware. He said that not all suggested changes were included in the report and asked for clarification that all recommendations would be considered.

Councillor Haysey confirmed that they would.

Councillor Dumont said he was not convinced by the name of the new ward Great Amwell and Stansted but he said the new ward represents both areas better.

Councillor Crystall asked what the process was for letting Members know the results of the polling district review.

Councillor Haysey said that it was still under discussion about how to communicate to Members.

Councillor Kemp said he appreciated the prompt response to Ware Town Council's request for a Community Governance Review.

Councillor Snowdon said that the ward names were decided by the Local Government Boundary Commission and were based on submissions from the public. He said that East Herts Council could change the name of the wards but would have to wait a minimum of five years from the completion of the boundary review to do so.

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 outcome of the Electoral Review of East Herts and the final recommendations of the review made by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England be noted;

(B) Subject to approval by Parliament, to implement the revised warding arrangements for East Herts recommended by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as set out at Appendix A to this report, together with consequential changes to the electoral arrangements of certain parish and town councils with effect from the local and parish/town council elections on 4 May 2023;

(C) That consequent on the changes to ward boundaries, the Council undertake between November 2022 and January 2023 a review of polling districts and polling places for the whole district, and that authority to agree the outcome of the review of polling districts and polling

places be delegated to the Chief Executive after consultation with the Leader of the Council;

(D) The Electoral Registration Officer publish a revised electoral register for East Herts on 15 February 2023, incorporating the changes to wards and polling districts resulting from the Electoral Review and the review of polling districts; and

(E) The Council agree in principle to undertake community governance reviews of (i) Ware town and certain neighbouring parishes and (ii) the Rush Green area as described at paragraphs 2.22 to 2.27 of this report, with a view to considering any changes to parish or parish/town ward boundaries that may be desirable in those areas.

(F) The community governance reviews proposed at e) above take place after the May 2023 local elections and that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be requested to bring forward as soon as practicable after those elections draft terms of reference for the reviews for consideration by the Council.

232 PRIVATE BILL - BISHOP'S STORTFORD TOWN COUNCIL CEMETERY

The Executive Member for Corporate Services presented the Bishop's Stortford Town Council Cemeteries Private Bill report as the local Ward Member. He said that the report set out the case for a

promotion of a Private Bill to enable the reuse of burial space in two cemeteries, either side of Cemetery Road, in Bishop's Stortford. He explained that the promotion of the Bill would be on behalf of the Bishop's Stortford Town Council at their request as opposed to an initiative of this Council.

Councillor Cutting said that the reasons why the Town Council have asked this Council to promote the Bill on its behalf is set out in detail in the 'Background' section of the report but in summary: there is only sufficient burial space to last until approximately 2036, the only practical way to resolve this is to seek additional powers through a private Bill and there was no other suitable alternative land available to use for burials.

Councillor Cutting said that a public consultation was carried out by this Council, in addition to a previous consultation by the Town Council. There were seven responses to the consultation (six against and one in favour) and they have been summarised in paragraph 6.3 as well as the Council's assessment of the responses, contained in paragraph 6.4. He added that there were no financial implications to this Council as all costs are being met by the Town Council.

Councillor Cutting proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported.
Councillor Snowdon seconded the proposal.

Councillor Wyllie said he supported the report as the Leader of Bishop's Stortford Town Council but questioned why the consultation was reported in the Herts Mercury and not in a Bishop's Stortford

newspaper.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that it was advertised in two Bishop's Stortford newspapers.

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 Council authorises the promotion and deposit of the private Bill on behalf of the Bishop's Stortford Town Council to authorise the reuse of certain graves with two cemeteries in its area subject to appropriate protections substantially in accordance with the attached draft Bill;

(B) The Council authorises the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Corporate Services, to address procedural matters which may arise in relation to the promotion of the Bill and to enter into undertakings or commitments in relation to it; and

(C) The Council authorises the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to agree to the making of any necessary amendments to the Bill that may arise during the course of the promotion of the Bill.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the report asking the Council to note the urgent non-key decision taken on 12 August 2022.

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

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

RESOLVED – That the urgent non-key decision taken by the Executive Member for Planning and Growth on 12 August 2022 be noted.

234 GREEN BELT LAND

Councillor Snowdon proposed the following motion on notice:

“This Council notes:

- That Green belt land in Bishop’s Stortford has been split into residential-sized parcels for sale, with two recent examples being the Thorley Lane East Woods and the Meads Land, South of Meadowlands off Rye Street
- The Thorley lane East Woods are Green Belt Land, have a Tree Preservation Order on the site and are listed as Open Space in the recently adopted

Neighbourhood Plan

- The Rye Street land is Green Belt land, Local Open Space, and an Area of Archaeological Significance
- The sale of Green Belt and rural land in this manner is a problem across East Hertfordshire and beyond, with similar examples in Much Hadham, Braughing and Tewin
- The strong public feeling that Green Belt land should not be parcelled up into small chunks
- The considerable public desire to protect the woodland on Thorley Lane East and the Meads Land Rye Street from development
- That both the Thorley Lane East Woods and Meads Land are considered by local people to be important local amenity land
- Bishop's Stortford Town Council approached the sellers of both the Meads and Thorley Lane East Woods to try buy the land. In both cases the sellers were not willing to sell at the market rate for amenity land. In both cases the sellers were asking for prices closer to development land prices
- On 10th October 2022, Bishop's Stortford Town Council passed a motion substantially the same as this motion, and it received cross-party support

This Council believes:

- Green Belt land should be protected from being sold off in small plots
- Some prospective buyers of small plots of Green Belt land do not fully understand the planning challenges associated with trying to develop this land

This Council resolves:

- To ask the Leader of the District Council to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to:
 - Express the Town Council's frustration that Green Belt land is being sold in small parcels
 - Ask the Secretary of State to consider new legislation and/or regulations to tighten up the rules about selling Green Belt land
 - Ask the Secretary of State to ensure that there are strict rules around the information that is made available to prospective buyers of Green Belt land by sellers. In particular, a full assessment of the planning status of the land should be prominently displayed in any planning material
- To ask the Leader to write to the Thorley Lane East Woods Action Group to send them a copy of this motion"

Councillor Snowdon said there was significant public concern about the sale of green belt land in Bishop's Stortford and other areas. He said the motion was carefully worded based upon a similar motion passed at Bishop's Stortford Town Council recently although that motion went further because it was not a planning authority. He understood that some Members wanted the motion to go further but he thought it was the best motion the Council could pass.

Councillor Wyllie seconded the motion and reserved his

right to speak.

Councillor Bell said she supported the motion and said it was important to protect green belt land from being developed. She said that there was an error on the first bullet point under 'This Council resolves' where it refers to the Town Council. She proposed an amendment to the motion to change this to the District Council.

The amendment having been proposed by Councillor Bell and seconded by Councillor Curtis was put to the meeting and was declared CARRIED. The amended motion then became the substantive motion as follows:

"This Council notes:

- That Green belt land in Bishop's Stortford has been split into residential-sized parcels for sale, with two recent examples being the Thorley Lane East Woods and the Meads Land, South of Meadowlands off Rye Street
- The Thorley lane East Woods are Green Belt Land, have a Tree Preservation Order on the site and are listed as Open Space in the recently adopted Neighbourhood Plan
- The Rye Street land is Green Belt land, Local Open Space, and an Area of Archaeological Significance
- The sale of Green Belt and rural land in this manner is a problem across East Hertfordshire and beyond, with similar examples in Much Hadham, Braughing and Tewin
- The strong public feeling that Green Belt land should not be parcelled up into small chunks
- The considerable public desire to protect the woodland on Thorley Lane East and the Meads Land

Rye Street from development

- That both the Thorley Lane East Woods and Meads Land are considered by local people to be important local amenity land
- Bishop's Stortford Town Council approached the sellers of both the Meads and Thorley Lane East Woods to try buy the land. In both cases the sellers were not willing to sell at the market rate for amenity land. In both cases the sellers were asking for prices closer to development land prices
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 - Ask the Secretary of State to consider new legislation and/or regulations to tighten up the rules about selling Green Belt land

- Ask the Secretary of State to ensure that there are strict rules around the information that is made available to prospective buyers of Green Belt land by sellers. In particular, a full assessment of the planning status of the land should be prominently displayed in any planning material
- To ask the Leader to write to the Thorley Lane East Woods Action Group to send them a copy of this motion.

Councillor Goldspink said she firmly supported the motion and it was very important to protect green open spaces. She believed the motion could be strengthened.

Councillor Wilson proposed the following amendment to be added under 'This Council notes':

- Council expresses regret at the amount of former Green Belt land that has been built on or is due to be built on throughout the District as a result of the plans developed in the District Plan of 2018
- Council deplores the fact that the national government forced every local planning authority to construct a fixed amount of housing, meaning building on Green Belt was inevitable
- It is accepted that siting developments in Bishop's Stortford North has caused intolerable strain on the infrastructure in the town whilst the prospect of a distribution centre in Bishop's Stortford South represents an even greater difficulty.
- It is regrettable that developments have been and will be built on former Green Belt land and admits that

the consequent loss of green spaces is not in accord with residents' needs or wishes

- This council will do all it can to alleviate the inevitable strain on infrastructure that the development of Gilston will bring.
- This council accepts errors were made in the local plan and that less developments should have been sited around the same pieces of infrastructure, specifically the north-south "corridor" from Bishop Stortford southwards towards Harlow, More brownfield sites should have been sought if at all possible.

Councillor Townsend seconded the motion.

Councillor Wilson proposed to adjourn the meeting for ten minutes under paragraph 3.21 of the Constitution to allow the Council to consider the amendment. Councillor Snowdon seconded the motion.

The motion to adjourn the meeting for ten minutes having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That the meeting be adjourned for ten minutes.

The meeting reconvened.

The Chairman asked if the amendment was allowed under the Council Procedure Rules.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services referred to paragraph 3.22.6 of the Constitution which said

amendments were allowed as long as the effect was not to negate the motion or substantially rewrite the motion. He said he believed the amendment as proposed moved into other issues around planning and the District Plan, whereas the original motion was purposely and narrowly focussed on the sale of green belt land. He said the amendment would negate the motion and would therefore not be accepted.

The Chairman said that Members could now debate the substantive motion.

Councillor Crofton said he supported the motion and had experienced the selling off of land parcels in his ward. He said these sites had no chance of gaining planning permission but were being sold as development sites. He said the District Council needed to be strong in their planning and control of unauthorised use of land.

Councillor Stowe said that in his ward, plot lands had sheds, polytunnels and even people living in caravans on them. He said the enforcement team were aware but agents were telling buyers that they could do this to get future planning permission on the site.

Councillor McAndrew supported the motion.

Councillor Boylan expressed support for the motion. He said that a large field in Braughing had been sold by the farmer and was now divided into 60 housing plots which had different owners on the land registry. Councillor Boylan said that because of the number of different owners there was no ownership of the field and it did not get maintained.

Councillor Curtis said that selling of plots of green belt land was outrageous and asked what was meant by the motion asking to strengthen the rules.

Councillor Devonshire said that selling agents were giving false information to buyers about the potential of the plots.

Councillor Crystall said he agreed with the essence of the motion but asked how a 'small plot' was defined.

Councillor Snowdon replied to the points raised in the debate. He said the term 'small plot' was a well known one in the planning industry. He said the council had a District Plan and places where development was and was not allowed. He said that Members had spoken quite strongly on problems in their own wards and it was a hard problem to solve but just because it was hard, should not mean that the council should not try to solve it. He said this was a motion about policy and not about legislation implementation.

Having been proposed and seconded, the substantive motion was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That:

"This Council notes:

- That Green belt land in Bishop's Stortford has been split into residential-sized parcels for sale, with two

recent examples being the Thorley Lane East Woods and the Meads Land, South of Meadowlands off Rye Street

- The Thorley lane East Woods are Green Belt Land, have a Tree Preservation Order on the site and are listed as Open Space in the recently adopted Neighbourhood Plan
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- The considerable public desire to protect the woodland on Thorley Lane East and the Meads Land Rye Street from development
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- To ask the Leader of the District Council to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to:
 - Express the District Council's frustration that Green Belt land is being sold in small parcels
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 - Ask the Secretary of State to ensure that there are strict rules around the information that is made available to prospective buyers of Green Belt land by sellers. In particular, a full assessment of the planning status of the land should be prominently displayed in any planning material
- To ask the Leader to write to the Thorley Lane East Woods Action Group to send them a copy of this motion.

235 COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Under paragraph 3.22.7 of the Constitution, Councillor Goldspink provided the meeting with an altered

motion from the one she had submitted on notice. Copies of the altered motion were distributed to the meeting.

Councillor Goldspink proposed the following motion:

“We are all living in the midst of a serious Cost of Living Crisis and Emergency. Council does note the Government’s Decision, taken in June 2022, to impose a Windfall Tax on the super profits of the oil and gas companies and to redistribute this as a one-off payment to many households. Though this Windfall Tax is welcome, and the payments are helpful, not everyone is out of difficulty. Council believes that it does not go nearly far enough, and that the Government should be doing much more to support the people of East Herts through this Cost-of-Living Crisis. East Herts Council therefore acknowledges that we are in a “Cost of Living Emergency”.

Councillors on East Herts Council believe the primary objective of the Chancellor’s Autumn Statement tomorrow should be support for the most vulnerable in our communities.

We welcome the support we have received from the Department of Work and Pensions on the Household Support Fund which amounts to £60,000 for food support and £60,000 for energy support. This money administered by the Community Alliance in East Herts went into supporting food banks and fuel poverty. The fuel support funding is in collaboration with housing associations.

We also welcome the £150 rebate in council tax earlier

this year and the £326 followed by £324 for those on Universal Credit or indeed, other benefits. The £400 we shall all receive towards our energy costs has already started to take effect with £66 off our bills last month and more to come this winter.

With the proposed rise in National Insurance now cancelled and older people receiving between £500 and £600 in winter fuel allowance, we believe this is a good start to creating more stability in the economy to help fight inflation despite the impacts of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

East Herts Council will be working with Hertfordshire County Council's Cost of Living Taskforce to monitor any problems our residents face in the coming months.

We await the outcome of the Autumn Statement to hear what further support may be provided to our vulnerable residents. In the meantime we will continue to work with our District and County colleagues to provide the very best support we can.

We call upon the government to ensure that measures be taken to alleviate poverty and help those most in need. The Council asks the Leader of the Council to write on behalf of East Herts District Council to lobby the government to take further steps to help those most in need, including the elderly, the disabled, those on low wages and those on benefits.

This Council resolves to consider the measures to be announced in the Autumn Statement and will continue to lobby government through the District Councils Network and the LGA for financial support and will

continue to work with all councils and agencies across county to ensure the best possible resources are in place for all our residents.”

Councillor Dumont seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Snowdon said he was in favour of the motion. He said that those struggling were not necessarily on benefits and with rising heating bills, residents need all the support offered to them. He said a key group that was overlooked was those that were in work but on low wages. He said that there were indications from the government that the minimum wage would be increased.

Councillor Haysey said she welcomed the altered motion, and she was happy to support it. She said it was important for the District Council to show unity and to improve the quality of life for the residents of East Herts. She said she was happy to write the necessary letters and invited the other Group Leaders to join her.

Councillor Redfern said that she was disappointed that the altered motion had been watered down and would have preferred to have seen the restoration of the Universal Credit supplement included. She did not feel there was enough strength to the current motion.

Councillor Wilson said that residents’ mortgages were high and struggling even if they earned a decent salary. He said he would also like to see Universal Credit increased.

Councillor E Buckmaster said that the Council were united and agreed that more could be done. He said that the council should be working across the political spectrum and across the other 10 councillors in Hertfordshire. He referred to the 'Here for you' campaign and said a booklet was delivered to all residents. He said the motion should not be too specific and would need to wait and see what the whole package was from the government in the Autumn Statement.

Councillor Kaye said he supported the comments from his colleagues. He said that there was speculation that Universal Credit and benefits would get a full inflation rise which could be more than the twenty pound that was withdrawn.

Councillor Symonds said that she worked closely with the Bishop's Stortford Food Banks and said the team always work with those collecting food to make sure there are not any underlying issues that could be addressed. She wanted to pay tribute to the benefits department who have been doing an excellent job.

Councillor Dumont said that it was good to hear the Council come together and support the motion. He said the impacts of Brexit and the Mini Budget had contributed to the issue. He hoped that the Government would correct its previous mistakes in the Autumn Statement.

Councillor Goldspink thanked members across the Chamber for their support. She hoped that they could

continue to lobby the government to do more to help the most vulnerable in East Herts.

Having been proposed and seconded, the substantive motion was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – That:

We are all living in the midst of a serious Cost of Living Crisis and Emergency. Council does note the Government’s Decision, taken in June 2022, to impose a Windfall Tax on the super profits of the oil and gas companies and to redistribute this as a one-off payment to many households. Though this Windfall Tax is welcome, and the payments are helpful, not everyone is out of difficulty. Council believes that it does not go nearly far enough, and that the Government should be doing much more to support the people of East Herts through this Cost-of-Living Crisis. East Herts Council therefore acknowledges that we are in a “Cost of Living Emergency”.

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The meeting closed at 9.20 pm

Chairman
Date