

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 11 JULY 2023, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor B Crystall (Leader)
Councillors C Brittain, B Crystall, A Daar,
J Dumont, V Glover-Ward, M Goldspink,
S Hopewell, T Hoskin and C Wilson.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors E Buckmaster, S Bull,
N Clements, B Deering, G McAndrew,
T Stowe and G Williamson.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager
James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Laura Guy	- Principal Planning Officer
Steven Linnett	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Helen Standen	- Deputy Chief Executive
Kevin Steptoe	- East Herts Garden Town Lead Officer

87 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

88 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader reminded Members and Officers to use their microphones as the meeting was being webcast.

89 MINUTES - 13 JUNE 2023

Councillor Goldspink proposed, and Councillor Glover-Ward seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2023 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Leader. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

90 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Glover-Ward declared an interest in Item 7 – Adoption of the Kingsmead Neighbourhood Plan as she was the Chair of the Kingsmead Neighbourhood Plan group.

91 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2024 - 25

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024-25. He

said that it was a government requirement that the Council approved the scheme annually and the recommendation was to leave the scheme unchanged. The scheme had remained the same since 2013 and there was no persuasive argument to make any changes and would provide additional certainty to residents at a difficult time.

Councillor Daar said that she had been to the Joint Revenues and Benefits Committee in Stevenage and was impressed by how hard the officers worked with recruitment difficulties and the extra demands from the government on covid and energy support grants. She congratulated officers and managing that alongside their day-to-day workload.

Councillor Goldspink thanked Officers for their detailed report and the careful consideration of all the options. She said that the final recommendation was sensible, and she fully supported it.

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

RESOLVED - To recommend to Council that no changes be made to the Council Tax Support scheme for 2024/25.

92 WASTE SHARED SERVICE: CLIENT TEAM AND CORPORATE SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability presented the Client Team and Corporate Support

Arrangements for the Waste Shared Service. He said the report had been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 June 2023 and the proposals in the report supported the goals around digital transformation to ensure residents will receive a consistent service across the two districts of East Herts and North Herts. He said there were no major changes, each council will lead on its own customer service provision and there were some minor changes to the governance of the service as detailed in the report.

Councillor Dumont said that he was in his second term as a Member and said that the customer service of the waste service and contract created the largest volume of communication from residents. He said he welcomed the fact that there was a huge emphasis in the report on customer service and in streamlining the process.

Councillor Hoskin said customer service was a central theme of the report and to ensure that the customer service was similar across the two councils.

Councillor Glover-Ward asked whether it was possible to forewarn residents when streets were about to be cleaned. She had received feedback from residents that they have not been able to get their cars out the way in time.

Councillor Hoskin said he would speak to Officers and provide a written answer to the question after the meeting.

Councillor Goldspink said she welcomed the report and thanked the working group who gave up their time to produce the report. She said that she liked the principle that the two councils should work together as it would

provide cost savings and best practice to the partnership. She also welcomed the paragraphs in the report that referred to proper engagement with the community to achieve a good service.

Councillor McAndrew said he also welcomed the report and said it was good to hear endorsement from various Members of the work that had been done. He said the Member workshops were intense but lots of ideas were brought together to streamline the future contract. He hoped that the IT systems at East Herts would be brought up to speed to enable the contract to move forward. He welcomed that East Herts would be taking on payment from customers in 2023.

Councillor Crystall thanked Councillor McAndrew for the work that was carried out when he was the Executive Member.

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

RESOLVED - that (A) the comments from Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 20th June 2023 be noted;

(B) the updated waste service policy statements to come into force from May 2025 be agreed;

(C) each council leads on their own customer service provision with one set of processes for

customer interactions being developed and agreed with a focus on resolution at the first point of contact be agreed;

- (D) further work to identify resources and costs to integrate the customer relationship management system with the waste management IT system be agreed; and
- (E) the proposed minor updates and changes to financial management and governance arrangements and subsequent minor changes to the Inter Authority Agreement outlined in Section 3 be agreed.

93 ADOPTION OF KINGSMEAD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Councillor Glover-Ward declared an interest in the item as she was the Chair of the Kingsmead Neighbourhood Plan. She left the Chamber for the discussion and voting of the item.

The Leader of the Council presented the report on behalf of the Executive Member for Planning and Growth. He said that Neighbourhood Plans were an important document for residents and the Kingsmead Neighbourhood Plan had a strong vision for sustainable development and was a positive addition to the development management process. He paid tribute to Councillor Glover-Ward who had chaired the plan and to those who had been involved in the community effort to develop the plan. He said that the referendum result spoke for itself with the vote on 4 May 2023 receiving 93% support and referred to the examiner's report which gave great feedback on the quality of the plan. He referred to one factual error in the report

on page 89 that stated the pre-submission (Regulation 14) consultation took place in November and December 2021 when it was extended to February 2022.

Councillor Daar said it was exciting to see the Neighbourhood Plan come into place and said that there was one area left in Hertford without a plan and hoped the community would start developing one soon.

Councillor Hopewell said she knew that a massive amount of work had gone into the plan and said it was fantastic that it got such a high level of support in the referendum.

Councillor Crystall proposed, and Councillor Daar second a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - To recommend to Council that the Kingsmead Neighbourhood Area Plan 2019-2033, as detailed at Appendix A to this report, be formally made (adopted).

94 HARLOW AND GILSTON GARDEN TOWN - DRAFT STEWARDSHIP CHARTER FOR CONSULTATION

The Leader of the Council presented the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town – Draft Stewardship for Consultation report. He stressed that the document was a draft and a generic strategic document that set out six high level principles for stewardship. He said that the document should help to ensure that the council gets the unique and specific solutions right for the Garden Town. He said that the consultation would run for a minimum of eight weeks

and a draft would be circulated to all Garden Town community groups and relevant Town and Parish Councils.

Councillor Buckmaster asked the Leader for the Council for assurance that if stewardship arrangements could be separated, that they would be. He accepted that there were strong similarities between the draft stewardship and the Places for People draft but there were other garden town work streams that could have a bearing on the document. He asked for reassurance that the responsibility for managing a wide range of assets like parks, play areas, allotments and community centres would remain solely in the Gilston town. He said if the responsibility went outside the area, it would challenge the principle of community ownership.

The Garden Town Lead Officer said that the draft document was trying to achieve a set of high-level principles that established good practice to be applied across the Garden Town and it did not seek to constrain Gilston in any way. He advised Members to keep an open mind when it came to what the best solutions were. He said the Garden Town was seeking to achieve delivery of 60% of transport by active healthy modes and residents in the new developments were likely to want to access facilities in Harlow so this would need to be developed in partnership with other organisations.

Councillor Buckmaster said he understood about the transport issue but said some partners would want control over the green spaces.

Councillor Dunlop said he did not understand why East Herts needed to be a part of the partnership at all. He felt the council should set the charter as it sees fits and questioned why it was being done at this stage before any

s106 agreements had been signed. He said that Gilston was part of East Herts and felt there was a pull towards Harlow.

The Garden Town Lead Officer gave some history to the Garden Town and said that the concept came together over the life of the District Plan which resulted in the allocation of 10,000 homes. He said the council worked with partners as the planning strategy needed to be considered beyond the district boundaries. He said that the council worked with Harlow and Epping Forest Councils to support the delivery of growth. He said that there were significant benefits of working in partnership and Gilston had local involvement and commitment.

The Garden Town Lead Officer explained that the draft stewardship had been put together now to provide some overarching principles and the detail would follow later. He said that resources and priorities had also played a role as the team had been focussing on the planning applications for the last couple of years.

Councillor Dumont said that he had been open in terms of raising concerns from residents about the development and spoke at the outline planning application before the election. He said he remained disappointed that the level of affordable housing had dropped from 40% to 23% but he said the Executive were being asked to approve that the document goes out for consultation. He said he hoped the council would take on board the positive and negative feedback in the final document.

Councillor Dunlop said the consultation results would be skewed as it would be heavily weighted towards the larger population of Harlow.

Councillor Crystall asked if it was possible to distinguish

between respondents in different areas.

The Garden Town Lead Officer said that the consultation would take place on online platforms and will offer to meet and discuss with community groups and parish councils. He said the consultation would capture the location of respondents.

Councillor Wilson said he thought it was sensible to have an overarching plan between two closely linked areas. He said residents will want to use the facilities in the local town so it was inevitable that there had to be co-operation.

Councillor Crystall responded to Councillor Buckmaster's question about reassurance on retaining local control. He said that the Green Party were big supporters of local control and it made sense that local control was retained as much as possible. He said he had heard what Councillor Buckmaster had said and recognised that it was a key issue.

Councillor Daar asked if neighbouring parish councils were being consulted.

The Garden Town Lead Officer said he was more than happy to open up the consultation as wide as necessary if Members felt it appropriate.

Councillor Dumont asked if Great Amwell and Stanstead parishes could be included as the Garden Town was the biggest issue for the local area.

Councillor McAndrew said Much Hadham were affected too, and it was used a rat run to get to Ware.

Councillor Daar asked if the stewardship arrangements precluded the new villages from having their own Town or Parish Councils.

The Garden Town Lead Officer said it would not. He said thoughts were starting to emerge locally as to how the existing parish councils could come together to fit the new geography.

Councillor Crystall proposed, and Councillor Glover-Ward seconded supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That the draft Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Stewardship Charter be approved for consultation

95 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.47 pm

Chairman
Date