

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 10 DECEMBER 2025, AT
7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Adams (Chairman).
Councillors J Dunlop, R Buckmaster,
C Brittain, M Butcher, I Devonshire,
E Buckmaster, S Bull, V Burt, R Carter,
N Clements, M Connolly, S Copley, N Cox,
B Crystall, A Daar, B Deering, J Dumont,
Y Estop, V Glover-Ward, M Goldspink,
C Hart, G Hill, D Hollebon, A Holt,
S Hopewell, C Horner, T Hoskin, D Jacobs,
S Nicholls, A Parsad-Wyatt, C Redfern,
V Smith, T Stowe, M Swainston, J Thomas,
S Watson, D Willcocks, G Williamson,
C Wilson, J Wyllie and D Woollcombe.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

James Ellis	- Director for Legal, Policy and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Brian Moldon	- Director for Finance, Risk and Performance
Sara Saunders	- Director for Place
Helen Standen	- Interim Chief Executive
Stephanie Tarrant	- Assistant Director for Democracy, Elections and Information Governance

263 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded attendees that the meeting was being webcast. The full webcast of the meeting can be viewed here: [Council - 10 December, 2025](#)

The Chairman announced that Rebecca Cercelea, aged 10, was to be presented a certificate for outstanding achievement in sports in East Hertfordshire. Rebecca had been partaking in karate since she was 4 years old and received her black belt on Saturday 6 December 2025, making her one of the youngest black belts in the country.

The Chairman acknowledged the sad deaths of former Councillors and Honorary Aldermen Keith Barnes and Tony Dodd. A minute of silence was held and the Chairman invited Members to share words of remembrance.

Councillors Goldspink and Hollebon paid tribute to Keith Barnes.

Members recognised that Keith was an outstanding Town and District Councillor, who served on the district for 20 years, standing mostly as an Independent Member. He was Bishop's Stortford Town Mayor twice and represented the Central Ward and was well known for working tirelessly to help residents.

Councillors E Buckmaster and Goldspink paid tribute to Tony Dodd.

Members recognised that Tony was a District and County Councillor and had been Chairman of East Herts from 2010-2011. He served on the Town Council since the 1970's and was Sawbridgeworth Town Mayor three times. It was noted that he was very keen on town twinning and founded the town twinning with Bry-sur-Marne, France, which recently celebrated 50 years. In addition, his connection with the Hailey Day Centre was acknowledged, with contributions in his memory being used to support this charity.

Members sent their best wishes and condolences to Keith and Tony's families.

The Chairman announced that this would be the last meeting that Steven King would webcast due to leaving East Herts Council. Officers and Members expressed their gratitude for the support that Steven had provided to meetings for the past 8 years and wished him well in his new role.

264 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council thanked Members and officers for their hard work throughout 2025 and wished them a relaxing and peaceful festive period.

265 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrews, Boylan, Marlow and McAndrew.

266 MINUTES - 22 OCTOBER 2025 AND 13 NOVEMBER 2025

The change to the minute style was highlighted, with a request to return to more detailed minutes recording individual Member contributions. Officers acknowledged the point raised and agreed to give the matter further consideration.

Councillor Carter proposed, and Councillor Goldspink seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2025, 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.

Councillor Crystall proposed, and Councillor Dumont seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held

on 13 November 2025, 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 meetings held on 22 October 2025 and 13 November 2025 be approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

267 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

268 PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

269 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The full responses to the submitted Public Questions can be found in the supplementary document [here](#).

270 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The full responses to the submitted Members' Questions can be found in the supplementary document [here](#).

271 EXECUTIVE REPORT – 18 NOVEMBER 2025

The Leader of the Council presented a report setting out recommendations to the Council made by the Executive at its meeting on [18 November 2025](#).

271 PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the report on the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy. She advised that the Council had agreed to undertake a review of the district plan including an

update of the evidence documents needed to support the new District Plan.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy 2025 replaced the previous playing pitch strategy, published in 2017. The report summarised the findings, provided a robust assessment of the supply and demand for outdoor sports facilities across East Herts and set out a framework for protecting, enhancing and providing new facilities to meet community needs up to 2043. The strategy had been developed in accordance with Sports England guidance.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth highlighted that since the Executive meeting, some minor factual errors had been corrected in the golf sections of the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy. Whilst the location of golf clubs within each sub-area were shown correctly in figure 12.1 of Appendix B, the accompanying table labelled the sub-areas of some of the facilities incorrectly. In addition, reference to Whitehill Golf Club driving range had been updated to clarify that the driving range was available on a pay and play basis and not for Members only. Consequently, these changes were also reflected in the assessment summaries within Appendix C, The Strategy and Action Plan. It was noted that these minor amendments to Appendix B and C did not affect the analysis of golf provision and had been corrected for clarity.

Councillor Glover-Ward, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Wilson seconded the proposal.

Members welcomed the report, and the importance placed on sports and exercise.

Members acknowledged that although future growth had not been formally considered, the delivery of some

projects was likely to be dependent on future growth and planning obligations. It was confirmed that the strategy would inform development decisions for Section 106 funding. It was noted that whilst Sports England was no longer a statutory consultee on planning, their role would continue in an advisory capacity.

Following a public question, Members highlighted the request for spectator sports (including Speedway) to be included in the plan, despite them not being participatory. Members heard that there had not been any intention to update the strategy document to include them. It was however noted that if evidence was brought forward by the Speedway group as part of the district plan consultations, it would be considered for inclusion in the district plan.

In response to a Member question regarding alternative surfaces for 3G pitches, Members heard that Sports England were currently undertaking research in this area and that the Council would be guided by their advice.

Concerns were raised that the distinction between public facilities and private members' facilities had not been made clear enough. In addition, Members queried if there had been omissions, particularly under the heading "Other open space and sports facilities". It was noted that activities such as basketball, softball, BMX, motorsport, speedway and canoeing had not been covered, even though they formed part of sport and recreation. Members were informed that canoeing had been referenced on page 260 of the report, and it had included consultation with the British Canoe Union.

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 Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy, attached as Appendix A, B and C was agreed as part of the evidence base

to inform the new East Herts District Plan and as a material consideration for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications.

(B) future updates of the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Action Plan be delegated to the Director for Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.

271 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2026/27

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the report on the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2026/27. He explained that Council Tax Support schemes were devised annually by local authorities and had to be approved before 11 March. The proposal to move to a banded scheme, intended to reduce administration costs, had been worked on during the year, however due to the complexity of the proposed changes, significant work was required to ensure the scheme would remain broadly cost neutral compared to the current model, whilst also ensuring that individuals would not be materially worse off. As a result, there was insufficient time to finalise and consult on the scheme and it was proposed that the existing scheme remained unchanged for 2026/27.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability said that work on a banded scheme was to continue, with a consultation planned for early in the new financial year. Neither the County Council nor the police had raised any objection to the unchanged scheme for 2026/27.

Councillor Brittain, the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. Councillor Horner seconded the proposal.

Members acknowledged that the scheme had been in place since 2013. It was recognised that whilst the

Council had considered changing the scheme a number of times, it had repeatedly concluded that it was best left as it was. Members expressed satisfaction that this remained the case at this stage.

Members supported continued work on the banded scheme was highlighting that it could make a significant difference. It was noted that it could simplify the tasks of the Revenues and Benefits team, potentially save money and reduce the need for claimants to repeatedly return for reassessment. Members shared from experience, that many claimants had fallen into debt because they had not realised changes until after reassessments were made, which had caused genuine distress and difficulties. It was noted that a cost-neutral scheme, which supported both claimants and the authority would be welcomed.

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) there be no change to the local council tax support scheme for 2026/27.

272 COUNCIL TAX BASE 2026/27

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the report on the Council Tax Base 2026/27. He advised that the Council Tax Base was the measure used for calculating Council Tax and was used by both the billing authority and the major precepting authorities, including the County Council and the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner, in the calculation of their council tax requirements.

Members heard that the calculation of the Council Tax Base was governed by statutory regulation and that the Council had limited discretion. Details of the calculation method were shown in the sections 2.1 to 2.4 of the report. The outcome of the calculation was that the 2026/27 Council Tax Base for the district be set at

£65,819.15. The breakdown by parish was shown in table 2 of the report. The figure for 2024/25 had been £65,314.04, representing an increase of £505.11 in the last year.

Councillor Brittain proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. Councillor Swainston 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 – (A) The 2026/27 Council Tax Base for the district is set as 65,819.15 as calculated in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012.

273 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

There were no Motions on Notice.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm

Chairman
Date