

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 23 JULY 2025, AT 7.00 PM

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

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Michele Aves	- Committee Support Officer
James Ellis	- Director for Legal, Policy and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Peter Mannings	- Committee Support Officer
Katie Mogan	- Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Sara Saunders	- Director for Place
Helen Standen	- Interim Chief Executive

116 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. He reminded Members that an Extraordinary Council meeting had been arranged for 20 August 2025, to ratify the appointment of the new Chief Executive Officer.

The Chair also extended the council's best wishes to past councillor Norma Symonds, who was currently unwell.

117 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Goldspink also extended her best wishes to former councillor Norma Symonds, who had recently suffered a stroke and was currently in hospital in Chelmsford. Councillor Goldspink advised that she would be arranging for a card to be sent wishing her a full and speedy recovery.

The Leader said that the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager was leaving the council, he thanked her for her service and wished her well. The Leader said that he hoped that Members were able to have a good summer break.

118 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Burt, Deering, Deffley, Dumont, Dunlop and Councillor Watson.

119 MINUTES - 14 MAY 2025

Councillor Connolly proposed, and Councillor Copley seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2025, be approved as a correct record, and be signed by the Chair.

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

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2025, be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chair.

120 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Goldspink declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item 10 (Community Governance Review – Final Recommendations), on the grounds that she was a Member of Bishop’s Stortford Town Council, and representations had been made by the Town Council.

Councillor Horner declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item 10 (Community Governance Review – Final Recommendations), on the grounds that he was a Member of Bishop’s Stortford Town Council, and representations had been made by the Town Council.

Councillor Swainston declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item 10 (Community Governance Review – Final Recommendations), on the grounds that she was a Member of Bishop’s Stortford Town Council, and representations had been made by the Town Council.

The Director for Legal, Policy and Governance said that Councillors that were dual hatters on various councils did not need to make declarations of interest in respect of Agenda Item 10 (Community Governance Review – Final Recommendations).

121 PETITIONS

Two petitions were submitted to the meeting.

122 SAVE HAVERS SHOPS FROM CLOSURE

Councillor Jacobs presented the ‘Save Havers shops from closure’ petition on behalf of the petition organiser.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability responded to the petition.

I would like to thank residents for presenting this petition, and to all those that have signed it.

I would like to open by saying that I am in wholehearted agreement with the principal points of this petition, and I would hope all councillors within this chamber support it.

Local shops are an invaluable local asset, providing local employment and services, a sense of community, and reduce the need for car journeys. The Havers shops are clearly very well located to serve the local community.

The title of the petition is 'save Havers shops from closure', and I am delighted to say that the Council has no plans to close the Havers shops. What has been decided is that the council is going to sell the property. We are currently working with our agent to agree marketing details, and the parade will be offered to the market within the next few weeks.

Since the decision to sell the property was announced, we have been approached by eight different parties who have expressed an interest in buying the parade. I understand that all eight of these potential buyers are seeking to purchase the parade as an investment, looking to retain the tenants and re-let the empty shops. None of the parties have indicated they would be looking to demolish the property and redevelop the site, although of course they may decide to do so later. However, the age and condition of the properties mean that some kind of refurbishment is probably needed soon, which may have an impact on the businesses.

The petition is also posing the question of whether the council can protect local businesses. Probably the best way to do this would be to retain ownership, thus retaining control of rental rates, but unfortunately, the weakening of local government is making this progressively more difficult. Parades such as this one were built post-war, along with the council houses they were designed to serve. Once the council houses around them were sold off, this led to councils owning retail properties scattered around the district. Whereas maintenance would previously be contracted for the entire property portfolio in an area, the loss of the houses significantly increased the cost of managing the shops, due to lack of economies of scale. In addition, as the properties aged, the maintenance requirements increased. The effect of this was that the council only carried out minimal maintenance

and this led to the gradual degradation of the properties. Perhaps if the council had more funds, it could have done better than this, but as we know, since 2010 local government funding has been significantly reduced, and there is no sign of this changing in the foreseeable future. The effect of this national policy has been to force local councils to withdraw from providing certain non-essential services. This council is additionally hamstrung due to the particularly high level of debt that it has accumulated over the last 5 years or so, which makes asset sales attractive as they help reduce the debt.

In contrast to the council's position, the private sector is well placed to manage commercial property. Private companies may have spare funds available, giving them easier access to new capital and much lower costs. In addition, companies who specialise in this business will have the knowledge and expertise to ensure the properties are maintained and tenanted. Their costs are likely to be also lower, because they may have economies of scale if they own other properties, and because they don't carry the council costs associated with ensuring that public money is spent wisely.

The council must decide how to use its limited funds in the best interest of council taxpayers. In this case the sale of the parade will allow the council to reduce debt, which will help protect other essential services the council provides. The sale will mean the parade transfers to private ownership, but there is no reason to believe that this will harm the immediate prospects of the parade. There is a cost of course, and that is that private ownership brings uncertainty, and we are often afraid of uncertainty, but this fear will hopefully turn out to be unjustified.

The best way to preserve local businesses is to support them, and I am sure the council would consider promoting community initiatives supporting local shopping.

It is very reassuring that there are so many signatures to this petition, and I am hopeful that with the support of the

local community the Havers Parade has a very bright future.

123 BACK OFF OUR BINS!

Ryan Henson presented the 'Back off our bins' petition.

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability responded to the petition.

Many thanks for taking the time to collect and present this petition which dates from March and April this year.

I think that it is worth making a few clarifications to some of the assertions made within the wording of the document. Firstly, the so called "disastrous new bin collection policy" was discussed and approved by the then Tory run administration of East Herts and was led by the then Tory member for Bishop's Stortford Thorley Manor who has since moved his allegiance to Reform UK. The public consultation process was run by the previous administration in 2022 immediately prior to the debate and final decision at the Executive in October 2022. The main elements of the policy reflect the legislation passed by the previous Tory central government on Simpler Recycling legislation that is the law of the land. The current Green Lib Dem administration picked up this decision in May 2023. However, having said that this administration is fully behind both the central legislation and the East Herts policy decisions. This is the right approach. Within East Herts we currently throw away more than we recycle and this is unsustainable, the express intention of all these changes is to increase our recycling rates and therefore reduce the amount of waste that goes to be incinerated. This latter point is incredibly important as a carbon tax is set to be introduced on the flue gases of the incinerators that we use and that will prove to be a very significant additional cost to either HCC or the new successor Unitary Authorities but should in of itself drive further waste reduction initiatives.

The wording of the petition states that “From August, they are cutting bin collections to once every 3 weeks”, just for clarity, there will be a collection each week from each household. So, for example, week 1 the residual waste will be collected, week 2 the mixed card and paper will be collected, week 3 the mixed recycling will be collected. If you pay for the brown bin service, then this will be collected every two weeks. Food waste will of course be collected each week from every household. Approximately 50% of households will have 4 bins to manage, the remaining 50% will by choice have a further bin making 5 for them to manage.

A point worth emphasising is that if residents forget to put out their bins, then there will indeed be a three week wait for the next cycle not the 6 weeks as quoted in the petition. This is what we as residents do as out part of the deal, we pop the right things in the right bin and put it out on the right day. That’s it. The council does the rest come rain or shine.

This administration is very aware of the discomfort that these or indeed any changes generate for residents and are very grateful for the positive comments that have been received. There’s no way of arguing that a wheelie bin adds anything to a garden or back yard and an additional one is potentially a nuisance if you have limited space. The upside of being a part of this change is the incredible positive difference increasing our recycling can have on our futures, all our futures.

Will things go wrong with the new approach – almost certainly. Things do go wrong, take this petition for example, out of the total 471 signatures there are 22 people who have signed it twice and 1 that has signed it three times. So, things can go awry. We are currently servicing more than 107k properties and so yes things may not go smoothly over the first few weeks. Our plea to residents is that we support the waste team in their endeavours and help make it the success that we know we will benefit from for years to come. The current changes will soon become the new normal.

124 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

125 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

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

126 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 3 JUNE AND 8 JULY 2025

The Leader of the Council presented a report setting out recommendations to the Council made by the Executive at its meetings on 3 June 2025 and 8 July 2025.

127 UPDATE OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said a Statement of Community Involvement, or an SCI, was an evolving document that must be updated at least every 5 years to meet the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 (as amended). She said that an SCI simply set out how the council will consult with the public on planning matters.

Members were advised that the previous SCI was adopted in 2019, and this report sought adoption of an updated version, as detailed in Appendix A of the report. The review of the SCI provided an opportunity to update the document to align with the Council's current priorities, policies, objectives and procedures.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the SCI aligned with the LEAF priorities in the Council's corporate plan and the Council's core value of being a listening council. These were both particularly pertinent to the SCI as they provided a strong focus on the Council being open and transparent whilst promoting listening and engaging with the community in a fair and inclusive way.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the updated SCI provided ways for the council to achieve that within the planning context. The update also included the changes to the constitution regarding planning matters as agreed in February 2025. She said that the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 had several implications for planning, with many details however still to be set out via secondary legislation.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the update to the SCI reflected current knowledge of the legislation and allowed for transition to meet the new requirements once further information was released.

Members were advised that the updated SCI now aligned with the process set out in the timetable to produce the District Plan within the Council's local development scheme.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the main changes were set out within the report. In summary, this included more information on the principles of consultation and how the council would implement those principles within planning engagement. There would also be more details in respect of consultation methods and how digital technology maybe used within the planning consultations to help make them more accessible and efficient.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that there would be an engagement strategy template to support preparation of planning policy consultations. She said that there would be new section for neighbourhood plan reviews explaining how that process worked and how communities could get involved.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that an equalities impact assessment could be found in appendix B to the report and this assessed the impacts the updated SCI would have to different groups in the communities.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that once adopted, the SCI before Members would replace the October 2019 version and would be published on website.

Councillor Glover-Ward proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. Councillor Swainston seconded the proposal and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Jacobs referred to section 6 of the SCI in respect of consultation on planning applications. He said that the planning portal was the primary way in which residents can comment on applications. He referred to the challenge of identifying key documents in amongst the hundreds of documents, which were often named confusingly.

Councillor Jacobs asked if the key documents could be flagged in some way, as this would be extremely helpful. He recognised that the planning portal was not a council product and could not therefore be changed. He said that the council could however make changes to the way it was used.

Councillor Jacobs said that there was a problem with some documents in that they did not display clearly on computer screens. He highlighted a reserved matters planning application in Bishop's Stortford where some trees were being considered for removal, and it had been very difficult to identify which trees were due to be cut down and which weren't.

Councillor Jacobs said that a principle should be adopted that if a document could not be read clearly on a computer screen, then it shouldn't be accepted as part of the planning validation process.

Councillor Woolcombe referred to paragraph 2.2 on page 37, and the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 stipulation that the council no longer needed an SCI. He commented on why Members were considering this if the document was going to become redundant.

Councillor Woollcombe said that he thought the document was excellent and should be adopted, especially as East Herts was a listening council and the SCI establishes how the council would do that. He asked how the council was going to continue to prepare and deliver SCIs for the constituents that Members represented.

Councillor Woollcombe said that Appendix B gave an excellent overview of how the District Plan will be consulted upon. He asked if that was the plan that was going to be adopted and, if not, how the document would be adapted, and how Councillors could have input into the plan for the consultation on the District Plan.

Councillor Glover-Ward said that as regards to submitting comments on the planning portal, the public could also comment via the generic planning email, which was planning@eastherts.gov.uk or via any councillor. She said that Members should always forward comments onto the planning department if they received any from the public about a planning application.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that as regards flagging up key documents on the planning portal, she would take that away and talk to officers about whether that was possible. Members were advised in respect of documents not displaying properly, all documents were checked as part of the validation process.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that if Members could notify her outside of the planning application reference and the document, and she would request that Officers investigate this to see what had happened.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth reiterated that there was only primary legislation at this time, and that the council did not yet have access to secondary legislation. She said that Officers were waiting for this before further items were developed.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth confirmed that a paper on the District Plan was coming later in the agenda, and that a sub-committee of the Executive was where District Councillors could have input into the District Plan.

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 Statement of Community Involvement 2025, as detailed at Appendix A to this report, be approved for adoption.

128 HERTFORDSHIRE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that East Herts Council had agreed to update the District Plan with a view to commence formal work in early 2026. She said that to facilitate this update, a vast quantity of underpinning evidence was required to support the strategies that the council will ultimately choose.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that various evidence-based studies would inform each policy in the District Plan to ensure that these were based on comprehensive and robust information that addressed key local priorities and issues.

Members were advised that the Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Study was commissioned by the Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Planning Partnership (HIPP) to update the original 2011 green infrastructure plan and to provide a joint approach on green infrastructure planning.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the current District Plan was informed by the 2011 Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan, which was endorsed as part of the evidence base to inform the current District Plan. She said that this Hertfordshire

Green Infrastructure Strategy would, if adopted, form part of the evidence base for the new District Plan.

Members were advised that the full evidence base was detailed within the Statement of Community Involvement and this could be seen under the environment and landscape scheme. The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that there was a plethora of evidence documents including items such as the green belt review, climate change study and the water cycle study.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the purpose of an evidence base was to support and inform the strategy and policies that were eventually included in the District Plan and that for the avoidance of doubt, there was no hierarchy in the evidence base.

Members were advised that the Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy provided a strategic framework for considering green infrastructure within the district and covered 6 main GI themes, as detailed within the agenda.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that green infrastructure was multi-functional with a range of benefits for people, nature and the climate, which underlined why it was so important it was conserved and enhanced in East Herts.

Members were advised that the strategy presented an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of Hertfordshire's current green infrastructure network and identified strategic priorities and actions to restore and improve green infrastructure in Hertfordshire.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth advised that Officers considered, and she concurred, that the strategic analysis and actions in the Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure HIPP strategy provided an overarching framework that can usefully inform the new District Plan.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that now that work had commenced on collating the evidence

base, it was recommended that the strategy was agreed as part of the evidence base for the District Plan.

Councillor Glover-Ward proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported, subject to a slight amendment that had been agreed by the Executive, as detailed on page 33 of the agenda. Councillor Copley seconded the proposal and reserved her right to speak.

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 Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2022), attached in three sections as Appendix A, B and C, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform the new East Herts District Plan, and

(B) the Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2022) be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications.

129 MEMBERSHIP OF THE DISTRICT PLAN EXECUTIVE PANEL

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the council had agreed that a review of the adopted District Plan should be undertaken. She said that the process of preparing a District Plan was a lengthy and complex exercise but was essential to provide plan led development.

Members were advised that the process of updating the District Plan, which could take several years from start to finish, required a wide range of supporting evidence and was subject to public engagement and independent examination through various stages and procedures that were set out in law.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the current adopted District Plan was enabled by the District Plan Executive Panel, which consisted of a sub-group of Members whose remit was to make recommendations to Council via the Executive on matters associated with the District Plan.

Members were advised that the intention, as set out in the agenda, was to reconvene the District Plan Executive Panel in advance of formal work on the new District Plan starting in early 2026. She said there was an ongoing and continuous need to inform Members of progress both on the preparation of the District Plan, and in respect of feedback from the community.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the preparation process for the District Plan could be time consuming for Executive meetings, which clearly needed to consider other council business, and which may not allow for Members to drill down into the details of a particular issue.

Members were advised that the District Plan Executive Panel would allow for a full consideration before items were then recommended onto the full Executive, and/or full Council. Three Executive Members would sit on the Panel and with all other Members able to attend open sessions, so that everyone could have full input to the discussion.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth advised that all Members would be able to question Planning Policy Officers on the pros and cons of an issue. She said the District Plan Executive Panel had the flexibility to convene meetings that were open to the public with agendas and minutes made available on the council's website.

Members were advised that any items considered by the District Plan Executive Panel would be presented to the Executive and to Full Council. Councillor Glover-Ward

proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported.

Councillor Goldspink seconded the proposal and said that she was delighted that this huge amount of work was being taken on, and that she was extra pleased that all Councillors were being invited to attend if there was a particular part of an agenda that was being discussed. Councillor Goldspink said it was excellent that this was going to be an open and collaborative process.

Councillor Hart said that it was great that the District Plan Executive Panel was going to be an open meeting for people to contribute. She asked how information was going to be disseminated so that Members knew what was coming up for discussion.

Councillor E Buckmaster said that the dissemination of information took place as had been described by the Executive Member for Planning and Growth. He said that the meetings were not interactive but gave the ability for Members to ask their questions and to ask questions on behalf of residents. He said that there was a lot of reading of technical information and Officers were there with the Executive Members to provide the answers.

Councillor Estop welcomed the proposed way forward and said that an alternative would be a policy committee. She said that the most important things was that there was Member involvement, Member leadership and openness in the process.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth thanked Councillor E Buckmaster for his comments and said that she would expect that Officers would publish agendas in the normal way as the Council would for any public meeting of the authority, i.e. 5 clear working days in advance.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth advised that she would endeavour to comply with the requirement that Executive Members include updates in the Members

Information Bulletin to cover what they had been working on in their portfolio areas of responsibility.

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 District Plan Executive Panel is reconvened as a sub-group of Executive for the specific purposes of advancing the new District Plan;

(B) Three Members are drawn from the Executive to sit on the District Plan Executive Panel, namely Councillors Vicky Glover-Ward (Chair), Ben Crystall and Joseph Dumont, with Councillor Tim Hoskin nominated as a substitute for Green Party members and Councillor Chris Wilson for Councillor Joseph Dumont, and

(C) The Council's website is updated to reflect the formation and purpose of the Panel and forms the primary source of information pertaining to the Panel.

130 GILSTON AREA MONITORING FRAMEWORK

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that planning permission had been granted in January 2025 for 10,000 new homes in the Gilston area, alongside provision for two new major roads and bridges and the many facilities required for these neighbourhoods to thrive.

Members were advised that the proposals were of a scale and complexity previously unseen in East Herts and policy DEL4 of the District Plan required the council to monitor its progress annually. The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the Section 106 agreement associated with the planning permission also contained monitoring obligations for the provision of data and information to assist in decision making relating primarily

to education, transport and travel planning, and also economic development.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said there were also triggers and milestones for the delivery of onsite infrastructure and the payment of financial contributions towards the provision of offsite infrastructure. She said that to provide a structured approach to the monitoring and delivery of the development, a monitoring framework had been developed.

Members were advised that a review group comprising of Officers from East Herts Council and Hertfordshire County Council, in addition to Officers required in the Section 106 agreement would ensure the co-ordination and oversight of the various monitoring activities.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that this group was not a decision-making body but a means of ensuring that there was co-ordination and oversight between the two signatories of the Section 106 agreement. She said that this allowed for discussion on all aspects of the development between the bodies responsible for monitoring and in some instances for delivery.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that East Herts Council and Hertfordshire County Council had obligations in the Section 106 agreement both as individual bodies and in collaboration. She said that it was important that Officers had a safe space in which to conduct these meetings.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the monitoring framework set out the council's approach to how information about the progress of the development would be publicised and shared with local communities and other key stakeholders. She said that its objectives were to provide a mechanism for tracking the progress of development throughout the build out of the planning permission to help ensure delivery of homes,

infrastructure and mitigations in accordance with the required development milestones and triggers, and a record of delivery.

Members were advised that late comments had been received from the Parishes of Hunsdon and Eastwick and Gilston, after the Democratic Services deadline. The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the council wished to take the opportunity to respond. As a listening council, the input of local communities was welcomed and encouraged in respect of all development activities across the district.

Members were advised that the council had established several new forums to facilitate community engagement in matters relating to planning applications and the delivery of permitted schemes. She said that the community were the eyes and ears on the ground and were often best placed to be able to advise when impacts are arising, particularly during construction.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that monitoring framework described the technical groups that had been and would be established to monitor the Gilston area developments. These groups would work with the developers and the county council in their role as authorities responsible for education and transport matters.

Members were advised that these groups would be responsible for handling sensitive data, and it was therefore not appropriate for a public engagement in these technical Officer groups. There were a plethora of opportunities in place to ensure that parish representatives in the community were informed of the programme monitoring and delivery matters and for the council to receive feedback from the community.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that parish councillors and the neighbourhood planning group had a monthly meeting via the local estate steering group, where on the ground day to day issues with landowners

and construction impacts were discussed. There was also the Gilston Area Community Forum and the Gilston Area Shadow Body, which would become a community management trust.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that there was a monthly district councillor catch up with Councillors Dunlop and Dumont, where Councillor Dunlop was specifically asked questions received from the parish councils and the neighbourhood planning group, so that he could feed back these responses to the respective bodies.

Members were advised that the Gilston.info website could be used by the community and parish councillors to report matters with developers, and also allowed posting and pinning information in relation to their activities. As was set out in the framework, annual reports would be prepared, and Officers were in the process of preparing material for the East Herts website, using the planning application portals to track the milestones within the Section 106 agreement.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that notwithstanding these different activities, normal regulatory requirements would continue to apply to the Gilston area development. She said that when applications were made, consultation was carried out with statutory consultees, neighbours and interested parties as applicable to each type of proposal. If changes were made to legal agreements, a planning application would be required, and consultation would be undertaken.

Members were reminded that while parish councils were statutory consultees, this covered the application process and did not extend to monitoring ongoing development. In line with monitoring on other schemes, the council would not extend representation on the delivery and monitoring group to include councillor representatives nor the parishes as this was primarily an Officer group.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that there was an abundance of communication channels for the residents who were most affected by the Gilston area developments, and the council thanked them for their continued engagement.

Councillor Glover-Ward proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. Councillor Thomas seconded the proposal and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor E Buckmaster mentioned the representations from the two affected parishes. He said that it was important that the two parish councils had a direct participation and an effective voice on the delivery and monitoring group as local representatives of the most affected residents.

Councillor E Buckmaster said that, as someone who had been closely involved in development within his own ward, the council needed to make sure that there was a forum and a way of ensuring that things were actioned dynamically.

Councillor E Buckmaster mentioned a reference in a letter for the need for a web-based monitoring tool that was updated in real time, which was essential for transparency. He said that the council should keep an open mind as the development unfolded, as there would be all kinds of issues that local people will be concerned about. He said that the local people would be getting directly in touch with parish, district and county councillors, who will want something done rapidly.

Councillor Devonshire said that in addition to Eastwick and Gilston and Hunsdon Parishes, he would like to see High Wych Parish included, as they also had concerns and would like to be kept informed.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that she understood why parish councillors wanted to be on the monitoring and development group. She pointed out

that there were no District Councillors or Hertfordshire County Councillors on it. She said that this group was a tactical operation as opposed to one that took strategic direction.

Members were reminded that councillors were here to provide the strategic direction for the council, and not to get involved in day-to-day matters. The Executive for Planning and Growth said that this was a tactical item, and it would not be appropriate for councillors from the two councils that were signatories to the Section 106 agreement to sit on the group, let alone a parish council that did not have monitoring duties within its remit under the relevant act. She said that she would expand on that when she wrote back to the parish councils.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that she had met with representatives from High Wych at a community forum a couple of times, that she was aware of their interest, and that they were being kept informed.

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 Gilston Area Monitoring Framework, attached at Appendix A, be endorsed.

131 HATFIELD FOREST MITIGATION STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the forest was a designated site of specific scientific interest and a national nature reserve, which gave local people unique access, being in easy reach of East Herts residents. She said that alongside Uttlesford, Harlow and Epping Forest Councils, East Herts had been working in partnership with Natural England and the National Trust to agree how to mitigate the detrimental impact of increasing visitor numbers.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that over the last decade the forest had experienced a doubling of visitor numbers which was unsustainable, with features being degraded and damaged. She said that the report outlined the new arrangements for the collection of a tariff to be applied to residential development in the 'zone of influence' – which concerned the eastern part of East Herts as shown in Appendix D.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the Gilston area – GA1 of the district plan, would be excluded from the tariff due to the extensive green infrastructure within the development. She said that tariffs would be collected immediately following the passing of the report.

Councillor Glover-Ward proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Horner seconded the proposal and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Devonshire said that he was conflicted on the matter, as the National Trust had other income streams. He said that the additional costs on developers would be passed onto house buyers, but conceded that residents did enjoy the area, with the tariff only £540.

Councillor Estop said that she had reservations regarding the proposal, and that she would abstain from the vote. She said that the report and the context was entirely the information about Hatfield Forest and the National Trust's own mitigation report, with the important schedule of mitigation which the planning service use in terms of development missing.

Councillor Estop said that the recommendation should include that the Director of Place maintains discretion in relation to other aspects of planning applications. She said that in relation to Gilston being exempt, this was a huge area of people who could go to the forest, and that the tariff was a flat rate, regardless of dwelling size.

Councillor Parsad-Wyatt said that it was fantastic to have the forest on the doorstep. He asked for clarification on the levy, i.e. if this was calculated the same across the entire zone of influence, or if it was proportional to usage.

Councillor Jacobs asked if the tariff was index linked or if it would be increased over time.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that in relation to Gilston, there was so much green space on its doorstep that there would be no need for residents to drive to the forest. She said that she would ask Officers to give a detailed technical answer with regards to the levy and confirmed that there would be regular reviews on the zone of influence tariffs.

Councillor E Buckmaster asked if the tariffs were equal or proportionate – citing Uttlesford's levy of £1300.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth said that the tariffs were proportionate to the level of development in each district.

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 final version of the National Trust Hatfield Forest Mitigation Strategy (version 6, attached at Appendix A), which includes the Site Access Management and Monitoring Measures (SAMMS), is approved as a basis for seeking a financial contribution for mitigation at Hatfield Forest;

(B) The apportionment of the SAMMS between the four LPAs via a hybrid method, taking equal account of both the percentage visitor impact and the proportion of new housing relative to existing within the Zol, is approved;

(C) The apportioned SAMMS tariff for East Herts District Council is set at £540.07;

(D) The tariff is applicable to new residential dwellings with immediate effect, subject to transitional arrangements to agree appropriate legal, financial and administrative mechanisms being brought into place to allow the collection and transfer of funds.

(E) The draft Governance Agreement (Appendix B) between the four local planning authorities and the National Trust as landowners is approved and delegated authority is given to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to work on the final version with an expectation that this is signed and sealed in Autumn 2025.

132 REFRESHED LEAF PRIORITIES AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024-25

Councillor Crystall said that the first corporate plan of the joint administration was approved by council in February 2024. He said that the corporate plan set out the strategic priorities of the joint administration grouped under the acronym LEAF.

Members were reminded that beneath each of the LEAF headings were actions that Officers were tasked with delivering. There were also a series of further actions, projects and measures were then implemented across the council at an operational level.

Councillor Crystall said that with the 2024/25 year completed, the progress against the LEAF priorities had been assessed and report was presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for discussion in June 2025. He said that this was a very useful session, and he thanked Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Crystall said that for 2025/26, the LEAF framework would be maintained with some updates to the

actions and objectives reflecting the progress that has been made but also to take account of new challenges that had arisen and needed to be accommodated.

Members were advised that the updated LEAF framework was presented in the report alongside the previous version to help highlight the changes to Members. Councillor Crystall said that this follows from the discussions at Overview and Scrutiny where Members wanted to see the two iterations of LEAF side by side.

Councillor Crystall proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Goldspink seconded the proposal and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Williamson referred to Appendix A in the Overview and Scrutiny papers and the recommendation. He asked if there were any metrics of how performance was being measured in respect of the LEAF priorities.

Councillor McAndrew welcome the report and referred to the parking strategy and the objective of implementing the new strategy and other options including the LCWIP, to encourage active travel. He said that the LCWIP had not yet gone out to public consultation and was dependent on government funding. He said that he was not quite sure how the LCWIP was relevant to this.

Councillor McAndrew referred to the government's withdrawal of national support for neighbourhood planning. He asked how the council intended to ensure that parishes, especially those with limited resources, could still develop or effectively update neighbourhood plans. He referred to a specific support that the council could provide.

Councillor McAndrew said that given the council's 2023 climate emergency declaration, which called for urgent action to cut emissions by 2027, why was the air quality action plan objective for 2025-26 been narrowed to implementation rather than expanding this with new measures.

Councillor McAndrew said that the climate emergency declaration demanded bold action in respect of the Herts nature recovery strategy to protect local habitats. He asked if this change would deliver new resources, land protections or local biodiversity targets.

Councillor Jacobs thanked Councillor Crystall for bringing this matter before Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He referred to the actions set out in section f regarding making East Herts a more inclusive environment for the community. He said that he did not believe that this was reflected in the actions and if everything set out in the plan was completed, he did not feel that this would deliver a fairer and more inclusive East Herts.

Councillor Jacobs said that Bishop's Stortford Town Council had a diversity and equality sub-committee that was delivering great actions, and the council could learn some lessons from those actions.

Councillor Devonshire said that two of the LEAF priorities mentioned listening, opening and transparent and another mentioned acting with the community. He said that both priorities were light on consultation events, and he posed a question as to how to reach other residents. He made the point that consultation events reached a restrictive proportion of residents.

Councillor Estop said that under listening, open and transparent, she said that regarding the matter entitled encourage residents she did not quite understand that and felt that this should be two things, i.e. encourage to use digital channels and secondly, enable those who were digitally able to talk to us by phone.

Councillor Estop said that under acting with the community, she said that did not understand what was meant by prioritising improved sustainability standards in reference to updating the local plan. She said that this wording could be removed.

Councillor Estop referred to prioritising actions relating to affordable housing and asked if the administration could review that and ask how to refer to affordable housing in this document.

Councillor Hart said that under the fair and inclusive heading in support of those facing homelessness or recovering from it and involving them consultation and community activities. She said that the very nature of homelessness disenfranchised those residents from community.

Councillor Hart said that this statement itself would not address the real problems of homelessness, and it was not clear how this would be achieved. She said that she doubted that this would be achieved with more consultation and community activities.

Councillor Glover-Ward said that this paper was a midterm refresh and was for two years. She said that the LCWIP was out for public consultation in autumn and it was anticipated that it would be delivered sometime next year.

Members were advised that this would allow year to implement some of the LCWIP. Councillor Glover-Ward acknowledged that this was reliant on government money, but if no one had applied for the funding then this would not be implemented.

Councillor Glover-Ward said that in terms of the Neighbourhood Plans, the government had withdrawn the grants to parish and town councils, and East Herts Council would not be replacing those grants. Members were advised that an area had already been designated at the last meeting of the Executive, and the Stocking Pelham Parish Council had confirmed that they were going still ahead even though there was no grant.

Councillor Glover-Ward said that the District Council would be keeping on the Officer that does the Neighbourhood Plans. She said that the council would

continue to supply the level of resources that had been supplied previously.

Councillor Glover-Ward said that the council did not want to create lots more neighbourhood plans, as the council had limited amounts of resources, and Officers were taking on an enormous task in updating the District Plan.

Councillor Glover-Ward said the Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Strategy was out for consultation, and she suggested that Members read the document and submit a consultation response accordingly to Hertfordshire County Council.

Councillor E Buckmaster said that he understood that the LCWIP the consultation would be from 25 September for six weeks.

Councillor Daar referred to the cultural strategy and said that UKSPF funding had been used to launch the first Arts in East Herts, and a lot of those events were free or low cost. She cited some examples of such events.

Councillor Hoskin said that air quality was not improving, and the only way that air quality was getting better was because of legislation. He said that this was a sad reflection, but the action plan will only produce results there if people start doing something different. He said that he had working with Councillor E Buckmaster and expert Officers from Hertfordshire County Council in respect of Hockerill Junction.

Councillor Hoskin said that testing that was about to commence, and he referred to whether there was a political will to do something about it. He said that the current legal limit at Hockerill had been reached, and this figure could reduce if the government implemented tighter legislation.

Councillor Crystall said that there were about 30 metrics, and he apologised that these were not in the report. He said that he could provide a copy of the paper. Councillor

Crystall that under the fair and inclusive section, there were a few other aspects to making things fairer and more inclusive. He said that were other aspects to making things fairer and more inclusive and maintaining and improving council services and make things more efficient.

Councillor Crystall said that it could always be argued that more could be done to make strategies fairer and more inclusive, and it would have been good to hear what Bishop Stortford Town Council has done.

Councillor Crystall said that a question Members had been asking for years was how who to reach people who did not respond to consultations, specifically young people, the elderly or those who did not have access to the internet. He talked about Old River Lane and the public square consultation, and talking to schools.

Councillor Crystall said that a few events had been held at market stalls, and there would always be people the council would not reach. He said that the council could try to look for new ways to reach them. He referred to digital communication channels such as tiktok and snapchat.

Councillor Crystall said that the council had a limited capacity to expand staff numbers to answer phone calls in peak times. He said that the council that the refreshed priorities did not directly address homelessness, and all the council could do was to ensure that the authority helped as many homeless people as possible. Councillor Goldspink summarised the actions being undertaken to address homelessness in East Herts.

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 Council adopt the revised LEAF priorities.

Councillor Glover-Ward proposed that the meeting adjourn for a 5-minute comfort break. Councillor Hopewell seconded the motion. The motion was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Council meeting be adjourned for a 5-minute comfort break.

133 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chair of the Community Governance Review working group, Councillor Joe Thomas presented the report. He said that the group had spent 12 months carefully considering and extensively consulting to arrive at the report's final 12 recommendations, which would serve communities better.

Councillor Thomas said that in relation to Aston Parish Council, the recommendation to defer a decision until 2026 would enable the number of registered electors in Hazel Park to increase.

Councillor Thomas said that the recommendation to extend Bishop's Stortford Town Council to run parallel with Thorley Street made most sense to give new communities effective representation.

Councillor Thomas said that with regards to Sawbridgeworth, opposition was that warding would destroy the fabric of the community, but other town councils worked well and benefitted from warding. He said that the recommendation was therefore to ward into 4, along the polling district boundaries.

Councillor Thomas said that the same principles applied to the recommendation for Buntingford, dividing into 2 wards along the B1038.

Councillor Thomas said that throughout the process the group had been guided by the statutory requirements,

and he acknowledged the passion and engagement of contributors throughout the process.

Councillor Thomas proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Nicholls seconded the proposal and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Williamson said that the Conservative Group had two amendments that they wished to put forward, which related to the recommendations for Sawbridgeworth and Buntingford. He said that the amendments had been circulated to Members before the meeting, giving them the opportunity to read them.

Councillor Parsad-Wyatt proposed the following amendment:

Amend point iii of Recommendation (a) of the report as follows:

- Replace point iii) (“That Sawbridgeworth Town Council be warded [...] West ward = 4.”)
- With: iii) That Sawbridgeworth Town Council remains unchanged.

So that the amended recommendation (a) reads as follows:

Recommendation (a):

That the proposals set out below be adopted by the Council as Final Recommendations for the purposes of the Community Governance Review: [...]

iii. That Sawbridgeworth Town Council remains unchanged.

Councillor Parsad-Wyatt spoke to the amendment, he extended his thanks to the working group and said that although the majority of the proposals were proportionate, he could not vote in favour of all of the recommendations in their current form.

Councillor Parsad-Wyatt said that the views of Sawbridgeworth residents and councillors could not be ignored, and to do so would be in contravention of the purpose of the review. He said that the amendment to keep Sawbridgeworth unchanged was not about party politics, with objections to warding by the town council cross-party. He said that this rare unity should be taken seriously, and that if the council was a listening council, they should listen when communities responded strongly.

Councillor Parsad-Wyatt said that the main issue with the proposal was electoral representation and equality. He said that warding based on the current polling districts would see 1 councillor with 174 electors, and 5 other councillors, with a ratio of 1 to 730, which would give an imbalance, and which went against guidance from The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

Councillor Parsad-Wyatt said that the proposal also risked the identity and cohesion of Sawbridgeworth as a community, which was a town where all facilities were centrally located. He said that the proposed ward names did not reflect geographically, with no consultation regarding these launched with residents or the town council.

Councillor Parsad-Wyatt said that the guidance was clear, that due consideration should be given to the preference of the local community. He said that the electorate forecasts for the next 5 years had not been provided, and that these contraventions undermined confidence in the review process, risking reputational damage and legal challenges.

Councillor Parsad-Wyatt said that the intention was not to block change forever, but to remove the flawed recommendation for now. He said that there was an option to come back after the review, with proper consultation and communication with residents. He asked that Members look beyond party politics and do what was

right for the community, protecting electoral fairness and proving that the council did listen.

Councillor E Buckmaster seconded the amendment and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Hoskin questioned how, without consultation, it was known that the public did not want the proposal.

Councillor R Buckmaster said that she has spoken with lots of residents. She said that the review was not publicised fully and that she was appalled that the proposal was being put forward.

Councillor Jacobs assured Members that the suggestion that the working party hadn't listened to concerns was not the case, adding that they had listened carefully. He said that for the working party to not agree with comments, was not the same as ignoring them.

Councillor Jacobs said that the working group could not find another example in the country of a town which was not warded. He said that as a ward councillor, it was much easier to do his job when representing part of a town.

Councillor Jacobs addressed the point of the proposed uneven ward sizes. He said that this was due to the significantly smaller hamlet of Spellbrook, which was separate from Sawbridgeworth, but within the boundary of Sawbridgeworth parish, with its own primary school. He said that it was definitely not part of Sawbridgeworth town, with very strong argument to separate its representation on the town council.

Councillor Daar asked what Sawbridgeworth Town Council did to circulate that the review was taking place to residents.

Councillor Hopewell echoed the comments of Councillor Jacobs. She said that in her experience of being a Hertford Town Councillor, warding enriched conversations

and that there was no fighting over resources for particular wards.

Councillor E Buckmaster said that the matter should be discussed at a public Town Council meeting, with an agenda published in advance. He said that he had not heard what the benefits of warding Sawbridgeworth were, and that no residents had come forward to ask why the town was not warded or ask who their representative was.

Councillor E Buckmaster said that he had served on Sawbridgeworth Town Council for 18 years, and that nothing which was ward specific had ever arisen. He said that residents addressed the Town Council as a whole, and that issues were escalated to upper authorities when necessary.

Councillor E Buckmaster said that Sawbridgeworth had a strong history of independent Members, which warding could discourage. He said that the current choice of candidates across the town in a single ward gave the greatest form of democracy, with electors able to vote for a mix of both party and independent candidates. He urged Members not to take this ability away and said that if it could not be articulated properly why residents would benefit from warding, then it should not be done.

Councillor Parsad-Wyatt referred again to the review process, he said that this did not give an accurate view of Sawbridgeworth, and misunderstood points of electoral representation and equality. He asked that Members vote for the amendment and that the process came back to be reviewed again.

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

Councillor Holt proposed the following amendment;

Amend point IV of Recommendation (a) of the report as follows:

- Replace point IV) “That Buntingford Town Council be split into two wards named North and South along the B1038 with six councillors representing each ward.”
- With: IV) “That Buntingford Town Council remains unchanged.”

Councillor Holt thanked all of the Councillors and officers involved in the working group. He said that in summary he believed that he had a duty to speak up where the wishes of the community were being overlooked, and that it felt like a generic governance structure was being pushed on Buntingford, the smallest town in Hertfordshire.

Councillor Holt said that the Town Council functioned well and had kept party politics out of decision making for 54 years. He said that nobody wanted change, and that the Mayor of Buntingford had given representations. He questioned why the proposal was therefore being pushed ahead, dividing a town which did not want to be divided.

Councillor Holt said that the proposal went against guidance, creating problems where none existed and making illogical boundaries. He said that the 600 plus homes which were proposed to be built in Buntingford in coming years had been ignored, and he therefore questioned the rush for change now.

Councillor Holt said that residents shared the same high street and sense of community, with groups working across the whole town to resolve issues quickly.

Councillor Andrews seconded the amendment and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Glover-Ward said that she represented a ward, which gave better focus and still allowed people to vote across party lines. She said that the working group had delved into much detail and had followed the correct procedure, having been guided by officers.

Councillor Nicholls said that she was in favour of warding Buntingford, agreeing that it was sensible to split the town along the B158, which took into consideration two large housing developments. She said that there was flexibility with the boundary if future needs arose, and that she had received no negative feedback from residents, with many in favour of the proposal.

Councillor Nicholls said that it was not clear what form of discussion took place at Buntingford Town Council, as no details or minutes were available on this subject. She added that during the public consultation no comments were received from councillors or the public. Councillor Nicholls said that residents would benefit from a ward councillor, who would still be able to act in the best interest of the whole town.

Councillor Crystall thanked the working group for their work, and councillors for the amendments. He observed the number of towns of similar size to Sawbridgeworth and Buntingford which were not warded, and as there were not many, the reasons for this. He referred to the representations which spoke of the divides that would be formed by the creation of ward boundaries and said that this was not the case in Hertford, Ware or Bishop's Stortford. He added that he had personally experienced no ward competitiveness.

Councillor Crystall said that ward names were an emotive issue, but not a critical issue. He said that he represented the ward of Hertford All Saints, which contained St Andrews Church, which was not logical. He said the important issue was representation and helping residents to understand who their representatives were.

Councillor Crystall said that the council had been listening, and that when there were issues in Buntingford lots of emails were received from residents. He said that in the case of the review, no real campaign or communication regarding people's views had been

received. He concluded that warding would be a positive thing for residents.

Councillor Bull said that he had served on Buntingford Town Council for over 40 years and was not against change. He said that Buntingford was unique in many ways, and that issues were thrashed out by councillors acting for the whole town.

Councillor E Buckmaster said that he still had not heard how Buntingford would benefit from the proposal and reiterated that the towns in question were not the same as others within East Herts. He said that under the current system residents could vote for as many candidates as they wished, but warding could throw up discrepancies, such as candidates all wanting to stand for one particular ward.

Councillor Woolcombe said that the proposal for Buntingford had come as a surprise, as no consultation had happened.

Councillor Hart observed that the arguments for and against the proposal had been succinctly made, with those in opposition of warding being councillors in the towns concerned. She said that warding itself would not necessarily lead to greater cooperation.

Councillor T Smith said that he did not see any logical reason to ward Buntingford, with the Town Council against it. He echoed the comments of other Members and said that there was no reason for warding.

Councillor Parsad-Wyatt said that the council had a process for the review to enable residents to submit representations, and that he trusts that this was run. He said that in terms of wider communication, town councils fed into this process and raised issues on 3 occasions. He said that he was yet to hear reasons as to why warding was good for either.

Councillor Parsad-Wyatt said that the examples of warding in Hertford, Ware and Bishops Stortford were largely based on an equal balance of electors. He said that the point that the consultation had not followed government guidance had been raised in both amendments and he asked if the legal officer could advise on the process should guidance have not been followed.

At this point in the meeting, as it was approaching 10pm, Councillor Crystall proposed a motion that the meeting continue past 10pm. Councillor Glover-Ward seconded the motion.

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

RESOLVED – that the meeting continue past 10pm.

Councillor Copley said that in relation to the benefits of warding, people found it daunting to approach a whole council, and feedback was that they would feel more comfortable engaging with a smaller number of Members.

Councillor Thomas said that warding can work in small environments, and cited Tewin as an example of this.

Councillor Jacobs said that the working group were unable to find any councils the same size of Buntingford which were not warded. He said that he was surprised to hear some Members say that the process had come out of the blue, as it had been discussed in the chamber previously.

Councillor Jacobs said that it had been heard that Buntingford Town Council was overwhelmingly against the proposal, but only 3 responses were received from the consultation, 2 for and 1 against. He said that in relation to Sawbridgeworth there were 11 responses, 8 of which were from the Town Council.

Councillor Williamson again raised the point that the process had not followed guidance laid down by the Boundary Commission.

The Director for Legal, Policy and Governance said that the working group were assisted by 2 officers throughout the process, and that officers were happy that guidance had been followed.

Councillor Hopewell echoed the comments made by Members regarding the benefits of warding and said that looking through feedback there did not seem to be an overwhelming objection to this from residents. She said that the Town Council had objected, discussing it between themselves instead of with residents, and that there was no information regarding the review on their Facebook page or website.

Councillor Hopewell said that another benefit of warding was that residents had a named representative within their ward to approach, as opposed to the people of Buntingford who currently had to go through the Town Clerk.

Councillor Andrews said that although he didn't represent Buntingford, he used a car repairer, a dentist and collected his prescriptions in the town. He said that Buntingford supported its satellite villages, and was a proud town, with a vibrant high street, which unusually most of the residents could walk to in 15 minutes.

Councillor Andrews said that there was no appetite for warding, and that the Town Council was well run and cost effective. He said that Buntingford had had a lot imposed on it, being the first to produce its own neighbourhood plan. He urged Members to let the town make its own decision, saying it was not time for East Herts Council to impose something else on them which was not wanted.

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

The debate therefore returned to the original recommendations in the report.

Councillor Butcher said that he wished to put on record that Ware Town Council were bemused when the proposal came through. He said that it was sensible to tidy things up but not push forward at this time. He said that WARE2 was supposed to be underway, and would happen by 2027, meaning a review would come back in the future.

Councillor Stowe asked if the recommendations would be voted for 'en bloc'. He asked if recommendation I could be pulled out.

The Director for Legal, Policy and Governance asked if Members would like any of the recommendations to be pulled out, leaving those remaining for a block vote.

Councillor Williamson asked if recommendations III and IV could be voted on separately.

The Director for Legal, Policy and Governance said that as there was broad agreement within the Chamber, they would proceed with a block vote for all of the recommendations except for I, III and IV, and that these recommendations would then be voted on individually.

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) that the proposals set out below be adopted by the Council as Final Recommendations for the purposes of the Community Governance Review.

II. That the boundary for Bishop's Stortford Town Council be extended parallel to Thorley Street, running behind the existing houses, down to the

A1184 along to Obrey Way to incorporate the St James' Park development.

V. That the Rush Green roundabout be moved into the Hertford Kingsmead East ward of Hertford Town Council.

VI. That the boundary between Ware Town Council and Wareside Parish Council remain unchanged.

VII. That Hertingfordbury Parish Council have their councillor numbers reduced to 9.

VIII. That Stanstead St Margaret's and Stanstead Abbots parish councils remain unchanged.

IX. That the southern boundary to follow the entire length of the B181 to the Amwell Roundabout, then follow the northern part of that roundabout, and proceed along the B1502 to its current intersection with Old Hertford Road.

X. That no change be made to Brent Pelham parish council's name. XI. That Buckland Parish Council be renamed Buckland and Chipping Parish Council.

XII. That Stapleford Parish Council be renamed Stapleford and Waterford Parish Council

b) That the consent of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) be sought in respect of those Final Recommendations where required before a reorganisation order is made.

c) That the Director for Law, Policy and Governance be given delegated authority to prepare and make an order under Section 86 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

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 I) the final recommendation for Aston Parish Council be deferred until 2026 where a further CGR should look at creating a community council for the Hazel Park development when the implications of Local Government Reorganisation are fully understood and there are a greater number of registered electors.

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 III) Sawbridgeworth Town Council be warded into four wards along the polling district boundaries and the number of councillors be as follows: South ward = 5, Spellbrook ward = 1, Central ward = 2, West ward = 4.

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 IV) Buntingford Town Council be split into two wards named North and South along the B1038 with six councillors representing each ward.

134 REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Director for Legal Policy and Governance presented the report. He said that Members would be aware of the recent senior management restructure, and that following this, Head of Service job titles had been changed to Directorships, and delegations reordered within the Constitution.

The Director for Legal Policy and Governance said that as per paragraph 2.6.3a of the Constitution such changes were required to be brought before Council for their attention, but other than the aforementioned changes nothing new was being proposed.

Councillor Daar proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. Councillor Goldspink 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 updates and consequential amendments to the Constitution identified in the attached appendices are received.

135 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

One motion on notice was submitted.

136 SWIFT BRICKS

Councillor Williams presented his motion on notice. Councillor Glover-Ward seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Goldspink said that she strongly supported the motion, adding that swifts were lovely birds which enriched the environment and biodiversity. She said that swift bricks were not expensive and were easy to install.

Councillor Horner supported the motion, speaking on behalf of Bishop's Stortford, which has one of the largest swift colonies in Hertfordshire. He said that everything possible should be done to support the birds.

Councillor Bull supported the motion, noting the swifts that resided in the tall buildings at Addenbrookes Hospital.

Councillor Glover-Ward supported the motion, saying that swift bricks lasted forever, giving homes to fabulous birds.

Councillor Williams said that he recognised that in politics lots of things were complicated, but that swift bricks were a simple thing, that could save a special bird, at a low cost.

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

RESOLVED - In June local activists, Politicians and residents united to declare Ware the first swift town in the eastern England region, this comes of the back of an enormous amount of work from local swift groups and other voluntary organisations like our Men's sheds.

The reason for this work is that while swifts are beloved by many as a sign of summer, they have suffered large declines in number and are unfortunately now red listed, the causes for this are many but one driver is the reduction in their nesting sites something which we can help offset by mandating swift bricks in all new domestic buildings in the UK.

The UK rightly works to preserve its historic buildings and cultural heritage, our natural heritage is equally as important to who we are, more than that we have a moral duty to preserve for the future the wonders we are so fortunate to have inherited. The only circumstance in which we should want to compare the scream of the swift with the purr of the turtle dove or the song of the nightingale is in their ubiquity not in their absence, Therefore this council should resolve, to empower its leader to write to all MP's representing areas in East Hertfordshire, on the councils behalf encouraging them to support (EDM 1065) which

urges the government introduce regulations that 'would require the incorporation into all new domestic buildings of swift bricks'.

The meeting closed at 10.25 pm

Chairman

Date