

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
THURSDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2025, AT 7.00
PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Adams (Chairman).
Councillors J Dunlop, D Andrews,
R Buckmaster, P Boylan, C Brittain,
I Devonshire, E Buckmaster, S Bull,
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,
S Marlow, G McAndrew, S Nicholls,
A Parsad-Wyatt, C Redfern, T Smith,
V Smith, T Stowe, M Swainston, J Thomas,
S Watson, D Willcocks, G Williamson and
C Wilson.

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

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: [Extraordinary Council - 13 November 2025](#).

The Chairman invited the Director for Legal, Policy and Governance to provide an update following a request for the KC advice on the decision-making process to be made public at the Council meeting held on [22 October 2025](#).

The Director for Legal, Policy and Governance advised that they had asked the KC to prepare a separate note that could be shared with Members without waiving legal privilege. This note had now been shared with all Group Leaders and Independent Members. Members heard that the KC note confirmed that the decision in relation to the final Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) submission was not for Full Council and following debate Members could cast an indicative vote on their preferred option.

In response, the reliance on a separate note was deemed unsatisfactory, with a request that future documents referred to within reports be available for Members to review.

233 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Butcher, Burt, Deffley, Jacobs, Wyllie and Woollcombe.

234 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

235 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN HERTFORDSHIRE

The Leader of the Council presented the Local Government Reorganisation in Hertfordshire –

Submission of final proposals report. Councillor Crystall highlighted that in February 2025, the Government invited all Hertfordshire Councils to propose a single-tier system to replace the County and District Councils.

Councillor Crystall said that, since then, the eleven councils and the Police and Crime Commissioner had worked together to produce three unitary options: two, three, or four councils. Whilst a joint submission had been agreed, most leaders across the county had acknowledged that it was not their preference. Submissions were required to be received by Government before 28 November 2025, with each council only able to express a preference and the final decision to be taken by Government. The final decision was expected to be received from Government by July 2026.

Councillor Crystall proposed the recommendation as set out in the report. Councillor Goldspink seconded the proposal and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Goldspink requested a recorded vote. This was supported by Councillors Brittain, Carter, Crystall, Daar and Dumont.

Members debated the proposals with Councillors Deering, Dumont, Glover-Ward, Andrews, E Buckmaster, Hart, Hollebon, Parsad-Wyatt, Wilson, Hoskin, Estop, Carter, Cox, Swainston, Daar, Brittain, Holt, Horner, Clements, McAndrew, Copley, Thomas, Hopewell and Marlow contributing to the discussion, ahead of Councillor Goldspink exercising her right to speak as the seconder.

Members across the chamber agreed that they were not in favour of Local Government Reorganisation across Hertfordshire or the process by which the proposal had taken. Members recognised that Hertfordshire County Council provided key services and had an outstanding Ofsted rating for Children's Services and was rated the second highest Adult Care Service in the Country. It was

noted that it remained unclear how the proposed unitary authorities would deliver these services.

Members highlighted opposition to the proposal of an Elected Mayor, which would introduce a new two-tier system, and further discussion focussed on the process and the financial outlooks associated with the proposals.

Concerns were expressed amongst Members with regards to diluting public access to local councils with the implementation of wider unity authorities. In addition, consideration was given to the barriers of becoming a Councillor in a larger unitary authority, where the location of meetings could be held at a significant distance and during the workday.

It was noted that the Council owned a number of assets and there was a request for all assets of the Council to be reviewed and protected ahead of any changes to the local structure.

Members commented on the strengthened role that Town and Parish Councils could play in the future and considered the potential benefits of unitary authorities.

Disappointment was expressed in relation to some Executive Members proposing to abstain from the indicative vote. Members of the Executive highlighted that they would consider the full debate of Council ahead of taking a decision on 18 November 2025.

To conclude the debate, Councillor Crystall acknowledged the consensus across the Chamber with regards to the options being presented for reorganisation. Councillor Crystall summarised the viability of each option for East Herts and thanked officers for the work that had been undertaken.

The motion having been proposed and seconded was put to a recorded vote and the result was as follows:

Option a) Submit proposal and identify the two unitary (2UA) option as preferred:

Councillors Copley, Horner, Swainston (3)

Option b) Submit proposal and identify modified three unitary option (3UA modified) as preferred and request that Secretary of State formally modify the proposal by agreeing boundary changes, as set out in the proposal:

Councillors Carter, Connolly, Crystall, Daar, Dunlop, Hill, Nicholls, Thomas, Watson, Wilson (10)

Option c) Submit proposal and identify the modified four unitary option (4UA modified) as preferred and request that the Secretary of State formally modify the proposal by boundary changes as set out in the proposal:

Councillors E Buckmaster, R Buckmaster, Bull, Clements, Deering, Devonshire, Estop, Hart, Hollebon, Holt, Parsad-Wyatt, Redfern, Stowe, Willcocks, Williamson (15)

Abstained:

Councillors Adams, Andrews, Boylan, Brittain, Cox, Dumont, Glover-Ward, Goldspink, Hopewell, Hoskin, Marlow, McAndrew, T Smith, V Smith (14)

RESOLVED – Council noted the outcome of the indicative vote.

The meeting closed at 8.58 pm

Chairman
Date

