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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 24 MARCH 2026, AT 7.00 PM

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

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Richard Crutchley	- Team Leader (Planning Policy)
James Ellis	- Director for Legal, Policy and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Brian Moldon	- Director for Finance, Risk and Performance
Helen Standen	- Interim Chief Executive
Julia Watson	- Assistant Planning Policy Officer
Rowan Perrin	- Senior Parks and Leisure Development Officer

394 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A Daar.

395 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded attendees that the meeting was being webcast. The full webcast of the meeting can be viewed here: [Executive – 24 March 2026](#).

396 MINUTES – 10 FEBRUARY 2026

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods proposed, and the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2026 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Leader.

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

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

397 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

398 EXTENSION OF THE GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT AND THE USE OF GLYPHOSATE IN THE GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

The Executive Member for Wellbeing presented the report on the Grounds Maintenance contract. The Executive heard that the East Herts Grounds Maintenance Contract was due to expire in December 2027. Consideration had been given to either a full retender or a contract extension and with Local Government Reorganisation approaching, an extension was deemed the most practical and cost-effective option.

It was noted that extending the contract allowed for a review of key elements, particularly the reduction and potential elimination of glyphosate use in parks and open spaces due to environmental and health concerns.

However, it was noted that removing glyphosate from highway verge maintenance was deemed unfeasible. Executive heard that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had recommended negotiating a contract extension of up to five years, with a focus on phasing out glyphosate in Council-managed parks and open spaces.

The Executive Member for Wellbeing proposed the recommendations as detailed in the report. The Executive Member for Planning and Growth seconded the proposal.

Members asked for clarification on the reasons for phasing out glyphosate. Officers explained that concerns had been raised about its potential carcinogenic effects, its non-selective impact on plant life, and its long-term presence in soil. These factors, alongside the Council's biodiversity and public health commitments, informed the move toward alternative methods.

A question was raised about whether any assets linked to the contract might be sold. Officers confirmed that some town councils had expressed interest in certain assets and the matter was under active consideration, including how any sale would interact with the contract.

Members asked about the timing of reducing glyphosate use and whether work could begin before the contract extension period. Officers confirmed that changes could start immediately as part of ongoing negotiations.

Officers were thanked for the work undertaken in reviewing the contract.

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

RESOVLED – that (A) Executive approve (A) an extension of the current grounds maintenance contract with Glendale for a further five years, including an appropriate break clause to align with

Local Government Reorganisation.

(B) agree the withdrawal of glyphosate use across East Herts Council owned parks and open spaces and support the investigation and implementation of alternative weed control methods.

399 THE HERTFORDSHIRE HEALTHY AND SAFE PLACES FRAMEWORK

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the report on the Hertfordshire Healthy and Safe Places Framework. Members heard that work to update the District Plan would begin in 2026 and would require extensive supporting evidence. Members were briefed on the Healthy and Safe Places Framework, which provided guidance for integrating health and safety considerations into planning.

The framework promoted a 'health in all policies' approach and encouraged the use of health impact assessments and engagement in planning processes. It was proposed that the framework be adopted as part of the evidence base for the new District Plan and used as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth proposed the recommendations as detailed in the report. The Executive Member for Wellbeing seconded the proposal.

Members asked whether the introduction of the Healthy and Safe Places Framework would affect how Section 106 contributions were identified or prioritised. It was explained that while the framework would support future policy development, it would not change current Section 106 process, which would continue to relate directly to mitigating the impact of new developments.

A question was raised about whether the framework

might encourage Highways to consider healthier street design principles. It was noted that the framework would feed into the new District Plan and could influence future policies but would not alter existing arrangements under the current plan.

Members queried how issues such as air quality, travel patterns, construction methods and sustainable neighbourhood design would be addressed. Members heard that these themes would form part of the evidence base and policy development for the new District Plan, with the intention of promoting healthier, more sustainable communities.

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 – Executive recommended to Council that:

(A) the Hertfordshire Healthy and Safe Places Framework (2025) attached as Appendix A, be 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.

400 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2025/26 - QUARTER 3 FORECAST TO YEAR END

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the Financial Management 2025/26 Quarter 3 Forecast to year end. The report noted that a revenue overspend of £505,000 was forecast, showing a slight improvement on quarter 2. Improved forecasts were noted in centrally managed costs for legal and governance services and leisure services, while planning and building control showed a deteriorating position due to increased salary and agency pressures.

Members were advised that interest and investment income had improved, and a contribution to the interest equalisation reserve was proposed in line with policy. The capital budget for 2025/26 had been revised to £11.885 million, including £400,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, with a forecast underspend of £2.5 million, of which £1.114 million was expected to be carried forward.

Members also received an update on the Council's debt position. Whilst overall debt had risen to £2.35 million, £819,000 of this related to scheduled payments from neighbouring authorities. Excluding these, underlying debt had reduced by £435,000, totalling £1.532 million.

The Executive Member for Financial Wellbeing proposed the recommendations as detailed in the report. The Executive Member for Corporate Services seconded the proposal.

Members sought clarification on the timetable for spending the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) capital allocation. It was confirmed that Government had extended the deadline to October 2026, allowing projects to continue beyond the previously expected March cut-off.

Questions were raised about the wider economic outlook, including interest rates, inflation and the possibility of recession and how these might affect future Council budgets. It was noted that it remained too early to assess the full impact. The Government's existing three-year settlement, issued in December 2025 and confirmed in January 2026, was still in place and any changes were unlikely to be known before November or December 2026.

In response to a question regarding whether recently added reserves could provide protection if financial pressures increased, it was confirmed that the additional reserves would offer some cushioning if required, although the intention remained not to rely on them unless necessary.

Members asked about the effect of future borrowing rates when refinancing loans. It was noted that interest rate movements could have an impact, however it was too early to determine the extent.

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.

RESOVLED – Executive (A) considered and noted the projected £505k overspend on the 2025/26 revenue budget.

(B) agreed the inclusion of an additional £400k UK Shared prosperity Fund (UKSPF) grant for capital projects, and its addition to the capital programme.

(C)) considered and noted the forecast £2.505 million underspend on the 2025/26 capital programme and the currently anticipated £1.14 million carry-forward, which remains subject to change at year-end.

401 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER QUARTER 3 MONITORING

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the Strategic Risk Register Quarter 3 Monitoring report. Members heard that the risk register had been reviewed by the Leadership Team as part of the Council's routine governance arrangements and that an internal audit of the Council's risk management framework had been completed in December 2025. The audit confirmed that the Council had a structured and well-documented approach to managing risk, supported by an up-to-date strategy and a defined five-stage risk cycle. The audit also identified areas where further improvements could strengthen consistency, transparency and operational assurance across the organisation. The recommendations from audit were set out in table 2.3 of the report.

Members heard that the Leadership Team had introduced a programme of deep-dive reviews to examine individual risks in greater detail, beginning with the Place Directorate.

It was reported that dedicated risk-management training for Members would take place in June 2026 and would be recommended for those serving on the Audit and Governance Committee.

The corporate risk register, included as Appendix A, had remained broadly stable between quarters 2 and 3, with only a minor movement in the climate-change risk relating to planning permission for the Great Amwell site.

Members were informed that the register format had been updated to include target scores and movement indicators, improving transparency around how risks were changing over time and supporting the Leadership Team's ongoing oversight.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability proposed the recommendations as detailed in the report. The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods seconded the proposal.

Members asked for further detail on the recent deep dive undertaken within the Place Directorate. Officers explained that the review drew on operational risk registers and highlighted concerns around recruitment, retention and maintaining adequate staffing levels to deliver statutory services. It was confirmed that similar deep dives would be carried out across all directorates.

Questions were raised about upcoming risk-management training. Officers confirmed that training sessions had been arranged for both Members and officers in June 2026, with attendance expected for those on Audit and Governance Committee.

Members also sought clarification on how frequently the

corporate risk register was updated. It was advised that the Leadership Team reviewed risks quarterly and that emerging global issues would be considered at the next review.

Concerns were expressed about the scale of cyber-security threats facing local authorities. Members were encouraged to attend the Joint ICT Committee for updates.

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.

RESOVLED – that (A) the 2025/26 quarter three corporate risk register and actions being taken to control and mitigate risk was considered and noted.

(B) the actions being taken following the recent internal audit report on the Council's risk management arrangements were noted.

402 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (RIPA)
POLICY REVIEW

The Executive Member for Corporate Services presented the report on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (RIPA) Policy Review. It was explained that although the Council had not used covert investigatory powers for some time, there was a legal requirement to maintain an up-to-date policy. The recent inspection by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) had resulted in a positive outcome, confirming that the Council was operating compliantly. The only action arising from the inspection was the need to bring the policy back to Members for review, as this had not occurred since 2023.

The Executive Member for Corporate Services thanked the Monitoring Officer, noting that this was his final

attendance at Executive. They noted that the Council had benefited greatly from his expertise and that he had always remained fair, impartial and highly effective in the role.

The Executive Member for Corporate Services proposed the recommendations as detailed in the report. The Executive Member for Resident Engagement seconded the proposal.

Members queried when the Council last exercised its powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA). Officers advised that the Council had not used RIPA powers within the past six years. It was noted that these powers were used more frequently around twenty years ago, however following national changes in approach, the use of such powers reduced significantly. Whilst not used regularly, the Council was statutorily required to maintain an up-to-date RIPA policy.

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.

RESOVLED – A) Executive considered the content of the report and provided observations to the Director for Legal, Policy and Governance.

B) That the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) Policy at Appendix B be adopted.

403 URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 7:40pm

Chairman

Date

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