

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 6 JULY 2011, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor S Rutland-Barsby (Chairman)
Councillors D Abbott, M Alexander,
D Andrews, W Ashley, S Basra, E Bedford,
E Buckmaster, S Bull, M Carver,
Mrs R Cheswright, K Crofton, A Dearman,
J Demonti, P Gray, L Haysey, T Herbert,
Mrs D Hollebon, Mrs D Hone, A Jackson,
G Jones, G Lawrence, J Mayes,
G McAndrew, M McMullen, P Moore,
W Mortimer, M Newman, T Page, P Phillips,
M Pope, N Poulton, R Radford, J Ranger,
C Rowley, P Ruffles, N Symonds, J Taylor,
A Warman, G Williamson, J Wing, M Wood,
C Woodward and B Wrangles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Anne Freimanis	- Chief Executive
Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Caroline Goss	- Communications Officer
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
George A Robertson	- Director of Customer and Community Services
Brian Simmonds	- Head of Community Safety

131 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed the press and public to the meeting and reminded Members that the meeting was being webcast live.

The Chairman drew attention to the Council's recent success in being awarded the East of England Charter for Elected Member Development. She advised that it was hoped that a formal presentation of the award would be made at the Council meeting on 28 September 2011.

The Chairman also advised that an extraordinary meeting of the Council would likely be held on 28 September 2011, for the purpose of considering a motion to confer the title of Honorary Aldermen to those qualifying former Members in recognition of their public service.

The Chairman reminded those Members that had yet to pick up their laptop to contact the IT Helpdesk as soon as possible. She also reminded all newly-elected Members of the scrutiny training session that had been arranged for 13 July 2011, at 5.00 pm, in the form of a "mock committee" for which papers had already been circulated.

The Chairman reported that she had attended 20 events since the Annual meeting and detailed some of the highlights. She thanked the Vice-Chairman, Councillor J Taylor, as well as Councillors A Warman and N Wilson for attending events on her behalf.

Finally, she advised that the Council for the Protection of Rural England's Village of the Year competition in Hertfordshire had been won by Hunsdon.

132 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 18 May 2011, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

133 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor N Symonds declared a personal interest in the matter referred to at Minute 135 – Petition on Chantry Resident Permit Proposal, in that she was a customer at the Bishop’s Stortford Veterinary Hospital.

134 PETITION - CAMPFIELD ROAD, HERTFORD

A petition comprising 55 signatures had been submitted by Mrs M Lyons as follows:

We the undersigned, petition and register our opposition to having our public money spent on a third set of steps at the end of Campfield Road.”

In noting the absence of the petitioner, Council agreed to receive the petition.

135 PETITION - CHANTRY RESIDENT PERMIT PROPOSAL

A petition, comprising 350 signatures, had been submitted by Mr N Richards, Practice Manager, Bishop’s Stortford Veterinary Hospital, as follows:

“We the undersigned would like to object in the strongest possible terms to East Hertfordshire’s proposals not to allow Bishop’s Stortford Veterinary Hospital to have residents visitors vouchers (short stay) and residents visitors vouchers (short stay for pensioners), within the proposed parking Zone B7.

The current proposals do not allow adequate provisions for short stay parking whilst visiting the Hospital, it will restrict access to the Hospital and could seriously compromise our ability to seek emergency care for our pets.”

Mr Richards outlined the history of the veterinary practice and the contribution it made to the local economy and employment in the area, as well as the essential services provided to

residents in Bishop's Stortford. He detailed the reasons for the petition and stated that he was requesting the ability for the practice to purchase residents' short-term visitor vouchers, which could be used by customers bringing their animals into the surgery.

He referred to current parking issues in the area and the problems that would be caused for visitors if they could not park within a short distance of the practice. He acknowledged the benefits of the proposed scheme and requested a small amendment to the proposal that would enable the practice to continue to serve the local community.

In response, the Executive Member for Planning Policy and Economic Development thanked Mr Richards for the petition and undertook to consider it carefully alongside all the other representations that had been received as part of the consultation process. He reminded Members of the purpose of the scheme, which had been requested by residents since 2003, and was intended to protect limited on-street parking for residents, who were inconvenienced by commuter, leisure and airport related parking.

However, as the portfolio holder responsible for economic development, he was also conscious of the needs of local businesses. Therefore, he advised that Officers were working on further options to facilitate the continuance of this successful practice and was confident that a positive solution could be found.

Councillors J Demonti and T Herbert, as the local ward Members, both expressed support for the petition and urged the Executive Member to reach a satisfactory outcome.

136 OLYMPICS UPDATE

Police Inspector Ron Singleton, Beds & Herts Olympic Planning Team, gave a presentation updating Council on the Lee Valley White Water Centre. She detailed the key issues in the location and construction of the venue, transport links, partnership and community work, the torch relay and

maintaining business as usual.

In response to Members' questions, PI Singleton commented on the partnership work undertaken with all communities in respect of planning events. She also advised on the work and consultation undertaken with water and transport authorities.

137 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Question 1

Councillor M Wood asked the Leader of the Council if he would join him in welcoming the Coalition Government's announcements of the previous week with regard to Councils being allowed to retain money derived from business rates.

In response the Leader agreed with Councillor M Wood and reminded Council of his budget statement in 2005, in which he had suggested an increasing case for more local responsibility, although at that time with a Labour Government, he had not held his breath.

In reply to a supplementary question, the Leader stated that he was awaiting the detail and that the District Councils Network would be looking at this. He welcomed the opportunity for the Council to have control of 85% of the revenue it generated and the responsibility that went with it.

Question 2

Councillor M Wood asked the Executive Member for Community Safety and Environment for an explanation of the rationale behind this decision to withdraw clothes bank bring sites, which he believed had created a certain amount of anger across the District.

In reply, the Executive Member questioned the level of anger as only one complaint on this matter had been recorded by the Council. He detailed the new textile recycling arrangements and the rationale, which gave residents greater control over the service received and provided increased

income, thus reducing costs for the taxpayer. The new arrangements did not have any known impact on private sites and residents had the choice of taking textiles to charity shops or to one of 14 recycling banks provided by the Council's contractor. He commented that additional income raised would be used to support local voluntary organisations which helped residents.

In response to a supplementary question, the Executive Member reminded Members that the new arrangements were in their infancy and he gave an undertaking to continue to review them.

138 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 24 MAY 2011

In respect of Minute 20 – Public Engagement and Consultation Task and Finish Group, the Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support advised that the first aspects of the review, including a calendar of events across the District, would be available on the intranet shortly.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 24 May 2011, be received.

139 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - MARCH 2011

RESOLVED – that (A) the budgetary variances set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report submitted, be noted; and

(B) in accordance with Financial Regulation 4.7.3, the carry forward of the capital budgets not spent in 2010/11, as set out in Essential Reference Paper 'D' and summarised at paragraph 2.32 of the report submitted, be approved and added to the 2011/12 capital estimates.

140 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 15 JUNE 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 15 June 2011, be received.

141 EAST HERTS/STEVENAGE REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

RESOLVED – that (A) the view be supported that a shared Revenues and Benefits service with Stevenage Borough Council is viable and will deliver benefits as described in the business case document titled ‘Revenues & Benefits Shared Service for East Herts & Stevenage’, at Essential Reference Paper ‘A’ of the report submitted and to implement the proposals set out in this document;

(B) a Joint Revenues and Benefits Shared Service Committee with Stevenage Borough Council, as detailed at Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ of the report submitted, be approved;

(C) the creation of a Joint Management Board for a shared Revenues and Benefits service be approved;

(D) as the host authority for the shared service, the proposals to discharge, on behalf of Stevenage Borough Council the administration of Council Tax, National Non-domestic Rates and the administration of the Benefits scheme, including the investigation and prosecution of Benefit Fraud, in accordance with section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, be approved, with the effective date for this arrangement to be agreed by the Chief Finance Officers at each Council;

(E) a contingency of £25,000 for unforeseen set up costs, be approved, to be met by a supplementary estimate if required;

(F) splitting set up costs and savings 50:50 for the first three years, be approved; and

(G) the Director of Internal Services be authorised to approve a partnership agreement with Stevenage Borough Council, to implement these proposals,

subject to final confirmation of the business case.

142 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 5 JULY 2011

RESOLVED – that the Decision Sheet of the Executive meeting held on 5 July 2011, be received.

143 BISHOP'S STORTFORD 20 20 VISION AND GOODS YARD SITE BRIEF

RESOLVED - that (A) the Draft Bishop's Stortford Goods Yard Site Development Brief as now submitted is adopted as the Council's vision and objectives for the site, subject to the following amendments:

Page 41, Item 6 – insert “not” before “become a competitor to Harlow...”

to read “A development centred on the Goods Yard site would greatly ease the congestion in the town centre but it should not become a competitor to Harlow or Cambridge.”

Page 56, paragraph 9.6.4 – insert after “...to consider a range of building heights” the words “up to” and delete the words “...varying between 3 storeys and”

to read “The Council is satisfied that across such a large site it would be appropriate to consider a range of building heights up to 6 storeys.”

Page 62, paragraph 14.5 – insert a full stop after “...effected to some degree by a number of different contaminants”

to read “Much of the made ground appears to have been effected to some degree by a number of different contaminants. Groundwater and the adjacent river are considered vulnerable to off-site migration.”

(B) minor amendments are delegated to the Director of Customer and Community Services in consultation

with the Leader; and

(C) used for development control purposes in determining planning applications relating to the site; and

(D) used to inform emerging Local Development Framework strategies and policies.

144 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - APRIL 2011

RESOLVED - that the carry forward requests of £9,270, £4,750, £7,000, £4,100, £4,195, £9,530 as outlined in paragraph 2.25 to 2.28 of the report submitted, be approved in accordance with Financial Regulation 4.7.3 and met by a call on the general reserve.

145 GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN 2010/11

RESOLVED - that a change of purpose of the Waste Recycling Reserve as set out in paragraph 3.6 of the report submitted, be approved.

146 MONTHLY CORPORATE HEALTHCHECK - MAY 2011

RESOLVED - that a supplementary Capital estimate of £77.5k against the Council's Leisure Development Capital project, be approved.

147 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(A) JOINT MEETING OF EXECUTIVE, COMMITTEES, PANELS, ETC - 18 MAY 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the joint meeting of the Executive, Committees, Panels, etc, held on 15 June 2011, be received.

(B) DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE
- 25 MAY 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 25 May 2011, be received.

(C) HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 31 MAY 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 31 May 2011, be received.

(D) CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
- 31 MAY 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 31 May 2011, be received.

(E) ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
- 7 JUNE 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 June 2011, be received.

(F) COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
- 14 JUNE 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Community Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14 June 2011, be received.

(G) DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE
- 22 JUNE 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 22 June 2011, be received.

148 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2011

Council considered a joint report of the Scrutiny Committee Chairmen detailing the Scrutiny Annual report 2010/11.

The Chairman of the Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee expressed his gratitude to all Scrutiny Members who had contributed throughout the year and Officers for their support. He paid particular tribute to the Scrutiny Officer for her continued support.

Councillor J Ranger welcomed the report and offered his congratulations to the work of the Scrutiny Committees and the benefits for residents. He drew Members' attention to the section of the report looking forward to the evolving role of scrutiny and the impact of the three Bills working their way through Parliament.

Council agreed to receive the report.

RESOLVED – that the Annual Report on the work of the East Herts Scrutiny Committees and Health Engagement Panel during 2010/11, be received.

The meeting closed at 8.01 pm

Chairman
Date