

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, District Council Offices,
Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City
on Wednesday, 20th March, 2019 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Jean Green (Vice-Chairman), Ian Albert, Daniel Allen, Kate Aspinwall, David Barnard, Clare Billing, Judi Billing, Val Bryant, Paul Clark, Sam Collins, Julian Cunningham, Bill Davidson, Steve Deakin-Davies, Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Sarah Dingley, Faye Frost, Gary Grindal, Simon Harwood, Cathryn Henry, Terry Hone, Mike Hughson, Tony Hunter, Steve Jarvis, Bernard Lovewell, Ian Mantle, Paul Marment, Ian Moody, Michael Muir, Lynda Needham, Sue Ngwala, Helen Oliver, Janine Paterson, Mike Rice, Martin Stears-Handscomb, Claire Strong, Terry Tyler and Michael Weeks

IN ATTENDANCE: David Scholes (Chief Executive), Anthony Roche (Deputy Chief Executive), Gavin Ramtohal (Legal Commercial Team Manager) and Melanie Stimpson (Democratic Services Manager)

ALSO PRESENT: At the commencement of the meeting approximately 19 members of the public.

93 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio Recording – Start of Item – 45 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Bishop, Ruth Brown, Nicola Harris, David Levett, Ben Lewis, Gerald Morris, Lisa Nash, Deepak Sangha and Harry Spencer-Smith.

94 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio Recording – Start of Item – 1 minute 42 seconds

A) Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and were required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members that declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members that declared a Declarable Interest, who wished to exercise a 'Councillor Speaking Right', must declare this at the same time as the interest, move to the public area before speaking to the item and then leave the room before the debate and vote.

(B) Dispensations

The Chairman invited the Deputy Monitoring Officer to advise on the following dispensations granted:

Councillor Judi Billing – as a Director of Hitchin Initiative

Councillor Terry Hone – as a Trustee and Board Member of Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation

Councillor Lynda Needham - as a Trustee and Board Member of Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation

(C) Voting

Members were reminded to remain in the room throughout the item of business to ensure that a vote could be cast.

(D) Rules of Debate

In accordance with the Constitution Members were requested to ensure that no speech exceeded five minutes without the consent of the Chairman.

(E) Car Park

As notified in the Members Information Service note last Friday, in response to escalating anti-social behaviour, the multi-storey car park in Hitchin and Letchworth would close early from Monday 25 March 2019. The Lairage car park in Hitchin would close at 18:45 each evening and the Letchworth multi-storey would close at 19:00. Users of the car park would be notified via notices in the car park, Facebook, twitter and the Council's website, which would include alternative parking locations. In the forthcoming Members Information Service further details would be provided of where Councillors could park when attending evening meetings at the District Council Offices. The early closure was intended to be a short-term measure, but would remain in place until further notice.

(F) Multi Cultural Event

The Chairman of the Council, in association with North Herts Inter Faith Forum and Community Groups was holding a Multi Cultural Celebration on Saturday 6 April 2019 at 18:00 until 20:00 in Hitchin Town Hall. The event will include great entertainment, samosas and sandwiches.

Tickets were available from Committee Services at a cost of £7.00 per person.

(G) Refreshments

As the meeting was an Extraordinary, single agenda item meeting, no refreshments were provided following the meeting.

95 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio Recording – Start of Item – 8 minutes 10 seconds

The Council was addressed by Mr Graham Fisher, Chief Executive of Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.

The following Councillors asked points of clarification:

Councillors Judi Billing, Mike Rice and Gary Grindal.

96 REFERRAL FROM HITCHIN COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the referral from the Hitchin Committee be considered together with the next item on the agenda (Minute 97 refers).

97 FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND - CONSIDERATION OF POTENTIAL BIDS

Audio Recording – Start of Item – 13 minutes and 18 seconds

The Deputy Chief Executive presented a report following the decision of Full Council at its meeting of 7 February 2019 where it was resolved that it should be for Full Council to determine which bid should be submitted to the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF).

It was explained that the report provided information of the criteria against which bids were to be assessed and invited Full Council to decide on the preferred bid that it wished to submit.

Since publication of the agenda there had been letters of support received and the details of these were provided.

The officer's presentation of the report, having concluded, in order to progress to the debate the recommendations as contained within the submitted report were moved by Councillor Lynda Needham and seconded by Councillor Julian Cunningham.

Subsequently the following amendment to 2.2 of the submitted report was proposed by Councillor Judi Billing and seconded by Councillor Ian Albert:

'That Full Council determines that the Hitchin town centre bid should be submitted as an Expression of Interest at phase 1 of the Future High Streets Fund application process'.

The matter was then debated with the following Councillors giving statements and asking questions:

Councillor Simon Harwood
Councillor Sam Collins
Councillor Lynda Needham
Councillor Bernard Lovell
Councillor David Barnard
Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg
Councillor Daniel Allen
Councillor Julian Cunningham
Councillor Gary Grindal
Councillor Paul Clark
Councillor Claire Strong
Councillor Michael Muir
Councillor Terry Hone
Councillor Steve Jarvis
Councillor Michael Weeks
Councillor Helen Oliver
Councillor Judi Billing

Having fully debated the matter the amendment was voted upon and was declared carried. Following which the substantive motion was voted upon and it was

RESOLVED:

That Full Council:

- i. Notes the guidance issued by the Government and the criteria against which bids are to be assessed.
- ii. Determines that the Hitchin town centre bid should be submitted as an Expression of Interest at phase 1 of the Future High Streets Fund application process.

Wednesday, 20th March, 2019

- iii. Notes that there may be other funding opportunities available in the future for the potential bid that is not chosen, or for the bid chosen by Full Council if it is unsuccessful in securing monies from the Future High Streets Fund, including a second funding round of the Future High Streets Fund in 2020.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm

Chairman