

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices,
Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City
on Thursday, 21st November, 2019 at 7.30 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jean Green (Chairman of the Council) as she was attending a Civic Engagement.

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillors Kate Aspinwall, Jim McNally, Ian Moody and Sam North.

Councillor Kay Tart advised that she would arrive late for the meeting.

2 MINUTES - 12 SEPTEMBER 2019

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 12 September 2019 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

3 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business notified.

4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(1) Fire Announcement

The Vice-Chairman advised that no testing of the fire alarms was expected. If the alarm did sound those attending were to leave the building by the fire exits.

(2) Mobile Phones

The Vice-Chairman reminded those present to turn off mobile phones or mute the ring tone and other sounds.

(3) Climate Emergency

Members were reminded that this Council had declared a Climate Emergency. This was a serious decision and meant that, as this was an emergency, all of us, officers and Members had that in mind as we carried out our various roles and tasks for the benefit of our District.

(4) Audio Recording

The Vice-Chairman advised that, in accordance with Council policy this meeting was being audio recorded.

(5) Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded to make declarations of interest before an item, the detailed reminder about this and speaking rights was set out under item 3 on the agenda.

(6) Refreshments

The Vice-Chairman invited all Members to refreshments after the meeting in Committee Rooms 2/3.

(7) Comfort break

The Vice-Chairman advised that, if the meeting went on beyond 9pm, he would call a 5 minute comfort break. He reminded Members to remain in the room prior to this to ensure they could vote.

(8) Councillor Helen Oliver

The Vice-Chairman, on behalf of the Council, congratulated Councillor Helen Oliver on her recent marriage.

(9) Rules of Debate

The Vice-Chairman reminded Members that in accordance with the Constitution please could Members ensure that no speech exceeded five minutes without the consent of the Chairman.

(10) Business Rate Pooling Application – Use of Urgency in Relation to Call-In

Attention was drawn to the Information note which advised Council of the use of urgency provisions, which in accordance with the Constitution must be reported to the next meeting of the Council.

(11) Order of Business

The Vice-Chairman advised that he would be taking Item 8 – Notice of Motions immediately following Public Participation.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - CITIZENS ADVICE NORTH HERTS

Ms Rosie Waters, Citizens Advice North Herts, thanked the Vice-Chairman for the opportunity to address Council as follows:

The Vice-Chairman thanked Ms Waters for her presentation.

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - RIVER IVEL

Ms Sharon Moat and Mr Richard Meredith Hardy, RevIvel, thanked the Vice-Chairman for the opportunity to address Council regarding the River Ivel as follows:

The Vice-Chairman thanked Ms Moat and Mr Meredith Hardy for their presentation.

7 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

RESOLVED:

That this Council expresses its concern about the perilous state of the upper reaches of the River Ivel and other local chalk streams, including the Rivers Purwell and Hiz and St Ippolyts Brook.

Council notes that the River Ivel has been continuously dry in an area extending from the Ivel Springs Local Nature Reserve downstream to Radwell for a period of well over a year.

Council further notes that there has been no flow in the upper Ivel during half the months of the previous four years.

The River Ivel is one of the rare and ecologically important chalk streams of the Chiltern Chalk Aquifer. According to the Ivel Springs Greenspace Action Plan for 2010–2015, “Chalk rivers are extremely rare and included in the Herts Biodiversity Action Plan. The river and its wetlands are important habitats for a wide range of species”. This is a resource we should cherish and protect. Instead, the watercourses are dry, the fish are dead and other associated wildlife is gone.

Council is therefore determined to ensure that a healthy year-round water flow be restored and maintained in the upper reaches of the river from the area known as Ivel Springs down to Radwell Lake and beyond.

Furthermore, Council recognises that the disaster of the Ivel is not an isolated instance among the chalk streams of the Chiltern Chalk Aquifer: many others are suffering dangerously low levels and consequent environmental harm.

Council therefore undertakes to implement the following actions:

1. Elicit information from Affinity Water regarding their plans for reducing abstraction rates from the chalk aquifer:
 - at Baldock specifically and
 - from the aquifer as a whole.
2. Elicit plans from Affinity Water with regard to use of AMP7 (2015–2020 Asset Management Plan) money to invest in effective measures to conserve and enhance the Ivel specifically and other local chalk streams generally.
3. Seek a pledge from Affinity Water that it will take the steps necessary to ensure that a specified minimum water flow is maintained in the upper Ivel throughout the year.
4. Seek assurance from the Environment Agency that it will continue to monitor the impact of water abstraction from the aquifer on our local environment and take appropriate action, including consideration of withdrawal of abstraction licences, where Affinity Water allows its activities to harm the environment.
5. Support and work with local interest groups, including the RevIvel Association in Radwell.
6. Support the establishment of an integrated, overarching partnership to enable all relevant agencies and organisations to collaborate with the aim of protecting the chalk streams of the aquifer in its entirety.
7. Lobby our constituency MPs for active support in all of the above.

8 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

(A) Item Referred from Cabinet: 31 October 2019 – Hertfordshire Growth Board

RESOLVED: That the proposed Memorandum of Understanding relating to the Hertfordshire Growth Board, attached as Appendix D, be supported and the agreement signed.

(B) Item Referred from Cabinet: 31 October 2019 – Council Plan And Council Objectives 2020-2025

RESOLVED: That this referral be taken with Item 7 (Minute 50 refers).

9 COUNCIL PLAN 2020-2025 AND COUNCIL OBJECTIVES 2020-2025

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Council Plan; which provides a summary of objectives and of activity to support the progression of the following Council Objectives be approved:
 - Be a more welcoming and inclusive **council**;
 - Build thriving and resilient **communities**;
 - Respond to challenges to the **environment**;
 - Enable an enterprising and co-operative **economy**;
 - Support the delivery of good quality and affordable **homes**.
- (2) That the following document be approved:
 - Appendix A - Council Plan 2020-2025, including Proposed Actions and Achievements of the Council in 2018/19.

REASON FOR DECISION: The Council plan is a key element of the corporate business planning process, as a high level strategic document it sets out the Council's priorities for the next year. As an overarching policy framework document it guides and influences the use of Council resources; providing a focus for activities, plans and services the Council provide.

10 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

There were no questions from Members.