

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

**MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GERON ROAD,
LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY
ON THURSDAY, 27TH JUNE, 2019 AT 7.30 PM**

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors Martin Stears-Handscomb (Chairman), Paul Clark (Vice-Chairman), Ian Albert, Judi Billing, Gary Grindal, Keith Hoskins and Steve Jarvis.*

Deputy Executive Members: Councillors Ian Mantle, Sam North and Carol Stanier

In Attendance: *Jeanette Thompson (Service Director - Legal and Community), Reuben Ayavoo (Policy and Community Engagement Manager) and Hilary Dineen (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager)*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 5 members of the public, including one registered speaker.*

14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio Recording – Start of Item – 42 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Ruth Brown and Kay Tart.

15 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – Start of Item – 54 seconds

There was no other business notified.

16 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – Start of Item – 57 seconds

- (1) The Chairman advised that the multi-storey car park would close by 9pm, and once it had closed people would not be able to access their cars until it reopened in the morning. Members of the public in attendance may need to move their car as soon as possible, as it may not be possible to get back in to the building later in the meeting.
- (2) The Chairman advised that, in accordance with Council policy this meeting was being audio recorded. Members of the public and the press may use their devices to film/photograph, or do a sound recording of the meeting, but to let him know, so that all present could be informed.

- (3) 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 are required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest, wishing 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 must leave the room before the debate and vote.
- (4) The Chairman requested that, for the benefit of any members of the public present at the meeting, please would Officers announce their name and their designation to the meeting when invited to speak.

17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – Start of Item – 2 minutes 43 seconds

Mr Robin Dartington thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation regarding public consultation.

Mr Dartington advised that he wished to put forward some ideas regarding how the Council should undertake public consultation regarding significant developments such as Churchgate, Hitchin and drew attention to the following:

- He had been a Councillor some 30 years ago and was now part of the Churchgate Resurgence PB Group;
- There should be an appropriate organisation to direct the project and engage with the community;
- The public must be involved in drawing up the development brief;
- Previous schemes had been developed autocratically with decisions imposed;
- There was an opportunity to organise things differently;
- The Council would not exist if it were not for the residents.

Mr Dartington then posed several questions:

- Did the Cabinet agree that the public, Councillors and officers should work together?
- Could Cabinet consider setting up a Hitchin Town Consultation Forum which would hold public meetings and then set up joint working parties, which should be composed of residents, Councillors and officers?
- Does Cabinet agree that such a positive forum would enable the large number of active community groups in Hitchin to co-ordinate their views?
- Could such a forum be the way forward to develop the thinking on Churchgate?
- Would the announcement of such a forum be the Council's first effective step in changing the relationship between the public and their representatives?

The Chairman thanked Mr Dartington for his presentation.

The following Members took part in the debate or asked questions:

- Councillor Ian Albert;
- Councillor Judi Billing;
- Councillor Paul Clark;
- Councillor Steve Jarvis.

Some of the main points raised were:

- Engagement with the Community was a focus;
- There were different types of consultation and whatever format is used it must be timely and relevant;
- Councillors spent a lot of time talking and listening to residents, although this could always be done better;
- Some strength in using self organised groups to help with consultation;
- The Area Committees had a role to play;
- The Council needed to find ways reach out to groups that do not engage;
- The Council needed to learn to manage the differing views of residents;
- Consequences of consultations could be different to what may be expected;
- The views expressed during a consultation may not necessarily be representative of the community as a whole;
- In some cases the result may not be as expected;
- The Council needs to be clear about what it can and can't achieve;
- The Council needs to have a clear set of expectations so that those consulted felt empowered and not disappointed.

Mr Dartington felt that:

- The Area Committees were not the right format for consultation and didn't meet often enough;
- The Community groups had factions within them;
- Public should be able to talk for however long is needed;
- That the reasoning of some presenters was incorrect or misguided;
- He expressed disappointment at the cautious views expressed by Members and that frustration came from not being heard.

The Chairman closed the debate with the following comments:

- The Council did want to listen;
- Some of the limitations had been discussed;

18 CO-OPERATIVE COUNCILS INNOVATION NETWORK

Audio recording – Start of Item – 33 minutes 37 seconds

The Chairman introduced the report entitled Co-Operative Councils Innovation Network together with the following appendix:

- Appendix A - Introduction to the Co-operative Innovation Network (CCIN).

No alternative options had been considered.

It was moved by Councillor Martin Stears-Handscorn, seconded by Councillor Paul Clark and

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- (1) That North Hertfordshire District Council become a full member of the Co-Operative Innovation Network and adopt the networks co-operative values;
- (2) to declare North Hertfordshire District Council a Co-operative Council.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: The Labour and Co-operative group of North Hertfordshire are currently associate members of the Co-operative Innovation network. With the recent change in administration, the Leader of the Council seeks to make the Council a full member of the Network.

19 CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Audio recording – Start of Item – 36 minutes 47 seconds

The Executive Member for the Environment and Leisure introduced the report entitled Cabinet Panel on the Environment together with the following appendix:

- Appendix A - Cabinet Panel on Environment.

No alternative options were considered.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Judi Billing;
- Councillor Ian Albert;
- Councillor Steve Jarvis;
- Councillor Paul Clark

Some of the points raised included:

- That some of the meetings and events could be localised for instance by using Area Committee and other existing structures;
- That it was important that actions came out of the discussions.

The Executive Member for the Environment and Leisure confirmed that engagement would be by various methods.

Councillor Steve Jarvis moved the recommendations contained in the report, which was seconded by Councillor Judi Billing.

Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb moved that there be nominated substitutes to the Cabinet Panel on the Environment.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Cabinet approves the establishment of the Panel, with Membership, Terms of Reference, Procedure and administration for the Cabinet Panel on the Environment as per Appendix A.
- (2) That there be nominated substitutes to the Cabinet Panel on the Environment.

REASON FOR DECISION: To comply with the direction of Cabinet on 11 June 2019.

20 MODERN DAY SLAVERY TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT & CHARTER AGAINST MODERN SLAVERY

Audio recording – Start of Item – 46 minutes 50 seconds

The Executive Member for Community Engagement introduced the report entitled Modern Day Slavery Transparency Statement & Charter Against Modern Slavery together with the following appendices:

Thursday, 27th June, 2019

- Appendix A – Transparency Statement on Modern Slavery;
- Appendix B – Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Action Plan 2018 - 2021
- Appendix C - Co-operative party Charter Against Modern Slavery extract page 2 Charter from Modern Slavery briefing.

Alternative Options Considered:

- In terms of the Transparency Statement there is no legal requirement to publish one and Cabinet could chose not to do so; however, the Local Government Associate advocates this as good practice;
- In terms of the Charter, the Cabinet have the option of referring this to Full Council or not doing so.

The Service Director – Legal and Community advised that the Safeguarding Group (an officer group) had considered the Transparency Statement and the Charter and were supportive of the principals, however would defer to the Contract and Procurement Group regarding implementation.

Some concern was expressed if the Charter was to be implemented in its stricted terms. However, if the Council were happy that offices used their best endeavours, they were supportive.

There was also some concern about the level of monitoring and reporting that may be require. However if officer could work through the requirements with Members checking, they were happy with the proposals.

The Executive Member for Community Engagement suggested that this should be considered in a years time in order to assess any difficulties and any transgressions.

The following Members took part in the debate and asked questions:

- Councillor Sam North

The Executive Member for Community Engagement proposed that the wording of the Charter should be reconsidered before presentation to Council so that it include and item regarding training.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Transparency Statement 2019-2020, as attached as Appendix A to the report be approved:
- (2) That the actions to date, as per the Action Plan, as attached as Appendix B to the report be noted;
- (3) That the Service Director – Legal and Community be requested to present a report in July 2020 reviewing the Action Plan and particularly any difficulties faced or transgressions of the Charter.
- (4) That the wording of the Charter should be reconsidered before presentation to Council so that it include and item regarding training.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That, the Council agrees to adopt the Charter as attached as Appendix C to the report..

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To consider the Transparency Statement and related matters.

Thursday, 27th June, 2019

The meeting closed at 8.29 pm

Chairman