

# NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber,  
District Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City  
on Thursday, 16th January, 2020 at 7.30 pm

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Terry Tyler (Vice-Chairman), Bill Davidson, Mike Hughson, Ben Lewis, Jim McNally, Sue Ngwala and Val Shanley.

Councillors Clare Billing, Faye Frost and Lisa Nash advised that they would arrive late for the meeting

### 2 MINUTES - 21 NOVEMBER 2019

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 21 November 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 Chairman advised that no testing of the fire alarms was expected. If the alarm did sound to please leave the building by the fire exits.

#### (2) Former Councillor Allison Ashley

The Chairman advised that It was with much regret that she had to announce that, former Councillor Allison Ashley passed away before Christmas. She would be sadly missed.

Allison was a North Herts District Councillor for 15 years representing the Hitchin Priory Ward from 2002 to 2017. During her service with the NHDC she served on a variety of Committees and represented the Council on several Outside Bodies. Allison was also the Chairman of the Council in the 2008 – 2009 Civic Year.

The Chairman asked those present to stand and observe a minute's silence in memory of former Councillor Allison Ashley.

Councillor Judi Billing requested that a letter of condolence be send on behalf of the Council to County Councillor Derrick Ashley.

#### (3) Mobile Phones

The Chairman asked that those present ensure that their mobile phones were turned off or the ring tone and other sounds muted.

(4) Climate Emergency

Members were reminded that this Council has 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.

(5) Audio Recording

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.

(6) Long Service Award – Geraldine Goodwin

The Chairman advised that, it is with great pleasure that we are recognising the long service of Geraldine Goodwin.

Geraldine commenced employment with the Council as a Senior Fraud Investigator on 6 December 1994, having spent eight years at the Department for Works and Pensions, the last two working in the Organised Fraud Team.

In 1999, Geraldine took up the post of Management Trainee and started studying for her professional qualification with the Institute of Revenues Rating & Valuation. Geraldine qualified in 2003. In 2000, Geraldine moved into the Recovery Team and in 2003 became the Team's Assistant Manager. In 2005 Geraldine was promoted to the post of Revenues Manager.

In her role, Geraldine is responsible for ensuring that the Council efficiently administers and collects its Council Tax, Business Rates and BIDS and collects other amounts due to the Council such as Sales Ledger, Car Parking Penalty Charge Notices and Housing Benefit Overpayments.

Geraldine has been instrumental in developing processes and procedures that strike the right balance between helping those in difficulty and maintaining healthy collection rates.

Geraldine also contributes to wider corporate activities with a qualification in coaching & mentoring, being a Job Evaluator and being on the Gender Pay Gap Group.

Geraldine is a shining example of someone who has seized the opportunities to progress her career at North Herts and her positive attitude and dedication make her a great asset to the Council.

Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb paid tribute to the contribution that Geraldine made to the Council and pondered on how fortunate the Council was to have dedicated staff such as Geraldine and others.

(7) 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 Chairman's Announcements on the agenda.

(8) Refreshments

All Councillors were invited to refreshments after the meeting in Committee Rooms 2/3.

(9) Comfort break

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

(10) Rules of Debate

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

(11) Civic Service

The Chairman advised that her Civic Service was being held this Sunday at 3pm at Royston Catholic Church. It would be a pleasure to see you there.

(12) Civic Awards Ceremony

The Chairman advised that her Civic Awards Ceremony would be held on 28 February 2020 at Hitchin Town Hall.

The venue's sound and acoustics had been much improved.

It would be a great pleasure to see you at this event.

## 5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no presentations by members of the public.

## 6 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

### 6a – Item Referred from Standards Committee: 22 October 2019 – Planning Code of Good Conduct

The Chairman advised that this referral would be taken with Item 7 (Minute 59 refers).

### 6b Item referred from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee: 5 December 2019 – Proposed Amendments to the Contract Procurement Rules

**RESOLVED:** That the proposed changes to the Contract Procurement Rules be adopted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** That the Contract Procurement Rules are part of the Constitution (under Section 20) and are revised and updated periodically as part of the Council's governance and procurement review processes, contributing to effective organisational internal control. In addition, the review and adoption of the Council's Contract Procurement Rules is a key action in the Council's Procurement Strategy.

### 6c Item referred from Cabinet: 17 December 2019 - Investment Strategy (Capital and Treasury) Mid-Year Review 2019-20

**RESOLVED:** That the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of September 2019 be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure the Council's continued compliance with CIPFA's code of practice on Treasury Management and the Local Government Act 2003 and that the Council manages its exposure to interest and capital risk.

6d Item referred from Cabinet: 17 December 2019 - Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) 2020/2021

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the following changes to the CTRS for 2020/2021 be approved:
  - A) That a deminimis amount of £2.50 per week be introduced for reductions in entitlement, with no deminimis amount for increases in entitlement;
  - B) That any payments made under the Windrush Compensation Scheme be disregarded for the purposes of CTRS.
- (2) That the level of Scheme funding to be allocated to the Parish, Town and Community Councils will be the same as 2019/2020 (£38,885).

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To ensure that the Council complies with the requirement to ensure that a Scheme is in place by 11 March 2020.

**7 REVIEW OF PLANNING CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE**

**RESOLVED:** That the Planning Code of Good Practice as amended and contained at Appendix A be approved.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure good governance within the Council and that the Council's Planning Code of Good Practice remains fit for purpose and is consistent with best practice.

**8 REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME**

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report and findings of the IRP, as attached as Appendix A to the submitted report be accepted with the exception of Paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8 and the figures in the table at Paragraph 3.2 to read:

Leader of the Council	BA x 2.8	£14,280
Deputy Leader of the Council	BA x 0.5	£2,550
Leader of each Opposition Group	BA x 0.5	£2,550
- (2) That, subject to the following amendments to Section 4 – Special Responsibility Allowances, the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2020.21 as set out in appendix B of the submitted report be agreed:

Leader of the Council	£14,280
Deputy Leader of the Council	£2,550
Leader of each Opposition Group	£2,550

That the final paragraph of Section 4 be deleted.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To ensure that the Council meets its statutory requirements of an annual review and adoption of the scheme.

**9 CONSTITUTIONAL & GOVERNANCE REVIEW 2019/20**

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That, subject to the following, the proposed amendments below, the amendments set out in Appendix A be approved:

Paragraph 4.8.9

That the restriction on the number of points of clarification that could be raised at the Planning Control Committee (currently 3) be removed;

Paragraph 9.8.2

That the wording of Paragraph (g) of the Terms of Reference be amended so that it read:

“In line with the Council’s adopted Statement of Community Involvement to receive any presentations from developers on major planning applications for 100 dwelling and above (including Construction Management Routes) and provide comments accordingly.”

- (2) That the Terms of Reference for the Cabinet Panels at Appendices B,C and D be approved.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To ensure the Council meets its statutory obligations and continues to improve its working practices.

**10 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

(A) London Luton Airport

Councillor David Barnard asked a question to which Councillor Paul Clark, Executive Member for Planning and Transport, supplied a response.

**11 NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

(A) Sky Lanterns

**RESOLVED:**

That this Council notes the suffering caused to farm animals and the fire risk and litter problems resulting from the release of sky lanterns and balloons. In response to the concerns of many local residents on this matter, it resolves:

- (1) to ban the sale of and release of sky lanterns and helium balloons on all Council owned land and property. This will be implemented by appropriate wording within the Terms and Conditions issued with approval for a Land Licence to hold an event on land owned by North Hertfordshire District Council;
- (2) to publicise the ban and its reasons to encourage residents to cease the practice;
- (3) to write to the Government in support of the National Farmers Union campaign for a ban on the sale of sky lanterns.

(B) Renewable Energy

It was proposed by Councillor Steve Jarvis, seconded by Councillor Kay Tart and:

**RESOLVED:**

That this Council:

- (i) recognises the importance of our work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy;

**Thursday, 16th January, 2020**

- (ii) recognises the central role that councils can play in sustainable communities, particularly through the provision of locally generated renewable electricity;
- (iii) further recognises:
  - that very large financial set up and running costs in selling locally generated renewable electricity to local customers result in it being impossible for local renewable electricity generators to do so;
  - that making these financial costs proportionate to the scale of a renewable electricity supplier's operation would create significant opportunities for councils to be providers of locally generated renewable electricity directly to local people, businesses and organisations; and
  - that revenues received by councils that become local renewable electricity providers could be used to help fund local greenhouse gas emissions reduction measures and to help improve local services and facilities;
- (iv) accordingly resolves to support the Local Electricity Bill, supported by the last Parliament by a cross-party group of 115 MPs, and which, if made law, would make the set up and running costs of selling local electricity to local customers proportionate by establishing a Right to Supply; and
- (v) further resolves to:
  - inform the local media of this decision;
  - write to local MPs asking them to support the bill; and write to the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, Power for the People, (at 8 Delancey Passage, Camden, London NW1 7NN or [info@powerforpeople.org.uk](mailto:info@powerforpeople.org.uk)) expressing its support.