

# NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, District Council Offices,  
Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City  
on Wednesday, 26th May, 2021 at 7.30 pm

### 1 WELCOME

The Chair of the Council welcomed everyone to the meeting and drew attention to there being are only 20 Members present.

He advised that, due to the cessation of the Flexible Meeting Arrangements on 7 May 2021, it was now a requirement that the majority of formal meetings convene in person.

Having been unable to find a suitable alternative venue, Group Leaders agreed that the meeting would take place in the Council Chamber which could only hold this number of people whilst social distancing requirements were still in place.

Although minimal officers were present in the room, other officers had joined the meeting remotely, as the requirement to meet in person only applied to Councillors and, where required, members of the public.

There was still the opportunity for those Members not present, public and press to listen and view proceedings on the Council's YouTube channel as the meeting was being streamed live.

As new systems were being used he asked that Members be guided by officers and be patient as things may take longer than usual.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager undertook a roll call of officers attending remotely to ensure that they could here and be heard.

She advised that new cameras had been installed which were linked to the microphones and would move to show whoever had their microphone on.

An officer who was in attendance remotely would be shown on the screens around the room and would be visible on the YouTube livestream when they spoke.

If a Member wished to speak they should use the speak button (located on the microphone unit). The microphone would light up green and the Chair would be alerted the request to speak. When the Chair invited a Member to speak their microphone would be made live and would turn red at which point the Member could speak.

The normal procedure rules in respect of debate and times to speak would apply:

No speeches may be made until the mover had moved a proposal and explained the purpose and it had been seconded.

When seconding a motion or amendment, a Member may reserve their speech until later in the debate.

In accordance with the Constitution no speech should exceed five minutes without the consent of the Chair.

If a Member had a closure motion, personal explanation or point of order, they must indicate this by pressing the speak button on their microphone and raising their hand to alert the Chair.

Voting would be via the Yes/No/Abstain buttons on the microphone unit. Instructions regarding how to use the microphone unit were included on the back of the nameplates. Details of how Members voted would be shown on the screens around the room and the result would be visible on the YouTube stream.

In the event of a tied vote the Chair would have the casting vote.

Members and Officers were required to wear masks when standing or moving around the room or the building. Masks could be removed whilst seated.

Exit and entry to the room and the building would be guided by marshals.

The Chair of the Council, Councillor Terry Tyler started the meeting proper.

## **2 ELECTION OF CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2021/22**

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Val Bryant be elected Chair of the Council to hold office until the next Annual Meeting of the Council in 2022.

Councillor Val Bryant took the Chair then read and signed the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took possession of the chain of office. Councillor Bryant thanked the Council for her election as Chair and advised that her Consort for the year would be Mr Stewart Bryant.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council places on record its sincere thanks and appreciation to Councillor Terry Tyler for his service as Chair of the Council during the past year and also to his Consort Mrs Deborah Freeman for her help and support during his term of office.

## **3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

*Audio recording –*

Councillor Strong advised that she wished to give apologies for the members of the Conservative Group who were unable to attend due to the decision to hold a quorate plus meeting as a result of the Covid social distancing requirements

## **4 ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2021/22**

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Terry Tyler be appointed Vice-Chair of the Council to hold office until the next Annual meeting of the Council in 2022.

Councillor Terry Tyler then read and signed the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took possession of the Chain of office. Councillor Tyler thanked the Council for his election as Vice-Chair and advised that his Consort for the year would be Councillor Lisa Nash.

## **5 MINUTES - 15 APRIL 2021**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council meeting held on 15 April 2021 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

## **6 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council policy, this meeting was being audio recorded as well as filmed. The audio recordings would be available to view on Mod.gov and the film recording via the NHDC YouTube channel.

- (2) 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.
- (3) Members were reminded to make declarations of interest before an item, the detailed reminder about this and speaking rights was set out under Chair's Announcements on the agenda.
- (4) The Chair welcomed and congratulated the following new Members to the District Council following their successful election on 6 May 2021 - Councillors Amy Allen, Simon Bloxham, Adam Compton, Juan Cowell, Sarah Dingley, Nigel Mason and Mandi Tandi.
- (5) The Chair congratulated the following who were successfully re-elected at the District Council Elections - Councillors Ian Albert, Paul Clark, Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Terry Hone, David Levett, Ian Mantle. Claire Strong, Richard Thake, Terry Tyler and Michael Weeks.
- (6) The Chair thanked former Councillors Bill Davidson, Steve Deakin Davies, Helen Oliver and Val Shanley who did not stand for re-election.
- (7) The Chair announced that her final thanks were to the former Leader of the Council, Martin Stears-Handscomb, who was unsuccessful in being re-elected.

Martin would have very much liked to have been present at the meeting but, the Covid Social Distancing measures meant that space in the Chamber was limited. He did however hope to come to a future meeting once some form of normality resumed.

Martin served the Council for 28 and half years, the last two years as Leader of the Council.

She was sure that all would wish to join her in wishing him well in his life outside of NHDC.

Councillors Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Claire Strong, Paul Clark and Judi Billing paid tribute to former Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb.

- (8) Members were reminded to complete their Registers of Interest forms online.  
  
This would need to be completed on a laptop or a computer through citrix. Delivery of laptops to newly elected Members would start on 27 May 2021.  
  
If Members had any issues accessing the form they should contact the Committee Services Team.
- (9) Members were reminded that they may only speak once on a motion and once on any amendment.
- (10) The Chair advised that she did not intend to have any comfort breaks unless Members requested one.

**7 DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS (INCLUDING ALL POLLS) - 6 MAY 2021**

**RESOLVED:** That the report of the Returning Officer regarding the results of the District Council, County Council, Police Crime Commissioner and Parish Council Elections and Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Planning Referendum held on 6 May 2021 be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To inform Members of the results of the District Council, County Council, Police Crime Commissioner and Parish Council Elections and Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Planning Referendum held on 6 May 2021.

**8 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg be elected as Leader of the Council until Annual Council in May 2025.

**9 NOTING THE APPOINTMENT OF THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET AND DEPUTY EXECUTIVE MEMBERS FOR 2021/22**

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That it be noted that the Leader of the Council had appointed Councillor Paul Clark as the Deputy Leader of the Council for the Civic Year 2021/22;
- (2) That it be noted that the following Members be appointed as Executive Members of the Cabinet for 2021/22 responsible for the following areas:

|                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Cabinet Member                      | Portfolio                        |
| Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg | Leader and Cabinet Chair         |
| Councillor Paul Clark               | Planning and Cabinet Vice-Chair  |
| Councillor Ian Albert               | Finance and IT                   |
| Councillor Judi Billing             | Community Engagement             |
| Councillor Sam Collins              | Enterprise, the Arts & Transport |
| Councillor Amy Allen                | Recycling and Waste Management   |
| Councillor Steve Jarvis             | Environment and Leisure          |
| Councillor Gary Grindal             | Housing and Environmental Health |

- (3) That it be noted that the following Members be appointed as Deputy Executive Members of the Cabinet for 2021/22 for the following areas:

|                                |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Deputy Executive Member        | Portfolio                        |
| To be advised                  | Planning                         |
| Councillor Sam North           | Finance and IT                   |
| Councillor Ruth Brown          | Community Engagement             |
| Councillor Nigel Mason         | Enterprise, the Arts & Transport |
| Councillor Carol Stanier       | Recycling and Waste Management   |
| Councillor Adem Ruggerio-Cakir | Environment and Leisure          |
| Councillor Sean Prendergast    | Housing and Environmental Health |

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To comply with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 and Sections 4.8.1 (vii), 5.2, 5.3.4 and 5.6 of the Council's Constitution.

**10 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES, JOINT COMMITTEES AND PANELS FOR 2021/22**

**RESOLVED:**

- (11) That, in line with the agreement of Group Leaders, the membership of the Licensing and Appeals Committee be increased to 14 (currently 13);
- (12) That, for 2021/22, the seats allocated to each political party on the Committees to which Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 applies and the seats allocated each political party on the bodies to which Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 does not apply, as set out in Appendix A to these Minutes, be noted.
- (13) That, for 2021/22, Members be appointed to the various Committees and other bodies in accordance with the wishes of the individual political groups, as detailed in Appendix B to these Minutes.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To comply with the provisions of Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

**11 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES FOR 2021/22**

**RESOLVED:** That the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees for 2021/22 be appointed in accordance with the details set out in Appendix C to these Minutes.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To comply with the provisions of Standing Order 4.8.1(a)(ix) of the Council's Constitution.

**12 KEY DECISIONS - ANNUAL REPORT ON CASES OF SPECIAL URGENCY**

**RESOLVED:** That the report entitled Key Decisions – Annual Report on Cases of Special Urgency be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To comply with Regulation 19 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

**13 APPROVE A PROGRAMME OF ORDINARY MEETINGS FOR THE COUNCIL FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2021/22**

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the following programme of ordinary meetings of the Council be approved for the Civic Year 2021/22:  
Thursday, 8 July 2021 – 7.30pm  
Thursday, 23 September 2021 – 7.30pm  
Thursday, 11 November 2021 – 7.30pm  
Thursday, 20 January 2022 – 7.30pm  
Thursday, 10 February 2022 – 7.30pm  
Wednesday, 23 March 2022 - 7.30 pm.
- (2) That the Calendar of Meetings for 2021/22, as attached as Appendix D to these Minutes, be approved.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable Members to agree a programme of ordinary meetings of the Council for 2021/22.

**14 NOMINATION OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER BODIES FOR 2021/22**

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the list of nominations of representatives on Outside Organisations and Other Bodies for 2021/22, as detailed in Appendix E to the Minutes be approved, with confirmation that:
  - (a) The Council's representative on Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust be Councillor Terry Tyler;
  - (b) The Council's representative on Royston First (BID) be Councillor Ruth Brow..
- (2) That Groundwork Hertfordshire, has been identified as not being in existence and therefore the nomination be removed from the list of Outside Organisations
- (3) That, subject to the usual checks on outside organisations being undertaken and satisfactory, the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership be added to the list of Outside Organisations and that the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure be nominated as the representative to this organisation;
- (4) That Political Group Leaders notify the Democratic Services Manager of nominations to the remaining vacancies or any changes to the existing representatives on outside organisations.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To comply with the provisions of Standing Order 4.8.1(b)(iv) and (v) of the Council's Constitution.

**15 RESOLUTION TO EXTEND THE 6 MONTH RULE - SECTION 85 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**RESOLVED:** That an extension of the six-month rule for Councillors unable to attend Committee meetings owing to the Coronavirus, or health related reasons following the cessation of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 No.392 and the requirement for Local Authorities to hold meetings in person be approved. The six-month period will end on 26 November 2021.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

- (1) Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 states that 'if a member of a local authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority, he shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the authority'. Whilst the Local Government Association has been lobbying for this issue to be dealt with, this has so far not been addressed by central government.
- (2) The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 No.392 allowed Local Authorities to hold remote meetings until 7 May 2021. This has now expired and Local Authorities are required to hold meetings in person.
- (3) The recommendation at 2.1 is therefore required to enable Councillors to continue to serve as District Councillors whilst they feel too vulnerable to attend meetings in person and social distancing is required due to the pandemic.

16 **CONSTITUTIONAL REPORT TO COUNCIL UNDER SECTION 2.6.6**

**RESOLVED:** That the amendments made to the Constitution be noted and endorsed.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure the Constitution reflects legislative change and minor amendments required following Council resolution of 15 April 2021.