

# NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## MINUTES

Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, District Council Offices, Letchworth Garden City  
on Thursday, 10th February, 2022 at 7.30 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors: Councillor Val Bryant (Chair), Councillor Terry Tyler (Vice-Chair), Ian Albert, Amy Allen, Daniel Allen, Kate Aspinwall, David Barnard, Clare Billing, Judi Billing, Simon Bloxham, Ruth Brown, Sam Collins, Adam Compton, George Davies, Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Morgan Derbyshire, Sarah Dingley, Jean Green, Simon Harwood, Terry Hone, Keith Hoskins, Mike Hughson, Steve Jarvis, David Levett, Ian Mantle, Nigel Mason, Gerald Morris, Michael Muir, Sam North, Sean Prendergast, Mike Rice, Adem Ruggiero-Cakir, Claire Strong, Mandi Tandi, Kay Tart, Richard Thake and Tom Tyson

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Anthony Roche (Managing Director), Jeanette Thompson (Service Director – Legal and Community), Ian Couper (Service Director – Resources), Melanie Stimpson (Democratic Services Manager), William Edwards (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager), James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer) and Louis Mutter (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)

### 89 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

*Audio recording – 2:54*

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Bishop, Tony Hunter, Jim McNally, Faye Frost, Juan Cowell, Lisa Nash, Michael Weeks, Gary Grindal, Ian Moody and Carol Stanier.

### 90 MINUTES - 20 JANUARY 2022

*Audio Recording – 3:22*

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 20 January 2022 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

### 91 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

*Audio recording – 4:39*

There was no other business notified.

### 92 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Audio recording – 4:43*

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (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) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.
- (4) The Chair advised that the usual rules in respect of debate and times to speak would apply.
- (5) The Chair advised that there was no longer a requirement for Members to stand while addressing the Council.
- (6) The Chair advised that there would be a comfort break at 9pm or at a suitable break in business thereabouts.
- (7) The Chair advised that the fundraiser in support of her chosen charities would now be taking place on 22 May and reminded Members to mark the date in their calendars.

### **93 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*Audio recording – 7:05*

There was no public participation.

### **94 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

*Audio recording – 7:08*

There were no questions submitted by Members.

### **95 NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

*Audio recording – 7:13*

There were no motions on notice submitted.

### **96 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

*Audio Recording: 7:18*

#### 8a. Referral from Cabinet – Revenue Budget 2022/23

The Chair advised that this referral would be taken with Item 10.

#### 8b. Referral from Cabinet – Investment Strategy (Integrated Capital and Treasury)

The Chair advised that this referral would be taken with item 11.

### **97 CHANGE TO POLLING PLACE AND POLLING STATIONS**

*Audio Recording: 7:45*

The Democratic Services Manager presented the report entitled Change to Polling Place & Polling Stations and highlighted the following:

- The report is to agree the designation of polling places to come into effect at the coming elections in May.
- Several polling stations that were previously used are no longer viable options.
- Paragraphs 8.3 and 8.4 explain the changes required.
- Within the report is a proposed amendment to the Constitution.

Councillor Dennis-Harburg proposed, Councillor Brown seconded and it was put to debate.

The following Members took part in debate:

- Councillor Claire Strong

On the vote it was:

**RESOLVED:** That the Council:

- (1) Designates the polling places and new polling stations as illustrated in the proposals attached as Appendix A to the report
- (2) Instructs the Monitoring Officer to amend the Constitution (4.4.1 (q) & (b)(x)) to enable amendments to polling places and polling stations between compulsory reviews to be delegated to the Service Director: Legal and Community, in consultation with the Returning Officer, relevant ward Councillors and Group Leaders.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

- (1) Through lack of availability or concerns about suitability, several polling stations previously designated are no longer viable options for use at upcoming elections.
- (2) The Returning Officer must therefore identify suitable alternatives for the polling places and subsequent polling stations to be used.
- (3) Recommendation 2.2 is for additional flexibility specifically to agree the polling station post Council meeting and generally where this situation arises between mandatory reviews and allows for relevant Member consultation when this arises.

## 98 REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23

*Audio Recording: 9:32*

The Chair advised that she would be inviting Councillor Dennis-Harburg (Leader of the Council) to speak, following which Ian Albert (Executive Member for Finance and IT) would present the report. The Chair agreed that Councillor Albert may speak for more than 5 minutes regarding the Budget.

The Leader of the Council made an introductory speech regarding the Revenue Budget 2022/23.

The Executive Member for Finance and IT gave a detailed speech regarding the entitled Revenue Budget 2022/23 and the following Appendices:

- Appendix A – Financial Risks 2022/23
- Appendix B – Revenue Budget Savings and Investments
- Appendix C – Budget Summary 2022 – 2027
- Appendix D – Resilience Index

Councillor Ian Albert proposed, Councillor Sam North seconded the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Steve Jarvis presented his amendments to the recommendations, which had been attached as an addendum to the Agenda Pack entitled Revenue Budget 2022/23: Proposed Amendments to Recommendations. Councillor Steve Jarvis proposed and Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg seconded.

Councillor Simon Harwood declared an interest in respect of his daughter being an employee of the Hitchin Outdoor Pool whose opening hours were being considered as part of the amendment. The Monitoring Officer advised that he take no part in the debate or vote on this amendment.

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

- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg
- Councillor Richard Thake
- Councillor Ruth Brown

The amendment was put to the vote.

The results of the vote were as follows:

YES: 35  
ABSTAIN: 0  
NO: 0  
TOTAL: 35

The individual results were as follows:

Cllr Val Bryant	YES
Cllr Adam Compton	YES
Cllr Adem Ruggiero-Cakir	YES
Cllr Amy Allen	YES
Cllr Claire Strong	YES
Cllr Clare Billing	YES
Cllr Daniel Allen	YES
Cllr David Barnard	YES
Cllr David Levett	YES
Cllr Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg	YES
Cllr George Davies	YES
Cllr Gerald Morris	YES
Cllr Ian Albert	YES
Cllr Ian Mantle	YES
Cllr Jean Green	YES
Cllr Judi Billing	YES
Cllr Kate Aspinwall	YES
Cllr Kay Tart	YES
Cllr Keith Hoskins	YES
Cllr Mandi Tandi	YES
Cllr Michael Muir	YES
Cllr Mike Hughson	YES
Cllr Mike Rice	YES
Cllr Morgan Derbyshire	YES
Cllr Nigel Mason	YES

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Cllr Richard Thake	YES
Cllr Ruth Brown	YES
Cllr Sam Collins	YES
Cllr Sam North	YES
Cllr Sarah Dingley	YES
Cllr Sean Prendergast	YES
Cllr Simon Bloxham	YES
Cllr Simon Harwood	
Cllr Steve Jarvis	YES
Cllr Terry Hone	YES
Cllr Terry Tyler	
Cllr Tom Tyson	YES

As such it was:

**RESOLVED:** To amend the recommendations to include an additional recommendation 2.6 as follows:

“Noting the additional flexibility resulting from the final Local Government Settlement, Council approves the following further investments to support the council’s sustainability objectives and the continuing provision of high quality leisure facilities for local people:

- A. Implementation of additional wilding schemes from those set out in the Wilding Audit prepared for the council by Countryside Management at a total cost of £25k.
- B. Work with user groups to investigate and implement potential extensions to open air pool opening at the end of the 2022 season at a cost of £25k.
- C. Provision of expert leisure market, pre-procurement and strategic investment advice in respect of the leisure services contract retendering at a cost of £25k.”

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

- Councillor Sam Collins
- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor George Davies
- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Judi Billing
- Councillor Adam Compton
- Councillor Terry Hone
- Councillor Amy Allen

In response to a query from Councillor David Levett the Service Director – Resources gave advice regarding the statutory consultation of business ratepayers.

The substantive motion as amended was put to the vote.

The results of the vote were as follows:

YES:	21
ABSTAIN:	15
NO:	0
TOTAL:	36

The individual results were as follows:

Cllr Val Bryant	YES
Cllr Adam Compton	ABSTAIN
Cllr Adem Ruggiero-Cakir	YES
Cllr Amy Allen	YES
Cllr Claire Strong	ABSTAIN
Cllr Clare Billing	YES
Cllr Daniel Allen	YES
Cllr David Barnard	ABSTAIN
Cllr David Levett	ABSTAIN
Cllr Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg	YES
Cllr George Davies	ABSTAIN
Cllr Gerald Morris	ABSTAIN
Cllr Ian Albert	YES
Cllr Ian Mantle	YES
Cllr Jean Green	ABSTAIN
Cllr Judi Billing	YES
Cllr Kate Aspinwall	YES
Cllr Kay Tart	YES
Cllr Keith Hoskins	YES
Cllr Mandi Tandi	ABSTAIN
Cllr Michael Muir	ABSTAIN
Cllr Mike Hughson	YES
Cllr Mike Rice	ABSTAIN
Cllr Morgan Derbyshire	ABSTAIN
Cllr Nigel Mason	YES
Cllr Richard Thake	ABSTAIN
Cllr Ruth Brown	YES
Cllr Sam Collins	YES
Cllr Sam North	YES
Cllr Sarah Dingley	ABSTAIN
Cllr Sean Prendergast	YES
Cllr Simon Bloxham	ABSTAIN
Cllr Simon Harwood	ABSTAIN
Cllr Steve Jarvis	YES
Cllr Terry Hone	
Cllr Terry Tyler	YES
Cllr Tom Tyson	YES

As such it was:

**RESOLVED:** That Council:

- (1) Notes the position on the Collection Fund and how it will be funded.
- (2) Notes the position relating to the General Fund balance and that due to the risks identified a minimum balance of £30.5 million is recommended.
- (3) Approves the savings and investments as detailed in Appendix B.
- (4) Approves a net expenditure budget of £18.123m\* as detailed in Appendix C
- (5) Approves a Council Tax increase of £5 on a band D property (other bands with pro-rata increases). This is in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy and is equivalent to 2.08%

- (6) Noting the additional flexibility resulting from the final Local Government Settlement, Council approves the following further investments to support the council's sustainability objectives and the continuing provision of high quality leisure facilities for local people:
- A. Implementation of additional wilding schemes from those set out in the Wilding Audit prepared for the council by Countryside Management at a total cost of £25k.
  - B. Work with user groups to investigate and implement potential extensions to open air pool opening at the end of the 2022 season at a cost of £25k.
  - C. Provision of expert leisure market, pre-procurement and strategic investment advice in respect of the leisure services contract retendering at a cost of £25k.

*[\*It was confirmed that the amended substantive resolution therefore was an approved net expenditure figure being £18.198m – being the figures in 2.4 and 2.6]*

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To ensure that all relevant factors are considered in arriving at a proposed budget and Council Tax level for 2022/23 and to ensure that the budget is aligned to Council priorities for 2022/23 as set out in the Council Plan.

## 99 INVESTMENT STRATEGY (INTEGRATED CAPITAL AND TREASURY)

*Audio Recording: 1:07:18*

Councillor Ian Albert presented the report entitled Investment Strategy (Integrated Capital and Treasury along with the following appendices:

- Appendix A – Investment Strategy
- Appendix A1 – A full list of planned capital expenditure (2022/23 onwards)
- Appendix A2 – A list of new capital schemes and schemes planned to commence from 2022/23

Councillor Ian Albert proposed the recommendations in the report, and Councillor Sam North seconded and it was put to debate.

The following Members took part in debate:

- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Steve Jarvis
- Councillor Sam North
- Councillor David Barnard

The Executive Member for Finance and IT responded to questions.

On the vote it was:

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That Council approve the adoption of the Investment Strategy (as attached in Appendix A), including the capital programme and prudential indicators.
- (2) That Council approve the adoption of the four clauses in relation to the Code of Practice on Treasury Management (as detailed in paragraphs 8.12 and 8.17)
- (3) That Council approve bringing forward the £150k capital allocation for NHLC: Sauna Steam Refurbishment forward in to 2021/22

**REASONS FOR DECISIONS:**

- (1) To ensure that the capital programme meets the Council's objectives and officers can plan the implementation of the approved schemes
- (2) To ensure the Council's compliance with CIPFA's code of practice on Treasury Management, the Local Government Act 2003, statutory guidance from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and the CIPFA Prudential Code. As well as determining and managing the Councils risk appetite in respect of investments.

The meeting closed at 8:53 pm

Chair