

# NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## CABINET

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERONON ROAD, LETCHWORTH  
ON WEDNESDAY, 2ND NOVEMBER, 2022 AT 7.30 PM

## MINUTES

**Present:** *Councillors: Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg (Chair), Ruth Brown, Ian Albert, Judi Billing, Keith Hoskins, Amy Allen, Sean Prendergast and Ian Mantle*

**In Attendance:**

*Ian Fullstone (Service Director – Regulatory), Jeanette Thompson (Service Director – Legal & Community and Monitoring Officer), Louise Symes (Strategic Infrastructure and Projects Manager), Nigel Smith (Strategic Planning Manager) Deborah Coates (Principal Planning Officer), James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager) and Louis Mutter (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)*

**Also Present:**

*At the commencement of the meeting approximately 1 member of the public.*

### 130 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

*Audio recording – 2 minutes 9 seconds*

Apologies for absence was received from Councillor Steve Jarvis.

### 131 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Audio recording – 2 minutes 18 seconds*

- (1) The Chair welcomed those present at the meeting;
- (2) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (3) 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) 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. The Chair also reminded Members to state whether they had been granted a dispensation by the Monitoring Officer.

The Chair invited the Monitoring Officer to provide additional information on declaring interests and dispensations.

The Monitoring Officer informed the committee that she has granted a general dispensation to all District Councillors due to interest in 5 potential sites of development included in the Local Plan.

Councillor Judi Billing and Keith Hoskins declared interests as Hertfordshire County Councillors, due to County Council owned land in Baldock included in the Local Plan 2011-2031.

Councillor Ian Mantle declared an interest as the District Council's nominee on the Letchworth Heritage Foundation which owns land included in the Local Plan 2011-3031.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed she had granted dispensations for those three declarations of interest.

## **132 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*Audio recording – 4 minutes 35 seconds*

There was no public participation at this meeting.

## **133 NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN 2011-2031**

*Audio Recording: : 4 minutes 43 seconds*

The Executive Member for Planning and Transport, Councillor Ruth Brown, presented the report entitled North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 and highlighted the following key points:

- The Local Plan was sent for examination in June 2017, the Main Modifications were approved in December 2018. Both of those dates were prior to the current administration;
- The Plan has gone through several rounds of public consultations and hearings over a period of 4 years;
- There was an Extraordinary Council meeting in October 2020 to look at Greenbelt allocations in relation to the reduction of housing need;
- The Inspector's Report keeps all of the greenbelt housing sites that were originally allocated as well as a significant new area being allocated as Greenbelt;
- The government is requiring all Local Authorities to have an adopted Local Plan by December 2023. Adopting this Plan gives the Council significantly more control over the development in the District;
- The report also recommends that Cabinet approves the updated Local Development Scheme, which includes an early review which should start by December 2023.

In response to questions from Councillor Ian Albert, Councillor Ruth Brown, the Monitoring Officer and the Strategic Planning Manager respectively, advised:

- The Council is required to start the review by December 2023, it can be started earlier. It's important to recognise it's a big undertaking and needs an effective review;
- The Extraordinary Council meeting is on 8 November, a legal basis for the recommendation has been set to adopt a plan. If the plan wasn't accepted the Council would be potentially subject to judicial review by interested developers;
- The review of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty is at an early stage at the moment; AONBs are amended through a different process, so can be changed outside of the Local Plan cycle and relevant policies would be applied to the amended area.

Councillor Ruth Brown proposed and Councillor Ian Albert seconded.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Ian Albert
- Councillor Judi Billing

The Chair invited Councillor David Levett to address the Committee and made the following points:

- Councillor Levett had been involved in the production of the Local Plan since 2011;
- This plan is not perfect, it's a work in progress and something that is going to change all the time;
- The Council has seen through the Planning Control Committee the issues of not having a Local Plan.

The Chair and Councillor David Levett extended their thanks to the officers involved in the work to produce the Local Plan, often working early in the morning to late at night as well as thanking the Members of the previous administration in beginning this process.

Following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet recommends to Full Council that:

- (1) The outcome of the examination set out in the Inspector's Report (IR), attached as Appendix 1, along with his recommended Main Modifications of the Plan, attached as Appendix 2, be noted.
- (2) The final version of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 ('the Local Plan') attached as Appendix 3, incorporating both the Inspector's Main Modifications and the proposed Additional Modifications, attached as Appendix 4, be adopted as part of the statutory Development Plan for the District.
- (3) The Policies Map, illustrated by Appendices 5a to 5g, is adopted in order to give geographical effect to the policies of the Local Plan.
- (4) The updated Local Development Scheme, attached as Appendix 6, be approved.
- (5) Delegated authority is granted to the Service Director – Regulatory in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport to make any minor non-material corrections (including but not limited to cosmetic additions or presentational alterations) to the adopted Local Plan or the adopted Policies Map as considered necessary for their publication and publicity in accordance with the relevant regulations.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To provide the District with an up-to-date Local Plan in accordance with the requirements of national legislation and policy.

**134 THERFIELD HEATH SSSI MITIGATION STRATEGY**

*Audio Recording: 21 minutes 3 seconds*

The Executive Member for Planning and Transport, Councillor Ruth Brown, presented the report entitled Therfield Heath SSSI Mitigation Strategy and highlighted the following key points:

- The Council was asked by Natural England to produce a mitigation strategy before the Local Plan is adopted;
- The increasing amount of development around the area puts extra footfall on that area;

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- Many of the allocated sites in Royston have already had developments on them, but there are more to come;
- A supplementary agenda was published including the comments from Natural England.

Councillor Ruth Brown proposed and Councillor Ian Albert seconded and, following a vote it was:

***RESOLVED:***

(1) That, subject to approval of the Local Plan by Full Council, the Therfield Heath SSSI Mitigation Strategy is approved as a material consideration for the purpose of determining planning applications in Royston and the surrounding area.

(2) That delegated authority is granted to the Service Director – Regulatory in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport and the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure to incorporate the minor changes requested by Natural England, attached as Appendix C and any further non-material corrections prior to publication of the Strategy.

***REASON FOR DECISION:***

To provide a mechanism through which to negotiate mitigation measures to address recreational impact on the Therfield Heath Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) and fulfil the Council's Statement of Common Ground with Natural England.

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm

Chair