

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION SHEET

**Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, District Council Offices, Gernon Road,
Letchworth
on Thursday, 13th July, 2023 at 7.30 pm**

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Terry Tyler, Adam Compton, David Barnard, Faye Frost, Simon Bloxham and Juan Cowell.

2 MINUTES - 25 MAY 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 25 May 2023 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

3 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business notified.

4 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (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 normal procedure rules in respect of debate and times to speak will apply.
- (5) The Chair advised that 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution did not apply to this meeting. A comfort break would be held at an appropriate time, should proceedings continue at length.
- (6) The Chair advised that the referrals at Agenda Item 8 should be numbered 8A, 8B, etc.
- (7) The Chair noted that the thoughts of the Council were with those affected by the recent fire in Baldock and advised support would be available via the Herts County Council website.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at this meeting.

6 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

In accordance with Standing Order 4.8.11 three questions had been submitted by the required deadline set out in the Constitution.

There was also one urgent question submitted in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.11(d)(ii).

(A) Council Response to London Luton Airport Application

Councillor Ralph Muncer to Councillor Elizabeth Dennis (Leader of the Council)

(B) Levelling Up Funds

Councillor Terry Hone to Councillor Ian Albert (Executive Member for Finance and IT)

(C) Council Office Reception

Councillor David Levett to Councillor Elizabeth Dennis (Leader of the Council)

(D) Housing for Asylum Seekers

This question was accepted as urgent in accordance with 8.4.11(d)(ii) of the Constitution by the Member to which the question was addressed. The reason provided for the matter being urgent was that the issue had potential to cause community tensions and to bring the Council into disrepute.

Councillor Dominic Griffiths to Councillor Sean Prendergast (Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health)

7 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

There were five motions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.12.

(A) The Great Home Upgrade

RESOLVED:

The Council:

- (1) Calls upon the Prime Minister to call for a Great Homes Upgrade and a commitment to retrofit 19 million homes by 2030.
- (2) Calls on the Chancellor to commit to investing over the next three years to begin a Great Homes Upgrade, and that the government will commit to working with housing associations, private rental properties and owner occupiers to upgrade properties for net zero and commits to setting up a retrofitting taskforce to target resources now to achieving net zero through upgrading properties.
- (3) Commits to writing to our neighbouring local authorities to ask them to join us to join the campaign.

(B) Ecological Emergency

RESOLVED:

The Council:

- (1) Declares an ecological emergency.

- (2) Ensures that addressing the ecological emergency and nature recovery are considered as strategic priorities for planning policies and design guides for new development, including master-planning of sites, by identifying appropriate areas for habitat restoration and biodiversity net gain and ensuring that development limits impact on existing habitats in its process.
- (3) Set measurable targets and standards for biodiversity increase, in both species and quantities, seeking also to increase community engagement.
- (4) Work with our partners to establish a Local Nature Partnership for Hertfordshire as soon as possible, in keeping with the urgency of this declaration.
- (5) Work with our partners to develop Nature Recovery Networks and Nature Recovery Strategy for Hertfordshire, again in keeping with the urgency of this declaration.
- (6) Look for opportunities to work in partnership with local charities and environmental organisations to deliver nature recovery in North Hertfordshire.
- (7) Investigate new approaches to nature recovery such as habitat banking that deliver biodiversity objectives and provide new investment opportunities.
- (8) Commits to considering biodiversity net gain policies within the review of the Local Plan at the earliest achievable opportunity, with a commitment to set a local BNG policy, which goes beyond the minimum, nationally required, 10% increase.

(D) Community Infrastructure Levy

Following the debate, and before being put to a vote, Cllr Ian Moody withdrew the motion on the basis of the statement by the Executive Member for Planning and Transport.

(C) Waste Contract Renewal – Changes to the Residual Waste Collection Cycle

RESOLVED: That the motion was lost.

(E) Solar Energy Policy

The Chair advised that this motion had been withdrawn.

8 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

8a) Referral from Cabinet: Active North Herts Strategy

RESOLVED: A budget of £50k was approved from 2025/26 onwards, to enable the delivery of a new Active Communities programme run by the leisure operator.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure the Council and its stakeholder partners have a clear policy position on its approach to the future delivery of sport, leisure, physical activity and wellbeing services across the district.

8b) Referral from Cabinet: Revenue Budget Outturn 2022/23

RESOLVED: That Council approved the net transfer from earmarked reserves, as identified in Table 9, of £5.274million.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

(1) Members are able to monitor, make adjustments within the overall budgetary framework and request appropriate action of Services who do not meet the budget targets set as part of the Corporate Business Planning process.

(2) Changes to the Council's balances are monitored and approved.

8c) Referral from Cabinet: Investment Strategy (Capital and Treasury) End of Year Review 2022/23

RESOLVED: That Council:

(1) Approved the actual 2022/23 prudential and treasury indicators.

(2) Noted the annual Treasury Report for 2022/23.

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.

8d) Referral from Cabinet: Year End Report on Risk Management Governance

RESOLVED: That Council considered the Annual Risk Management update, including comments provided by Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

REASON FOR DECISION: The responsibility for ensuring the management of risks is that of the Cabinet, who were responsible for monitoring the effective development and operation of Risk Management.

8e) Referral from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee: Finance, Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report 2022-2023

The Chair advised that this referral would be taken alongside Agenda Item 10 'Finance Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report 2022-2023'.

9 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

RESOLVED: That Full Council noted the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2022-2023.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable Council to consider the report of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the work of that Committee in the 2022/2023 Civic Year.

10 FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

RESOLVED: That Full Council noted the Annual Report of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee 2022-2023.

REASON FOR DECISION: To provide Full Council with assurance as to the effectiveness of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

11 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That Council received and noted the Annual Report.

REASON FOR DECISION: In line with recommended good governance practice to report the work of Standards Committee to the full Membership, to promote and maintain high standards of conduct and to demonstrate a strong commitment to ethical values.

12 AMENDMENTS TO THE HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD STANDING ORDERS IN RELATION TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR AND PRE-EMPTIVELY SEEKING AUTHORITY TO AMEND SERVICE DIRECTOR: REGULATORY DELEGATIONS

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the amendments as set out within this report to Standing Order 4.2 contained within Appendix 1 Annex A of the HGB Standing Orders, in Section 11 of the NHC Constitution were approved.
- (2) That the Council delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer to undertake any necessary amendments to the Constitution, in respect of the Service Director: Regulatory and the Service Director: Housing & Environment (to take effect on successful appointment/commencement).

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) Section 11 of the Constitution contains the Standing Order 4.2 contained within Appendix 1 Annex A the Hertfordshire Growth Board Standing Orders deals with the re-appointment of the Chair and states:

“The appointment of the Chair described in 4.1 shall be for a term up to the first meeting of the HGB that follows both the 2021 local elections and the 2021 Annual Meetings of the constituent Councils (the Post-Election Meeting). At the Post Election Meeting, the Board may either re-appoint the same member as Agenda Item 12 Chair or appoint a new Chair for a term of two years. Save in the above case, the Chair shall serve a single consecutive term of two years.”

- (2) It has been identified that the wording of Standing Order 4.2 is ambiguous and unclear in relation to the term of Chairs and the re-election of Chairs for periods exceeding two years. Therefore, each member council has been consulted on amendments to Standing Order 4.2, which will make it clearer, and which will allow for the re-election of the current Chair. The Hertfordshire County Council's Monitoring Officer has requested that this be brought to the Council meeting in July.

- (3) It is therefore recommended that 4.2 is amended to:

“With effect from the Annual General Meeting 2023 the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair shall be decided annually as the first substantive item of business at the AGM.”

- (4) To ensure that effective delegations can be put in place in time for any new (temporary) appointment.