

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERONON ROAD, LETCHWORTH, HERTS, SG6 3JF
ON TUESDAY, 19TH NOVEMBER, 2024 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Daniel Allen (Chair), Val Bryant (Vice-Chair), Ian Albert, Amy Allen, Mick Debenham and Dave Winstanley.*

In Attendance: *Faith Churchill (Democratic Services Apprentice), Philip Doggett (Principal Estates Surveyor), Jo Dufficy (Service Director - Customers), Susan Le Dain (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), David Martins Hesp (Assistive Technology Manager), Robert Orchard (Culture and Facilities Services Manager), Anthony Roche (Managing Director), Nigel Smith (Strategic Planning Manager) and Jeanette Thompson (Service Director - Legal and Community).*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting no members of the public were present.*

58 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 1 minute 58 seconds

No apologies for absence were received.

59 MINUTES - 10 SEPTEMBER 2024

Audio Recording – 2 minutes 12 seconds

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 10 September 2024 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

60 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 3 minutes 4 seconds

There was no other business notified.

61 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 3 minutes 9 seconds

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be recorded.
- (2) The Chair reminded Members that the Council had declared both a Climate Emergency and an Ecological Emergency. These are serious decisions, and mean 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 for the purposes of clarification that 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution did not apply to this meeting.

62 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 4 minutes 18 seconds

There was no public participation at the meeting.

63 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

Audio recording – 4 minutes 23 seconds

The Chair advised that the item referred from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be taken with Item 7 on the agenda.

64 MUSEUM STORAGE OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Audio recording – 4 minutes 36 seconds

The Chair invited Councillor Matt Barnes, as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to present the referral on this item. Councillor Barnes advised that:

- The committee wished to thank Councillor Tamsin Thomas and all the Officers involved for the very well presented report.
- There was discussion around all the options available which resulted in the proposed amendments to the original recommendations.
- The committee endorsed the proposal to apply for grant funding towards the costs of any of the proposals to reduce capital spend.
- The committee wished to thank Councillor Tamsin Thomas and all the Officers for the knowledge and expertise they demonstrated at the meeting which was great assistance to Members.

Councillor Daniel Allen, as Interim Executive Member for Planning and Transport, presented the report entitled 'Museum Storage Options Appraisal' and advised that:

- The primary purpose of the report was to provide an appraisal of the full range of options available.
- The majority of the collection was in storage and not on display in the main museum.
- The museum curators had an active approach to the museum collection and the collection continued to grow.
- The site at Bury Mead was not supposed to be used as a long-term solution and it was not fit for this purpose any longer.
- Accreditation was important as it not only enabled the Council to host travelling exhibitions, but also to access capital and project-based grants and to bid for grants.
- Officers identified eight possible options, three of which were short term options and five were longer term options.
- It was preferable to find a viable long-term proposal for the storage as costs would rise over time and a long-term solution was most needed.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ian Albert
- Councillor Mick Debenham

In response to questions, the Principal Estates Surveyor advised that a six-month timeframe should be enough time to allow costings to be presented back to Cabinet.

In response to questions the Culture and Facilities Survey Manager advised that:

- The Council would have to work alongside any grant funding timeframes which may result in a delay to the six-month timeframe for costings to be available.
- An overview of the damage and deterioration to the collection that had occurred to date was detailed in Appendix 5.
- Although urgent issues had been mitigated, deterioration was a gradual process and if objects were stored in poor conditions they would deteriorate over time.

The following Members took part in a debate:

- Councillor Ian Albert
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Amy Allen
- Councillor Daniel Allen
- Councillor Mick Debenham

Points raised in a debate included:

- Cabinet was happy to accept the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Careful judgement would be needed in reaching a decision as there was a limit to what funds could be allocated to projects.
- The Council was a custodian of the heritage of North Hertfordshire and the collection contained important artifacts which needed to be preserved for future generations.
- The current museum was not a suitable working space for its staff as well as the artifacts.

In response to a question, the Service Director – Resources advised that although funds were allocated from the capital programme as detailed in section 11.4 of the report, some of the costs would become revenue costs as the project proceeded.

The Leader of the Council, as Chair, advised that Cabinet accepted the recommendations (as amended) by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting held on 12 November 2024.

Councillor Mick Debenham proposed and Councillor Amy Allen seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- (1) Noted the current projected costs, advantages and disadvantages of each option.
- (2) Approved use of £30k of the allocated £4m budget in the current capital programme for this project to develop more detail on the costs of Option D (Warehouse Proposal) and to acquire the necessary details for a planning application to be made.

- (3) Approved use of £20k of the allocated £4m budget in the current capital programme for this project to develop more detail on the costs of Option E (purchase of a freehold/long leasehold building (new or existing)), should a suitable property become available.
- (4) Considered and gave approval for officers to apply for grant funding towards the investigations mentioned in 2.2 and 2.3 and recognise the need to align investigations with grant funding timetables in this instance.
- (5) Resolved to discount options A, B and G and recommend that they are no longer developed or explored further.
- (6) Indicated that Options C, F and H outlined within the report should be pursued further.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) Officers do not have the capacity or financial budget to progress all 8 options to an advanced stage and some early decisions are required in order to focus time and budget on pursuing the most advantageous options based on the best information available to officers and members at the present time.
- (2) In addition, the pursuit of greater detail on a number of the options will require expenditure on external reports and consultants which officers are seeking Cabinets approval to progress. Estimated figures are included in the main body of the report which can be found in Appendix 1 and are summarised in the Executive Summary Grid in Appendix 2.

65 CODICOTE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Audio recording 31 minutes 13 seconds

Councillor Daniel Allen, as Interim Executive Member for Planning and Transport, presented the report entitled 'Codicote Neighbourhood Plan' and advised that:

- Neighbourhood plans were introduced by the Localism Act in 2011.
- Neighbourhood plan laid out planning policies for their neighbourhood areas.
- The Codicote neighbourhood plan was dedicated by Council in June 2014.
- Consultations would take place over a seven-week period in December 2024 and January 2025.
- This neighbourhood plan was a key decision as it covered the two district wards of Codicote and Kimpton and also Knebworth and was therefore brought to Cabinet.

In response to a question from Councillor Ian Albert, the Strategic Planning Manager advised that the area covered by the Codicote Parish Council was the two district wards of Codicote and Kimpton and also Knebworth.

The following Members took part in a debate:

- Councillor Ian Albert
- Councillor Amy Allen

Points raised in a debate included:

- Lessons should be learnt from previous public consultations held for neighbourhood plans to ensure that the correct information was used in future plans.
- This report contained the older wording of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) which need to be updated with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Councillor Amy Allen proposed and Councillor Dave Winstanley seconded, and following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved that public consultation can be undertaken for the submission version of the Codicote Neighbourhood Plan.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable public consultation on the proposed submission Codicote Neighbourhood Plan 2022 – 2035 to take place before the Neighbourhood Plan is submitted for examination by an independent examiner.

66 **LAND NORTH-EAST OF GREAT ASHBY (GA2) STRATEGIC MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK**

Audio recording – 38 minutes 33 seconds

Councillor Daniel Allen, as Interim Executive Member for Planning and Transport presented the report entitled 'Land North-East of Great Ashby (GA2) Strategic Masterplan Framework' and advised that:

- This report was asking Cabinet to refer this masterplan to Full Council for adoption as a material planning consideration for approximately 600 homes and supporting infrastructure.
- Council Officers and advisers had worked with a development team to produce this masterplan which had been overseen by the Project Board.
- The final version of the masterplan was a more visual report which delivered the key requirements of the Local Plan.
- This masterplan had set six silver and two gold targets of achievement against the Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which supported the Local Plan.
- If Cabinet approved the referral of this masterplan to Council, Officers would provide Members with a presentation of key plans at the meeting on 28 November.
- Members had been invited to attend a briefing session on the masterplan on 6 November which had been well attended.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Daniel Allen
- Councillor Amy Allen
- Councillor Ian Albert

In response to questions, the Strategic Planning Manager advised that:

- The masterplan identified two off site cycling routes, one to the southwest and the other to the south which went towards the secondary school.
- There was currently one bridleway at the access point to the south and there was a proposal to upgrade the footpath currently on the northern boundary to also be a bridleway.
- The masterplan included a rights of way plan which could be found in both the masterplan and the supplementary document.
- Officers would check updated advice produced by Hertfordshire County Council to ensure that all stakeholders were working alongside each other and report back at Full Council on 28 November.

The following Members took part in a debate:

- Councillor Daniel Allen
- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Mick Debenham

Points raised in a debate included:

- This development would be going ahead as it was already in the Local Plan and the masterplan would ensure the best options for residents.
- The member briefing session had made the scope and purpose of a masterplan very clear and was very useful.
- The use of masterplans was an excellent process.

Councillor Amy Allen proposed and Councillor Mick Debenham seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That the Strategic Masterplan Framework for the land North-East of Great Ashby (Local Plan site GA2), attached at Appendix A, is approved and adopted as a material planning consideration for relevant planning decisions relating to the site.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

- (1) To set an agreed design framework for the delivery of a strategic site within the Council's adopted Local Plan.
- (2) To accord with policy requirements of the Local Plan.

67 NORTH STEVENAGE STRATEGIC MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

Audio recording – 50 minutes 21 seconds

Councillor Daniel Allen, as Interim Executive Member for Planning and Transport, presented the report entitled 'North Stevenage Strategic Masterplan Framework' and advised that:

- This report was asking Cabinet to refer the masterplan back to Full Council for reconsideration.
- The masterplan was originally considered at Council back in July 2024 but was not adopted at that time as a number of issues were raised by Members.
- This report provides an update on the issues and clarifies several changes that have been made and more visual material has now been used.
- This report clarifies the access arrangements into the site, detailed how cars will be able to circulate within and between the two schemes using the access points from North Road and an internal connection at the east of the site.
- All parts of the NS1 site are within a 20-minute walk of the school and shops on site.
- This masterplan was aiming to meet several gold targets set in the Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which supported the Local Plan.
- If Cabinet approve to refer this masterplan back to Council, there would be a presentation of key plans to Members at the meeting on 28 November.
- Members had been invited to attend a briefing session on the masterplan on 6 November which had been well attended.

In response to a question by Councillor Val Bryant, the Strategic Planning Manager advised that:

- Hertfordshire County Council had decided that two primary schools were required.
- The two primary school had been built in close proximity to each other as schools had to be built on the most accessible and flattest part of the site.
- Detail of the provision of school sites would be decided in the legal agreement at the application stage.

The following Members took part in a debate:

- Councillor Daniel Allen
- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Val Bryant

Points raised in a debate included:

- The main concern was how to improve integration between the two sides of the sites.
- This was an excellent masterplan with a good spread of affordable housing within the two sites.
- The masterplan provided good phasing particularly in regard to green spaces and the allocation of 40% affordable housing at each phase.

Councillor Dave Winstanley proposed and Councillor Val Bryant seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- (1) Following the Full Council decision not to adopt the masterplan in July 2024, the additional information and clarification in this report is noted.
- (2) The Strategic Masterplan Framework for North Stevenage, attached at Appendix B, is approved and adopted as a material planning consideration for relevant planning decisions relating to the site.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) To facilitate the delivery of a strategic site within the Council's adopted Local Plan.
- (2) To accord with policy requirements of the Local Plan.

68 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Audio recording – 59 minutes 34 seconds

Councillor Daniel Allen proposed and Councillor Amy Allen seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

69 **EXTENSION OF PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN CARELINE AND HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - PART 2**

N.B. This item was considered in restricted session and therefore no recordings were available.

The Executive Member for Community and Partnerships presented the report entitled 'Extension of Partnership Agreement between Careline and Hertfordshire County Council – Part 2'.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Mick Debenham seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Cabinet noted the recommendations in Part 1 of this report.

70 **EXTENSION OF PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN CARELINE AND HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - PART 1**

Audio recording – 1 hour 15 minutes 20 seconds

Councillor Val Bryant, the Executive Member for Community and Partnerships, presented the report entitled 'Extension of Partnership Agreement between Careline and Hertfordshire County Council' and advised that:

- This report asked Cabinet to approve to extend the agreement between North Herts Careline and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) for a period of five years from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031.
- This contract would continue the delegation of service from HCC to North Herts Council.
- The current five-year contract would expire on 31 March 2026.
- The Careline partnership worked well and promoted the wellbeing of the residents of North Hertfordshire.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Daniel Allen
- Councillor Ian Albert

Points raised in a debate included:

- Careline was an invaluable service to the residents of North Hertfordshire.
- Careline handled 1,500 calls a day as detailed in section 7.1 of the report.
- Careline was a great example of how local authorities worked together to support communities.

Councillor Dave Winstanley proposed and Councillor Amy Allen seconded, and following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- (1) Approved the extension of the agreement between Herts Careline and HCC for a period of five years to run from 01 April 2026 to 31 March 2031. This contract will be delivered by way of delegation from HCC to NHC.
- (2) Delegated the operational contractual arrangements and final sign off of the agreement to the Service Director Customers, in consultation with the Executive Member for Community and Partnerships.

Tuesday, 19th November, 2024

REASON FOR DECISIONS: The existing partnership between Careline and HCC works very well. An extension of the contract will enable us to continue to build on the positive relationship to the benefit of service users across Hertfordshire.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm

Chair