

# NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## MINUTES

Meeting of the Council held as a Virtual Meeting  
on Thursday, 27th August, 2020 at 7.30 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors: Terry Tyler (Chair), Val Bryant (Vice-Chair), Ian Albert, Daniel Allen, Kate Aspinwall, David Barnard, Clare Billing, Judi Billing, John Bishop, Ruth Brown, Paul Clark, Sam Collins, Bill Davidson, George Davies, Steve Deakin-Davies, Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Morgan Derbyshire, Faye Frost, Jean Green, Gary Grindal, Simon Harwood, Terry Hone, Keith Hoskins, Mike Hughson, Tony Hunter, Steve Jarvis, David Levett, Ian Mantle, Jim McNally, Ian Moody, Gerald Morris, Michael Muir, Lisa Nash, Sue Ngwala, Sam North, Helen Oliver, Sean Prendergast, Mike Rice, Adem Ruggiero-Cakir, Val Shanley, Carol Stanier, Martin Stears-Handscorn, Claire Strong, Richard Thake, Tom Tyson and Michael Weeks

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Howard Crompton (Service Director - Transformation), Ian Couper (Service Director - Resources), Isabelle Alajooz (Legal Commercial Team Manager), Nurainatta Katevu (Legal Regulatory Team Manager), Melanie Stimpson (Democratic Services Manager), Hilary Dineen (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager) and Matthew Hepburn (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)

## 29 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

*Audio Recording – 1 second*

The Chair welcomed everyone to this virtual Council meeting that was being conducted with Members and Officers at various locations, communicating via audio/video and online. There was also the opportunity for the public and press to listen and view proceedings.

The Chair invited the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager to explain how proceedings would work and to confirm that Members and Officers were in attendance.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager undertook a roll call to ensure that all Members and Officers could hear and be heard and gave advice regarding the following:

The meeting was being streamed live on the Council's You Tube channel and also recorded via Zoom. If live streaming failed the meeting would adjourn. If the live stream could not be restored within a reasonable period then the remaining business would be considered at a later date.

Please stay in view of the camera at all times.

If for any reason the meeting was not quorate an Officer would notify attendees by interjecting the meeting. The meeting would adjourn immediately. Once the meeting was quorate the meeting would resume. If connection could not be restored within a reasonable period, then the remaining business would be considered at a later date.

If a remote Member lost connection the Chair may adjourn the meeting for a short period to enable connection to be re-established. If the Chair did not adjourn the meeting the Member would be deemed to have left the meeting at the point of failure and be deemed to have returned at the point of re-establishment. Only Members present for the entirety of debate and consideration of an item were entitled to vote.

Noise emitting devices should be muted and the mute button on the tablet or computer should be activated when not speaking.

If a Member wished to speak they should use the raise hand button and microphones would need to be unmuted before speaking.

If a Member had a closure motion, personal explanation or point of order, please interject the meeting and wait for the Chair to invite you to speak.

When requested to vote, voting would be via the Green tick for "Yes", Red Cross for "No" and Blue Raise Hand for "abstain" functions. To enable the votes to be counted, votes should not be cleared until requested to do so .

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

### **30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

*Audio recording – 10 minutes 52 seconds*

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kay Tart.

### **31 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Audio recording – 11 minutes 2 seconds*

#### **(1) Recording**

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

#### **(2) Climate Emergency**

Members were reminded that this Council has declared a Climate Emergency. This is 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) Declarations of Interest**

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) Rules of Debate**

The Chair reminded Members that the normal procedure rules in respect of debate and times to speak would apply:

No speeches may be made after the mover had moved a proposal and explained the purpose of it until the motion 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 Members should ensure that no speech exceeded five minutes without the consent of the Chair.

(5) Motions

In order to clarify matters for Members, in accordance with the Council's Constitution:

Only one amendment may be moved and discussed at any one time. No further amendment may be moved until the amendment under discussion had been decided.

If an amendment was not carried, other amendments to the original motion may be moved.

If an amendment was carried, the motion as amended would take the place of the original motion. This would become the substantive motion to which any further amendments are moved.

After an amendment had been carried, the Chair may, if requested, read out the amended motion before accepting any further amendments, or if there were none, put the substantive motion as amended for debate and to the vote.

## 32 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

*Audio recording – 25 minutes 32 seconds*

Prior to the Item being considered Councillor Judi Billing sought legal opinion regarding whether those who were also County Councillors should declare an interest.

The Legal Regulatory Team Manager advised that all Members would be affected by the decisions made and therefore no declarations were required.

Councillor David Levett presented the motion.

Councillor David Levett proposed and Councillor Morgan Derbyshire seconded that:

“This Council notes the forthcoming publication of the Devolution and Recovery White Paper from Government and supports the move to a single Unitary Authority for Hertfordshire.

Council instructs officers and the Leader of the Council to work with other authorities and Hertfordshire County Council to achieve this in the shortest possible time frame.”

Councillor David Levett called for a recorded vote on the motion.

Councillor Martin Stears-Handscorn proposed amendments to the motion so that it read:

“This Council notes the forthcoming publication of the Devolution and Recovery White Paper from Government. It supports the consideration of Unitary options and other alternative arrangements. However, it does not support any particular option as to do so would be premature. It awaits the publication of the White Paper before coming to any conclusions.

The Council additionally notes the public statements of the Leader and Deputy Leader as well as a number of administration group members which state opposition to a single unitary authority for Hertfordshire.

It believes that any change to the current local government structure must be carried through in the interests of the residents of North Hertfordshire.

Furthermore, to ensure adequate representation of the electorate this council believes that with any changes to the current arrangements a more representative voting system should be introduced and that, in the case of any Unitary options, properly resourced democratic bodies are planned for the unparished areas.

Council instructs officers and the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council to work with other authorities to investigate all the options that meet these criteria and to seek the views of residents so that we are prepared to respond to the White Paper when it is published.

It notes the progress of collaborative working between all the Hertfordshire Districts and Boroughs, the County Council, the Local Enterprise Partnership and MHCLG to achieve the best possible recovery and future investment for the County and reaffirms its support for this work.”

Councillor David Levett raised a point of order in that, in his belief, the amendment was not legal as it negated the motion and therefore could not be accepted.

The Legal Commercial Team Manager advised that it was clear that an amendment should not negate a motion. This amendment added to the motion by adding additional options to the original motion.

The Chair advised that he would accept legal opinion and therefore the amendment to the motion was valid.

Councillor David Levett then sought to withdraw the motion.

Councillor Paul Clark seconded the amendment.

The Legal Commercial Team Manager advised that, as the original motion had been proposed and seconded, under Paragraph 4.8.14 (i) of the Constitution:

“A Member may withdraw a motion which they have moved with the consent of both the meeting and the seconder. The meeting’s consent will be signified without discussion. No Member may speak on the motion after the mover has asked permission to withdraw it unless permission is refused.”

Councillor Morgan Derbyshire, seconder of the motion, gave his consent for the motion to be withdrawn.

The Chair called for a vote to determine whether the meeting was in agreement with the motion being withdrawn.

Upon the vote the meeting did not give consent for the motion to be withdrawn.

The following Members took part in the debate regarding the amendment:

- Councillor Daniel Allen;
- Councillor Sam Collins;
- Councillor Terry Hone;
- Councillor George Davies;
- Councillor Ian Mantle;
- Councillor Tony Hunter;
- Councillor Ian Albert;

- Councillor Helen Oliver;
- Councillor Keith Hoskins;
- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Judi Billing;
- Councillor Sam North;
- Councillor Steve Jarvis;
- Councillor Claire Strong;
- Councillor Simon Harwood;
- Councillor Richard Thake.

*The Chair called a comfort break at 9.20pm.*

*The meeting reconvened at 9.28pm.*

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager undertook a roll call to ensure that all could hear and be heard.

The debate regarding the amendment to the motion continued with the following Member speaking:

- Councillor Jean Green.

Councillor David Levett called for a recorded vote on the amendment.

Upon the vote the amendment was carried with the votes being recorded as follows:

**For:**

Councillors: Ian Albert, Daniel Allen, Kate Aspinwall, Clare Billing, Judi Billing, Ruth Brown, Val Bryant, Paul Clark, Sam Collins, Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Gary Grindal, Keith Hoskins, Mike Hughson, Steve Jarvis, Ian Mantle, Lisa Nash, Sue Ngwala, Sam North, Helen Oliver, Sean Prendergast, Adem Ruggiero-Cakir, Carol Stanier, Martin Stears-Handscomb, Terry Tyler and Tom Tyson.

**Total: 25**

**Against:**

Councillor: David Barnard, John Bishop, George Davies, Steve Deakin-Davies, Morgan Derbyshire, Faye Frost, Jean Green, Simon Harwood, Terry Hone, Tony Hunter, David Levett, Jim McNally, Ian Moody, Gerald Morris, Michael Muir, Mike Rice, Valentine Shanley, Claire Strong, Richard Thake and Michael Weeks.

**Total: 20**

**Abstain:**

There were no abstentions.

This now being the substantive motion the following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor David Levett.

Upon a recorded vote it was:

**RESOLVED:**

This Council notes the forthcoming publication of the Devolution and Recovery White Paper from Government. It supports the consideration of Unitary options and other alternative arrangements. However, it does not support any particular option as to do so would be premature. It awaits the publication of the White Paper before coming to any conclusions.

The Council additionally notes the public statements of the Leader and Deputy Leader as well as a number of administration group members which state opposition to a single unitary authority for Hertfordshire.

It believes that any change to the current local government structure must be carried through in the interests of the residents of North Hertfordshire.

Furthermore, to ensure adequate representation of the electorate this council believes that with any changes to the current arrangements a more representative voting system should be introduced and that, in the case of any Unitary options, properly resourced democratic bodies are planned for the unparished areas.

Council instructs officers and the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council to work with other authorities to investigate all the options that meet these criteria and to seek the views of residents so that we are prepared to respond to the White Paper when it is published.

It notes the progress of collaborative working between all the Hertfordshire Districts and Boroughs, the County Council, the Local Enterprise Partnership and MHCLG to achieve the best possible recovery and future investment for the County and reaffirms its support for this work.

The recorded votes were as follows:

**For:**

Councillors: Ian Albert, Daniel Allen, Kate Aspinwall, David Barnard, Clare Billing, Judi Billing, John Bishop, Ruth Brown, Val Bryant, Paul Clark, Sam Collins, George Davies, Steve Deakin-Davies, Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Faye Frost, Jean Green, Gary Grindal, Simon Harwood, Terry Hone, Keith Hoskins, Mike Hughson, Tony Hunter, Steve Jarvis, David Levett, Ian Mantle, Jim McNally, Ian Moody, Gerald Morris, Michael Muir, Lisa Nash, Sue Ngwala, Sam North, Helen Oliver, Sean Prendergast, Mike Rice, Adem Ruggiero-Cakir, Valentine Shanley, Carol Stanier, Martin Stears-Handscorn, Terry Tyler, Tom Tyson and Michael Weeks.

**Total: 42**

**Against:**

There were no votes against the motion.

**Abstain:**

Councillors Morgan Derbyshire, Claire Strong and Richard Thake.

**Total: 3**

The meeting closed at 9.52 pm

Chair