

## NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MINUTES

Meeting of the Council held as a Virtual Meeting  
on Thursday, 15th April, 2021 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, George 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, Ian Moody, Gerald Morris, Michael Muir, Lisa Nash, Sue Ngwala, Sam North, Mike Rice, Adem Ruggiero-Cakir, Val Shanley, Carol Stanier, Martin Stears-Handscomb, Claire Strong, Kay Tart, Richard Thake, Tom Tyson and Michael Weeks

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Anthony Roche (Managing Director), Jeanette Thompson (Service Director - Legal and Community), Ian Couper (Service Director - Resources), Hilary Dineen (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager), Matthew Hepburn (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer) and William Edwards (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Representatives from the Letchworth Heritage Foundation joined for item 104 only.

## 93 WELCOME AND REMOTE/PARTLY REMOTE MEETINGS PROTOCOL SUMMARY

*Audio Recording – 56 Seconds*

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 to and view proceedings.

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

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer 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 onto You Tube and recorded via Zoom.

Extracts from the Remote/Partly Remote Meetings Protocol was included with the agenda and the full version was available on the Council's website which included information regarding:

- Live Streaming;
- Noise Interference;
- Rules of Debate:
- Voting and
- Part 2 Items.

Members were requested to ensure that they were familiar with the Protocol.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer reminded Members that, due to a software update by Zoom, our usual voting procedure had been disrupted and would no longer work as required, therefore all voting would take place using raise hand function.

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

**94 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

*Audio Recording – 56 Seconds*

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jim McNally, Helen Oliver and Sean Prendergast.

It was notified that Councillors Keith Hoskin and Simon Harwood would be joining the meeting later.

**95 MINUTES - 21 JANUARY 2021 - 11 FEBRUARY 2021**

*Audio Recording – 6 Minutes 13 Seconds*

Councillor Terry Tyler proposed and Councillor Val Bryant seconded and upon being put to the vote it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 21 January 2021 and 11 February 2021 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair;
- (2) That, with the authorisation of the Chair, their electronic signature and initials be attached to the Minutes approved in (1) above.

**96 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

*Audio Recording – 7 Minutes 44 Seconds*

The Chair advised that he had agreed to an urgent item of business to be considered in Part 2 regarding the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.

**97 HRH PRINCE PHILIP, THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH**

*Audio Recording – 8 Minutes*

The Chair announced that following the passing of Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. Flags in north Hertfordshire were being flown at half mast.

**98 RICHARD TIFFIN & CHRIS PARKER**

*Audio Recording - 9 Minutes 40 Seconds*

The Chair advised that Members and Officers had been informed of the sudden passing of Richard Tiffin, Principal Planning Officer, on 20 January at the age of 57.

Richard was a long standing and well known friend and colleague to many, whether through his work first in planning policy and then development management, or his role with UNISON or at lunchtime football, he would be sorely missed.

The Planning department was inundated with messages of support from within and outside the authority which was a testament to Richard's character and the professional and personal impact he had on those he met.

Richard started with NHDC on 10 July 1989, before taking a short break in early 1995 to take up a position as a lecturer at DeMontfort University, before then re-joining the Council.

His most recent role at NHDC was as Team Leader for the East Team in Development Management. He was an excellent line manager who supported his colleagues during challenging times and particularly over the last year when people needed extra support.

His contribution as a planning professional at NHDC was second to none in terms of his creative thinking, problem solving and encouragement and support to his colleagues. He would be sorely missed within his team and across the Council as a whole.

Our thoughts are with his wife Katharine and son Bradley.

The following Councillors paid further tribute to Richard:

- Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb;
- Councillor Michael Muir;
- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Paul Clark;
- Councillor Gerald Morris.

Following the tributes Council held a minute's silence in his memory

The following Councillors paid further tribute to Chris:

- Councillor Judi Billing.

Following the tributes Council held a minute's silence in his memory.

## **99 25 YEAR SERVICE AWARD - KAREN PULHAM**

*Audio Recording – 21 Minutes 36 Seconds*

The Chair announced that Karen Pulham, Accounting Technician, had worked for North Herts District Council for 25 Years.

Karen started at NHDC as a Word Processor Operator.

After a short while she was seconded to Accountancy to cover maternity leave and was successful in her application for an Assistant Management Accountant role, covering Performance, which included the very first Local Performance Plan, Council Tax and Fundamental Service Reviews.

The Team was later merged with Admin and became the Management Support Unit for Finance and Regulatory Services, covering a variety of work, including HR for the directorate.

Being HR Officer for the directorate gave Karen the most contact with everyone in the council.

In 2005, she took Maternity leave and while on Maternity Leave the MSU was centralised and Karen became the Technical Assistant to the Director of Finance, working closely with Norma Atlay until her retirement.

Karen is now a valued member of the Controls, Risk and Performance Team in her role as Accounting Technician – Technical, and is responsible for a variety of areas including compliance and VAT.

The following Members paid tribute to Karen's Service at North Herts District Council

- Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb

Councillor Terry Tyler proposed, Councillor Val Bryant seconded and upon being put to the vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That it be placed on record the Council's sincere thanks and appreciation to Karen Pulham for her long and valuable service to Local Government.

## 100 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Audio Recording – 24 Minutes 35 Seconds*

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council policy this meeting was being audio recorded as well as filmed. The audio recordings would be available to view on Mod.gov and the film recording via the NHDC YouTube channel.
- (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) 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) 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 has moved a proposal and explained the purpose of it until the motion has been seconded.  
  
When seconding a motion or amendment, a Member may reserve their speech until later in the debate.  
  
In accordance with the Constitution please can Members ensure that no speech exceeds five minutes without the consent of the Chair.
- (5) The Chair advised that, if the meeting was still in progress at 9pm, he would call a comfort break at an appropriate place.
- (6) The Chair advised that the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation would be joining the meeting. However, they were unable to join until 8pm. Therefore, the order of business may need to be amended to ensure that the urgent item of business was heard as soon as the Heritage Foundation were available.

## 101 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio Recording – 26 Minutes 50 Seconds

There was no public participation.

## 102 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

Audio Recording – 26 Minutes 57 Seconds

The Chair of the Standards Committee, presented the item referred from the Standards Committee meeting held on 3 March 2021 regarding the Local Government Association ('LGA') Model Code of Conduct together with the following appendix:

- North Herts District Council Code of Conduct for Councillors (and Voting / Non-Voting Co-Optees) based on the Local Government Association Model Code.
- That the Standards Committee and the LGA had done a fantastic amount of work, helped by Independent Members;
- There had been a mixed reaction across the Country to a common code of conduct;
- There was wide support from Parish and Town Councils to take forward a the LGA code of conduct model in order to create uniformity;
- The code was not a perfect model, however Members of the Standards Committee felt it was worth adopting;
- It would be good to have a new code of conduct to start the new Civic year; and
- Training for Members on the code would be undertaken in the new Civic year.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Claire Strong;
- Councillor David Levett; and
- Councillor Michael Muir.

Points raised by Members included:

- The importance of offering Code of Conduct Member training; and
- The code would provide better consistency.

In response to a Member's question regarding offering training to Parish Councils, the Chair of the Standards Committee advised that training could not be made compulsory. However, Parish Councils would be encouraged to complete training and advised on the importance of it.

It was proposed by Councillor Judi Billing, seconded by Councillor Ruth Brown and upon being put to the vote, was:

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the LGA Model Code of Conduct be adopted with the following amendments:
  - (i) Appendix B to include the replacement Table 1, which includes the NHDC definition of DPs and links to guidance/ statutory instrument;
  - (ii) Replacement of the Appendix C good practice recommendations with Appendix C grounds for a Dispensation;

- (iii) Definition of 'room' to include a footnote explanation that this includes 'virtual meeting' room and typographical changes to use the words: 'Registrable' and 'behaviours';
- (2) That the Code take effect from the day after the election poll in 2021 (7 May) or such day if the election is postponed, as the case may be;
- (3) That training on the new code be compulsory for all District Councillors during the 2021-2022 municipal year.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To ensure good governance within the Council, which is reflective of a national governance model.

### 103 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

*Audio Recording – 34 Minutes 20 Seconds*

Councillor Ian Mantle asked the reason that the item was in Part 2.

In response, the Service Director – Legal and Community/Monitoring Officer explained that the information was confidential to the organisation.

Councillor Terry Tyler proposed and Councillor Val Bryant seconded.

It was thus:

**RESOLVED:** That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the following report will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

### 104 PRESENTATION FROM LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY HERITAGE FOUNDATION

*NB: No audio or film recording was taken owing to the item being Part 2.*

*NB: The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer undertook a roll call to ensure all present could hear and be heard*

Councillor Terry Hone disclosed a Declarable Interest in that he was on the Board of Trustees at Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation. He advised that he would not take part in the item and left the 'virtual' room.

Mr Graham Fisher and Mr Chris Pattison, Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation gave a verbal presentation.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Ian Mantle;
- Councillor Kay Tart;
- Councillor Martin Stears-Handscorn.

The Chair thanked Mr Fisher and Mr Pattison for their presentation.

Mr Fisher and Mr Pattison left the meeting.

105 LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY HERITAGE FOUNDATION

*Audio Recording – 1 Hour 48 Minutes 14 Seconds*

*NB: No audio or film recording was taken regarding this Part 2 Item.*

Councillor Terry Hone had previously disclosed a Declarable Interest in that he was on the Board of Trustees at Letchworth Garden City Heritage Fund. He had advised that he would not take part in the debate or vote and remained outside of the 'virtual' room.

The Managing Director presented the report entitled Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation together with the following appendices:

- Appendix A - LGCHF Governor Report;
- Appendix B - Initial assessment of the Code for the Foundation (June 2019).

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

- Councillor Richard Thake;
- Councillor Paul Clark;
- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Sue Ngwala;
- Councillor Judi Billing;
- Councillor Ian Albert;
- Councillor Daniel Allen.

Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb proposed, Councillor Gary Grindal seconded and it was:

**RESOLVED:** That a member working group consisting of the Group Leader of each political party and the Members of Letchworth Area Committee be delegated the power to consider and agree the Council's response to the proposals of Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure Council is able to respond to the consultation in a timely manner.

*NB: The Chair announced that there would be a 10 minute break before the meeting returned to Part 1*

*Audio Recording – 1 Hour 48 Minutes 14 Seconds*

*NB: Council reconvened in Part 1 at 21:13.*

*NB: Councillor Faye Frost left the meeting at 21:14.*

*NB: The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer undertook a roll call to ensure that all present could hear and be heard..*

For transparency the Part 2 vote was repeated and it was:

**RESOLVED:** That a member working group consisting of the Group Leader of each political party and the Members of Letchworth Area Committee be delegated the power to consider and agree the Council's response to the proposals of Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure Council is able to respond to the consultation in a timely manner.

## 106 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

*Audio Recording – 1 Hour 45 Minutes 30 Seconds*

In accordance with Standing Order 4.8.11(b), three questions had been submitted by the deadline date for questions set out in the Council's Constitution.

(A) Union Flag to be flown outside all public buildings

Councillor David Levett to Councillor Martin Stears-Handscorn (Leader of the Council).

'The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport recently announced that changes in legislation allow the Union Flag to be flown outside all public buildings every day as "a proud reminder of our history and the ties that bind us" and has called on local authorities to routinely fly the flag.

Could the Leader of the Council confirm it is the administration's intent to follow that request and fly the Union Flag outside all of its buildings where it has the ability to do so.'

Councillor Martin Stears-Handscorn responded as follows:

'Thank you for your question. Our joint administration's view is that this should be a matter for a cross party discussion following the elections and we hope a consensus achieved – having taken account of views from our communities.

Our current practise, that we inherited from the previous administration, is to fly the Union flag on special occasions and I believe personally that has served us well. If we are to make a change, members of all parties and staff colleagues will have their views on this, and they should have the opportunity to express them. When this was raised by a member of our staff at a staff briefing, some concerns were raised which should be considered.

Of course, since this question was raised, His Royal Highness Prince Philip has died. As soon as we heard of his death, I was in touch with the Managing Director and things were already in train to fly the flag at half-mast on all our buildings as a mark of respect as we all would want.

In the same way we flew the flag at half-mast when we heard of the death of Captain Tom.

Flags are flown at other times when we have good reason. That's how we do it at the moment. It seems to us that any change to that is best handled by a local discussion and not by Government imposition.'

As a welcoming and inclusive Council I know this is the way we would want to take this forward after the election'

*NB: at 1 hour 42 minutes the Managing Director advised that there was a potential issue with the YouTube live streaming of the meeting. In accordance with the Remote/Partly Remote Meetings Protocol, the meeting was adjourned briefly whilst the matter was investigated/*

*NB: at 1 hour 53 minutes the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager confirmed that the live stream had not in fact been interrupted and the meeting could there for resume.*

Councillor Judi Billing raised a point of order in that Questions from Members was not a debatable item. The Service Director- Legal and Community confirmed this.



(B) Percentage increase of the County Council precept

Councillor Sue Ngwala to Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb (Leader of the Council).

'Could the Leader of the Council explain why the percentage increase of the County Council precept shown on the Council tax bill sent out is shown as 2%, when the actual increase is close to 4%?'

Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb responded as follows:

'Cllr Ngwala is correct the overall increase for the County Council is 3.99%, this is made up of two percentage changes, which we are required by the Government to show separately on the bill.

One is for the part of the overall change attributable to the adult social care precept (2.00%) shown on the bill as Herts CC Adult Social Care Precept and one for the part attributable to general expenditure 1.99% - shown as Herts County Council on the bill and rounded up to 2.0%'

Councillor Sue Ngwala asked a supplementary question:

'Would the Leader agree with me that this is misleading and rather dishonest?'

Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb responded as follows:

'Yes I do agree.

It is one thing for Conservative Councillors to vote against the 2% increase in North Herts, an increase forced on us by the Government, and then vote for a 4% increase at the County Council the next day. Perhaps that is all part of the 'to and fro' of local politics. But it is quite another thing to deliberately mislead the public on their council tax bills. Perhaps another example of when local government works to a higher standard than national government.'

(C) Safety of women and girls in our communities

Councillor Clare Billing to Councillor Gary Grindal (Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health) and Councillor Judi Billing (Executive Member for Community Engagement).

'Following concerns raised with me about how safe women and girls in our communities feel, both within and outside their homes. Could the Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health and the Executive Member for Community Engagement outline what is being done in North Herts to support women and girls locally?'

Councillor Gary Grindal (Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health) responded as follows:

'Yes if I can kick it off Chair. Thank you Councillor Billing for the question.

It shouldn't really be a surprise to Members that questions are being asked by the public to Councillors about our response to the appalling statistics that emerged in the aftermath of the shocking murder of Sarah Everard. Clearly, there is a community side to this which Judi [Executive Member for Community Engagement] will address.

Thursday, 15th April, 2021

But if I can just focus on the area that covers off violence against women, and not just women because we partner with SADA [Survivors Against Domestic Abuse] which I know all the Members will be familiar with, whose role it is, across North Herts, based in Stevenage, to work and deal with cases of violence within the home, which is their main focus of attention. It is quite staggering that, when you see figures that 71% of female murder victims are killed in their home, the importance of the work that SADA perform can never be underestimated. In recent conversations with SADA, since the violence against women and girls campaign started in the aftermath of the recent murder, it was pleasing to note that SADA had not reported any spike around harassment crimes and it is not an area that they would normally cover. But in recognition of the importance of this, SADA have informed me that there would be an extraordinary meeting of the RAG, the Regulatory Authority Group, which will specifically be held to focus on women's safety and what can be done in order to try and offer some sort of protection to women.

Following that meeting, there will be a media campaign which should hopefully be launched next week. At North Herts, we will be included in the posts shared that come out of that meeting.

So, I haven't got any more that I can specifically say at this time but hopefully over the next week, we will see what the results of that particular extraordinary meeting were.

Also, we know that the Home Secretary declared that every woman should feel safe to walk the street and again we wait Government to see if there will be new laws introduced and I know they were looking at harassment crimes and certainly relating to sexual harassment'

Councillor Judi Billing responded as follows:

'I will just very briefly add to that.

Shortly after the horrific death of Sarah Everard, there was obviously a heightened awareness of the sorts of issues of women's safety which we should all be concerned about all the time but it takes an event like that for the emotions to come to the surface.

I know that questions were asked at the Letchworth Councillor Surgery shortly after that. In response, I have asked the Community Engagement Team to work with our Community Safety Team to look at what more we should be doing as a local authority to ensure the safety of women.

Interestingly, I was briefed by Becky Coates today for a completely different reason and the material we got from our annual survey on community safety in February and March, before this event, actually put women's feelings of safety quite low on the reported issues that were coming through our survey.

We do know that this event has made people think really long and hard about their own situations, although sometimes there has been a regrettable politicisation of one family's grief which I think is not always helpful.

We are doing absolutely all we can to look at what is going to be needed and to speak to women in the District in more depth than we normally do in just our annual survey of what really worries you.

As it happens, next week is also National Stalking Awareness Week and the Suzy Lamplugh Trust that some of you may know about their work, is doing a great deal next week that you can find online to see the sorts of stuff they are doing including, an online conference next Wednesday from 9 until 12 if people are interested in that. They have a number of fine speakers including the Domestic Abuse Commissioner.

So, there is a great deal going on and there is a great deal for us as a local authority to do with our duty of care for people and we will be exploring in greater depth what the women in North Herts think should be made available for them and making sure that we do our best to meet their needs.'

## 107 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

*Audio Recording – 2 Hours 6 Minutes*

Three motions had been submitted, due notice of which had been given in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.12.

### (a) Fly-tipping

Councillor Sam North moved the altered motion which was seconded by Councillor Tom Tyson.

'The Council notes:

1. Fly-tipping increased in North Hertfordshire by 100% between 2013 and 2019. In the last year, the monthly average fly tips in our district have increased by an unprecedented 59% compared with 2019/20201 . This is a situation mirrored nationally.
2. The new powers the Labour and Liberal Democrat administration implemented in late 2019 to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to those not disposing of their waste responsibly, which have led to a record number of fines being issued by the council for fly tipping.
3. The excellent work of NHDC officers in stepping up the effort to tackle fly-tipping even under the very difficult circumstances of the pandemic.
4. The concerns raised by residents over the closure, and inconsistent operation, of the County Council's waste and recycling centres during the pandemic, and the impact this has had on residents' ability to dispose of household waste responsibly.
5. The impact that fly-tipping has on the environment, and our rural and urban communities.

The Council resolves:

1. To continue to review its fly-tipping and waste management policies and work with relevant external stakeholders (such as landowners, contractors and the Police & Crime Commissioner) to increase this council's and our district's resilience to this crime through a programme of effective communications and preventive and remedial actions.
2. To conduct a further review of our bulky waste collection service to ensure it is well known by and accessible to the greatest number of residents, serving as an effective incentive against the use of unlicensed or unscrupulous waste collectors.
3. To request that Hertfordshire County Council reaffirm that waste and recycling is an essential service by pledging not to close Household Waste Recycling Centres except in the direst public health emergency and undertaking to provide alternative solutions to residents and support districts and boroughs in dealing with the consequences of any such closure.
4. To ask Hertfordshire County Council to extend the opening hours of the Household Waste Recycling Centres in North Hertfordshire as it has done for other facilities in the county.

5. To continue public information and engagement campaigns on the responsible disposal of waste and deterrence of all fly-tipping, including littering, to support our communities in doing the right thing.

6. To ask Hertfordshire County Council to consider providing an amnesty for private landowners who can take the waste to a Waste and Recycling Centre, on recommendation from district council officers.'

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor David Barnard

Councillor David Levett proposed an amendment to the motion which was seconded by Councillor George Davies. The amendment was in relation to the resolutions only.

The amendment was as follows:

'The Council Resolves to:

1. To review its fly-tipping and waste management policies and continue its work with the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership (HWP), the fly tipping group and relevant external stakeholders (such as landowners, contractors, the NFU and the Police & Crime Commissioner) to increase this council's and our district's resilience to this crime through a programme of effective communications and preventive and remedial actions.
2. No Change
3. To request that Hertfordshire County Council reaffirm that waste and recycling is an essential service by pledging not to close Household Waste Recycling Centres except where the law requires to do so or the safety of staff and visitors is being compromised.
4. The Council welcomes the changes already announced for changes at 3 major HWR sites in Hertfordshire (including Stevenage) and asks Hertfordshire County Council to review the opening hours of the Household Waste Recycling Centres in North Hertfordshire.
5. No change.
6. No change.
7. NHDC promotes the funding available from the Police & Crime Commissioner and the advice and guidance to dealing with fly tipping on private land.

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

- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg;
- Councillor Judi Billing;
- Councillor Carol Stanier;
- Councillor Sam Collins;
- Councillor Terry Hone;
- Councillor Claire Strong; and
- Councillor Ruth Brown.

*NB: The Chair announced that there would be a 7 minute break at 22:21. The meeting resumed at 22:26.*

*NB: Owing to technical issues, Councillor Claire Strong left the meeting and rejoined.*

*NB: The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer undertook a roll call to ensure that all present could hear and be heard.*

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg proposed an amendment to Paragraph 1 of the amendment so that it read:

1. To review its fly-tipping and waste management policies and continue its work with the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership (HWP), the Hertfordshire Fly Tipping Group and relevant external stakeholders (such as landowners, contractors, the NFU and the Police & Crime Commissioner) to increase this council's and our district's resilience to this crime through a programme of effective communications and preventive and remedial actions.

Councillors David Levett and George Davies as proposer and seconder accepted the amendment

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment was carried.

A Point of Order was raised as to whether a substantive motion could be debated. The Monitoring Officer responded by directing Members to the Council's Constitution – Standing Order 4.8.14 (g) (v) *'After an amendment has been carried, the Chair may if requested read out the amended motion before accepting any further amendments, or if there are none, put the substantive motion as amended for debate and to the vote'*

The following Members debated the substantive motion:

- Councillor Sam Collins;
- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Gerald Morris;
- Councillor David Barnard;
- Councillor Sam North;
- Councillor Carol Stanier;
- Councillor Val Bryant; and
- Councillor Claire Strong.

Once debate had concluded, the substantive motion was put to the vote.

A recorded vote was requested by Councillor Claire Strong, in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.16 (e)

Following the recorded vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

That the Council notes:

1. Fly-tipping increased in North Hertfordshire by 100% between 2013 and 2019. In the last year, the monthly average fly tips in our district have increased by an unprecedented 59% compared with 2019/2020. This is a situation mirrored nationally.
2. The new powers the Labour and Liberal Democrat administration implemented in late 2019 to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to those not disposing of their waste responsibly, which have led to a record number of fines being issued by the council for fly tipping.
3. The excellent work of NHDC officers in stepping up the effort to tackle fly-tipping even under the very difficult circumstances of the pandemic.

4. The concerns raised by residents over the closure, and inconsistent operation, of the County Council's waste and recycling centres during the pandemic, and the impact this has had on residents' ability to dispose of household waste responsibly.
5. The impact that fly-tipping has on the environment, and our rural and urban communities.

That the Council resolves:

1. To review its fly-tipping and waste management policies and continue its work with the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership (HWP), the Hertfordshire Fly Tipping Group and relevant external stakeholders (such as landowners, contractors, the NFU and the Police & Crime Commissioner) to increase this council's and our district's resilience to this crime through a programme of effective communications and preventive and remedial actions.
2. To conduct a further review of our bulky waste collection service to ensure it is well known by and accessible to the greatest number of residents, serving as an effective incentive against the use of unlicensed or unscrupulous waste collectors.
3. To request that Hertfordshire County Council reaffirm that waste and recycling is an essential service by pledging not to close Household Waste Recycling Centres except where the law requires to do so or the safety of staff and visitors is being compromised
4. The Council welcomes the changes already announced for changes at 3 major HWR sites in Hertfordshire (including Stevenage) and asks Hertfordshire County Council to review the opening hours of the Household Waste Recycling Centres in North Hertfordshire.
5. To continue public information and engagement campaigns on the responsible disposal of waste and deterrence of all fly-tipping, including littering, to support our communities in doing the right thing.
6. To ask Hertfordshire County Council to consider providing an amnesty for private landowners who can take the waste to a Waste and Recycling Centre, on recommendation from district council officers.
7. NHDC promotes the funding available from the Police & Crime Commissioner and the advice and guidance to dealing with fly tipping on private land.

The recorded vote was as follows:

**For:**

Councillors: Ian Albert, David Barnard, John Bishop, Paul Clark, Sam Collins, George Davies, Morgan Derbyshire, Jean Green, Simon Harwood, Tony Hunter, Steve Jarvis, David Levett, Ian Moody, Gerald Morris, Michael Muir, Lisa Nash, Sam North, Mike Rice, Val Shanley, Claire Strong, Richard Thake, Terry Tyler and Tom Tyson.

**Total: 23**

**Against:**

Councillors: Daniel Allen, Kate Aspinwall, Clare Billing, Val Bryant, Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Mike Hughson, Ian Mantle, Sue Ngwala, Adem Ruggiero-Cakir and Kay Tart.

**Total: 10**

**Abstain:**

Councillors: Judi Billing, Ruth Brown, Gary Grindal, Terry Hone, Keith Hoskins, Carol Stanier, Martin Stears-Handscorn.

**Total: 7**

(b) 20mph Speed Limits

Councillor Paul Clark proposed the altered motion which was seconded by Councillor Sam Collins.

‘That Council:

1. Welcomes the work done by North Herts District and County Councillors to develop and introduce 20mph zones in parts of their towns and villages.
2. notes that the United Nations have mandated the setting of 30kph (20mph) maximum speed limits wherever pedestrians, cyclists or other vulnerable road users mix in a frequent manner with motor vehicles.
3. supports the “20’s Plenty” for Hertfordshire campaign and their call for the introduction of a 20mph default speed limit in the residential and central areas of towns and villages.
4. notes research from the UK and abroad that has shown wide-area default speed limits of 20mph/30kph have:
  - reduced traffic speeds in the first year of operation, with the largest speed reductions on the fastest roads;
  - reduced road traffic collisions by up to 40% and town and village casualties by 20%;
  - increased journey times by just 10 seconds per mile;
  - made streets quieter - a 10mph reduction in speed halves traffic noise;
  - encouraged walking and cycling, especially for older people and young children;
  - benefited communities, with residents more likely to stop and talk on footpaths;
  - been popular, as 75% of residents and motorists feel that, after installation, 20mph limits have benefitted the local community.
5. notes that the Integrated Plan of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) earmarks £7m for the establishment of 20mph zones across the county over a four-year period but recognises that this will be insufficient to introduce widespread 20mph limits if each scheme requires complex traffic calming.
6. further notes that wide-area 20mph limits that make effective use of signage, road markings, technology, and public engagement provide significant budgetary benefits and are more popular with motorists and residents than engineered calming methods such as speed humps whilst recognising that additional measures may be required in some locations.
7. believes that the implementation of a wide-area 20mph speed limit in North Herts towns and villages, combined with a public information campaign, would have beneficial impacts on road safety, active transport and community well-being at substantially lower cost than the County Council’s proposals, and would support this Council’s climate emergency objectives.
8. resolves that the Leader of the Council should write to HCC proposing the establishment of wide-area 20mph speed limit project across Hertfordshire, involving officers and councillors at both County and District levels’

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Gerald Morris;
- Councillor Sam North;
- Councillor George Davies;
- Councillor Ian Albert;
- Councillor Judi Billing;
- Councillor Steve Jarvis;
- Councillor Terry Hone; and
- Councillor David Barnard.

Councillor George Davies proposed an amendment to the wording which was seconded by Councillor Claire Strong:

- Point 2 – replace ‘mandated’ to ‘endorse’ so that it reads ‘notes that the United Nations have endorsed the setting of 30kph [...]’
- Point 7 – after village, add ‘where appropriate and where desired by residents’ so that it reads ‘believes that the implementation of a wide-area 20mph speed limit in North Herts towns and villages, where appropriate and where desired by residents, combined with a public information campaign [...]’.

Councillors Paul Clark and Sam Collins as proposer and seconder accepted the amendment

Councillor Ian Albert proposed an amendment to the motion by adding in the word ‘some’ before motorists and residents on Point 6 so that it reads ‘more popular with some motorists and some residents’.

Councillors Paul Clark and Sam Collins as proposer and seconder accepted the amendment

A recorded vote was requested by Councillor Sam Collins, in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.16 (e)

Following the recorded vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

That Council:

- (1) Welcomes the work done by North Herts District and County Councillors to develop and introduce 20mph zones in parts of their towns and villages.
- (2) Notes that the United Nations have endorsed the setting of 30kph (20mph) maximum speed limits wherever pedestrians, cyclists or other vulnerable road users mix in a frequent manner with motor vehicles.
- (3) Supports the “20’s Plenty” for Hertfordshire campaign and their call for the introduction of a 20mph default speed limit in the residential and central areas of towns and villages.
- (4) Notes research from the UK and abroad that has shown wide-area default speed limits of 20mph/30kph have:
  - Reduced traffic speeds in the first year of operation, with the largest speed reductions on the fastest roads;
  - Reduced road traffic collisions by up to 40% and town and village casualties by 20%;
  - Increased journey times by just 10 seconds per mile;
  - Made streets quieter - a 10mph reduction in speed halves traffic noise;



- Encouraged walking and cycling, especially for older people and young children;
  - Benefited communities, with residents more likely to stop and talk on footpaths;
  - Been popular, as 75% of residents and motorists feel that, after installation, 20mph limits have benefitted the local community.
- (5) Notes that the Integrated Plan of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) earmarks £7m for the establishment of 20mph zones across the county over a four-year period but recognises that this will be insufficient to introduce widespread 20mph limits if each scheme requires complex traffic calming.
- (6) Further notes that wide-area 20mph limits that make effective use of signage, road markings, technology, and public engagement provide significant budgetary benefits and are more popular with some motorists and some residents than engineered calming methods such as speed humps whilst recognising that additional measures may be required in some locations.
- (7) Believes that the implementation of a wide-area 20mph speed limit in North Herts towns and villages, where appropriate and where desired by residents, combined with a public information campaign, would have beneficial impacts on road safety, active transport and community well-being at substantially lower cost than the County Council's proposals, and would support this Council's climate emergency objectives.
- (8) Resolves that the Leader of the Council should write to HCC proposing the establishment of wide-area 20mph speed limit project across Hertfordshire, involving officers and councillors at both County and District levels.

The recorded vote was as follows:

**For:**

Councillors: Ian Albert, Daniel Allen, Kate Aspinwall, David Barnard, Clare Billing, Judi Billing, John Bishop, Ruth Brown, Paul Clark, Sam Collins, George Davies, Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Morgan Derbyshire, Jean Green, Gary Grindal, Simon Harwood, Terry Hone, Keith Hoskins, Mike Hughson, Tony Hunter, Steve Jarvis, David Levett, Ian Mantle, Ian Moody, Gerald Morris, Michael Muir, Lisa Nash, Sue Ngwala, Sam North, Adem Ruggiero-Cakir, Carol Stanier, Martin Stears-Handscomb, Claire Strong, Richard Thake, Terry Tyler and Tom Tyson.

**Total: 36**

**Against:**

**Total: 0**

**Abstain:**

**Total: 0**

(c) Hybrid Meetings

Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb moved the motion which was seconded by Councillor Paul Clark.

Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb advised that he and Councillor Paul Clark, as proposer and seconder of the motion would accept Councillor Judi Billing's amendment which had been given notice. Therefore, the motion being proposed would read:

'This Council is astonished and disappointed that the Government could not find time to amend legislation allowing Councils to continue to carry out meetings using virtual technology where and when they see fit to do so.

It notes that the experience of holding meetings remotely has improved engagement with residents, improving inclusion, diversity and accountability as well as contributing to our response to the climate emergency and reducing the need for officers and members to travel to meetings.

It further notes the request by the Minister for evidence as to why remote or hybrid meeting should be permitted and instructs officers to respond to the government questionnaire, assembling evidence from our recent experience of the benefits of such meetings, including quantitative data relating to increased engagement and cost savings, within the requested timescale.

This council further calls upon the government to bring forward legislation as a matter of urgency to remove the need for central government to determine how local councils conduct their business at the level of meetings arrangements and allows us to find the most appropriate ways to both conduct essential business and engage with the communities that we represent.'

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Gerald Morris;
- Councillor Lisa Nash;
- Councillor Sam Collins; and
- Councillor Judi Billing.

Councillor David Levett moved the Closure Motion 'to ask that the question be now put', in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.14 (l) (i) B, which was seconded by Councillor Paul Clark.

Councillor Martin Stears-Handscorn exercised his right to reply

Councillor Gerald Morris made some points of personal clarification.

The Closure Motion was voted upon and it was carried that the motion be put.

The Chair then requested Members to vote on the Hybrid Meeting motion.

The vote was carried.

Members then voted on the amendment (as amended)

Having been voted upon, it was:

**RESOLVED** that:

This Council is astonished and disappointed that the Government could not find time to amend legislation allowing Councils to continue to carry out meetings using virtual technology where and when they see fit to do so.

It notes that the experience of holding meetings remotely has improved engagement with residents, improving inclusion, diversity and accountability as well as contributing to our response to the climate emergency and reducing the need for officers and members to travel to meetings.

**Thursday, 15th April, 2021**

It further notes the request by the Minister for evidence as to why remote or hybrid meeting should be permitted and instructs officers to respond to the government questionnaire, assembling evidence from our recent experience of the benefits of such meetings, including quantitative data relating to increased engagement and cost savings, within the requested timescale.

This council further calls upon the government to bring forward legislation as a matter of urgency to remove the need for central government to determine how local councils conduct their business at the level of meetings arrangements and allows us to find the most appropriate ways to both conduct essential business and engage with the communities that we represent.

The meeting closed at 0.04 am

Chair