

## NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### CABINET PANEL ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

MEETING HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING  
ON WEDNESDAY, 21ST OCTOBER, 2020 AT 7.30 PM

#### MINUTES

**Present:** *Councillors: Judi Billing MBE (Joint Chair) and Keith Hoskins MBE (Joint Chair), Ian Albert (In place of Helen Oliver), Ruth Brown, George Davies, Jean Green, Simon Harwood and Michael Muir (In place of Michael Weeks)*

*NB Councillor Jean Green joined the meeting at 7.59pm*

**In Attendance:** *Steve Crowley (Service Director - Commercial), Chloe Gray (Commercial Manager), Hilary Dineen (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager), Anna Gouveia (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)*

**Also Present:** *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 8 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

#### 1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

*Audio recording 10 seconds*

The Chair welcomed everyone to this virtual Cabinet Panel on Community Engagement and Co-operative Development meeting that was being conducted with Members and Officers at various locations, communicating via audio/video and online and advised that there was the opportunity for the public and press to listen and view proceedings.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer undertook a roll call and gave advice regarding the following:

- Attendance;
- Live Streaming;
- Noise interference;
- Voting.

The Chair, Councillor Judi Billing, started the meeting proper.

#### 2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

*Audio recording 6 minutes 53 seconds*

Apologies were received from Councillors Helen Oliver, Kay Tart and Michael Weeks.

Having given due notice Councillor Ian Albert advised that he would be substituting for Councillor Helen Oliver and Councillor Michael Muir advised that he would be substituting for Councillor Michael Weeks.

Councillor Jean Green had given apologies that she would arrive late for the meeting.

### 3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Audio recording 7 minutes 54 seconds*

- (1) The Chair advised that this meeting would focus on co-operative development. A further meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020 would focus on the other half of the panel's brief which was community engagement;
- (2) The Chair welcomed those present at the meeting, especially those who had attended to give a presentation;
- (3) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded. The audio recordings would be available to view on Mod.Gov and the film recording via the NHDC YouTube channel;
- (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.

### 4 INTRODUCTION BY THE JOINT CHAIRS OF THE CABINET PANEL ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

*Audio recording 8 minutes 57 seconds*

The Joint Chairs, Councillors Billing and Hoskins, gave brief introductions to this first Cabinet Panel on Community Engagement and Co-operative Development meeting focusing on Co-operative Development. The following information was covered:

- The Joints Chairs would take turns in chairing meetings;
- The purpose of the Panel was set out in the Terms of Reference which was included with the agenda;
- The main aim was to focus on community engagement and co-operative development;
- Each meeting would focus on a particular theme chosen by Councillors;
- Organisations and individuals would be invited to present at meetings and where possible the views of the public and organisations would be included;
- The Council had been a member of the Co-operative Council's Innovation Network (a Local Government Association special interest group) for approximately one year.

### 5 PRESENTATION ON THE ROLE OF CO-OPERATIVES AND THE FUTURE

*Audio recording 12 minutes 13 seconds*

Ms Anna Peachey, Economy, Partnerships and Regeneration Manger, Plymouth City Council, gave a presentation entitled 'Growing the Co-op Economy – Co-operatives Unleashed from the Grassroots'. The following subjects were included in the presentation:

- The co-operative economy;
- Co-operative principles and values;
- Opportunities for development.

The Chair thanked Ms Peachey for her presentation.

*NB Councillor Jean Green joined the meeting at 19.59pm.*

The following Members asked questions and took part in debate:

- Councillor Judi Billing;
- Councillor Keith Hoskins;
- Councillor Simon Harwood.

The following members of the public asked questions and took part in debate:

- Alexander Jarosy, Chair of NHCVS;
- Anna Peachey, Plymouth City Council.

The following was discussed:

- Further information, including the “Co-operatives Unleashed” report and case studies, could be found on the CCIN website: <https://www.councils.coop>
- The inclusion of co-operative principles (e.g. fairness, co-operation, stakeholder engagement) in public service;
- North Herts District Council was at the start of its co-operative journey and was considering first steps.

## 6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - CREATE SEVEN

*Audio recording 50 minutes 05 seconds*

Ms Jill Chapman, Create Seven, provided Members with a verbal presentation on personal development for co-operation and collaboration, which included the following points:

- Create Seven was a not-for-profit co-operative based in Letchworth;
- Co-operation could be challenging and there was a need to be flexible;
- Co-operative development required a shift of focus from competitive to collaborative working.

The Chair thanked Ms Chapman for her presentation.

## 7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - TRANSITION TOWN LETCHWORTH

*Audio recording 1 hour 1 minute 22 seconds*

Mr John Webb, Transition Town Letchworth, provided Members with a verbal presentation in respect of his organisation, which included the following points:

- Transition Town Letchworth (TTL) was part of the worldwide Transition Network which was focussed on local action toward a “low carbon” future;
- Co-operative ventures were included in the network’s report in 2017 on working towards a “Resilient and Thriving Town Centre”;
- TTL is exploring a “Repair and Scrapstore” project;
- Further details could be found on the website: <http://www.transitionletchworth.org>

The Chair thanked Mr Webb for his presentation.

*NB The written submission is attached with the agenda.*

## 8 MEMBERS' DISCUSSION

*Audio recording 1 hour 7 minutes 7 seconds*

The Chair led a discussion concerning co-operative development.

The following Members asked questions and took part in debate:

- Councillor Ian Albert;
- Councillor Simon Harwood;
- Councillor Keith Hoskins.

The following members of the public asked questions and took part in debate:

- Alexander Jarosy.

Discussion included the following:

- Work would need to be done to develop the approach to working with community and voluntary organisations;
- NHDC commercial initiatives could be reviewed to see if any would lend themselves to a cooperative approach;
- Existing initiatives could be reviewed to see if they would be suitable for a co-operative approach;
- The success and profitability of co-operatives;
- The Black Squirrel Credit Union was an example of a co-operative organisation in North Hertfordshire;
- Co-operative opportunities for arts and culture.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer be requested to send the presentations and written submissions included in this meeting to all members of the Panel and, subject to the contributors' permission, publish them on mod.gov.
- (2) That the Service Director - Commercial be requested to review the list of current commercial ideas and opportunities to consider whether any have the potential to be run via a co-operative approach.
- (3) That the Service Director - Commercial be requested to liaise with Plymouth City Council regarding recent co-operatives set up in that region with the aim of considering the co-operative approach for NHDC initiatives.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To initiate the development of the co-operative economy in North Hertfordshire.

**9 INFORMATION NOTE - WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER 2020/21**

*Audio recording 1 hour 20 minutes 24 seconds*

The Service Director – Commercial presented the Work Programme and Action Tracker which would be filled in after every meeting with actions to be carried out and discussion areas for future meetings.

A specific email address had been set up for the panel: [EnterprisePanel@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:EnterprisePanel@north-herts.gov.uk). This could be used to send ideas and suggestions for co-operative development in North Hertfordshire.

A further meeting of the Panel would be held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020, to consider community engagement and specifically the use of social media.

**Wednesday, 21st October, 2020**

**RESOLVED:** That the Service Director – Commercial be requested to update the Work Programme and Action Tracker with the following:

- Circulate the presentations and written submissions included in the meeting to all Members as described in Minute 8, Resolution 1;
- Review the list of current commercial opportunities as described in Minute 8, Resolution 2;
- Liaise with Plymouth City Council regarding recent co-operatives set up in that region as described in Minute 8, Resolution 3.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure that the Cabinet Panel on Community Engagement and Cooperative Development are able to plan its workload and monitor actions.

### **Audio Recording of Meeting**

The meeting closed at 8.56 pm

Chair