

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices,
Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City
on Thursday, 17th May, 2018 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Councillor John Bishop (Chairman), (Vice-Chairman), Ian Albert, Allen, Kate Aspinwall, David Barnard, Clare Billing, Judi Billing, Paul Clark, Sam Collins, Julian Cunningham, Bill Davidson, Steve Deakin-Davies, Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Sarah Dingley, Faye Frost, Nicola Harris, Simon Harwood, Cathryn Henry, Terry Hone, Mike Hughson, Tony Hunter, Steve Jarvis, David Levett, Bernard Lovewell, Ian Mantle, Jim McNally, Paul Marmont, Ian Moody, Gerald Morris, Lisa Nash, Lynda Needham, Sue Ngwala, Helen Oliver, Janine Paterson, Mike Rice, Deepak Sangha, Martin Stears-Handscomb, Claire Strong and Michael Weeks

IN ATTENDANCE: David Scholes (Chief Executive), Anthony Roche (Deputy Chief Executive), Jeanette Thompson (Service Director - Legal and Community) and Ian Gourlay (Committee and Member Services Manager)

ALSO PRESENT:

At the commencement of the meeting approximately 8 members of the public.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ruth Brown, Val Bryant, Jean Green, Gary Grindal, Ben Lewis, Michael Muir, Valentine Shanley, Harry Spencer-Smith, Richard Thake and Terry Tyler.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2018/19

Nominations were invited by the retiring Chairman (Councillor Alan Millard) for the election of the Chairman of the Council to hold office until the next annual meeting of the Council in 2019.

It was proposed by Councillor Lynda Needham, seconded by Councillor Julian Cunningham, and

RESOLVED: That Councillor John Bishop be elected Chairman of the Council to hold office until the next Annual Meeting of the Council in 2019.

Councillor John Bishop then read and signed the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and the Chairman (Councillor John Booth) placed the chain of office upon him. Councillor Bishop thanked the Council for his election as Chairman.

3 COUNCILLOR ALAN MILLARD - PAST CHAIRMAN

The Chairman paid tribute to Councillor Alan Millard for his service as Chairman during his term of office.

Councillor Millard wished to record particular thanks to his wife and consort, Maureen, and his Secretary, Amelia McNally, for their help and support during the Civic Year. He presented Maureen and Amelia with bouquets of flowers as a mark of his thanks.

It was moved by the Chairman, Councillor John Bishop, seconded by Councillor Lynda Needham, and

RESOLVED: That the Council places on record its sincere thanks and appreciation to Councillor Alan Millard for his services as Chairman of the Council during the past year.

4 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2018/19

The Chairman asked for nominations for the appointment of Vice-Chairman of the Council to hold office until the next Annual Meeting of the Council in 2019.

It was moved by Councillor Lynda Needham, and seconded by Councillor Julian Cunningham, and

RESOLVED: That Councillor Jean Green be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council to hold office until the next Annual meeting of the Council in 2019.

The Chairman announced that Councillor Green had tendered her apologies for the meeting.

5 MINUTES - 10 APRIL 2018

It was moved by Councillor Lynda Needham, seconded by Councillor Julian Cunningham, and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 10 April 2018 be approved as a true record signed by the Chairman.

6 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(1) Declarations of Interest

The Chairman reminded Members that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest, who wished to exercise a 'Councillor Speaking Right', must declare this at the same time as the interest, move to the public area before speaking to the item and then must leave the room before the debate and vote.

(2) New Councillors and Former Councillor re-elected

The Chairman congratulated and welcomed Councillors Daniel Allen, Kate Aspinwall, Ruth Brown, Val Bryant, Sam Collins, Mike Hughson, Ian Moody, Lisa Nash, Sue Ngwala and Helen Oliver and welcomed back Councillor Clare Billing, following their success at the Elections held on 3 May 2018.

(3) Re-elected Councillors

The Chairman congratulated all those existing Councillors who had been successful in being re-elected at the District Council Elections.

(4) Councillors unsuccessful in seeking re-election

The Chairman thanked for all their work and effort those Councillors who had been unsuccessful at the District Council Elections, namely former Councillors John Booth, Steve Hemingway, Fiona Hill and Alan Millard.

(5) Charities and Fundraising

The Chairman was still deliberating over choosing his charity for the year, and Members would be advised as soon as a decision had been made.

7 DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS - 3 MAY 2018

The Council received the report of the Returning Officer on the results of the District and Parish Council Elections held on 3 May 2018.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Returning Officer be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To inform Members of the results of the District and Parish Council Elections held on 3 May 2018.

8 SCHEDULE OF COUNCIL MEETINGS 2018/19

The Council received a report of the Chief Executive on a proposed programme of ordinary meetings of the Council in 2018/2019.

It was moved by Councillor Lynda Needham, seconded by Councillor Julian Cunningham, and

RESOLVED: That the following programme of ordinary meetings of the Council be approved for the Civic Year 2018/2019:

Wednesday, 18 July 2018;
Thursday, 6 September 2018;
Thursday, 22 November 2018;
Thursday, 17 January 2019;
Thursday, 7 February 2019; and
Thursday, 4 April 2019.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable Members to agree a programme of ordinary meetings of the Council for 2018/2019.

9 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Council noted that the Leader of the Council for the period until May 2019 would be Councillor Lynda Needham.

10 APPOINTMENT OF A DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Council noted that the Leader of the Council had appointed Councillor Julian Cunningham as Deputy Leader for the 2018/2019 Civic Year.

11 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE CABINET FOR 2018/19

The Leader of the Council presented a report which was tabled at the meeting, and which advised the Council of the proposed Cabinet Executive Members for 2018/2019. The Leader explained the rationale behind her decision to reduce the number of Cabinet Members from 8 to 7 for the 2018/19 year. The report also contained details of the delegation arrangements for Executive Members, which would be incorporated into the Council's Constitution.

RESOLVED: That it be noted that the following Members be appointed as Executive Members of the Cabinet for 2018/2019 responsible for the following areas, and with the delegations for inclusion in the Council's Constitution as detailed in the report tabled at the meeting:

Cabinet Member

Councillor Mrs L.A. Needham
Councillor Julian Cunningham
Councillor Tony Hunter
Councillor David Barnard
Councillor Bernard Lovewell
Councillor Michael Weeks
Councillor David Levett

Portfolio

Leader and Cabinet Chairman
Finance & IT and Cabinet Vice-Chairman
Community Engagement & Rural Affairs
Leisure & Green Issues
Housing & Environmental Health
Waste, Recycling & Environment
Planning, Enterprise & Transport

12 TO APPOINT MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES FOR 2018/19

The Chief Executive reported on the proposed allocation of places on the Council's Committees and other bodies for 2018/2019. He also tabled details of the political balance of Committees as required under the provisions of Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 which imposed a duty for the Council to review the representation of the different political groups on the Council's committees.

The report indicated the bodies to which the section applied and set out the proposed numbers of seats on these bodies and the suggested allocation of places that complied with the requirements of the law.

It was moved by Councillor Lynda Needham, seconded by Councillor Julian Cunningham, and

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the seats allocated to each political party on the Committees to which Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 applied and the seats allocated to each political party on the bodies to which Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 did not apply be as set out in Appendix A to these Minutes; and
- (2) That Members be appointed to the various Committees and other bodies in accordance with the wishes of the individual groups, as detailed in Appendix B to these Minutes, and subject to the replacement of the name "Robert Logan" with "Gary Hills" as one of the Parish Council representatives on the Standards Committee.

REASON FOR DECISION: To comply with the provisions of Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

13 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMEN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES FOR 2018/19

The Council gave consideration to the appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees (with the exception of Area Committees) for 2018/2019.

It was then moved by Councillor Lynda Needham, seconded by Councillor Julian Cunningham, and

RESOLVED: That the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees for 2018/2019 be appointed in accordance with the details set out in the Appendix C to these Minutes.

REASON FOR DECISION: To comply with the provisions of Standing Order 4.8.1(a)(ix) of the Council's Constitution.

14 ADJOURNMENT TO ENABLE THE APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMEN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF AREA COMMITTEES

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to enable the five Area Committees to meet to elect their respective Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen for 2018/2019.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.50pm.

The meeting was re-convened at 7.55pm.

15 KEY DECISIONS - ANNUAL REPORT ON CASES OF SPECIAL URGENCY

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Mrs L.A. Needham) submitted a report informing the Council of any occasions over the past year where the provisions relating to "Special Urgency" had been used in connection with the publication of an intention to make a Key Decision, as required by legislation.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that, during the 2017/2018 Financial Year, there had been three occasions upon which the "Special Urgency" powers had been used.

The powers had been exercised by the Cabinet on 19 December 2017 and 23 January 2018, in respect of decisions concerning the acquisition of 14/15 Brand Street, Hitchin, in relation to the North Hertfordshire Museum Project at Hitchin Town Hall, and on 27 March 2018 in respect of a decision concerning options for a Housing Investment Company, all as detailed in the report.

It was moved by Councillor Lynda Needham, seconded by Councillor Julian Cunningham, and

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To comply with Regulation 19 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

16 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Chairman Cathryn Henry) for the Civic Year 2017/2018 introduced the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which set out that Committee's activities over the year and the plans for continued improvement over the coming year.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was pleased at the appointment of Councillor Elisabeth Dennis-Harburg as her Vice-Chairman for 2018/19.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2017/2018 be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To comply with the provisions of Standing Order 6.2.6 of the Council's Constitution.

17 ANNUAL REPORT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report of the Standards Committee for 2017/18, as attached at Appendix A to the report, be received and noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To promote and maintain high standards of conduct and to demonstrate a strong commitment to ethical values.

18 NOMINATION OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER BODIES FOR 2018/19

The Leader of the Council referred to the current position regarding District Council representatives on outside organisations, as detailed on the paper tabled at the meeting. The Political Groups had indicated those positions they wished to have allocated to them and there were a small number of issues to resolve. The Leader of the Council suggested that nominations be notified to the Proper Officer in due course.

It was moved by Councillor Lynda Needham, and seconded by Councillor Julian Cunningham, that the list of Nominations to Outside Organisations for 2018/2019 tabled at the meeting be approved, with the exception of those which had more nominations than places.

During the debate, the Leaders of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups withdrew from the list the names of certain nominees for those bodies which had more nominations than places.

Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report as submitted be approved, with confirmation that:
 - (a) the Council's nominated representative on the British Schools Museum will be Councillor Nicola Harris;
 - (b) the Council's nominated representative on the East and North Herts NHS Trust Involvement Committee will be Councillor Steve Deakin-Davies;
 - (c) a decision on the Council's nominated representative on the Hitchin Initiative be deferred, pending clarification of the roles of the Hitchin Initiative and the Hitchin Business Improvement District (BID) ;
 - (d) the Council's nominated representatives on the King George V Playing Fields User Group will be Councillors David Barnard, Simon Harwood and Richard Thake;
 - (e) the Council's nominated representative on the Letchworth Garden City Town Twinning Association will be Councillor Ian Mantle;
 - (f) the Council's nominated representatives on North Hertfordshire Homes will be Councillors David Barnard, Tony Hunter and Claire Strong;
 - (g) the Council's nominated representative on the Royston and District Sports Council will be Councillor Tony Hunter;
 - (h) the Council's nominated representatives on the Royston Town Twinning Association will be Councillors Jean Green and Ben Lewis; and
- (2) That Political Group Leaders notify the Proper Officer of nominations to the remaining vacancies or any changes to the existing representatives on outside organisations.

19 ITEMS REFERRED FROM EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE: 11 MAY 2018 - APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER AND MONITORING OFFICER

[Note: Prior to the consideration of this item, Jeanette Thompson withdrew from the meeting.]

The Council considered items referred from the Employment Committee, made at its meeting held on 11 May 2018, in respect of proposed appointments to the statutory posts of Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer.

It was moved by Councillor Lynda Needham, seconded by Councillor Julian Cunningham, and

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Ian Couper be appointed to the statutory post of Chief Financial Officer; and
- (2) That Jeanette Thompson be appointed to the statutory post of Monitoring Officer.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure the Council complies with the requirements set out in the Officer Employment Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm

Chairman