

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE ROBIN ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY, 6 MAY 2014**

Present:

The Deputy Mayor of Hertford
Councillor R Willis

Councillors

P Boyle, Mrs B Haddock, Mrs B Mansfield, Mrs S Newton, Dr L Radford, P Ruffles, Miss J Sartin and A Stevenson

Officers

Town Clerk – Ms N L Villa
Civic Administration Manager – Ms P Carpenter
3 members of the public

Note: In the absence of the Mayor, The Deputy Mayor Cllr Willis took the Chair.

490. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors P Ruffles and N Wilson declared a DPI, for discussions regarding the District Plan and the Parking Consultation, as members of East Herts District Council

Councillor Mrs S Newton declared a DPI for discussions regarding the District Plan, as a local landowner.

491. QUESTIONS AND/OR STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None.

492. DISPENSATIONS

A formal request had been received from Councillor P Ruffles and Councillor N Wilson to receive a dispensation to take part in discussions in this agenda on the East Herts consultations for the Draft District Plan and Changes to Car Parking Charges.

It was RESOLVED that:

Dispensations be granted to Councillor P Ruffles and Councillor N Wilson to take part in discussions on the East Herts Draft District Plan and the Changes to Car Parking charges consultations

493. EAST HERTS COUNCIL DRAFT DISTRICT PLAN

Note: Having previously declared a DPI, Cllr Mrs S Newton left the room during the discussions on this item.

The Council had been consulted on the proposals detailed in the Draft District Plan and commented as follows:

The Council welcomed the plan overall, recognising that the District would be at the mercy of developers without it, however the Council was anxious to ensure that the infrastructure of roads, transport, sewerage, schooling etc were all in place prior to any building work taking place. The quality of the housing provision was also of major concern, with high quality, low density housing, with houses as opposed to flats required. Hertford currently has flats in excess. Transport and road infrastructure were of major concern and it was not felt that these issues were fundamentally addressed within the plan.

The Council felt that the plan did protect Hertford despite fitting in more homes than is considered desirable, and is relieved that the Green Fingers are protected and the Green Belt surrounding Hertford is not too adversely affected. It was also considered vital to maintain the historic core of Hertford.

Mead Lane Proposals

The key issue for any further development in this area is transport and road infrastructure. The area is cut off from major roads and following the significant development in recent years' volume of traffic is already an issue. The Council would not wish to see anymore flats in this area. The design and layout of the properties is considered very important and must reflect and complement the Edwardian houses at Spencer Street, Marshgate Drive and Mead Lane.

Land West of Hertford (North of Welwyn Road)

The land is currently an eyesore and would be a good area for new dwellings but again design and housing mix was considered important, along with green space. The protection of the wildlife site in the document is appreciated. This site also widens the Hertford Parish Boundaries meaning that a boundary review would be appropriate to ensure the properties remained within Hertford.

Land West of Hertford (South of Welwyn Road)

If this site is to be used for development, care must be taken not to encroach further from the boundaries and there should be a wide buffer on to the woodland of Panshanger Country Park which is so important for ecological reasons. In this area, high quality/low density housing should be encouraged. In order not to encroach further onto the boundaries in future it was recommended that allotment land be included on the boundaries.

Land North of Hertford (Bengeo)

The Council was sorry to see this development within the District Plan, which was on Green Belt land and gave no consideration to addressing the narrowness of Sacombe Road. Concern was also raised that should this development take place it would be easy to further encroach onto the Green Belt at a later date. Figure 7.5 on page 93 of the Draft District Plan was also misleading and appeared to indicate that the bottom triangle of that land had already been developed, which it hadn't.

The Council formally requested that proposals to develop this land be removed from the Draft District Plan. However it was also recognised that new homes were required and suggested an alternative site of the Marquee in the Town Centre for development.

Land South of Hertford

There were anxieties regarding this land. Any development should not get too close to the Ashbourne brook and the valley and concerns were raised that Mangrove Road was already under enormous pressure from the nearby Simon Balle School. Access was not good, therefore any housing should be low density and of good design.

General

Huge emphasis must be put on the importance of good quality design which ensures the whole quality of the town is upheld.

Town Centre and Shopping

Frustrations regarding a proliferation of the same type of shop in the town centre were often raised by this Council's Planning Sub Committee and the Public and it was therefore requested that a Saturation Policy be added to the District Plan to ensure that there was a mechanism for turning down applications for further shops of the same nature.

Travel

Mention in the District Plan regarding a better ability to travel to the North of England would be appreciated.

Community facilities and Recreation

New Allotment and Cemetery land should be identified within the District Plan as well as good quality play areas.

It was RESOLVED that:

The above comments be forwarded to East Herts Council as Hertford Town Council's response to the Consultation on the Draft District Plan.

494. EAST HERTS COUNCIL PARKING CONSULTATION

The Council considered the proposed changes to the Car Parking Charges and commented as follows:

Whilst supportive of the efforts of East Herts Council to encourage more people who wish or need to drive into Hertford, the Council did however have some reservations regarding the current proposals.

Although on the face of it 30 minutes free parking in all car parks was considered good news, the reservations relating to this were that people may seek to avoid any parking charges and therefore only stay in Hertford for half an hour when they may have previously stayed for an hour. In the time taken to walk to and from the car park there is unlikely to be time to visit more than one or two businesses before the thirty minutes expired. The Council is keen to encourage people to spend more time in the Town Centre rather than less.

The Council was however cautiously supportive of the plans in the hope that people would be prepared to spend a minimum of 80p and for this get 90 minutes parking instead of the previous 60 minutes. The Council would urge the District Council to monitor the impact of the 30 minute parking closely to ensure that it did not lead to an inadvertent drop in footfall to the town centre. It may be that consideration should be given to 1 hour free parking.

The Council noted that in recent years the parking revenue surplus budget had contributed significantly to other services run by the District Council and should that trend continue the Council considers that the time had come to focus income from parking on parking services, perhaps with an hour's free parking and better support to the town centre.

The Council was not wholly opposed to the £1 charge for evening parking as this will support day time businesses. The Council can sympathise with businesses that rely heavily on the night time economy but it was considered only fair that those businesses share some burden of the cost that is currently shouldered entirely by day time businesses through their customers. The Council was however concerned by the impact the evening charges would have on town centre residents (of which there are a large number) who currently park for free in the evenings in the car parks or on single yellow lines, which are likely to be more utilised by town centre visitor parking. The Council therefore urged East

Herts Council to consider a town centre residents' parking permit scheme that had parity with the costs associated with other residential parking schemes.

The Council was also concerned that there was a danger that the impact of evening charging will result in parking that is detrimental to the flow of traffic and to residential areas close to the town centre, where residential parking schemes do not operate in the evening. There is no reference to these likely impacts within the consultation documents.

The Council is disappointed that Pay on Exit parking is not referenced in any of the consultation papers as this is something that businesses, individuals and this Council have called for many years.

It was RESOLVED that:

The above comments be forwarded to East Herts Council

495. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** that:

In view of the confidential nature of the following items, which relate to the business matters of other individuals and organisations, the public shall be excluded while the following item is discussed. This is in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by the Local Government Act 1972.

496. STAFFING REVIEW

The Council received an update regarding the current position of the staffing review.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.30.