

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND LEISURE  
COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2016 IN THE ROBING ROOM,  
THE CASTLE, HERTFORD AT 7.30PM**

PRESENT: Councillor Miss J Sartin, in the Chair

Councillors: P Boyle, S Cousins, Mrs S Dunkley and Miss C Geall

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr P Ruffles  
Mr J Whelan – Town Clerk  
Ms P Carpenter, Civic Administration Manager

**330. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Dr Downs (unwell) and Cllr Mrs Haddock (unwell)

**331. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**332. QUESTIONS AND/OR STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

None.

**333. CONSULTATION – EAST HERTS COUNCIL DISTRICT PLAN PRE SUBMISSION**

The Council had been consulted on the pre submission document of the East Herts Council District Plan and commented as follows:

The Council welcomed the plan overall but expressed concern regarding how the extra development would exacerbate the already over congested road network in Hertford and whether sufficient weight had be placed on plans to ameliorate this.

In terms of housing mix, low density, high quality houses were considered important as opposed to flats, which Hertford already has in abundance. It was not clear to the Council whether the numbers of houses allocated to Hertford within the Strategy took account of development and planning approvals which had been implemented since the start of the Plan's period of 2011. These developments have provided a significant number of new homes and should be counted as part of Hertford's allocation.

The Council was pleased to note that the Green Fingers would be protected but also considered that other green spaces within Hertford such as at Sele Farm and beside County Hall equally important and should be retained.

Whilst the Council is disappointed that some of the land in the green belt is being given up to development, the importance of the protection of green spaces within the town boundary is considered vitally important and must be protected.

### Employment Land

Hertford has lost significant employment land in recent years and lacks small business units. Employment areas such as at Caxton Hill and Mimram Road must be protected and enhanced to meet the need; the Council welcome the Plan's recognition of these and other sites as employment areas.

### Mead Lane

The plan to provide 200 dwellings in the Mead Lane area was, on the one hand considered sensible given its brownfield site status, however the Council did not believe further development was sustainable in this area without measures to improve traffic infrastructure, given the already very problematic road access to the site following significant residential development here in recent years.

### West of Hertford

The Council was keen to emphasise the importance of a buffer between the proposed new housing and the existing woodland in order to protect Panshanger Park from the development. Concern was also expressed regarding road access, provision of safe road crossings by both Sele School and towards Bentley Road and traffic calming measures on the B1000.

### North of Hertford

Again, concern was expressed regarding the sustainability for the proposed development North of Hertford. Traffic issues on Sacombe Road were pertinent, as was the fact that Bengoe Primary School is already full which would result in additional cross town travel to primary schools away from the immediate vicinity.

The plan appears to indicate that it was a fait accompli that the gravel extraction would be taking place on the adjoining site, but this has not been approved.

### South of Hertford

The Council has previously expressed concern regarding the proposal to remove this area from the Conservation Area largely to protect the number of trees in the area, however the Council was pleased to note that the rear of the proposed site would remain as buffer to the green belt.

The Council would comment in detail on all the developments as they come forward for planning permission.

### Leisure Facilities

The plan makes reference to the need for junior football pitches, however there is a requirement and a shortage of full size pitches. General sports provision is

all in need of improvement, and changing facilities on Hartham Common are lacking.

### Retail and Town Centres

The need to retain the historic character of the town centre is important and quality facades and associated advertising should be encouraged and enforced where necessary.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **comments** as above be forwarded to East Herts Council.

### **334. HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL TRANSPORT VISION 2050**

The Council commented to the Consultation as follows:

The Council largely supported the guiding principles and objectives within the Consultation but considered that some were based on speculation at present regarding matters such as driverless and electric cars.

In terms of the major schemes affecting Hertford, specifically regarding the Hertford bypass, the Council did not consider there was sufficient information provided to comment in detail, but were supportive of feasibility work to continue in order to understand the opportunities a bypass could bring, as well as the impact it would have. It was particularly noted no information regarding possible routes for a by-pass had been made available, making a full assessment of this option harder.

In the meantime however the Council urged the County Council to look at alternative means of travel to car use to relieve the traffic congestion in Hertford now, as even if a by-pass were to be constructed it would be many years before this happened, and reducing congestion and pollution in Hertford needs tackling immediately. As the largest employers in Hertford, the County and District Councils have a real opportunity to discourage car use among their employees, and should study other models such as those successfully implemented by Southampton Council and also Cambridgeshire County Councils. There are severe air quality concerns in Hertford and measures should be implemented to get cars off the road, including through improved and expanded cycle routes.

The Transport Vision appeared to focus heavily on car use rather than encouraging broader initiatives such as much improved and affordable public transport.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **comments**, as above, be forwarded to Hertfordshire County Council.

### **335. GOVIA THAMESLINK TIMETABLE CHANGES 2018**

The Council commented as follows on the timetable changes consultation:

Hertford Town Council strongly objected to the proposals regarding replacing trains with buses from Watton-at-Stone to Stevenage from 2018, particularly given at this juncture no date had been confirmed to implement Platform 5 at Stevenage. The Council objects to the fracturing of rail passengers journeys for an indefinite period and considers the Consultation to be misleading in that it does not explicitly reference the point. It is not considered appropriate for the arrangements to be open ended and a timescale must be put into place.

Hertford Town Council has long appealed through various forms of consultation for improved services north to Cambridge and Peterborough to

- increase rail patronage;
- encourage passengers to use the route north from Enfield and Hertford rather than travel into London first; and to
- reduce car travel.

Members are concerned that the proposals would encourage more people to drive and would cause increase congestion and exacerbate parking problems around existing stations. In particular the area around Watton-at-Stone Station would be the destination for significant coach traffic as part of the temporary bus replacement service proposed. This would have a detrimental impact on village life.

On a positive note the Council welcomed the new trains and carriages but commented on the importance of the need for sufficient trained drivers and appropriate rosters to ensure a reduction in train service cancellations.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **comments**, as above, be forwarded to Govia Thameslink in response to the Consultation.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm