

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL
HELD ON**

16 September 2021

7.30 - 8.35 pm

PRESENT

COUNCILLORS

Clive Souter (Chair)
Maggie Hulcoop (Vice-Chair)

David Carter
Simon Carter
Joel Charles
Nick Churchill
Jean Clark
Mike Danvers
Tony Durcan
Tony Edwards
Michael Garnett
Michael Hardware
Andrew Johnson
Eddie Johnson
Shona Johnson

OFFICERS

Brian Keane, Chief Executive
Lisa Thornett, Corporate
Governance Support Officer
Simon Hill, Head of
Governance

29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bob Davis, Jodi Dunne, Alastair Gunn, Eugenie Harvey and Colleen Morrison.

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

31. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2021 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

32. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair advised that he had attended a number of events since the last Full Council meeting. This included the Queens award for voluntary services at Down Hall, Brentwood's Civic Service, Rochford's Garden Party, Bishops Stortford's musical picnic, the Mayor of Broxbourne's afternoon tea, Community Embraces around the world food event, the High Sheriff's garden party and the inauguration of the new Bishop of Chelmsford.

The Chair had also attended many events in Harlow including the Great British Spring Clean finale, the opening of a new pizza shop in the town centre and a new sculpture at St Mary's Little Parndon. The Chair also attended the Gibberd Garden Beer Festival and thanked Councillor Danvers for showing him around the gardens.

The Chair advised that his annual golf day took place on 3 September with 60 players taking part. Public Health England were the winning team with three Councillors coming in second place.

The Chair reminded everyone that his Civic Service would take place on 7 November 2021. The Chair also advised that tickets for the Red Church brewery tour were also still available.

33. **PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

34. **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

The questions, together with the answers, are appended to the minutes.

35. **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

The questions, together with the answers, are appended to the minutes.

36. **MOTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

a) Proposed Developments Around Harlow

Proposed by Councillor Russell Perrin (seconded by Councillor Michael Hardware):

"This Council recognises the huge concerns many residents have about the proposed developments around Harlow, including Sumners West, Katherines West, Latton Priory and to the east of Harlow. There are worries that these developments will overwhelm the existing town transport infrastructure, services and amenities.

In particular, these concerns surround transport links in west and south Harlow, the lack of capacity on Southern Way, Water Lane, Broadley Road and the B181 Epping Road, and the potential impact on local medical and education services.

The proposed strategic housing site to the east of Harlow, and those developments already taking place on Gilden Way and the new M11 junction, will add additional impact upon the residents of Old Harlow who understandably continue to raise objections about the proposals for further new housing.

In support of the above, this Council resolves that it:

- i) Remains against growth to the southern and western boundaries of the town, preferring any growth to be to the north (Gilston Villages) and east of Harlow.
- ii) Will make any representations necessary to communicate that it does not support any development of Sumners West or any other developments to the south or west of Harlow.
- iii) Will not sell or lease any land or rights of way which it possesses that may assist in the development of Sumners West or any other developments to the south or west of Harlow.
- iv) Puts in place a plan to do everything possible to mitigate the impacts of the strategic housing site to the east of Harlow. To better recognise the potential impact on existing residents, particularly in Churchgate Street and the neighbouring parts of Old Harlow that will also be affected, by:
 - Conducting an additional strategic assessment of the proposed housing site to gain further clarity about its feasibility and publish a specific mitigation action plan to limit the severity of the impact of such potential housing growth;
 - Developing a separate agreement between this Council and Old Harlow residents to safeguard the community from future over-development, recognising the importance of preserving the Conservation Area; and
 - Committing to additional consultation in line with the new community engagement strategy that will be developed by this Council, so that Old Harlow residents' concerns can be used to inform future plans to mitigate the prospect of an east strategic housing site.
- v) The Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Growth submits a formal objection to Epping Forest District Council Local Development Plan to the extent that it impacts upon points i – iv and sub clauses raised in this motion.”

Councillor Chris Vince (seconded by Councillor Tony Durcan) proposed an amendment to point iii) to add the word “continue” after “will” in the first line.

The amendment was lost.

RESOLVED that the motion was carried.

37. REFERENCES FROM CABINET AND COMMITTEES

- a) DfT Standards - New Requirements for Private Hire Vehicle Proprietors / Operators and Staff

Full Council considered a referral from the Licensing Committee on the new requirements for Private Hire Vehicle Proprietors/Operators and Staff.

Proposed by Councillor Nick Churchill (seconded by Councillor Andrew Johnson) it was:

RESOLVED that Full Council agree that:

- i) A new mandate is introduced to require all vehicle proprietors to provide a basic disclosure certificate from the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) and that a new check is undertaken annually.
- ii) A new mandate is introduced to require all Private Hire Vehicle Operator licence holders, to hold a basic disclosure certificate from the DBS and that a new check is undertaken annually.
- iii) A new mandate is introduced to require operator staff who take bookings, dispatch vehicles or any other staff who have access to booking information or have contact with members of the public to hold a Basic disclosure certificate from the DBS and that a new check is undertaken annually.
- iv) Subject to i, ii and iii, the requirements be introduced as set out in the proposals section of this report.

38. REPORTS FROM OFFICERS

- a) Independent Member of the Audit and Standards Committee Appointment

Full Council considered a report from Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Property and Deputy to the Chief Executive, on the appointment of an Independent Member of the Audit and Standards Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Eddie Johnson (seconded by Councillor Jean Clark) it was:

RESOLVED that Laura Kirman is appointed as the independent member of the Audit and Standards Committee.

39. **MINUTES OF CABINET AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following meetings are noted.

- a) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 6 July 2021 of Licensing Committee
- b) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 7 July 2021 of Development Management Committee
- c) Minutes of meeting Monday, 12 July 2021 of Cabinet
- d) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 13 July 2021 of Scrutiny Committee

40. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL

Full Council – 16 September 2021

Questions from the Public

1 Hugh Hoad to Councillor Andrew Johnson (Leader of the Council and Lead on Economic Recovery):

When the public space protection order in the town centre was introduced he wanted begging as a thing that wasn't allowed, but his idea wasn't accepted. Now he is Leader will this be introduced?

Reply from Councillor Andrew Johnson (Leader of the Council and Lead on Economic Recovery):

The Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) in the Town Centre (x2) were implemented in August 2019 and will remain in place for a period of three years until August 2022.

It may be possible to extend or vary the PSPOs, for example to change the size of the area covered by the PSPO or to remove or add new prohibitions, such as begging. However, before any changes can be made the council must follow a process to make sure that a number of statutory conditions have been met. The council will also need to gather evidence to show that it has reasonable grounds for any specified problems contained within the PSPO, with clear data and other evidence to justify any variations and additions to it.

During the coming months the council will begin to gather evidence to determine whether or not an extension or variation to the PSPO under any grounds, including begging, can be justified. If the view is that it can, then there will be appropriate consultation and other necessary legislative requirements to undertake before a Cabinet decision can be made on the precise nature of the PSPO.

The council is determined to provide community leadership to address the root cause of begging, that of homelessness, by working with charities including Streets2Homes to identify local issues and signpost individuals to the appropriate support.

Supplementary Question from Hugh Hoad:

As you've got to wait to add begging in, there is a total ignorance of the order, wouldn't it be cheaper to do away with the order totally because, yet again, there is a total waste of Council Tax payers money because the order is not enforced?

Supplementary Reply from Councillor Andrew Johnson (Leader of the Council and Lead on Economic Recovery):

I think I share your concerns about Public Space Protection Orders and their viability. I think we had a good debate in this Chamber about that back in 2019. The fact that remains Mr Hoad is that this will remain legally enforced until August 2022. To make any changes or to renew at the end of that one or non-renew, we will still require the Council to continue to gather the evidence of effectiveness at the moment. So I think that, at the moment, the Public Space Protection Order will remain in place until August 2022 and, as we gather more evidence over the next nine months, we will then be able to make a future determination about the future of PSPO's or not.

2 Hugh Hoad to Councillor Andrew Johnson (Leader of the Council and Lead on Economic Recovery):

As we have not had a separate food waste collection will there be a refund on next year's council tax?

Reply from Councillor Andrew Johnson (Leader of the Council and Lead on Economic Recovery):

Food waste collections were temporarily suspended for two weeks due to Veolia operatives having to isolate due to being pinged by the Covid 19 app.

We will bring forward council tax proposals next year as part of the normal budget process.

Full Council – 16 September 2021

Questions from Councillors

1 Councillor Jean Clark to Councillor Joel Charles (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Community Resilience):

Pets' Corner took huge steps to remain a sustainable, popular service. What are the new Administration's expectations regarding the future of Pets' Corner? Are there plans to generate more income? If so, what exactly are they?

Reply from Councillor Joel Charles (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Community Resilience):

Pets' Corner is a much-loved council asset that makes an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of our community.

Our administration is exploring options to invest in the council's valued non-statutory services, which includes Pets' Corner in the wider portfolio. There are no plans to make changes to the council's community services budgets that will negatively impact frontline delivery.

Work continues by our administration on delivering an updated medium-term financial strategy and a budget for the next municipal year that focuses on extending opportunity and prosperity – the guiding focus that flows through everything the council will aim to achieve in the future. The council's community services will play a key role in promoting inclusion to help realise the goal of extending opportunity. To practically achieve this on the ground, our administration is exploring opportunities for additional income generation at Pets' Corner, which includes looking at further educational opportunities, and scoping the potential to expand the use of the Learning Centre as a more established conference facility.

Supplementary question from Councillor Jean Clark:

I think we agree very much on the importance of Pets Corner and I am pleased to hear that there are no plans to make changes that will negatively impact it. There is a fine line between commercialisation and simple income generation. Can you make a commitment that you won't be introducing entry charges for Pets Corner?

Supplementary reply from Councillor Charles (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Community Resilience):

This administration, and let me be crystal clear with the Labour administration, will not be introducing charges at Pets Corner. Only this week, Councillor Clark, did we announce additional investment in Pets Corner; new cladding, larger stable windows for viewing access for young people, particularly families that visit that centre. I myself and colleagues in this room have visited Pets Corner and recognise the value of a free opportunity for families that may be struggling that are able to go to that petting zoo and the excellent work that it does and the fundamental to our support is making sure those families are able to access it in the future. This Council is serious about investing in its community facilities for the benefit of residents and is focussed not only on residents but also the welfare of the animals at Pets Corner. So I take great issue Councillor Clark with your suggestion as it hasn't entered my thought process whatsoever.

2 Councillor Mike Danvers to Councillor Russell Perrin (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance)

Do all sitting Harlow District Councillors live in Harlow?

Reply from Councillor Russell Perrin (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance):

All Conservative Councillors live in Harlow.

Supplementary question from Councillor Mike Danvers:

In that case Chair, would the Portfolio Holder ask the Conservative Councillors to make it clear in their Declaration of Interest that they do live in Harlow? That is unless of course they have no fixed abode.

Supplementary reply from Councillor Russell Perrin:

Yes.

3 Councillor Mike Danvers to Councillor Simon Carter (Portfolio Holder for Housing)

Given the situation over the last three months could he outline both the short term and long term strategy for repairing and maintaining the Clock Tower at Puffers Green? Would he consider giving the iconic building a small separate capital budget from the housing revenue capital account schemes for annual maintenance?

Reply from Councillor Simon Carter (Portfolio Holder for Housing):

A budget was allocated as part of the Housing Capital programme for 21/22 approved by Cabinet in January 2021.

This forms part of the Council's Housing Investment Programme (HIP) External Works. The scope of works has been developed and been extended to include both internal and external works refurbishing the property. HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd have been awarded the works. They are developing an implementation plan which is expected to complete in December 2021. This will follow the planning application required with a listed building and Essex County Council approvals, which are taking longer than usual due to revised Covid-19 working arrangements. The revised updated timetable has been discussed with the tenant.

The clock and bell ringing mechanism is in working order following extensive repairs. The Council is establishing a longer term specialist works agreement to ensure servicing and repairs are mainstreamed should the need arise.

4 Councillor Tony Durcan to Councillor Andrew Johnson (Leader of the Council and Lead on Economic Recovery):

Last week was the twentieth anniversary of 9/11 where 2,977 people were murdered.

Your Harlow reminded us all of a local lad born and educated in Harlow who was a victim of this tragedy, Simon Maddison. Whilst he moved to America he should be remembered by Harlow in some way. I ask the council at the next opportunity that we find a naming opportunity to recognise Simon's life and his ambitions.

Could we send a message to his family in America and at a suitable time enable them to be aware that Harlow never forgets its own?

Reply from Councillor Andrew Johnson (Leader of the Council and Lead on Economic Recovery):

9/11 remains one of the most poignant and tragic events in our lifetime and the twentieth anniversary last weekend was a powerful reminder to reflect on those that lost their lives, including Simon. I was moved by the tribute to Simon in Your Harlow and I'm aware that BBC Essex also carried out an interview with Simon's family in America where they spoke about his life in Harlow and his family home at Paddock Mead.

We should be guided by the wishes of Simon's family and I will ask Officers to gather contact details for his family and so we can ask them what they feel would be an appropriate memorial for Simon.

Supplementary question from Councillor Tony Durcan:

Andrew, I completely agree with everything that you said but would you agree with me that something fitting may well be the new buildings at the Lister House area because that is quite close to where Simon was brought up but also equally I hope that you could also look to see whether there is somewhere in the Town Park that we can actually have an area where we can go and enjoy and remember Simon as a good friend and a good comrade of Harlow?

Supplementary reply from Councillor Andrew Johnson (Leader of the Council and Lead on Economic Recovery):

I think, Councillor Durcan, there are a number of places around the town where memorials could be. I'm informed that Simon attended Abbotsweld school as I did so I think there are lots of places around the town that could be appropriate. I don't want to specify something until we have had a chance to speak with his family and see a) if they are happy and b) what they feel is appropriate but I am happy to invite Councillor Durcan to join me in the discussion of that once we have details from the family.