

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL
HELD ON**

17 July 2024

7.00 - 9.08 pm

PRESENT

COUNCILLORS

Andrew Johnson (Chair)
Sue Livings (Vice-Chair)

Danielle Brown	Maggie Hulcoop
David Carter	James Leppard
Joel Charles	Kay Morrison
Jodi Dunne	Aiden O'Dell
Tony Durcan	Russell Perrin
Tony Edwards	Daniella Pritchard
Hannah Ellis	Nicky Purse
Michael Garnett	Matthew Saggars
Emma Ghaffari	Stacy Seales
James Griggs	Lanie Shears
Alastair Gunn	Jake Shepherd
Michael Hardware	Clive Souter
Michael Houlihan	Dan Swords
Luke Howard	Nancy Watson

OFFICERS

Hannah Marriott, Governance
Support Officer
Niel Churchill,
Communications Manager
Alan Evans, Interim Strategic
Director
Julie Galvin, Legal Services
Manager
Paul Keen, Communications
Officer
Jacqui Van Mellaerts,
Assistant Director - Finance
Yvonne Rees, Interim Chief
Executive

16. **WEBCAST INTRODUCTION**

The Chair said the meeting was being webcast live and would be available for repeated viewing after the meeting has ended. By continuing to attend the meeting, you were consenting to being filmed and to appearing in the webcast.

17. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mark Ingall, Stefan Mullard-Toal and Chris Vince.

18. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

19. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2024 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

20. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR**

The Chair congratulated Councillor Chris Vince on being elected as MP for Harlow.

The Chair sent his best wishes for a swift recovery to ex-Councillor Bob Davies who had recently suffered a stroke. The Chair also wished Councillor Mark Ingall a speedy recovery following his accident.

The Chair advised that he had attended the “Beating The Retreat” by the East Anglian Regiment. The Regiment sent their best wishes to the Council and noted that they would like to take up their right to march through the town at some stage.

21. **PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

22. **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

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

23. **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

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

24. **MOTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

a) Long Term Plan for Towns Investment

Proposed by Councillor Dan Swords (seconded by Councillor David Carter):

“This council welcomes the plethora of investment the Government announced into Harlow which is now being delivered with transformational regeneration of the town centre including:

- £23.7 million Town Deal announced in June 2021;
- £20 million Levelling Up Fund announced in January 2023;
- £20 million Long Term Plan for Towns investment announced in March 2024;
- Harlow Investment Fund, Housing Infrastructure Grant and Rolling Infrastructure Fund;
- As well as many other investments from the Government worth hundreds of millions of pounds.

However, notes that the £20 million Long Term Plan for Towns investment appears at risk in light of the comments of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Secretary of State for Communities, Housing and Local Government last week making clear that such funding was under review. This is a concern shared by councils of all political colours and has been raised by the District Councils' Network.

Furthermore, Harlow Council (like many other councils) has not received the first tranche of funding as expected following the General Election.

This is of great concern of all Members at Harlow Council as if a decision is taken by the new Government not to proceed with this funding it will have a significant impact on the regeneration of the town centre, particularly on the safety and security provisions and required infrastructure for the new town centre.

If the new Government decides not to proceed with this previously committed funding, it will be enormously detrimental to Harlow and the rebuilding of the town centre.

This Council will constructively work with the new Government for the benefit of Harlow seeking to ensure that all investments currently allocated to Harlow are continued to enable the rebuilding of the town centre to be completed as planned.

Therefore, this Council calls on:

- The Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Communities, Housing and Local Government to recognise that all Members of the Council support this investment, and therefore seek urgent assurances on this funding including confirmation of when the first tranche of funding will be received;
- Harlow's MP to arrange an urgent meeting with the Secretary of State for Communities, Housing and Local Government, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and representatives from the Council to discuss this matter;
- Harlow's MP to raise this matter in House of Commons Business, Departmental and Prime Minister's questions to ensure maximum exposure is given to the matter."

Councillor Dan Swords requested (seconded by five supporting Councillors) a recorded vote on the motion. The recorded vote is appended to the minutes.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED that the above motion be carried.

25. **MAIN DEBATE**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.3, the Chair called on the Leader of the Council to introduce the debate on the work undertaken by the Council during the 2023/24 municipal year together with any highlights, pressures and potential issues for the coming year. The Leader of the Opposition was given the opportunity to respond to the debate.

26. **APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMAN**

Full Council received a report on the appointment of three Honorary Alderman.

Proposed by Councillor Dan Swords (seconded by Councillor James Griggs) it was:

RESOLVED that in recognition of their significant contribution to the Council and the District of Harlow in particular and public service in general, Council confers the title of Honorary Alderman to Mr Simon Carter, Mr Eddie Johnson and Mr Mark Wilkinson.

27. **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME 2024/25**

Full Council received a report on the proposed Members Allowances Scheme for 2024/25.

Proposed by Councillor Dan Swords (seconded by Councillor James Griggs) it was:

RESOLVED that the item be deferred to Full Council in September 2024.

28. **DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS - REPLACEMENT**

Full Council received a report on the replacement of one committee member serving the Development Management Committee.

RESOLVED that:

A Council agrees the replacement of Councillor Russell Perrin with Councillor Matthew Saggars to serve on a politically balanced Development Management Committee.

B Councillor Nicky Purse shall be a substitute committee member.

- C All other appointments approved by Council on 23 May 2024 shall remain as agreed.

29. **REFERENCES FROM CABINET AND COMMITTEES**

- a) Referral from Audit and Standards Committee - Audit and Standards Committee Annual Report 2023/24

Full Council received a referral from the Audit and Standards Committee on the Audit and Standards Committee Annual Report 2023/24.

Proposed by Councillor Matthew Saggors (seconded by Councillor Dr Emma Ghaffari) it was:

RESOLVED that:

A The Annual Report of the Audit Committee for 2023/24 be agreed and recommended to Council for approval.

B The Committee's Terms of Reference be agreed.

30. **REPORTS FROM OFFICERS**

None.

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following meetings be noted.

- a) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 13 March 2024 of Development Management Committee
- b) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 10 April 2024 of Development Management Committee
- c) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 18 June 2024 of Licensing Committee
- d) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 26 June 2024 of Audit & Standards Committee

32. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL

Full Council – 17 July 2024

Questions from the Public

1 Jennifer Steadman to Councillor Nicky Purse (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability):

Can the person responsible for approving the purchase of the Glyphosate weedkillers: Nomix, Barclay and Pistol that the council regularly spray around Harlow on lampposts, grass verges, near schools and playgrounds etc please advise me if there any plans to source products that are less harmful to people, wildlife and the planet?

For example; products that don't contain glyphosate which has carcinogenic properties. Products such as acetic acid, soap, steam, salt, iron-based sprays or pelargonic fatty acids which naturally occur in plants have been proven to be effective on different types of weeds and wont cause any risk of harm to the environment, its inhabitants and residents.

Reply from Councillor Nicky Purse (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability):

The approval of chemical herbicide is managed overall by the Chemical Regulation Division (CRD) part of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) working closely with the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Glyphosate products are approved for use. Currently Harlow Council permits the usage of Glyphosate products and it remains the mainstay of its weed control.

Officers and managers have explored the possible use of alternate products and we regularly work with other Local Authorities to explore other options.

A trial was attended on 'foam stream' by weedtech run by Southend Council. Initial views was the lack of flexibility of the machine around the extensive hard surfaces and levels found in Harlow.

Currently alternative methods appear to be less effective at weed control and each method does have its own set of negatives to be aware of. We remain open minded as new methods may be available yet mindful of the impact on resource and efficiency.

Supplementary question from Jennifer Steadman to Councillor Nicky Purse (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability):

Germany, the home of Bayer, who purchased Monsanto, has banned the use of glyphosate as has Belgium, France, Vietnam and the Netherlands along with many other countries, now Mexico has banned it. In the UK the renewal assessment process expiry date is December 2025 following the three year extension following the UK's post-Brexit pesticide regulatory regime is developed. So my question is does Harlow Council have plans to review the type, usage and suggest alternatives to weed killers that can include cancerous ingredients including the aforementioned products or is the health of the residents of Harlow, their children, pets and wildlife and the risks to the operatives performing the spray application too low on the political agenda?

Supplementary reply from Councillor Nicky Purse (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability):

That's quite a lengthy question there. In terms of that, it would come down to DEFRA to make that decision. As a local authority we would be mindful and we would look for alternatives but it would come down to DEFRA to make those decisions.

Full Council – 17 July 2024

Questions from Councillors

1 Councillor Kay Morrison to Councillor Nicky Purse (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability):

Local community groups sometimes use our green 'fingers' (which are otherwise disused) as an ideal location to celebrate a special event, such as the king's coronation. These spaces can provide opportunities for play and other family activities. The benefits are obvious.

However, when a request is made to use such a space regularly, obstacles have been encountered. Will the Administration investigate ways in which these grassy areas can be made available to our residents?

Reply from Councillor Nicky Purse (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability):

Thank you for your question.

The administration welcomes the feedback that the green areas we have sought to maintain and protect are so highly valued by the community. This administration will continue to do all it can to ensure good green spaces are available for community use

To your question, work is underway to identify possible ways to how greenspaces can be used and maintained by the community. There are a number of restrictions that need to be explored and considered and the shadow cabinet will be informed as to the outcome of this work.

Supplementary question from Councillor Kay Morrison to Councillor Nicky Purse (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability):

Thank you Councillor Purse for that encouraging response. So I look forward to the result, the outcome, of that work. What is the timescale?

Supplementary reply from Councillor Nicky Purse (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability):

I couldn't definitely say a timescale this evening to you but I will work hard with you and come back to you on our outcome from this but as you know, before I was a Councillor, I was very much one of those people that would actually use our green spaces and follow the right way to use those green spaces and have the pleasure that our communities do in our green fingers.

Recorded Vote- Full Council

Date: 17 July 2024

Item: Motion – Long Term Plan for Towns Investment

Name	Vote
Danielle Brown	For
David Carter	For
Joel Charles	For
Jodi Dunne	Against
Tony Durcan	Against
Tony Edwards	Against
Hannah Ellis	For
Mike Garnett	For
Emma Ghaffari	For
James Griggs	Against
Alastair Gunn	For
Michael Hardware	For
Michael Houlihan	Against
Luke Howard	Against
Maggie Hulcoop	Against
Mark Ingall	Absent
Andrew Johnson	Abstain
James Leppard	For
Sue Livings	For
Kay Morrison	Against
Stefan Mullard-Toal	Absent
Aiden O'Dell	Against
Russell Perrin	For
Daniella Pritchard	Against
Nicky Purse	For
Matthew Saggars	For
Stacy Seales	For
Lanie Shears	Against
Jake Shepherd	Against
Clive Souter	For
Dan Swords	For
Chris Vince	Absent
Nancy Watson	Against
Result	Carried