

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**CABINET
MONDAY 19 NOVEMBER AT 10.00 A.M.**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MONDAY 19 NOVEMBER AT 2.15 P.M.**

Agenda Item No.

**Urgent other
Part I
business**

**ITEM OF URGENT BUSINESS
ROLL FORWARD OF THE STRUCTURE PLAN – PUBLICATION OF
CONSULTANTS’ PROPOSITIONS**

Report of the Director of Environment

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Executive Member: Iris Tarry

1. Purpose of report

To consider a proposal from the Executive Member for Environment that the Consultants’ propositions should be made available to the public and to determine a response to a letter received from Watford Borough Council. This item will be considered as an item of urgent business with the consent of the Chairman.

2. Background

At their meetings on 15 October 2001 Cabinet and Executive Committee considered the outcome of a joint member meeting of the District and County Councillors on 4 October, when representatives of six Districts councils (East Herts, Hertsmere, St. Albans, Stevenage, Watford and Welwyn Hatfield) requested that the initial stage of the consultation on housing options be delayed.

The County Council agreed to the delay on the grounds that the district councils wanted more time to study the findings of the Housing Capacity Study and also agreed to the request that the Consultants’ propositions should not be made publicly available, as they had previously intended.

Since then selective parts of the site specific Consultants’ Study have been made available to the press in some areas. In addition, some district councils have made public statements and comments concerning the propositions, which appear to contradict their initial request that the site specific work be temporarily kept confidential. This partial release of information has created considerable interest and expressions of concern from members of the public and organisations.

A number of district councils who have followed the protocol and agreement reached following the joint member meeting have also expressed their concern at the reports appearing in the press.

A letter from Watford Borough Council seeking a formal response from the County Council has also been received. It is attached as an Appendix, together with a letter from the Leader of

Watford Borough Council and the response from the Leader of the County Council dated 22nd October.

The release of the Consultant's site specific work at this stage for public inspection would assist in helping to explain its status and the role it played in the overall Capacity Study. It would also provide the basis for the County Council to clarify any misunderstandings that might have arisen as a result of its piecemeal release.

The views of the Environment Select Committee Spokesmen have been sought and any received will be reported.

3. Financial Implications

None.

4. Conclusion

Members need to decide

- a) whether to make available the Consultant's propositions for public inspection, and
- b) how to respond to Watford Borough Council.