

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the County Council held at County Hall, Hertford, on Tuesday 15 July 2003.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

N E Agar	R J M Ellis	B J Lamb	E N Singam
T I Ambrose	K F Emsall (Chairman)	A Lee	R H Smith
J E Anderson	B C Engel	D B Lloyd	R J Smith
D A Ashley	F J Escott	D E Lloyd	W A Storey
S A Batson	G D Game	R Mays	I E M Tarry
M V Bayes	S B A Giles-Medhurst	J T Metcalf	J Taunton
D Beatty	J Gipps	R Mills	J W A Usher
N K Brook	P V Goggins	S J Mills	C J White
P T J Channell	R I N Gordon	J R Morton	
G R Churchard	A K Gray	A Oaten	
E M Clarke	M Green	M H O'Neill	
D Clayton	F Guest	D A A Peek	
R S Clements	B N W Hammond	S J Pile	
K J Coleman	D W Hills	J M Pitman	
M D Colne	M J Hobday	S Quilty	
G M Cook	J A Hobday	P A Ruffles	
R N Copping	M H T Janes	R Sanderson	
K M Crout	S E Jones	H M Saunders	
A D Dodd	T G M Kent	D T F Scudder	
M Downing	L R Kercher	A M R Searing	
D J Drake	I H Laidlaw-Dickson	I Simpson	

Upon consideration of the agenda for the meeting of the County Council held on 15 July 2003, as circulated, action was taken or decisions were reached as follows:-

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 20 May 2003 were confirmed.

2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

2.1 Election of New County Councillor

The Chairman welcomed to his first Council meeting, County Councillor Stuart Pile, who had been elected on 19 June 2003 to serve the Hatfield South Division (no 75).

2.2 Deaths of former County Councillors

The Chairman announced the recent deaths of former County Councillors Albert Dillingham and Audrey Ramsden.

Former County Councillor Dillingham had been elected to the County Council in 1946, and became an Alderman in 1960. He was then elected to the new Council from 1973 to 1977 representing Watford (Garston and Knutsford).

Former County Councillor Ramsden had served on the County Council from 1985 to 1989 representing Central Oxhey.

The Council stood in their memory.

2.3 Departing Chief Officers

The Chairman announced that this would be the last full Council meeting for the Acting Chief Executive, Charlie Watson, who was shortly to retire, and for the Director of Children, Schools and Families, Ray Shostak, who was leaving the County Council to take up a post with the Improvement and Development Agency.

Charlie Watson had joined the County Council in 1995 as Director of Environment and had been Acting Chief Executive since the departure of Bill Ogle on 2 May. Ray Shostak had joined the County Council as Director of Education in 1997 and became Director of Children, Schools and Families in 2000.

The Chairman was joined by the Leader of the Council, (R J M Ellis), C J White, T G M Kent and R J Smith in paying tribute to both officers and their outstanding contribution to the work of the Council.

2.4 H R Excellence Award

The Council congratulated the Director of People and Property, Alan Warner, on the County Council having won the H R Excellence in the Public Sector Award run by Human Resources Magazine.

2.5 New Children's Trust in North Herts/Stevenage

The Chairman announced that the North Herts and Stevenage Primary Care Trust and Hertfordshire County Council's Children, Schools and Families service had been selected to be one of only 35 national Children's Trusts.

2.6 Investors in People Award

The Council congratulated the Children, Schools and Families department on achieving the Investors in People Award.

3. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7 (1)

3.1 The following motion proposed by **R J M Ellis**, and duly seconded, was CARRIED:-

“That under Standing Order 6 (2) the Council varies the order of business so that the following questions to Executive Members be taken at the end of the agenda.”

3.2 (a) A D Dodd asked the Executive Member for Children, Schools and Families:-

“As Foundation Schools and Voluntary Aided Schools set their own admission rules, would the Executive Member agree with me that the wording and format in the ‘Moving On’ booklet sent out by the County Council to parents seeking transfer of their children to secondary school should be further strengthened to make it very clear that these schools – not the County Council – have responsibility for the allocations to those schools?”

(b) R I N Gordon replied:-

“I appreciate that the LEA’s role in the co-ordination admissions scheme can cloud responsibility for the admission arrangements for Voluntary Aided Foundation Schools which, of course, lies with the school’s governors, not with the LEA. I have asked officers to seek to emphasise this where appropriate in the new issue of ‘Moving On’ and I expect to receive a draft of that booklet shortly.”

3.3 (a) S B A Giles-Medhurst asked the Executive Member for Environment:-

“Given one of the aims of the new partnership arrangements as part of the Hertfordshire Highways is to ‘deliver the service standards expected’ will the Executive Member please inform the Council how he expects to measure that?”

(b) D A Ashley replied:-

“The new contract for the first time has a specific and very comprehensive performance management regime monitoring over 75 indicators which are combined from a number of perspectives, including effects on highway asset, customer, the organisation etc. Work is currently in hand to produce a balanced scorecard which shows overall performance trends on a monthly basis. Individual service aspects can also be identified to ensure continued improvement or acceptable standards over all elements.

I have asked for a presentation on the performance indicators and the balanced scorecard approach at the member seminar on 6 September.

These measures will be an important part of the scrutiny process, which is also a new means of monitoring the effectiveness of the arrangements.”

- (c) S B A Giles-Medhurst** then asked the following supplementary question:-

“In thanking the Executive Member for his answer, I am sure he would agree that the performance to date in many aspects particularly on project work is far from satisfactory with schemes being delayed and postponed for seemingly inexcusable reasons. Given this what further action will he and his key officers now take to ensure Herts residents get the service they should have?”

- (d) D A Ashley** replied:-

“I will continue to monitor the performance.”

- 3.4 (a) S B A Giles-Medhurst** asked the Executive Member for Environment:-

“Given that members were informed at an early stage of the benefits of the new integrated way of working with Hertfordshire Highways which involved joined up working with County Officers, Amey Larfarge and Mouchel, can the Executive member please inform the Council of the normal expected timescale for the implementation of local transport scheme projects from date of first discussion with local members to on the ground works and how this compares with the previous arrangements?”

- (b) D A Ashley** replied:-

“The benefits expected from the new style of working relate to the more effective use of resource (financial and manpower) in progressing work once identified on the ground.

The implementation of Local Transport Scheme projects is currently often dependent on a sequence of consultations in order to achieve consensus before a buildable project can be identified. No claims were made that this new contract would change these processes.

- (c) **S B A Giles-Medhurst** then asked the following supplementary question:-

“Whilst I am grateful for the answer would the Executive Member not agree that it does not answer the question as to the constant delays in either my division or other members on programmed projects, and the now increased time span on getting projects on the ground for which I can cite as an example the Woodwaye / Green Lane scheme where officers who have started work on this say that works on the ground will not start till September 2004. Is this not unacceptable?”

- (d) **D A Ashley** replied:-

“The new contractual arrangements do not impact on consultation activities leading up to work on the ground. I would not wish to override the interests of local people in favour of speed.”

- 3.5 (a) **S B A Giles-Medhurst** asked the Executive Member for Environment:-

“Since the start of operations of Hertfordshire Highways, how many sub-contractors’ contracts used by the partnership have been terminated?”

- (b) **D A Ashley** replied:-

“15 sub-contractors have been terminated, out of a total of about 80 showing our commitment to ensuring a quality service.”

- (c) **S B A Giles-Medhurst** then asked the following supplementary question:-

“Would the Executive Member agree that this is a sign of lack of control of sub contractors and the failure of Amey in particular to understand the needs of the clients and to ensure proper control of the works? What does he intend to do about it?”

- (d) **D A Ashley** replied:-

“No, not necessarily. We are continuing to work with the contractor and sub-contractors to ensure that arrangements are satisfactory.”

- 3.6 (a) **P V Goggins** asked the Executive Member for Environment:-

“The Executive Member will be aware of the failure of the County Council to fulfil its obligations in cutting highways grass verges in the Three Rivers/South West Herts area and that now some six

months into the year some highway verges and areas, the responsibility of the County Council, have still not been cut to the agreed level. Given this disgraceful state of affairs which has resulted in pavements being overrun with grass and its cuttings when cut, what action has the Executive Member taken to bring to account those that let this state of affairs occur and what measures is he taking to ensure regular cutting in future as well as action to rectify the damage done and to ensure this mess never occurs again?"

(b) D A Ashley replied:-

"I am aware that there have been difficulties with grass cutting in certain specific areas of the County. In part, this has been due to problems in correctly identifying boundaries between highway and non-highway grass cutting, particularly in areas taken over from the Districts.

I understand that, as a result of clarifying the relevant cutting areas, it became apparent that the quantity of grass needing to be cut was substantially greater than originally notified to the works team. These difficulties have now been resolved and additional resources acquired in order to meet the standards.

Regular contract monitoring will ensure service standards are achieved in future."

(c) P V Goggins then asked the following supplementary question:-

"Thank you for your answer. I am surprised that you say that there have been improvements and differences that have been resolved. A letter dated 8 July from the Leader of the Three Rivers District Council still talks of shambolic and haphazard service. Can the Executive Member explain the difference between the two statements?"

(d) D A Ashley replied:-

"I am aware of the letter from the Leader of the Three Rivers District Council. I will investigate the extent to which this refers to past performance rather than present circumstances. The County Council will not be satisfied until delivery is up to contractual requirements."

3.7 (a) A Oaten asked the Executive Member for Environment:-

"Given the answer provided by the Executive Member to my colleague County Councillor Giles-Medhurst at the April meeting on the transfer of Highways Agency roads to the County and in particular as regards the A405 and the junction with the

St Albans Road, I would be grateful to know what action the Executive Member has taken to progress the need for a safe crossing at this junction. The Executive Member promised to follow this up but officers have been unable to provide myself or my colleague with any answers as to when the works left unfinished by the Agency since last November, will now be completed. Given this, what urgent action is the Executive Member taking to resolve this safety issue and when can residents expect to see this crossing point opened?"

(b) D A Ashley replied:-

"My understanding is that officers have notified County Councillor Giles-Medurst that despite our attempts we were unsuccessful in getting the Highways Agency to finalise the crossing at A405/St Albans Road prior to the transfer of the road to the County Council in May. We have however obtained the relevant Safety Audit report together with funding to rectify the problem.

The situation is that the original installation by the Highways Agency provided a 2.5 minute red phase which is excessively long and resulted in cars jumping the light and potentially putting pedestrians at risk.

The member will appreciate that solving this is not particularly straightforward and it was not work that we were planning to do. Any work here will affect planned activity elsewhere. Nevertheless we are currently investigating in order to find a phasing sequence that will work safely, and will then complete the installation with the appropriate software and any associated site modifications as soon as possible."

(c) A Oaten then asked the following supplementary question:-

"In thanking the Executive Member for this answer would he agree with me that the Highways Agency has acted disgracefully in this matter in leaving the works unfinished and in an unsafe condition, and will he agree to write to the Minister for the Environment accordingly?"

(d) D A Ashley replied:-

"I will consider it."

3.8 (a) S B A Giles-Medhurst asked the Executive Member for Environment:-

"Will the Executive Member please assure members that there is a full audit trail with supporting documents justifying the use of and release of Section 106 monies?"

(b) D A Ashley replied:-

“The processes and procedures used within the Environment Department to justify the use of and release of Section 106 monies are the subject of regular review by internal audit in order to provide the assurance the member is looking for. At the March meeting of Environment Scrutiny this topic was reviewed and a further audit commissioned. The findings of this audit and recommendations for any necessary improvements to the existing procedures will be reported to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee in October.”

(c) S B A Giles-Medhurst then asked the following supplementary question:-

“Given that an unscheduled audit of two section 106’s is now taking place at mine and another member’s request and will identify the decision making and authorisation process, will he agree that it is most unsatisfactory that members have had to chase for over six months for full details of such information?”

(d) D A Ashley replied:-

“I am aware that members at both County and District level are constantly looking for ways of improving the S106 process.”

3.9 (a) D T F Scudder asked the Executive Member for Children, Schools and Families:-

“If the proposal for the closure of Leavesden Green School and the amalgamation of Alban Wood Schools proceeds what is the medium term staff cost savings per year and what is the expected capital receipt from the disposal of the then surplus land for housing?”

(b) R I N Gordon replied:-

“Members will appreciate that no member decision has been taken on the future of Leavesden Green JMI and the Alban Wood Schools and that the consultation continues.”

In terms of potential revenue implications, schools are funded partly as institutions and mainly according to the number of pupils. Any reorganisation will not affect the number of pupils – although demographic profiling suggests these will continue to fall. Officers estimate that the annual revenue savings from the two re-organisation proposals will be approximately £165,000.

That said, the proposals – and any member decisions – will be based substantially on educational factors, not financial ones. In terms of capital, should decisions be made in due course

which render any part of the current sites surplus to requirements, the Council will follow its standing procedures regarding possible re-use or sale. In the event of sale, the estimated values become commercially sensitive and it would be inappropriate to discuss them in Part I. I am sure officers will offer Mr Scudder a confidential briefing if this would be helpful.”

- (c) **D T F Scudder** then asked the following supplementary question:-

“At both recent consultation meetings it was said that financial concerns were not paramount. In the Consultation document's preamble it says that the proposed closure is driven by financial viability. Can the Executive Member explain this contradiction?”

- (d) **R I N Gordon** replied:-

“I reiterate that no member decision has yet been taken. There are two aspects here – educational and financial viability. The proposals are not driven by the financial effect for the authority, but it is important that we ensure that any school is educationally viable. That can also be influenced by its financial situation. A school designed structurally for 60 students in each year group, but which has less than 30, will inevitably encounter financial difficulties. That in turn can impact on educational issues.”

- 3.10 (a) **S B A Giles-Medhurst** asked the Executive Member for Environment:-

“Could the Executive Member please comment on the current performance of 24 Seven (which has recently been re-named EDF) and whether there has been any significant improvement in their repairs to street lights in Hertfordshire and what action the Executive Member and officers have taken to ensure any improved performance is maintained, and what further measures will they take if there has not been a significant improvement?”

- (b) **D A Ashley** replied:-

“Since March 2003 there has been a significant improvement in 24 Seven's (now EDF Energy) performance in dealing with reported faults and new connections. The backlog has largely been dealt with and current forecasts indicate that at the present rate of progress reported faults will be repaired within 10 working days (in line with 24 Seven's own Charter) by August 2003.

Officers of Hertfordshire Highways meet with senior management representatives of 24 Seven on a regular basis and this will continue with EDF Energy. These meetings have

proved useful in focussing attention on aspects of poor performance and have resulted in improved communications between the parties. It is expected that the current improvement in performance will continue and that their new ownership will provide an added incentive. If this is not the case the matter will be taken up at the highest level within EDF Energy.”

- (c) S B A Giles-Medhurst** then asked the following supplementary question:-

“Clearly there has not been a significant improvement in the performance. Will the Executive Member not agree that this is indeed the case when the Watford Highways Panel was told last night that EDF is still only currently meeting 50% of its agreed target. Surely this is a disgrace, especially when residents have had to wait since last December for street lights to be fixed. So what further pressure is to be applied?”

- (d) D A Ashley** replied:-

“I am open to suggestions. Pressure will be kept up and I look to members for their support in doing this.

Members have been sent copies of correspondence between the Leader of the Council and the new Managing Director of EDF clearly indicating our displeasure at current levels of performance.”

- 3.11 (a) N E Agar** asked the Executive Member for Children, Schools and Families:-

“In view of the obvious distress of the neighbours – is the Executive Member satisfied that the appropriate children are being sent to Wilbury Road Children’s Home in Letchworth?”

- (b) R I N Gordon** replied:-

“The nature of the needs of young people placed in children’s homes makes it likely that they will exhibit a range of emotional and behavioural difficulties. Careful consideration is given when making placements and staff are trained to divert young people from disruptive behaviour wherever possible.

I am aware that there has been a number of incidents arising from Wilbury Children’s Home and understand the impact on neighbouring residents is unacceptable.

A range of strategies has been put in place to ameliorate the situation. These also include a tight behaviour management programme designed to break the recent cycle of unacceptable behaviour. The situation has calmed significantly over the last week.

Senior officers, managers and staff remain in frequent contact with neighbouring residents. I have asked officers to ensure that local members are kept advised of developments.

(c) N E Agar then asked the following supplementary question:-

“When will the County Council establish a proper assessment centre with psychiatric support in the County to identify and treat these children before they get sent to children’s homes?”

(d) R I N Gordon replied:-

“I do not think that Dr Agar’s solution is necessarily the best way forward. We need to accommodate these children in the community and will continue to work closely with neighbours should problems arise.”

3.12 (a) N E Agar asked the Executive Member for Environment:-

“Is the decision to override the advice of English Nature to establish Heathland as opposed to agricultural land at the restoration of Coursers Road by relying exclusively on the advice of ODPM/MPG7 paragraph 13 justified when paragraphs 14 and 19 in the same MPG both authorise and indeed advocate the establishment of environmentally desirable objectives?”

(b) D A Ashley replied:-

“English Nature seek a reappraisal of the options for restoration for the proposed preferred area at Coursers Road with heathland included as an option. The advice from Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre is that it would not be desirable, and possibly not achievable - it would take a long period of time for the soils to become sufficiently poor to support heathland and may not be successful even then. HBRC consider that the restoration to arable farmland with additional new hedges, tree planting and permanent grass field margins would have the potential to increase biodiversity on the site, particularly with regard to bats and declining farmland birds. The Planning Brief for Coursers Road will reflect this and take the opportunity to promote the creation of suitable farmland habitats for tree sparrows.”

3.13 (a) N E Agar asked the Executive Member for Environment:-

“I understand the process of selecting members of the public to serve on the Herts Local Access Panel has now been completed. How many members of the public applied? How many were appointed and how many rejected? And what criteria were used to make the decision in each case? What arrangements have been made for inducting the successful candidates and where and when will the event take place?”

(b) D A Ashley replied:-

“The process will be completed tonight in Hatfield when I meet the Local Access Forum members and confirm their nominations.

We received 37 applications, shortlisted 17 of which 14 attended for interview on 17 June. We offered places to 10 people. With the addition of County Councillor Mary Bayes nominated by the previous Executive Member for Environment and a district councillor nominated by the Hertfordshire Local Government Association, the LAF will be 12-strong. Our recruitment and selection criteria were based upon the Government's official guidance published on 26 July 2002. Crucially, this guidance interprets the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002 which flow from the Countryside and Rights of Way Act and explains that the statutory, independent LAFs must reflect a balance of interests in the appointing authorities' area.

Arrangements are in hand to induct and train the LAF members over the summer. This will involve introductions to topics such as access legislation, sustainable transport and meetings management.”

4. QUESTIONS: HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY – STANDING ORDER 7 (6)

None were notified.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS – STANDING ORDER 7 (10)

None were notified.

6. PUBLIC PETITIONS – STANDING ORDER 14

The following members of the public presented petitions, and each addressed the Council for three minutes:-

- Mrs Doreen Coburn from Hemel Hempstead requesting the County Council to maintain part of Mountfield Road, Hemel Hempstead.
- Mrs Karen Conlon from Hemel Hempstead requesting road calming measures in Cattsdell, Hemel Hempstead.
- Mr David Babb, Chairman of the Leavesden Green Action Committee, opposing the proposed closure of Leavesden Green JMI School.

The petitions stood referred to officers for consideration and report to local members and group spokesmen.

Reports from the Cabinet – 23 June 2003

7. LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

The Council also received a supplementary report (item 7A) from the Director of Environment.

7.1 The following motion proposed by **D A Ashley**, and duly seconded, was CARRIED:-

“(1) “That the Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Report, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report (and in the additional officer report) be approved for submission to the Department for Transport by 31 July 2003 including:

(a) A new policy on Rural Transport

(b) A supplementary bid of £1.15 million to cover works on the existing A10 following completion of the Wadesmill Bypass.

(2) That the Director of Environment in consultation with the Executive Member be authorised to finalise the document.”

8. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF AIR TRANSPORT IN THE SOUTH-EAST COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

8.1 The following motion was proposed by **D A Ashley**, and duly seconded:-

“That the County Council:

(a) fully endorses its initial response to the consultation made in December 2002 and accepts the attached report together with the comments of the Structure Plan and Regional Planning Panel and the Environment Scrutiny Committee as the basis for a second response to the Department for Transport.

(b) expresses its concerns that the proposals for airport growth in the South East would have an extremely detrimental impact on the County.

(c) strongly endorses the view that demand management should form the basis of any long-term aviation policy.

- (d) *considers that if, following consideration of the issues raised by the County Council and others, further runway capacity is required in the south east, it should be provided at a new off-shore estuarial site where noise implications can be minimised whilst allowing 24 hour operations.*
- (e) *asks the Department for Transport to review the alternative proposals for such a site taking full account of the positive benefits they offer, particularly in terms of noise and the impact for economic regeneration.*
- (f) *considers any decision on the siting of new airport capacity should only be made following a full sustainability appraisal of options and when the necessary support and infrastructure works have been fully identified, and the viability and feasibility of their provision within the timescale of the development assured.*
- (g) *considers that expansion of airport capacity needs to be considered in a national context and taking particular account of the regional regeneration opportunities that may exist.*
- (h) *continues to pursue a campaign beyond the close of the consultation period to ensure that Hertfordshire's case is maximised in future determination of aviation policy.*
- (i) *authorises the Director of Environment, in consultation with the Executive Member, to finalise the County Council's response and submit it to the Department for Transport.*
- (j) *does not accept the case for a new hub airport in the south east."*

8.2

The following amendment proposed by **C J White**, and duly seconded, was ACCEPTED by the proposer and seconder of the motion at 8.1:-

"Add a new item (c)(i):-

'considers that increased use could be made of high speed rail links to substitute for short haul flights and asks the Department of Transport to review the capacity of the rail network in order to increase its capacity and improve its efficiency and attractiveness as an alternative to air travel'."

- 8.3** The following amendment to 8.1 (d), proposed by **C J White**, and duly seconded, was ACCEPTED by the proposer and seconder of the motion at 8.1:-

“Amend (d) to read:-

‘considers that, if following consideration of the issues raised by the County Council and others, further runway capacity is required in the South-East, further assessment should be made of off-shore sites, including estuarial sites where noise implications can be minimised, whilst allowing 24-hour operations’.”

- 8.4** The motions at 8.1 were then CARRIED, as amended by minutes 8.2 and 8.3.

9. REPORT OF THE ADULT CARE AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12 JUNE 2003

(Presented by R Mills, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee)

“Investing in your Health” – Consultation Paper Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority

The Chairman allowed debate on the following motion, notice of which was not able to be given under Standing Order 8 (3):-

- 9.1** The following motion proposed by **R Mills**, and duly seconded, was CARRIED:-

“That, in the event that the County Council is directed so to do by the Secretary of State for Health:

- (a) a Joint Committee be formed with the other specified health scrutiny committees to discharge the function of scrutiny of the consultation paper ‘Mount Vernon Hospital: the future of services for cancer patients’ issued by the Brent, Harrow, and Hillingdon PCTs and North West London Strategic Health Authority.*
- (b) in anticipation that the Joint Committee will comprise two representatives of each health scrutiny committee, R Mills (Chairman), and K J Coleman (Vice-Chairman) be appointed from the County Council’s Adult Care and Health Scrutiny Committee.*
- (c) the County Secretary be authorised to agree the detailed arrangements in consultation with the Group Spokesmen on the Adult Care and Health Scrutiny Committee.”*

9.2 The report of the Adult Care and Health Scrutiny Committee dated 12 June 2003 was received.

10. **REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17 JUNE 2003**

(Presented by C J White, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee)

The report of the Environment Scrutiny Committee dated 17 June 2003 was received.

11. **REPORT OF THE CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18 JUNE 2003**

(Presented by T G M Kent, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee)

Proposals by West Herts College to discontinue certain provision on the College's Dacorum Campus

The Chairman of the Topic Group referred to in the report, **R H Smith**, presented an oral report on the outcome of the meeting of the Topic Group which had been held on 11 July.

The Chairman then allowed debate on the following motion, notice of which was not able to be given under Standing Order 8 (3).

11.1 The following motion was proposed by **D E Lloyd**, and duly seconded:-

"This Council is concerned at the withdrawal of provision for 16-19 year olds from the Dacorum Campus of West Herts College as well as the curtailment of some Adult Learning courses.

However this Council is encouraged by the positive commitment of both the Learning and Skills Council and West Herts College to its Topic Group and have as common goals:

closer consortium working for 14-19 educational provision in the West Herts area;

an on-campus drop-in centre for 14-19 year olds;

systematic planning to determine adult learners' needs in the local area;

more entry to employment and vocational training."

- 11.2** The following amendment proposed by **T G M Kent**, and duly seconded, was ACCEPTED by the proposer and seconder of the motion at 11.1:-

“That the last line ‘more entry to employment and vocational training’ be replaced by ‘to provide sufficient accessible places for vocational training’.”

- 11.3** The motion at 11.1 was then CARRIED, as amended by 11.2.

- 11.4** The Report of the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee dated 18 June 2003 was received.

12. REPORT OF THE RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19 JUNE 2003

(Presented by I H Laidlaw-Dickson, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee)

Public Involvement in the Democratic Process

- 12.1** The following motion proposed by **I H Laidlaw-Dickson**, and duly seconded, was LOST:-

“That the County Council notes the effectiveness of all postal vote elections in increasing the turnout of electors, and therefore resolves to apply to the relevant authorities for the next election for the County Council in 2005 to be on the basis of postal voting.”

- 12.2** The following was motion proposed by **I H Laidlaw-Dickson**, and duly seconded:-

“That the Cabinet be urged to arrange for direct public involvement with its meetings by allowing questions to be put to Cabinet members from members of the public and to allow the presentation of petitions on the basis of the current constitution for Council and Scrutiny Committees.”

- 12.3** The following amendment to 12.2 was accepted by the proposer and seconder of the motion at 12.2:-

“Amend 12.2 to read:

‘That the Cabinet be requested to consider allowing questions to be put at Cabinet meetings by members of the Council and for members of the public to be able to present petitions or ask questions’.”

12.4 The following amendment to 12.2 (as amended at 12.3) proposed by **D Beatty**, and duly seconded, was then CARRIED:-

“Amend 12.2 (as amended at 12.3) to read:-

‘That the Cabinet be requested to consider allowing questions to be put at Cabinet meetings by members of the Council and members of the public’.”

12.5 The substantive motion (wording as at 12.4) was then CARRIED.

12.6 The following motion was proposed by **I H Laidlaw-Dickson**, and duly seconded:-

“That the Council investigates web casting of its meetings in order to determine the costs and practicalities of such an exercise.”

12.7 The following amendment to the motion at 12.6 proposed by **D Beatty**, and duly seconded, was then CARRIED:-

“Amend 12.6 to read:

‘That the Council investigates web casting of its meetings in order to determine the costs and practicalities of such an exercise, and that the outcome of this investigation be reported to the Council via the Cabinet’.”

12.8 The substantive motion (wording as at 12.7) was then CARRIED.

12.9 The Report of the Resources Scrutiny Committee dated 19 June 2003 was received.

13. KEY DECISIONS/FORWARD PLAN

The following motion proposed by **D Beatty**, and duly seconded, was CARRIED:-

“That the position of Key Decisions in the decision-making process, shown in the current edition of the Forward Plan, be noted.”

14. MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCES

The following motion proposed by **D Beatty**, and duly seconded, was CARRIED:-

“(1) That the report of the Independent Panel be received and that their recommendations (paragraphs 14 to 18) be adopted.

- (2) *That the Members Allowances Scheme, to run from 1 August 2003 to 31 March 2004, as circulated with the agenda, be approved."*

15. MEMBERSHIP OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The following motion proposed by **D Beatty**, and duly seconded, was CARRIED:-

- "(1) That Philip Aylett, Roger Fletcher and Susan Poole be appointed to serve as Independent Members of the Standards Committee until May 2005.*
- (2) That the County Council review these appointments (along with that of existing member David Sands) again at their Annual Meeting in May 2005, with an option at that time to reappoint members for a further period without recourse to further public advertisement."*

Item of Business Requested by Members under Standing Order 6 (2) (1)

16. PROPOSED CHANGE TO STANDING ORDER 6

The following motion proposed by **D Beatty**, and duly seconded, was CARRIED:-

"That Council Standing Order 6 be changed as follows, with immediate effect:-

That (f) be amended to read:

'to deal with questions from the public and questions to the Hertfordshire Police Authority asked under Standing Order 7'

Add new (o) to read:

'to deal with questions to the Leader and Executive Members asked under Standing Order 7'."

17. NOTICES OF MOTION – STANDING ORDER 8 (5)

None were notified.

ANDREW LAYCOCK
County Secretary