

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of an Extraordinary meeting of the County Council held at County Hall, Hertford, on Monday 13 September 2004.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

T I Ambrose	K F Emsall (Chairman)	D B Lloyd	R J Smith
D A Ashley	B C Engel	D E Lloyd	W A Storey
S A Batson	G D Game	R Mays	I E M Tarry
M V Bayes	J Gipps	D R McManus	J Taunton
D Beatty	P V Goggins	J R Morton	J W A Usher
D E Billing	R I N Gordon	S M P Newton	P A Webb
N K Brook	A K Gray	M H O'Neill	C J White
P T J Channell	M Green	D A A Peek	B A York
E M Clarke	F Guest	J M Pitman	
F W Clayton	B N W Hammond	S Quilty	
R S Clements	D W Hills	R Roberts	
M D Colne	J A Hobday	P A Ruffles	
G M Cook	M H T Janes	D T F Scudder	
R N Copping	S E Jones	A M R Searing	
M Downing	T G M Kent	I Simpson	
D J Drake	B J Lamb	E N Singam	
R J M Ellis	A Lee	R H Smith	

Upon consideration of the agenda for the Extraordinary meeting of the County Council held on 13 September 2004, as circulated, action was taken or decisions were reached as follows:-

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 20 July 2004 were confirmed.

2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported receipt of apologies from N E Agar, K M Crout, I H Laidlaw-Dickson, J T Metcalf, A Oaten, R Sanderson and H M Saunders.

**3. EAST OF ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY (EERA)
REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE/REGIONAL SPATIAL
STRATEGY (RPG/RSS14) FOR THE EAST OF ENGLAND -
RESPONSE TO EAST OF ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
'REQUEST FOR ADVICE'**

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

"That the Council strongly endorses the following Cabinet decisions taken on 13 September 2004:-

'That

- 1. the resolution of the Joint Member Panel attached as an Appendix be noted and welcomed.*
- 2. the recommendations of the Structure Plan and Regional Planning Issues Panel attached as an Appendix be welcomed and adopted.*
- 3. the contents of the report from the Director of Environment be agreed as the basis for the County Council's response to EERA's request for advice, and that the Director of Environment be given authority to prepare the final submission to EERA in consultation with the Executive Member.*
- 4. in response to the request for advice from EERA, the County Council reaffirms its commitment to defending the greenfields of Hertfordshire from development, and rejects the proposals in the emerging RSS which call for unjustifiably high levels of greenfield development in the County.*
- 5. the County Council calls upon EERA to support policies which focus on enhancing the quality of our existing settlements and countryside, and making maximum use of the sustainable potential of our towns.*
- 6. the County Council also calls upon EERA to address the issue of affordable and key worker housing in a sustainable way which results in a balanced provision of opportunity, rather than a concentration on large scale greenfield developments.*
- 7. the current infrastructure deficit of the County be explicitly recognised in the RSS and policies for new development be based on phasing new development to be dependent on the achievement of adequate social, economic, environmental and transportation infrastructure provision.*

8. *the County Council expresses its disappointment that local residents and businesses have so far been excluded from the debate about the future of the County.*
9. *the County Council undertakes an information and awareness campaign to:*
 - *enable a wider understanding of the proposals and implications of the emerging RSS*
 - *encourage maximum participation in the formal consultation process.*
 - *advise on the County Council's position.*
10. *the necessary resources to fund such a campaign be made available'."*

3.2

The following motion proposed by **B A York** and duly seconded, was CARRIED:-

"That the Director of Environment be requested to consult the Opposition Spokesmen on the submission to EERA (in addition to the Executive Member) and to make the following points in that submission, on behalf of the Council:

- (a) *that it be as positive and constructive as possible to avoid further delay in drafting RSS14 for public consultation;*
- (b) *that it be recognised that with the average price of a semi-detached house in Hertfordshire now £238,000, there is an urgent need for a higher proportion of affordable housing in the county and that the County Council pledges to work with EERA to achieve this;*
- (c) *that most additional homes in Hertfordshire during the Plan period should be within existing settlements, whilst recognising the integrity of green spaces within communities;*
- (d) *that the link between economic sustainability and housing requirement be recognised;*
- (e) *that, given the long lead-in time required, EERA be urged to explore now the feasibility of a major new settlement elsewhere in the Region;*
- (f) *that if Harlow expands to the north, i.e. principally in Hertfordshire, a compensating reduction in the Hertfordshire total of housing numbers be made."*

3.3 The following motion proposed by **B A York** and duly seconded was LOST:-

“That the County Council believes that the Conservative Cabinet has been negligent in not developing a spatial strategy for the future in Hertfordshire.”

3.4 The following motion proposed by **C J White** and duly seconded was CARRIED:-

“That when making the submission to EERA the Director of Environment takes on board the following suggestions in relation to the Cabinet decisions (set out at 3.1 above):-

- (a) That on decision 3 ‘the final submission to EERA’ read ‘an interim submission to EERA’.*
- (b) That a new 6 be added (with corresponding re-numbering) as follows:-*

‘Council rejects the imposition by the ODPM’s office of an arbitrary addition of 18,000 homes to the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough Growth Corridor housing numbers’

- (c) That in new 7 (old 6) all words after ‘sustainable way’ be deleted and replaced with:*

‘and calls upon EERA to make clear that Government funding should be provided to meet the high targets of affordable housing set within the RSS’.

(new 7 would therefore read:

‘ the County Council also calls upon EERA to address the issue of affordable key worker housing in a sustainable way and calls upon EERA to make clear that Government funding should be provided to meet the high targets of affordable housing set within the RSS’.)

3.5 The following motion proposed by **C J White** and duly seconded was LOST:-

“That when making the submission to EERA the Director of Environment takes on board the following suggestions in relation to the Cabinet decisions (set out at 3.1 above):-

(a) *Delete 4 and add new 4:*

'Council requests that the Administration:

- (i) develop a Hertfordshire view of the number of houses required in the county by 2021, taking into account the general needs of the Region and the ability of the county to absorb the numbers without significant reduction in the quality of life;*
 - (ii) develop a spatial strategy for the county to identify the most sustainable location for any genuinely unavoidable green belt development'.*
- (b) *Amend 7 to add at end 'and develop a new comprehensive list of infrastructure schemes necessary to achieve the above'.*
- (c) *Add additional resolution: ' Council calls upon EERA to allow the Council a period of three months in which to produce robust advice on the figures and strategy detailed above'.*

4. KEY DECISIONS / FORWARD PLAN

The following motion proposed by **R J M Ellis** 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."

ANDREW LAYCOCK
County Secretary

JOINT MEMBER PANEL ON REGIONAL PLANNING ISSUES

Resolution

In its request for advice from HCC, one of the S4(4) authorities, The Hertfordshire Local Authorities consider that the timescale, process and project brief set out by EERA in its request for advice from Section 4(4) authorities is flawed and unreasonable.

It does not allow for proper consultation between the County Council and the District Councils, and other stakeholders, and does not provide time for the necessary technical work to be undertaken to provide an informed input to the development of RPG 14.

The Hertfordshire Authorities urge that more time be given to Section 4(4) authorities and that no decisions be made by EERA until time has been given for a properly informed and considered response based upon an assessment of the final EERA Studies, and any further technical work to be undertaken by the Hertfordshire authorities.”

Structure Plan and Regional Issues Panel

7 September 2004

Recommendations to Cabinet

The Panel supports the Joint Members Panel resolution in seeking more time to undertake the task of submitting a response to EERA's request for Advice.

It recognises that EERA's request for Advice is unreasonable, there is limited time available, the underlying information is complex and that certain studies are still not complete. However, HCC should respond and in doing so, set out its response to the topics that are important within Hertfordshire.

The Panel considers that, as far as possible, there should be an opportunity to seek broad agreement on the final response made by HCC to EERA.

The Panel notes the figures for housing within Hertfordshire in the Hertfordshire Study and the ODPM Corridor study, but has concerns about the approaches adopted and the difficulties in reconciling their conclusions.

HCC, in recognising the pressures on Hertfordshire, should continue to defend the greenfields of Hertfordshire.

EERA should recognise the infrastructure deficit that exists within Hertfordshire. Any new development should be dependent upon achieving adequate infrastructure investment.

The Panel is concerned about the lack of consultation by EERA, the complexity of the information supporting RSS14 and EERA's inconsistent approach to providing access to information.

The Panel is concerned that insufficient attention has been paid to the feasibility of a new settlement and considers that there is a need for early consideration of a new settlement in the context of the future needs of the region

The Panel recognises that there is a need to regenerate towns and to provide for housing for the people of the region. It considers that the links between the economy, jobs and additional dwellings have been considered inconsistently across the region. EERA should seek to achieve urban regeneration through a balanced provision of opportunity rather than concentrating on urban extension through large scale greenfield development.

The above recommendations were supported by the Panel with the exception of Councillors R J Smith and B A York who wished to record their abstention.