

## **COUNCIL**

**Date and Time:** Thursday, 29 October 2015 at 7.00 pm

**Place:** Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Fleet

**Present:**

## **COUNCILLORS –**

Oliver - (Chairman)

Ambler	Crookes	Neighbour
Axam	Dickens	Parker
Blewett	Forster S	Radley JE
Burchfield	Gorys	Radley JR
Butler	Harward	Renshaw
Clarke	Kennett	Southern
Cockarill	Lewis	Wheale
Collett	Makepeace-Browne (from 7.35pm)	
Crisp	Morris	

Officers Present:

Patricia Hughes	Joint Chief Executive
Daryl Phillips	Joint Chief Executive
Gill Chapman	Committee Services

### **45 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2015 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **46 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bailey, Billings, Gray, Kinnell and Woods.

### **47 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made.

### **48 PRESENTATION - EVERYONE ACTIVE**

Mark Leahy of Everyone Active gave a presentation introducing Everyone Active, its ethos and values, and its plans for the future of Hart and Frogmore Leisure Centres.

Members consideration included environmental awareness, plans for increased participation, disabled users, the community development manager function, working

with and encouraging local clubs, use of social media in marketing and the proposed refurbishment of Frogmore Leisure Centre.

Members thanked Mark for his informative presentation.

#### **49 COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12 – QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC**

Questions had been received from Mr David Turver, details of which are set out in Appendix 1 attached to these Minutes.

#### **50 COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 14 – QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS**

A question had been received from Councillor Cockarill details of which are set out in Appendix 2 attached to these minutes.

#### **51 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman had attended the following events on behalf of the Council.

25 September	Hook Tandoori buffet lunch Presentation by Ranil Jayawardena MP to Hook Junior School
27 September	Mayor of Surrey Heath Civic Service at Frimley Green
11 October	Freemason's Thanksgiving service at Winchester Cathedral
13 October	Edenbrook Leisure Centre Ground Breaking Ceremony
13 October	Fleet Fashion Show, Harlington Centre, Fleet
16 October	Hook Community Centre Opening
24 October	Pelly Concert Orchestra at Church on the Heath, Elvetham Heath
25 October	Bracknell Forest Civic Service, Easthampstead
25 October	HCC Agincourt 600 <sup>th</sup> Commemoration, Winchester
27 October	Topping out ceremony at Keble Court, Church Crookham

The Vice Chairman had attended the following events on behalf of the Council.

4 October	Mayor Test Valley Civic Service, Andover,
6 October	New Forest Civic Day, Lyndhurst
11 October	High Sheriff of Hampshire & Mayor of Winchester – Annual Law Sunday Service at Winchester Cathedral

The Chairman added the following announcements:

Firstly, in support of my nominated Charity Hart Foodbank I will be holding a fund raising meal on Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> November at WE The Restaurant. I hope all members have seen the details sent out earlier this week through email. I would hope that members would encourage groups and individuals they work and liaise with to support this local charity. If you would like posters to advertise in your local wards then Sally would be happy to supply.

Secondly, I have become aware of the disquiet felt by many members from all political groups about the Planning pronouncements from our MP Ranil Jayawardena. In particular, the assertion that Hart has enough Brownfield sites to build all its housing needs without the need to disturb any significant Greenfield sites outside

current settlement boundaries. This is in direct contradiction to the advice we as a council have been given by officers, consultants and members on the Local Plan Steering Group.

In my role as Chairman I have had the pleasure of talking to Ranil on this issue whilst undertaking other civic duties. I therefore took the opportunity to invite him to a private meeting with this Council to explore why such disparate views have come about. His current position is that he would welcome such a meeting. My invitation was made to ensure no misunderstandings remain unchallenged between us as having a fully engaged, briefed and passionate advocate for Hart in Westminster is important for this Council.

I will be working with the Council Leader and Rail's office to agree a date that will fit in with his Parliamentary responsibilities. It is therefore likely that the timing of such a meeting will not be a midweek evening so I apologise to working members in advance.

## 52 CABINET MEMBERS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council, **Councillor Parker**, announced:

Devolution - Some members will have seen Councillor Roy Perry's speech to the Conservative Party Conference earlier this month, and his invitation to speak is an indication of the strength of the Hampshire bid, confirmed by other LGA and ministerial contacts. The challenge session which was due to be held between Hampshire representatives and the Secretary of State at DCLG had to be postponed, and it has become clear that it will not be complete in time for the Autumn Statement. This is not a bad thing as we will be able to refine our case. Next week the Joint Chief Executive and I will be attending the Hampshire Partnership meeting, at which all of this will be discussed further.

Planning - Members will be aware that a Housing Options paper is under preparation. This follows from the decision of Council last November to test a preferred strategy. The time is right to present the results of this testing to our residents for their review. A non-statutory consultation is being prepared which will outline the outputs to date, provide the non-negotiable development details and invite comments on the principal options for the remaining required development. The paper will be made available to all members in advance of the Local Plan Steering Group on 10<sup>th</sup> November, and will be considered at a special Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> November with a view to getting the consultation out before the end of November. Speed is of the essence, as we need to have results back as soon as expedient. It is however more important that we get this right, and I will value members assistance with ensuring that we do not trigger unintended sensitivities with wording.

The Joint Chief Executive and I met this week with our opposite numbers at Rushmoor Borough Council to discuss issues around Duty to Cooperate, particularly with respect to delivery of housing numbers. We agreed that Rushmoor, in addition to seeking additional opportunities for housing delivery, will examine their housing delivery trajectory to consider whether any shortfall against their OAHN can be mitigated.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, **Councillor Burchfield**, reported:

As Members are fully aware, we are in the latter stages of the 5 Council procurement project. The final decision will be taken in December and be announced to full Council in January. However, one change has been made - due to the current procurement partnership with Havant and East Hants, East Hants will now be the sixth council to join our project. This will give us even better cost efficiencies, although the final numbers will be known in December.

The Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing, **Councillor Crampton**, had no announcements.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, **Councillor Crookes**, had no announcements.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, **Councillor Forster**, reported:

I have two announcements. First the met office have warned that this is forecast to be a mild winter but there is likely to be a severe cold snap for a couple of weeks some time in December or January. The Council is already undertaking its winter programme of leaf clearing, and has a cold weather plan in place which means that we are properly prepared, if the forecast is correct.

Secondly I am aware that there are many migrants in Calais, who are ill prepared for a harsh winter, thanks to the highlighting of this issue by Transition Fleet. I'd like to urge residents to recycle more, and in particular winter shoes and boots, and clothes, and consider donating them for migrants to use. This can be done through Churches Together and other local organisations and clothes banks.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, **Councillor Gorys**, had no announcements.

The Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services, **Councillor Kennett**, had no announcements.

The Cabinet Member for Town and Village Regeneration, **Councillor Morris**, reported:

Proposed changes to Fleet car park charges have been initiated and with the help of the Task and Finish Group and FTC. A banding option previously agreed by Cabinet with amendments is planned to be implemented in January 2016 once the statutory public consultation is completed and an appropriate traffic order is approved. So that the transition to a new charging scheme runs smoothly, Mr Geoff Hislop and myself will be attending Fleet Futures Open Day this Saturday coming where we have a car parking management information stand to explain to the public the new proposed changes. An information board will also be on display explaining why the Church Road barrier system and this car parks refurbishment has been put on hold due to possible outsourcing. Nevertheless, irrespective whether we outsource car parks management or not I have put in place minor works for the toilet blocks in both Church road and Victoria Road as they have fallen into disrepair and are very unsightly to the public.

Regeneration work in Blackwater is ongoing and I'm also very pleased to report the very encouraging support from the retailers along the A30 for the new Retail Association. Elvetham Heath amenity space projects detailed in my last council statement are progressing well and a local Elvetham Heath food store has been approached to encourage them to fund 2 benches to be sited in an amenity space. I have recently had meetings with Odiham and Mattingley Parish Councils and with their assistance I'm reviewing several action plans to uplift areas within their parishes. On 30<sup>th</sup> November I'm attending Yateley's Town Council meeting to explain to them the help I can offer in the form of regeneration.

On 13<sup>th</sup> October I attended the District Association of Parish and Town Councils and gave a presentation of the Regeneration work currently in progress across the district and explained ways in which I could help other Parishes and Towns. This primarily was to show Councils that I hadn't already visited, the help and support I could offer and to understand their regeneration issues.

On 4<sup>th</sup> November I will be attending the Military Covenant Conference in London with the intention of formalising an initiative to bring forward fair mobile roaming charges for those military personnel serving outside of Europe. By 2017 the vast majority of European countries will have in place the same roaming charges when calling countries within Europe and it is my intention that those military service personnel servicing their country outside Europe will have the same fair roaming charges.

It is essential for military personnel to be able to contact their loved ones as this maintains morale for both those servicing abroad and their families left at home. By making this service cheaper would go some way for more frequent phone calls. Obviously those personnel on active service would be excluded from this initiative so not to jeopardise security. To further this initiative our Member of Parliament Ranil J Jayawardena has organised a meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> December with senior managers of all the top mobile phone companies so that we can discuss this initiative further.

I'm pleased to announce on 16<sup>th</sup> October Councillor Burchfield and myself attended the official opening of Hook's refurbished Community Centre where MP Ranil Jayawardena and Hart's Chairman Councillor Alan Oliver officiated. I wish to congratulate Hook Parish Council for the very professional and efficient planning of what is now a superb community facility.

Finally Chairman, I wish to thank those Councillors and officers who attended the recent Walking The Wounded event where injured ex military personnel walked through Hook as part of a 72 day 1000 mile walk. There were over 1000 people who attended in the centre of Hook and all in Hart can be proud of their support for these brave people.

## **53 JOINT CHIEF EXECUTIVES' REPORT**

The Joint Chief Executive confirmed to members that he was now the Planning Lead on the District Councils Network and that he and the Leader would be leading on a national conference on planning matters in Birmingham on 28 November. The

conference was an opportunity to influence the government's panel which is being set to review how to speed up the adoption of local plans.

The work on the new reception area is progressing well, and a welcome refresh to the entrance foyer. The lighting project has been a great success and as members can see there has been a vast improvement across the public areas of the building.

## **54 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b> No questions asked.	<b>15 September 2015</b>
<b>Audit Committee</b> No questions asked. Councillor Axam pointed out he had not attended and his apologies had been noted.	<b>23 September 2015</b>
<b>Cabinet</b> No questions asked.	<b>1 October 2015</b>
<b>Planning Committee</b> No questions asked.	<b>14 October 2015</b>

## **55 CHANGE TO THE CONSTITUTION**

Members considered the proposed changes to the Constitution. Members agreed that public question time was important, and the Council should be careful to show the openness and accountability of the Council.

*NB Para 25.1 of the Constitution states that 'Any motion to change the Constitution will, when proposed and seconded, be referred without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.' This item was proposed and seconded at the Council meeting of 24 September 2015.*

Members voted for the resolution unanimously.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Constitution be changed at Part 4.1, Section 12.2, as detailed in Appendix I to the Summons, to reflect that questions be asked and answered in rotation.

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm

## COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12

### QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

#### Questions received from Mr David Turver

- I. Do you agree with our local MP who says: “I believe unused and redundant commercial buildings should be brought forward for regeneration before any more greenfield sites are allocated anywhere in NE Hampshire. That includes Grove Farm, Hop Garden, Winchfield, the Urnfield...I’m against these developments – indeed, this sort of large-scale top-down volume-led development generally – as I do not believe they are necessary to deliver the housing we need in our area. Looking at Hart District specifically for a moment, as the largest part of the constituency, I believe that the local housing demand can be met on brownfield sites”?

**Response:**

*Putting to one side the matter that this is a quotation out of context, Mr. Jayawardena makes three points in this opinion statement. Firstly he says that brownfield should be used before greenfield; as a statement of principle I wholly agree, and always have. However, we are obliged to maintain a five year land supply. As fast as we approve fresh applications, previous consents are being built out; this is a moving target. Unless we can deliver brownfield site planning consents at the rate of that of our ongoing annual housing requirement we cannot deal with this sequentially. Given that we do not have deliverable and developable brownfield sites sufficient for our own Objectively Assessed Housing Needs (OAHN), we are obliged to allocate some sites other than brownfield to achieve the numbers required. Second, he is opposed to a number of specific sites, as am I. We are however compelled to allocate sites which we would prefer not in order to fulfil our OAHN. He states that he believes the OAHN can be met from brownfield sites; this is probably theoretically true, if we compel the use of unavailable sites including those in current active employment use. That is not available to us.*

2. What criteria would you use and how long would a brownfield site need to be vacant, with no sign of redevelopment before the council would consider using Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) to ensure that we can build modern apartments for young professionals who can’t otherwise buy a home in our area?

**Response:**

*CPO is not a cheap option. We would be obliged to pay market price for such land, plus the costs of acquisition, and this for a site where the owner has not perceived an opportunity to develop at a profit. It is simply unrealistic that Hart DC could undertake CPO on the scale necessary, and in the timeframes necessary, to persuade an Inspector that such a plan would be deliverable. The Council could not afford to do it.*

*Further, to produce tracts of apartments for young professionals would result in fundamentally unbalanced communities. We need communities which provide for all our residents, including families and older people. Young professional ghettos are not good planning.*

*In the event that a site would become appropriate for CPO, the site would be considered on its individual merits. You should be aware, however, that the seizure of the assets of others even paying full value is not something this council has seen as desirable, which is why it was not considered as an appropriate means of site assembly should a new settlement proceed.*

3. How many sites would meet those criteria and how many dwellings might they yield?

**Response:**

*A site would be considered on its merits at the time.*

4. Given that the baseline estimate of the number of households in Hart in 2011 and 2031 used in the SHMA was 35,760 and 42,220 respectively, but the new DCLG 2012-based household projections (Table 406) for 2031 show that Hart will have only 40,618 households, a reduction of 1,602, can you confirm that these revised figures will lead to a corresponding reduction in Hart's assessed housing need?

**Response:**

*A revision of the SHMA is currently under way and this document is part of the evidence base which will inform the assessment. I do not intend to anticipate the result of the assessment of this and other evidence.*

5. When will the 6,560 excess housing requirement for the whole HMA be removed from the assessed need in the SHMA given that the new DCLG 2012-based population projections (Table 426) show a population projection of only 289K for the HMA for 2031, compared to the SHMA (Appendix F, Figure 2) starting assumption of 307K and the final population estimate of 322K used to determine housing need?

**Response:**

*A revision of the SHMA is currently under way and this document is part of the evidence base which will inform the assessment. I do not intend to anticipate the result of the assessment of this and other evidence.*

6. What justification is there for assuming the significant social changes implied in the SHMA given that the SHMA increases the number of houses that need to be built based in part on very ambitious jobs forecasts which when combined with the population projections in the SHMA results in a massive increase in the proportion of people of working age who will be in employment (see table below)?

**Response:**

*A revision of the SHMA is currently under way and this document is part of the evidence base which will inform the assessment. I do not intend to anticipate the result of the assessment of this and other evidence.*

7. What steps will be taken to adjust the jobs forecasts in the SHMA given that, a) the revised BRES job numbers for 2013 show that the compound annual growth rate in jobs we have achieved since the recession ended in 2009 is ~0.5% which is much lower than the ~0.8% growth rate assumed in the SHMA for the period 2011-2031, b) this comes at a time when the UK is creating more jobs than the rest of the EU put together and c) it is inevitable we will experience at least one more recession during the plan period?

**Response:**

*A revision of the SHMA is currently under way and this document is part of the evidence base which will inform the assessment. I do not intend to anticipate the result of the assessment of this and other evidence.*

8. What steps are being taken to accelerate the delivery of the Local Plan given that the recent Government announcement indicated that Local Plans need to be brought into force by 2017 and the current LDS shows the Local Plan being adopted in Summer 2017 and other DPD's in Autumn 2018 and the track record of past slippage?

**Response:**

*Section 99 of the Housing and Planning Bill which provides for the reserve powers for the SoS at DCLG to recover a local plan does not have any dates. The operative wording is "if the Secretary of State thinks that a local planning authority are failing or omitting to do anything it is necessary for them to do in connection with the preparation, revision or adoption of a development plan document". The Joint Chief Executive, who is the planning lead on the District Councils Executive network, has ascertained that provided that councils are making reasonable progress towards a local plan, the SoS does not intend to intervene. The powers are intended for a small minority of councils who are making little or no effort to establish a plan. I have independently validated this with my own contacts on the Environment, Economy and Housing Board at the Local Government Association among others. We therefore don't think the Government will intervene if we meet our new timetable given we will already be at examination in the Spring of 2017.*

## QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

**Councillor Cockarill** asked:

Why has Hart been left behind by other local authorities and local residents in offering help to Syrian refugees fleeing from the civil war?

The **Leader** responded:

I do not accept the premise of the question. The minister appointed by Her Majesty's Government for Syrian refugees, Richard Harrington MP, made it clear to the LGA last week that because Britain is taking refugees from the camps on the Syrian border, who will be assessed against UNHCR criteria of vulnerability, people being resettled in the UK are those most in need. It follows that his priorities for his department, working closely with local authorities, are:

- Extending the Vulnerable Persons Programme which operates in many local authorities to help in resettling refugees.
- Expanding the number of local authorities that national Government is working with, acknowledging that circumstances are different in different areas.
- Working with some local authorities to establish the appropriate funding arrangements to ensure that refugees are protected while keeping costs to a minimum.

It follows from all that that the principal authorities with whom he needs to work are those with Adult Services and Children's Services, and other tiers will be working with them. Our officers have been exploring options, being actively engaged in discussions with local landlords, as well as the voluntary sector. Further, our Head of Housing has been positively engaging with Hampshire County Council. However, we are waiting for Hampshire County Council to complete a 'mapping' exercise whereby they will establish where those critical services (adult and children's services) could be made available for Syrian Refugees arriving. Consequently, we cannot come to any conclusions until we have some information as to the nature of the needs of those we will be welcoming to our communities. At the LGA, the Minister paid tribute to the response of local people, but confirmed that the Government is not looking for individuals to host refugees in their homes because of issues such as child protection. I therefore utterly refute the assertion that Hart has been left behind by the gesture politics of others.

**Councillor Cockarill** asked a supplementary question:

Clearly this is a situation that Hart cannot solve itself, given that it will soon be winter and very cold in eastern Europe, local residents are asking how they can help. Some councils are looking at ways to deliver this assistance, given the constrained government policy, when will we see Hart delivering help to real people who need it now and in the coming months.

The **Leader** responded:

We at Hart Council are not in a position to change government policy. There are a number of issues here. The people coming through Turkey and Eastern Europe are for the most part fit and active and resourceful, although there are some amongst them that are vulnerable and we have all been affected by the well publicised drowning of a small child before he left Turkey. However, the government policy of targeting people with a positive need in the refugee camps means that the easy bit is in finding accommodation - the difficult bit is in aligning the needs of the people who arrive with the facilities that need to be provided. We cannot do this on our own, only with the help of Hampshire County Council, and our housing officers etc are looking into it.