

HERTSMERE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

**Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices,
Elstree Way, Borehamwood**

9 November 2011

Present:

Voting Members:

Councillors Bright (Chairman), Donne, Goldstein, Graham, Heywood and Quilty

Non-Voting Members:

Councillors R Butler, Dr Cohen, Gilligan, Harrison, Hoeksma, Parnell, Patnick and Strack

Officers:

D Graham	Chief Executive
S Bijle	Director of Resources
G Wooldrige	Director of Environment
H Shade	Head of Corporate Support
M Silverman	Policy and Transport Manager
K Harwood	Housing Services Manager
J Edmond	Private Sector Housing Co-ordinator
S Warner	Senior Planning Officer
J Smith	Principal Democratic Services Officer

Guests:

S Richardson	local resident
C Brock	local resident
R Thompson	RPT Consulting

Other Officers in Attendance:

A Forbes	Webcaster
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Note: All decisions taken at this meeting are non-urgent, and therefore subject to the provisions of the call-in procedure unless otherwise specified.

37. **COMMUNICATIONS AND APOLOGIES**

The Chairman welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting and two guests in attendance for item 6.2 (Monk Parakeets), Simon Richardson and Christine Brock.

The Chairman advised Members that a late report (Report EX/11/75) for item 7.1: On-street Car Parking Charges - Suspension for the Christmas Holiday Period had been published earlier today, copies of which were tabled at the meeting. Copies of the report for part II item 2.1 (agenda item 11), Leisure Management Contracts Award – Detailed Evaluation, would be tabled at the appropriate point in part II of the agenda.

Apologies were received from Councillor Batten.

38. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Members had an interest to declare in any of the items of business on the agenda.

39. **SPEECHES BY NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

The Chairman advised that the usual arrangements for speeches by non-Executive Members would be in place for this meeting.

40. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 7 September 2011 were approved and signed as a true record.

41. **NON-KEY DECISIONS**

41.1 **MONK PARAKEETS**

Decision that:

1. the two papers attached to Report EX/11/66 at Appendices A and B be noted;
2. further research be carried out on how parakeet colonies are dealt with in other countries;
3. DEFRA be advised that:

- a) there is no automatic right for DEFRA to enter the Council's land to carry out the culling of monk parakeets;
- b) any decision to allow DEFRA onto Council land must be on a case-by-case basis and that, before permission is granted, DEFRA must make the strongest of cases to the Council's Environmental Health Officers as to why it needs to carry out its planned actions; and
- c) in the event that DEFRA wish to enter onto Council land and is able to make the case for carrying out such actions, firstly (in accordance with the request of the campaigners), no shooting be allowed on Council land and, wherever possible (as mentioned in campaigners' request number 7), rather than killing these birds, nests be removed by approved contractors under veterinary supervision and any birds or hatchlings caught be taken to nearby aviaries.

Reasons for the Decision

The decision indicated how the Council intended to respond to further applications from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and took account of the local representations made against the proposed actions by DEFRA.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None as a response to both parties was required.

Key Points Arising from the Discussion

- Mr Simon Richardson, co-author with colleague Christine Brock, of a report against the eradication of monk parakeets in the UK (Appendix B to EX/11/66 refers), gave a 10-minute presentation to the meeting.
- Following the presentation, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Economic Development asked how other authorities, such as those in Barcelona and Madrid, dealt with the issue of control. Mr Richardson replied that he believed some humane steps were taken to control the numbers of parakeets such as the inclusion of contraceptives in sunflower seeds.
- Four non-Executive Members spoke in turn against the proposed control measures citing reasons that included the following: no justification as these birds were no different from any other birds and as such no more dangerous to humans; evidence showed that their numbers were not increasing; shooting was completely unacceptable; waste of money; culling made no sense as the birds could still be imported and kept as pets (if truly dangerous, the first

action that should be taken should be to prevent importation). The Executive was strongly urged to resist the actions proposed by DEFRA.

- During discussion amongst the Executive Members, it was agreed that further research should be carried out to ascertain how other countries with similar climates to the UK had dealt with the issue. It was also agreed categorically that no shooting should take place on Council land.
- The Chairman, on behalf of the Executive, thanked the two local residents who had led the campaign against the culling of monk parakeets and attended the meeting that evening and DEFRA for its report. Summing up, he referred Members to the requests made by the campaigners (agenda page 34) and emphasised that it was important to understand that the Executive could only make decisions where it had the power to do so, specifically it could make decisions on some but not all of the requests. Accordingly, taking account of the implications of report para 2.3, he proposed a number of recommendations, as set out above, that were agreed by the Executive.

(Action: Head of Street Scene)

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