

Public Document Pack

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER, 2024

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

Please find attached supplementary papers relating to the above meeting, as follows:

Agenda No	Item
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7.	<u>NOTICE OF MOTIONS</u> (Pages 3 - 16)
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To consider any motions, due notice of which have been given in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.12.

Included within this pack are the proposed amendments received to the motions submitted, with amendments included as tracked changes.

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COUNCIL
19 SEPTEMBER 2024

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 4.8.12

The following amendment to a motion has been submitted.

Motion on the Provision of Affordable Housing and Infrastructure on Developments

This council notes that, despite the existence of unimplemented planning permission to build more than a million homes across England, the current government, like its predecessor, believes that making it easier for developers to get planning permission is ~~the~~ a way to increase the availability of affordable housing.

The council believes that increasing numbers of permissions, rather than focusing on building the right housing in the locations which are already identified for development will boost developers profits, ~~whilst not necessarily rather than~~ meeting the needs for affordable housing.

It also notes that the government's proposed changes to the NPPF would make it easier for developers in North Herts to obtain planning permission on speculative sites, including particularly those in parts of the Green Belt, ~~at a time when they should be delivering housing on the sites that are identified in the Local Plan.~~

It instructs the Leader of the Council to write to the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government setting out the council's views and calling for the government to adopt a strategy that will prioritise increasing delivery of ~~affordable~~ housing with appropriate infrastructure and to prioritise giving more power to councils to build housing, in particular social and affordable housing, ~~rather than increasing property developers' profits.~~

Amendments proposed by: Councillor Daniel Wright-Mason

Amendments seconded by: Councillor Dave Winstanley

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TITLE OF REPORT: NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 4.8.12

The following amendment to a motion has been submitted.

Motion on the Two Child Limit to Benefit Payments

In North Hertfordshire, 2120 children in 590 households are currently affected by the two-child limit to benefit payments. That is 7% of all children in the authority area. At the same time, 5270 local children are living in poverty.

Council strongly believes that the two-child limit to benefit payments is a cruel and harmful policy that should be scrapped. Research from the University of York has shown its introduction has had no positive impacts on employment and earnings. Instead, it has dragged thousands of local families into poverty.

Council notes that the Liberal Democrats have consistently opposed the two-child limit to benefit payments since it was introduced – calling for it to be axed in their 2017, 2019 and 2024 manifestos. Council notes with concern the stance of the Labour Government, who are committed to keeping the cap – going as far as suspending the whip from MPs who rebel against this position. Council welcomes the new Labour government setting up a child poverty task force, and looks forward to working with central government to ensure its recommendations are effectively implemented.

Council resolves to:

Instruct the Leader of North Herts Council to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister indicating North Herts Council's strong belief that the two-child limit to benefit payments should be scrapped – which would help 2120 children living in North Hertfordshire.

Further instruct the Council Leader to write to all MPs covering the district of North Hertfordshire, asking them to commit their public support to the campaign to end the cruel two-child limit to benefit payments and ensure the number of children a family has is considered when a hardship grant is given out by the Council.

Proposed by: Councillor Chris Lucas

Seconded by: Councillor Tim Johnson

Amendment proposed by: Councillor Nigel Mason

Amendment seconded by: Councillor Daniel Wright-Mason

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COUNCIL
19 SEPTEMBER 2024

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 4.8.12

The following amendment to a motion has been submitted.

Motion on proposed Expansion of London Luton Airport

On 24 May 2024, the then Secretary of State for Transport, The Rt. Hon. Mark Harper, delivered a written statement to Parliament announcing the deadline would be extended from 10 August 2024 to 4 October 2024 for a decision to be made regarding whether to grant a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the construction of a new passenger terminal and aircraft stands at London Luton Airport, thereby allowing passenger capacity to increase from 18 million per annum to 32 million.

The stated reason for this decision is as follows: *"This is due to the General Election and to allow appropriate time for any new Secretary of State to consider the applications. The department will however endeavour to issue decisions ahead of the deadlines above wherever possible"*.

Following the General Election and the appointment of a new Secretary of State for Transport, a decision on whether to grant a DCO is now expected imminently.

We note that Council agreed a similar motion proposed by Chris Lucas in January 2024 and the under the last government, the Conservative Secretary of State already agreed to increase the number of passengers at Luton Airport by 1 million from 18 to 19 million per year.

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Therefore, Council resolves that the Leader of the Council writes **once again** to the Secretary of State for Transport urging them not to grant a Development Consent Order, as well as stating that North Hertfordshire District Council continues to oppose any further expansion of London Luton Airport in the strongest possible terms, and remains of the opinion there are no conditions that can be applied to the application to make it acceptable.

Council further resolves that the Leader of the Council writes to the Member of Parliament for Hitchin, the Member of Parliament for North East Hertfordshire and the Member of Parliament for Stevenage, urging them to call on the Secretary of State for Transport to reject the proposal allowing London Luton Airport to expand, as well as to use their role as an MP representing residents in North Hertfordshire to secure Parliamentary scrutiny of the proposed expansion.

Amendment proposed by: Councillor Chris Lucas

Amendment seconded by: Councillor Sam Collins

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TITLE OF REPORT: NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 4.8.12

The following amendment to a motion has been submitted.

Motion on the Government Planning Reforms and Housing Targets

On 30th July 2024, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government made a statement to the House of Commons on changes to National Planning Policy.

The Government announced not only would it be re-introducing mandatory housing targets for Local Authorities, but that it would increase overall targets from 300,000 new homes per annum to approximately 370,000 per annum.

Under the Government's proposed new method announced as part of changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, North Hertfordshire will be required to build 992 new homes per year, representing an increase of 9%.

Neighbouring authority Luton will see its housing target reduced by 22%, and as a result of the Government removing the urban uplift, major cities such as London, Liverpool and Birmingham will all see a reduction in their housing targets by up to 31%.

Following the adoption of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan in November 2022, 47% of land within the district is designated as Green Belt. The reforms of which are proposed by the Government will weaken protections for Green Belt land, and could result in inappropriate development taking place within the district, particularly in and around our rural communities.

As a result of our Local Plan having recently been adopted, North Hertfordshire currently does not need to provide evidence of a five-year housing land supply in accordance with the 2023 NPPF. However, the Government is proposing to remove this element of the 2023 NPPF, which means that should this proposed change come into force there would be a presumption in favour of sustainable development through the decision-making mechanism. The loss of this protection increases the likelihood of approval for major developments proposed within the district on sites not identified in the Local Plan.

The Government has also stated its ambition to build "a new generation of new towns" which will comprise of at least 10,000 homes. In order to identify potential locations for these 'new towns' a New Towns Taskforce has been created within the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government.

Therefore, Council resolves:

~~1. not to take part in the Government's New Towns Scheme, and oppose any attempt by the Government to introduce a new town within the district of North Hertfordshire.~~

2.1. that the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government calling on the Government to:

~~2.1.1~~ 2.1.1 not increase the Housing Target for North Hertfordshire.

~~2.2.1.2~~ 2.1.2 restore the Urban Uplift, ensuring cities and urban areas take their fair share of housing development, particularly as many of these areas already have the infrastructure to support additional development.

~~2.3.1.3~~ 2.1.3 ensure infrastructure to support approved development is built prior to houses, thereby reducing the negative impact of development on existing communities, and ensuring local infrastructure is ready to provide for residents moving into new homes.

~~2.4.1.4~~ 2.1.4 adopt a brownfield first approach to development, and provide greater protection for green belt land in North Hertfordshire.

~~2.5.1.5~~ 2.1.5 not to amend paragraph 11(d) of the 2023 NPPF, which currently provides protection for North Hertfordshire as a local authority that has recently adopted a local plan but does not have a five-year housing land supply.

~~2.6.1.6~~ 2.1.6 strengthen the rights of local residents to ensure they have a meaningful say when development is proposed within their communities.

~~1.7~~ not remove the emphasis and focus on 'beauty' and 'beautiful design' from the National Planning Policy Framework.

~~2.7.1.8~~ 2.1.8 Not impose a New Town as part of the Government's New Towns Scheme within the district of North Hertfordshire, as the district has already adopted a Local Plan that delivers on the housing need for North Hertfordshire, and the development of a Government New Town would put increased strain on already pressured local services.

3.2. that the Leader of the Council writes to the Member of Parliament for Hitchin, the Member of Parliament for North East Hertfordshire and the Member of Parliament for Stevenage highlighting the opposition of Council to the Government's proposed planning reforms and housing targets, urging them to stand up against these proposals which would have a detrimental impact on residents and communities across North Hertfordshire.

Proposed by: Councillor Ralph Muncer

Seconded by: Councillor David Barnard

TITLE OF REPORT: NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 4.8.12

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The Government announced not only would it be re-introducing mandatory housing targets for Local Authorities, but that it would increase overall targets from 300,000 new homes per annum to approximately 370,000 per annum.

Under the Government's proposed new method announced as part of changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, North Hertfordshire will be required to build 992 new homes per year, representing an increase of 9%.

Neighbouring authority Luton will see its housing target reduced by 22%, and as a result of the Government removing the urban uplift, major cities such as London, Liverpool and Birmingham will all see a reduction in their housing targets by up to 31%.

Following the adoption of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan in November 2022, 47% of land within the district is designated as Green Belt. The reforms of which are proposed by the Government will weaken protections for Green Belt land, and could result in inappropriate development taking place within the district, particularly in and around our rural communities.

As a result of our Local Plan having recently been adopted, North Hertfordshire currently does not need to provide evidence of a five-year housing land supply in accordance with the 2023 NPPF. However, the Government is proposing to remove this element of the 2023 NPPF, which means that should this proposed change come into force there would be a presumption in favour of sustainable development through the decision-making mechanism. The loss of this protection increases the likelihood of approval for major developments proposed within the district on sites not identified in the Local Plan.

The Government has also stated its ambition to build "a new generation of new towns" which will comprise of at least 10,000 homes. In order to identify potential locations for these 'new towns' a New Towns Taskforce has been created within the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government.

Therefore, Council resolves:

1. that the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government calling on the Government to:

1.1 not increase the Housing Target for North Hertfordshire.

- 1.2 restore the Urban Uplift, ensuring cities and urban areas take their fair share of housing development, particularly as many of these areas already have the infrastructure to support additional development.
- 1.3 ensure infrastructure to support approved development is built prior to houses, thereby reducing the negative impact of development on existing communities, and ensuring local infrastructure is ready to provide for residents moving into new homes.
- 1.4 adopt a brownfield first approach to development, and provide greater protection for green belt land in North Hertfordshire.
- 1.5 not to amend paragraph 11(d) of the 2023 NPPF, which currently provides protection for North Hertfordshire as a local authority that has recently adopted a local plan but does not have a five-year housing land supply.
- 1.6 strengthen the rights of local residents to ensure they have a meaningful say when development is proposed within their communities.
- 1.7 not remove the emphasis and focus on 'beauty' and 'beautiful design' from the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.8** Not to impose a New Town as part of the Government's New Towns Scheme within the district of North Hertfordshire, as the district has already adopted a Local Plan that delivers on the housing need for North Hertfordshire, and the development of a Government New Town would put increased strain on already pressured local services.
- 1.9** Meaningfully engage with Local Planning Authorities on the New Town Scheme and – where proposed sites are put forward within an area – ensure that plans have local consent and that sufficient additional funding is in place to support already-stretched planning departments.
- 4.81.10** Actively pursue reforms designed to ensure that a far greater proportion of planning applications – which continue to be approved under the existing policy framework – are actually built out by developers in a timely manner, recognising that this is the most effective way of meeting the Government's stated objectives.

- 2. that the Leader of the Council writes to the Member of Parliament for Hitchin, the Member of Parliament for North East Hertfordshire and the Member of Parliament for Stevenage highlighting the opposition of Council to the Government's proposed planning reforms and housing targets, urging them to stand up against these proposals which would have a detrimental impact on residents and communities across North Hertfordshire.

Proposed by: Councillor Ralph Muncer

Seconded by: Councillor David Barnard

TITLE OF REPORT: NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 4.8.12

The following amendment to a motion has been submitted.

Motion on the Changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance

The Government laid the *Social Fund Winter Fuel Payment Regulations 2024* before Parliament on 22 August 2024, which come into force on 16th September 2024, unless either the House of Commons or House of Lords pass a motion to annul the Statutory Instrument.

Under the Regulations, from winter 2024/2025, households in England and Wales will no longer be entitled to the Winter Fuel Payment unless they receive Pension Credit or certain other means-tested benefits as announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Government has failed to carry out a full impact assessment or public consultation, despite Age UK estimating that 2 million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.

As a result of Labour's policy, 23,266 pensioners in North Hertfordshire face losing their winter fuel allowance, which not only risks leaving many pensioners across the district in financial hardship without the support they need, but will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.

Whilst some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many thousands across North Hertfordshire sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.

Therefore, Council resolves:

- 1. that the Leader of the Council writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asks the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.**
- 2. that the Leader of the Council writes to the Member of Parliament for Hitchin, the Member of Parliament for North East Hertfordshire and the Member of Parliament for Stevenage, urging them to ask the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty, as well as to press the government to reverse this decision which may impact 23,266 pensioners in North Hertfordshire.**

3. to encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensioners in North Hertfordshire are supported in claiming their entitlement.
4. ~~To~~ Encourages Members to sign the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK.

Proposed by: Councillor Ralph Muncer

Seconded by: Councillor David Barnard

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- 2. that the Leader of the Council writes to the Member of Parliament for Hitchin, the Member of Parliament for North East Hertfordshire and the Member of Parliament for Stevenage, urging them to ask the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty, as well as to press the government to reverse this decision which may impact 23,266 pensioners in North Hertfordshire.**

3. to continue to encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensioners in North Hertfordshire are supported in claiming their entitlement.
4. To encourage Councillors to consider ~~Members to sign~~ the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK.
- 4.5. To acknowledge and understand that the financial blackhole that the previous 14 years of Conservative government has left our country in has an impact on the new government's financial decision-making.

Amendments proposed by: Councillor Alistair Willoughby

Amendments seconded by: Councillor Nigel Mason